The College of Letters & Science is at the heart of UWM and home to its liberal arts disciplines. More than 30 percent of UWM’s student body chooses a major in Letters & Science, and nearly every UWM student, regardless of major, completes general education requirements within the college. Across disciplines, our students learn how to think critically, solve problems, communicate, and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

Our faculty rely on external funding to discover and create new knowledge across the natural and social sciences and the humanities. Recent achievements include the validation of Einstein’s theory of gravitational waves, the compilation of an Encyclopedia of Milwaukee history, the exploration of new treatments and drugs for a variety of diseases, new methods for teaching math and science, and a better understanding of the impact of social media on relationships and culture.

Our faculty, staff, students, and alumni serve the community as consultants and partners for start-ups and business ventures, volunteers and board members for nonprofits, experts for media inquiries, and producers of educational programming that is free and open to the public.

CAMPAIGN GOAL: $30 MILLION
A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE

The largest of UWM’s schools and colleges, the College of Letters & Science is home to 76 undergraduate majors and programs and 62 graduate programs. Nearly every undergraduate student takes courses in Letters & Science, which offers a multitude of classes in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Students gain knowledge and experience needed to excel in their chosen field, as well as the critical thinking and analytical skills essential to a successful career and life after graduation. Your investment in our students is critical to their future success and the strength of the College of Letters & Science.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Students play an integral role in advancing the academic and research missions of UWM. Scholarships for undergraduates and fellowships for graduate students help cover tuition and other expenses, and enable the college to attract and retain excellent students in our programs.

STUDY ABROAD

Studying in another country allows students to build their resume, apply classroom theory to real-world situations, and gain confidence from successfully navigating a new culture and language. While these transformative learning experiences are essential to 21st-century career preparation, many students are unable to travel abroad due to financial constraints.

INTERNSHIPS

Real-world, professional experiences give students an edge in developing their careers. Support for internships can provide our students with mentoring and other career development opportunities in Milwaukee and far beyond.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Students who participate in research opportunities enhance their academic experience while preparing for their future. Your support allows our students to work directly with faculty, giving them a head start on their career path.

GOAL FOR STUDENT SUPPORT: $15 MILLION

FUNDING FIELD RESEARCH

Madeline Poullette wants to broaden people’s knowledge of the world through museums. A graduate student pursuing her master’s in cultural anthropology and museum studies, Poullette is researching how to improve outdated museums by adopting characteristics of eco-museums, such as incorporating community members’ perspectives and preserving local heritage.

In 2016-17, Poullette went to La Ventanilla in Oaxaca, Mexico, four times to help the community replace its small educational displays with a new museum that will attract more tourists to the region. She is using a method called photovoice, through which community members take pictures of their daily lives. These photos and the discussions that follow will help the curators understand the collective identity so they can determine what to include in the exhibits.

Traveling is expensive, but Poullette’s trips were made possible through the Ruggiero and Handelman Field Research Award, funded by Howard Handelman and Kris Ruggiero, both former directors of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at UWM. Poullette says, “My time in Mexico broadened my interest in the region and gave me a strong background for my internship with a Mexican folk art collection at the Field Museum in Chicago. I can’t thank Kris Ruggiero and Howard Handelman enough for their generous support.”

Research awards were the only way I could pursue field research in Mexico. There’s nothing more important than research in a graduate student’s life.

MADDIE POULLETTE ’17

We have benefitted in many ways from our own international research experiences, and we are pleased to be able to pass on this opportunity to UWM students.

KRIS RUGGIERO AND HOWARD HANDELMAN
"I come from a welfare family, so I never even considered the possibility of attending college," recalls alumna Connie Jo. Fortunately, a high school teacher saw her potential, helped her apply, and even took her to meet an admissions counselor. "My teacher told the counselor he had to find a way for me to go to college. Ninety minutes later, I left his office with my admissions paper and offers of scholarship and grant assistance.

"Attending college changed my life so dramatically that I can never express my gratitude sufficiently to my teacher, the counselor, and the individuals who provided the funds for me to pursue higher education." After graduating from UWM in 1970, Jo eventually became an assistant dean in the College of Letters & Science. She has been a generous supporter of Letters & Science scholarships, including the New Directions Scholarship, which provides four years of support for exceptional students.

One of those students is Yazeed Qadadha, a biochemistry major from Palestine who plans to pursue a medical degree after graduating from UWM. He says the New Directions Scholarship relieved his financial pressures so he could spend time working in Associate Professor Sarah Patch’s lab, researching thermoacoustic imagining techniques. "I learned a great deal in Dr. Patch’s lab, met some amazing people, and developed skills one would never develop in a classroom setting," he says.

"I would not have been able to devote as much time to research without my scholarship. I’ll always be thankful to everyone who made this possible.

YAZEED QADADHA ’17

"I support the scholarship program because I know there are other potential students who have the academic skills necessary for college but not the required financial resources.

CONNIE JO ’70, ’80

MORE THAN 30% OF UWM STUDENTS CHOOSE LIBERAL ARTS MAJORS

6,549 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

285 L&S STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2015-16

1,018 GRADUATE STUDENTS

50.1% OF ALL UWM CREDIT HOURS ARE IN LETTERS & SCIENCE

SKILLS THAT MATTER MORE THAN A MAJOR

Communication
Critical thinking
Problem solving
Teamwork
Adaptability

(To 93% of employers)

—ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES—
A TOP-TIER RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

UWM has become one of America’s top research universities, receiving international recognition for its contributions to the global research community. Nowhere on our campus are those efforts more evident than in the College of Letters & Science. Our faculty and students work on groundbreaking projects that impact our everyday lives, including drug discovery, medical imaging, climatology, world politics and much more. Your support ensures that our outstanding faculty and students continue the work that is so vital to our future.

ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS AND CHAIRS
Endowed faculty positions are essential to keeping L&S on a path of excellence. Recognizing the significant contributions of senior-level faculty is key to recruiting and retaining those at the forefront of their fields.

RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTERS
The college is home to a variety of research centers and institutes where students and faculty gather to collaborate and work. Support for these centers is essential to expanding their impact on campus, in our community, and beyond.

LABORATORY EQUIPMENT
No matter the area of research, lab equipment is an essential part of the work our faculty and students do every day. Your support ensures that our students and faculty have access to the complex tools they need to advance knowledge in their fields.

FACULTY EXCELLENCE
Attracting and retaining the nation’s brightest faculty is a huge priority for L&S. The retention of professors is critical to our continued growth as a college, and faculty awards are a key tool in keeping top instructors on our team.

GOAL FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT: $12.5 MILLION

IT’S ABOUT TIME

When an unborn baby is smaller or larger than expected, it can mean there’s a problem. Knowing exactly when conception occurred helps physicians identify and treat complications and ultimately save lives.

Physicists Abbas Ourmazd and Russell Fung are looking at whether a mathematical algorithm could more accurately pinpoint gestational age. They originally developed the algorithm to make movies of ultrafast atomic and molecular processes taking place on timescales of a few quadrillionths of a second. Now, they are working to see if their discovery can reduce timing uncertainty in gestational age to a few days or even hours.

The computer algorithm works by extracting a weak arrow of time from noisy data with highly inaccurate time stamps. Think of it as restoring the initial sequence of a deck of cards after it has been heavily shuffled. “There are some remnants of the original sequence in the shuffled deck,” says Fung, a senior scientist. “There’s a weak whisper of time, like a faint voice in a loud party.”

The neonatal project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which helps people around the world lead healthy, productive lives. “It is a privilege to use the algorithm to help improve people’s health everywhere, particularly in developing nations,” says Oumrzaad, a UWM distinguished professor of physics. “This project will lead to new tools for identifying high-risk pregnancies and initiating timely medical treatment.”
AN INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH

Dorothy Shaw quietly left the bulk of her estate (worth more than $4 million) to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation when she died in 1980. Her vision was to support research in biochemistry, biological sciences, and cancer research at UWM and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since 1982, the foundation’s Shaw Scientist Program has awarded about $14 million in grants to 73 scientists, including Christopher Quinn, an assistant professor of biological sciences at UWM.

“Unlike federal grants, the Shaw Award is not tied to a particular project or time period, which has allowed me the flexibility to pursue new ideas,” says Quinn. The award has supported his research on axon guidance, the process through which axons are guided through the developing brain to form neural circuits. “This process is critical for the formation of a functional brain, and disruptions of this process can underlie neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism, dyslexia, and intellectual disability.”

Quinn is exactly the type of scientist that the award is intended to help. “The Shaw Scientist Program rewards innovation and allows for unconventional approaches and exploring novel ideas,” says Ellen Gilligan, president and CEO of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. “Research is a long-term investment in our quality of life, and we are committed to carrying out Dorothy Shaw’s vision of investing in the future health of our region.”
ENRICHING OUR COMMUNITY

UWM is among the nation’s top universities for community engagement according to the Carnegie Foundation, and the College of Letters & Science acts as a gateway to the university for many in the community. Through a diverse range of programming, the College of Letters & Science enables students and faculty to have an impact on the community while allowing community members to connect with and benefit from UWM. As a critical part of the only public, urban research university in Wisconsin, Letters & Science enriches the educational, economic, cultural, and environmental impact UWM has on the community around us.

GOAL FOR ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT: $2.5 MILLION

DEAN’S DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

This series, which is open to the public, invites students, faculty, and the community to learn more about the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences from the viewpoint of engaging and highly regarded speakers. Support for these lectures helps raise the profile of the college and the entire university.

RESEARCH SYMPOSIA

These events offer an exciting opportunity for faculty, staff, undergraduate, and graduate students to present their research to large audiences in a professional setting. Your support of these symposia helps connect the world-class research happening in Letters & Science to the community at large.

FILM FESTIVALS

Film festivals sponsored through the college are an important vehicle for engaging with the community and exploring a wide array of social, cultural, and political ideas. Support for these festivals makes the world more accessible to our students and our community.

SCIENCE BAG

The UWM Science Bag is a free one-hour lecture series designed for anyone curious about science, no matter what age. Your support helps make science accessible and exciting for the thousands who come to campus each year for this program.

LECTURES MAKE MATH ACCESSIBLE

UWM’s ascent to being a top-tier research university didn’t happen overnight. In 1964, UWM Mathematics Distinguished Professor Morris Marden established the university’s first PhD program. “For him, research was the driving, vital force of academic life which sustained and enriched the teaching and administrative values,” his sons Albert and Philip Marden recall.

But Morris Marden’s vision surpassed research. “The notion of a professor having obligations to bring his expertise to the community beyond the pursuit of a personal research program always guided his professional life,” his sons add. In 1986, Morris Marden and his wife, Miriam, established an endowment to fund scholarships and the Marden Lecture Series. Since then, internationally recognized mathematicians from universities around the world have given lectures on topics such as “How to Get Rich Playing the Lottery,” “Lessons Learned from the Financial Crisis,” “How to Bake Pi,” and “The Greatest Codebreaker and His Mathematics.”

For the past two decades, Albert and his wife, Dorothy, have supported the Marden Fund. “Over these many years, we have honored my father’s legacy by continuing his initial financial support. It has been very rewarding to hear about the yearly Marden Lectures and the increasing number of students who are funded by these scholarships.”

There are many for whom the job or profession is actually a way of life, something that colors all aspects of existence. Mathematicians are often in that category, and Morris was one of them.

ALBERT AND PHILLIP MARDEN

(Pictured: Miriam and Morris Marden)
A WINDOW TO THE WORLD

When Gabrielle Verdier joined the faculty at UWM after teaching French for 15 years at New York University, she was amazed to find so many French names in Wisconsin: Fond du Lac, Prairie du Chien, Eau Claire. Knowing that there was such a prominent French presence in Wisconsin motivated Verdier and her colleague Martine Darmon Meyer to start UWM’s Festival of Films in French. “The film festival allows UWM to share the riches of France and French culture,” Verdier says.

An annual event since 1998, the festival attracts thousands of people who come to the Union Cinema each February for a taste of French culture conveyed through film. The festival has attracted support from the Quebec government as well as the local Alliance Française de Milwaukee. “There is a strong community of people in the Milwaukee area who enjoy speaking French and learning more about France and the francophone world,” says Anne Leplae, executive director of the Alliance Française.

Thanks to donor support, the festival is free and open to the public. This makes it attractive to high school groups and brings prospective students to the university. “It coincides with the university’s educational mission,” Verdier explains. “And it’s a gift to the community.”

“I support the Festival of Films in French because it is particularly meaningful to me. I want to broaden people’s perspectives and expose them to the world.”

GABRIELLE VERDIER

“...This film festival provides an excellent opportunity for the Francophile community to come together and be exposed to the language and culture."

ANNE LEPLAE

I support the Festival of Films in French because it is particularly meaningful to me. I want to broaden people’s perspectives and expose them to the world.

GABRIELLE VERDIER

This film festival provides an excellent opportunity for the Francophile community to come together and be exposed to the language and culture.

ANNE LEPLAE
Over my three-decade career in the U.S. Foreign Service, I have always been grateful to UWM for providing me with a first-class education in management and economics. My training was essential to my recent role as principal deputy assistant secretary of state, responsible for large assistance programs in 90 countries and fighting transnational organized crime.

– LUIS ARREAGA ’75, ’76, ’81
U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala

UWM launched me from the working-class North Side into a journalism career that landed me in Barack Obama’s car, on NFL fields photographing the Packers, and writing and teaching on social justice, sports, energy, education, environment, and public health from Harlem to Sweden, from Maine to Uganda, and from the White House to the homes of the voiceless.

– DERRICK JACKSON ’76
Associate Editor of the Boston Globe

As a first-generation college student, UWM opened my eyes to the possibilities of the future. I developed strategic thinking, problem solving, writing, and effective communication skills while gaining an appreciation for lifelong learning. My education set the stage for an interesting and fulfilling life!

– SUSAN FINCO ’76
Owner of Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Executive Committee Member of the Green Bay Packers Board of Directors