



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

# ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT *Awards*

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OCTOBER 15, 2021



Dear Friends and Alumni,

The WMU College of Arts and Sciences is proud to honor our 2021 Alumni Achievement Award winners, chosen by faculty from the units in which they earned their degrees. It is a great pleasure to count these award recipients among our more than 40,000 college alumni. These honorees truly exemplify our college's mission to ignite and sustain a passion for learning and discovery in the humanities, social sciences and sciences, to help students, staff and faculty succeed in life and contribute to the betterment of our communities, from local to global.

This year's award winners represent an impressive breadth and diversity of careers and accomplishments, and share an unwavering commitment to engaged global citizenship. Our honorees this year include a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State; award-winning faculty, including a Michigan College Teacher of the Year; writers who have garnered national and international book awards; attorneys and members of corporate boards; and a top-ranked official in the U.S. Department of Transportation. These alumni have made a significant impact on our world through their dedication to the environment and sustainability, via their efforts to remediate brownfield sites; to promote climate literacy; and to develop and support sustainable transportation infrastructure. They are dedicated to public health and social justice, bringing attention to redlining and racial discrimination in real estate; helping to free others from addiction and substance abuse; using sophisticated methods in physics to understand essential biological processes; and by studying food insecurity in the U.S. and across the world. Collectively, they have received numerous accolades and awards as outstanding community members, educators, communicators and researchers.

We are so proud to honor these alumni, who demonstrate the core values of our college through their actions and their accomplishments. On behalf of the Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences, thank you for your remarkable achievements and contributions, and congratulations to every one of our 2021 College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement and Pillar honorees!

Sincerely,

Dr. Carla M. Koretsky, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences



*Dr. Sridhar Chalasani, MS '94*

DEPARTMENT OF **BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

*Director of Clinical Practice, Digestive Health Clinical Practice  
Council and Chief of the Unified Medical Staff,  
Bronson Methodist Hospital*

Dr. Sridhar Chalasani, MD, completed his master of science in biological sciences at Western Michigan University in 1994, working in the lab under Dr. Karim Essani.

Chalasani grew up in England and India where he graduated from Rangaraya Medical College. He is board certified in colon and rectal surgery which he began practicing in the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo areas in 2002. During his career, he has served as the chair of surgery section, vice chief of medical staff, and chief of medical staff at Bronson Battle Creek Hospital. Chalasani currently serves as the director of clinical practice, digestive health clinical practice council for the Bronson Medical Group, and as chief of the unified medical staff across the Bronson System.

Chalasani looks forward to coming to work every day knowing that he will make a positive difference in his patients' lives. Making a difference is the reason he chose the medical field – a desire to help people get better. He has a special interest in diverticulitis as well as colon cancer screenings and treatment, and spends some of his free time educating the community on colon cancer awareness. When not helping patients, Chalasani enjoys photography and spending time with his family.



*Dr. David Hoogerheide, BS '04*

DEPARTMENT OF **CHEMISTRY**

*Research Physicist, National Institute of Standards  
and Technology Center for Neutron Research*

Dr. David Hoogerheide received his bachelor's in chemistry and physics in 2004 from Western Michigan University, where he was awarded presidential scholarships in both disciplines, and was a member of the Lee Honors College. In 2010, he earned his Ph.D. in physics from Harvard, where he studied fluctuation processes in solid-state nanopore devices. Hoogerheide continued his work at Harvard with a postdoctoral fellowship exploring low-force transport measurements of single DNA molecules trapped in solid-state nanopores, leading to a patented method for pressure-driven control of biomolecular motion through nanopores.

In 2013, Hoogerheide was awarded a National Research Council Joint Research Associateship between the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Institutes of Health, where he developed neutron scattering and protein nanopore-based biophysical techniques to study the adhesion of peripheral membrane proteins to lipid surfaces. In 2015 he joined the NIST's Center for Neutron Research in Gaithersburg, MD, as a research biophysicist. He serves as an instrument scientist for the new CANDOR high-performance neutron reflectometer. Hoogerheide's research focuses on neutron reflectometry of membrane proteins and biosensor materials, with a particular interest in complementing structural biology with nanoscale charge transport and single-molecule measurements.



*Robert VanSumeren*, BA '09, MA '15

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DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMPARATIVE RELIGION**

*Corporate Counsel and Vice President of  
Compliance, Starr Commonwealth*

Robert VanSumeren earned his master's in comparative religion together with a graduate certificate in spirituality, culture and health from Western Michigan University in 2015. He went on to earn his law degree from Wayne State University Law School in 2018, and for good measure added a graduate certificate in alcohol and drug abuse studies from Wayne State in 2017. VanSumeren's personal story of years of struggle with addiction, as well as serving time in jail before turning his life around and working to support others who struggle as he did, has been featured in the Detroit Free Press, mlive.com, the Washington Post, and on NPR. While still a law student he was quoted in legalnews.com (March 20, 2017) as saying, "The studies of law and religion are similar—both deal with texts and tradition. In each field, interpretation is important. I suppose I'm continuing in law school what I began in the study of comparative religion — looking for truth." He currently serves as corporate counsel and vice president of compliance at Starr Commonwealth.

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*Dr. Michael Crimmins*, MA '98

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DEPARTMENT OF **GEOGRAPHY,  
ENVIRONMENT, AND TOURISM**

*Professor and Climate Science Extension Specialist,  
Department of Environmental Science, University of Arizona*

Dr. Michael Crimmins completed his master's in geography at Western Michigan University in 1998. He currently serves as a professor in the Department of Environmental Science as well as an extension specialist in climate science for the Arizona Cooperative Extension at the University of Arizona. Crimmins has demonstrated his commitment to promoting better decision making through climate science literacy by combining outreach and basic science research, facilitating knowledge transfer and reducing the uncertainties inherent in resource management decisions.

Crimmins has published extensively on drought, precipitation and vegetation patterns in the U.S. southwest desert with an emphasis on using climate science to inform decision making. His articles have appeared in the International Journal of Climatology; Sustainability; Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology; and Weather, Climate, and Society. He has been integral in the development of novel hydroclimate and drought monitoring products and decision support tools such as DroughtView, an online drought monitoring tool that utilizes remote sensing imagery to track changes in vegetation greenness while facilitating the collection and sharing of drought impact and status reports.

Crimmins is the lead researcher in the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Climate Science Applications Program, providing climate science support to resource managers across Arizona by accessing information needs, synthesizing and transferring relevant research results, and conducting applied research projects. His extension and research work support resource management across multiple sectors including rangelands, forests/wildfire, and water resources as well as informing policy and decision makers. This work aims to support managers by increasing climate science literacy as well as developing strategies to adapt to a changing climate. He also serves as a drought monitoring expert on the Arizona Governor's Drought Task Force, and has worked with counties across Arizona to implement drought preparedness and impact monitoring plans. Crimmins' awards include the Early Career Leadership Award from the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals and Extension Faculty of the Year from the University of Arizona.

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*Lisa Phillips*, BS '82, MS '88

DEPARTMENT OF **GEOLOGICAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

*President, Phillips Environmental Consulting Services, Inc.*

Lisa K. J. Phillips, a 1982 and 1988 Western Michigan University graduate, is an accomplished hydrogeologist, having spent her more than 35-year career dedicated to identifying, managing, and cleaning environmental contamination in Michigan. As a certified groundwater professional, certified wastewater treatment operator, and certified underground storage tank professional, she has managed several hundred projects remediating contaminated soil and groundwater throughout Michigan.

The demise of the paper making industry in West Michigan at the turn of the century left large swaths of industrial land and buildings vacant and blighted. Concurrently, Michigan enacted the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, which promotes the revitalization, redevelopment and reuse of contaminated and blighted properties. Working with developers and regulators alike on Brownfield Redevelopment projects on dozens of sites in Southwest Michigan, as well as several former paper mills throughout the state, has been a fulfilling aspect of her career.

Currently, she is pleased to have developed an approved Transformational Brownfield Plan for and is conducting environmental investigations and cleanup associated with the former paper mill in Vicksburg. The project is holistic in its approach to both the environmental and economic stability of the site and wider community as a whole.

Since 2000, she has served as the president and owner of Phillips Environmental Consulting Services, Inc. She serves as the chair of the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Treasurer of both the Michigan Land Trustees of America and the Van Buren County Conservation District Foundation. Phillips has given back to WMU by teaching the remediation module of the department's hydrogeology field course and by employing recent graduates, many of them women, in her company. Phillips is grateful to the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences for the undergraduate and graduate education that helped her set her career path.



*Jamie LeBlanc-Hadley*, BA '09

**GLOBAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

*Economic Officer, U.S. Department of State*

Jaime LeBlanc-Hadley is a foreign service officer with the Department of State. She is currently an economic officer in the U.S. Embassy Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, focusing on Kazakhstan's civil aviation, regional and bilateral trade issues, regional integration and intellectual property rights. Previously, she served as a political officer in the U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou, China, where she monitored and reported on human rights, labor issues, civil society and political developments in southern China. She has also served as a consular officer at U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and as a desk officer covering Kenya in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs in Washington, D.C.

LeBlanc-Hadley graduated summa cum laude from Western Michigan University in 2009 with a BA in international studies and a minor in Chinese. As an undergraduate student at WMU, she completed a year at the Beijing Language and Culture University as a Boren National Security Education Program Scholar. She is the recipient of Middlebury College's Kathryn R. Davis Fellowship for Peace and the State Department's Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship. LeBlanc-Hadley graduated with distinction from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in 2012 with an MA in international policy studies. She speaks Mandarin Chinese and Russian, and has previously studied Amharic.





*Dr. LaDale Winling*, BA '02, MA '04

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DEPARTMENT OF **HISTORY**

*Associate Professor of History, Virginia Tech*

Dr. LaDale Winling is an associate professor of history at Virginia Tech where he teaches courses in public history, digital history, and urban history to undergraduate and graduate students. Winling is an award-winning urban and digital historian whose work has been supported by grants and fellowships from the NEH, the Newberry Library, the National Building Museum and others. His first book, "Building the Ivory Tower: Universities and Metropolitan Development in the Twentieth Century," was published by University of Pennsylvania Press in 2017. He has published in *The Journal of American History*, and the *Journal of Urban History*, among others. He is currently working on a book project on the development of, and challenges against, racial discrimination in real estate titled "The Road to Redlining." His digital works include "Electing the House of Representatives, 1840-2016" (2018) and "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America" (2016). Winling and a collaborator earned a 2021 ACLS Digital Extension Grant to expand resources and interpretation in "Mapping Inequality."

His contributions to "American Panorama: An Atlas of United States History" earned him the 2019 American Historical Association Roy Rosenzweig Digital History Prize. Winling was also the 2019 Urban History Association's Kenneth Jackson Best Book Prize, North America co-winner, as well as co-winner of the Faculty Excellence Award, History Graduate Students Association, Virginia Tech in 2013.

Winling earned his bachelor's in 2002, and his master's in history, from Western Michigan University, in 2004. He also has a master's in Urban Planning (2007), as well as a Ph.D. in architecture (2010) from the University of Michigan. Winling presents his research to academic and public audiences and has given numerous conference and public presentations.

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*Dr. Cassandra Workman*, BA '00, MA '04

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INSTITUTE FOR **INTERCULTURAL  
AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES**

*Assistant Professor of Anthropology,  
University of North Carolina Greensboro*

Dr. Cassandra Workman completed a bachelor's degree in 2000, followed by a master of arts in anthropology in 2004 at Western Michigan University, before pursuing a Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of South Florida, completing it in 2013. Workman currently serves as an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

As a biocultural anthropologist, Workman is interested in looking at the ways in which humans are impacted biologically, psycho-emotionally and socially, by food insecurity and water and sanitation (WaSH) insecurity. In order to understand these complex interactions, she engages medical anthropology, environmental anthropology and other scientific disciplines such as public health and hydrology. Workman uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in her research and has conducted research in Lesotho and Tanzania, Africa, as well as in eastern North Carolina. In addition to conducting scholarly research, she has worked in international development for donor organizations and implementing partners in Mozambique, Tanzania and South Sudan. Workman draws on both her research and professional experience in international development to demonstrate the applicability of anthropology to addressing pressing global issues.

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*Dr. Mary Brown, Ph.D. '05*

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**MALLINSON INSTITUTE FOR  
SCIENCE EDUCATION**

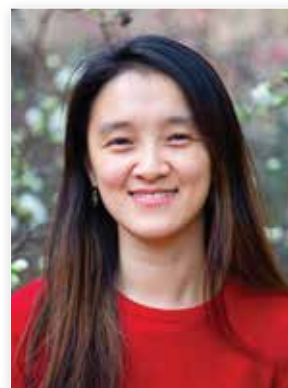
*Former Professor of Introductory Science,  
Lansing Community College*

Dr. Mary Brown was a professor of physical science and biology for 35 years at Lansing Community College (LCC). She received her Ph.D. in science education from Western Michigan University in 2005, following a bachelor's in biological science and teacher certification in 1973 and a master's in biology in 1975 from Central Michigan University. Throughout her career, Brown worked to help non-science majors develop an understanding of science by integrating its disciplines. She also sought to reduce science anxiety in non-science students by developing an instrument to measure their anxiety, as well as teaching students strategies for confidence building.

By all accounts she was an excellent teacher and highly dedicated to her students. In 2014, she was selected as the Michigan College Teacher of the Year by the Michigan Science Teachers Association. As one of her students wrote in one of her many positive reviews on Rate My Professor, "Dr. Brown is by far the best instructor I have ever had. Her tests are very difficult and the course material is challenging, but her enthusiasm makes it fun to learn. You will never have an instructor who cares more for her students than Dr. Brown. You have to show up and work hard in her class."

Since retiring from LCC in December 2013, Brown has become an active volunteer with Voters Not Politicians, a non-partisan organization focused on preserving democracy through efforts such as promoting anti-gerrymandering policies by educating the public about its history and effects. This statewide activism has consumed much of her time over the last few years along with volunteering at her local public library, participating in multiple book clubs, genealogy research, supporting her spouse's musical endeavors and traveling.

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*Dr. Min Tang, MA '14*

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DEPARTMENT OF **PHILOSOPHY**

*Teaching Assistant Professor of Philosophy,  
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill*

Dr. Min Tang earned her bachelor's from Lingnan Normal University in 2006, her master's in philosophy from Western Michigan University in 2014, followed by Ph.D.'s from Renmin University in China in 2012 and University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill in 2020.

As an undergrad at Lingnan, Tang completed a thesis on "Explaining Allais' Paradox, Local Context, and Cyclic Preferences in the Skew-Symmetric Bilinear Theory," which won a Best Bachelor Thesis Award.

At Western, Tang was an All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award winner, as well as the recipient of the Department of Philosophy's Graduate Research Award and the Heraclitean Society Annual Essay Award.

Tang's doctoral achievements at both UNC Chapel Hill and Renmin included the UNC Royster Fellowship, the UNC Diversity Fellowship, the First-Class Graduate Fellowship Award, and several research grants. Her UNC Chapel Hill dissertation was titled "Learning a New Language as a Transformative Experience," and her Renmin dissertation was "Mathematical Explanation in Mathematical Proof: The Fundamental Theorem of Algebra as a Case Study of Mathematical Explanation." Tang is currently an assistant professor of philosophy at UNC Chapel Hill.

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*Dr. Valentina Tobos*, MA '97, Ph.D. '01

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DEPARTMENT OF **PHYSICS**

*Natural Sciences Acting Director, Center of Teaching and Learning,  
and Associate Professor, Lawrence Technological University*

Dr. Valentina Tobos was born in Bucharest, Romania, where she earned a bachelor's degree in physics at the University of Bucharest in 1986. Following graduation, she taught middle-school and high-school physics, and prepared students for physics Olympiads.

She went back to school for graduate work to further her studies and earned a master's degree from Western Michigan University in 1997 and a Ph.D. in experimental solid-state physics in 2001, also from Western. Her current field of study is high-temperature superconductors.

Tobos has been teaching both introductory and advanced physics classes at Lawrence Technological University since the fall of 2001.

Tobos received Lawrence's Mary E. And Richard E. Marburger Faculty Member of the Year Award in 2006. Other honors include membership in Sigma Pi Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi, as well as membership in the American Association of University Women, and the American Association of Physics Teachers, among others.

She likes to say that, "Every challenge in learning will exercise your brain."

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*Dr. Amy K. Goodwin*, MS '99, Ph.D. '02

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DEPARTMENT OF **PSYCHOLOGY**

*Research Scientist and Pathology Team Leader,  
W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc.*

Dr. Amy Goodwin, upon completing her MS in 1999 and Ph.D. in 2002 at Western Michigan University, secured a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) School of Medicine. There she conducted seminal research in the behavioral pharmacology of commonly abused drugs.

Goodwin was promoted to assistant professor at JHU, where she conducted pivotal studies with gamma-hydroxybutyric acid and related compounds. This work was reviewed by the World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence and cited in multiple critical reports. Goodwin's research at JHU culminated with the first published demonstration of hallucinogen self-administration in non-human primates. In 2013, Goodwin joined the U.S. FDA NCTR, where she served as a director of the Behavioral Pharmacology Laboratory in the neurotoxicology division for five years. At NCTR, Goodwin and her team published an oft-cited, editor's choice award winning review of the status of nicotine research – the first report of nicotine-induced dopamine-release in a nonhuman primate species – and a physiologically-based pharmacokinetic model used in nonhuman primate research. Goodwin also served as an associate editor for BioCentury, Inc. Currently, Goodwin is with the team at W.L. Gore and Associates, Inc., a multinational material science company focused on discovery and product innovation.

Goodwin continues to serve as an adjunct professor for both JHU and the University of Maryland University College, as well as collaborate with former FDA colleagues on research publications. Additionally, she serves as a consultant for Oakland Licensed Professional Therapeutics.

Goodwin remains the only person in the Department of Psychology to have received National Research Service Award funding from the NIH. Goodwin has been awarded several grants, and her research accomplishments include publications in various prestigious journals, with first authorship on more than half of them.

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*Dr. Martin Hill*, BA '86, MA '91, Ph.D. '04

DEPARTMENT OF **SOCIOLOGY**

*President, VIP Research and Evaluation*

Dr. Martin (Marty) Hill received his BA in criminal justice from Western Michigan University in 1986 where he was selected as a Criminal Justice Scholar. He continued his education at WMU, completing a master's in sociology in 1991. It was then that his interest in social science research was sparked as a lab instructor for the introductory social science research methods course. Hill's passion for applied social science research was further kindled when he returned to WMU to complete his Ph.D. in 2004, and worked as a research assistant in the Kercher Center for Social Research.

Hill began his "real world" research with the U.S. Department of Justice/Bureau of Prisons as a research analyst evaluating drug treatment programs in the federal prison system. He received the Special Act Award for his contribution to research in this area. After some time in the private sector as a senior quantitative analyst, Hill returned to academia as director of the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College.

Currently, as president of his own research company, VIP Research and Evaluation, Hill has been able to utilize and hone his applied social science research skills to conduct survey and public opinion research, program evaluation, and needs assessments. Additionally, he serves as Associate Director of Research and Evaluation at Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center (MKC) for survivors of state-sponsored torture. At MKC, he tracks the clinical and non-clinical progress of the clientele and has helped place MKC at the forefront in research of treatment for survivors of trauma and torture. He has published and presented their findings nationally and internationally.

Hill credits WMU's Department of Sociology for his success. His time at the Kercher Center taught him the importance of building relationships with local organizations, agencies, and leaders to help create a better community for all. Through the training and coursework that led him to an applied research specialty, he acquired the skill to triangulate quantitative and qualitative methodologies to strengthen overall conclusions. Above all, however, he credits his mentors, who not only provided him with valuable tools to properly conduct social science research, but stoked his passion for making the world a better place, and demonstrated ways he could personally make a difference.

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*Martha Todd*, BA '06, MA '08

DEPARTMENT OF **SPANISH**

*Chair, Board of Directors, Kalsec*

Martha Todd came to Western Michigan University in 1998 as a transfer student from Kalamazoo College. She returned in 2005 and graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's in Spanish in 2006. She continued as a graduate student, completing a master's in Spanish in 2008. As a student, Todd was an intelligent, hard-working, diligent and affable member of the Bronco community. Her academic success was quickly followed by successes in the professional world. Today, Todd is the chair of the board of directors at Kalsec, Inc., the Kalamazoo Spice Extraction Company. Kalsec is a home-grown family business founded by her grandfather, Paul H. Todd, Jr. in 1958. Headquartered in Kalamazoo, MI, where 75% of the more than 450 people the company employs worldwide, are located. Over the course of sixty years, Kalsec has expanded operations to three continents. Kalsec continues under the direction of Todd, with the same respect and veneration for nature and the same passion for natural spices, herbs, vegetables and flavors as begun by her grandfather.

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*Dr. Dawit Senbet*, MA '04, Ph.D. '07

## DEPARTMENT OF **ECONOMICS**

*Professor and Chair, Department of Economics,  
University of Northern Colorado*

Dr. Dawit Senbet is a professor of economics at the University of Northern Colorado, where he is also serving as the chair of the Department of Economics, the chair of Faculty Welfare and vice chair of Faculty Senate.

Senbet was born and raised in Ethiopia, where he earned his bachelor's degree in economics from Addis Ababa University. After graduating, he was admitted to the graduate program in the Department of Economics at Western Michigan University. He graduated from WMU with a master's degree in applied economics in 2004, and a Ph.D. in monetary and macroeconomics in 2007, under the supervision of Professor Mark Wheeler. During his graduate training, he also received WMU's Departmental Outstanding Graduate Teacher award. His research interests include monetary and macroeconomics, development economics, and applied econometrics. He has authored and co-authored several articles in peer-reviewed economics journals.

Senbet has taught numerous courses, provided key leadership roles at the department, college, and university levels, and received many recognitions including the Dean's Salute to Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship and Service; Most Influential Faculty on Scholar-Athletes; First Year Scholars Outstanding Faculty; and the Award for Excellence in Advising & Service.

Senbet is very passionate about his students. He is engaged in numerous activities and workshops to enhance student learning and help the university increase retention and graduation rates. Senbet has also successfully developed a faculty-led study abroad course, accompanying his students to Ethiopia to further enrich their college experience. Senbet resides in Greeley, Colorado with his wife Hiwot, and their two dogs.



*Dr. Dustin Hoffman*, Ph.D. '13

DEPARTMENT OF **ENGLISH**

*Associate Professor of English, Winthrop University*

Dr. Dustin M. Hoffman writes stories about working people. He's the author of the story collection "No Good for Digging" and the fiction chapbook "Secrets of the Wild" (Word West Press). His first book, "One-Hundred-Knuckled Fist" (University of Nebraska Press), won the 2015 Prairie Schooner Book Prize.

Hoffman spent ten years painting houses in Michigan before getting his master of fine arts in fiction from Bowling Green State University and his Ph.D. in creative writing from Western Michigan University in 2013. His stories have appeared, or are forthcoming, in Black Warrior Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, Puerto del Sol, Masters Review, Witness, Quarterly West, The Journal, Wigleaf, The Adroit Journal, Faultline and several other publications.

He lives in South Carolina and teaches creative writing and literature at Winthrop University.



*Tristan Brown*, BS '05

INSTITUTE OF THE **ENVIRONMENT  
AND SUSTAINABILITY**

*Acting Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials  
Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation*

Tristan Brown currently serves as the acting administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, within the U.S. Department of Transportation. Previously, Brown served as legislative counsel to U.S. Senator Gary Peters, handling issues before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Brown has practiced law at Stinson LLP, as well as Van Ness Feldman LLP, in their Washington, D.C., offices, focusing on regulatory, transactional, and litigation matters relating to the transportation and public utilities sectors. He also served as deputy associate administrator for congressional affairs at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Prior to that, he served as an aide to U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, advising the senator on matters related to energy, the environment, transportation, and Native American issues, and participated in annual meetings of the Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Brown received a master's of philosophy from the University of Cambridge, where he was a Gates Cambridge Scholar in the Department of Land Economy. Later he earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California Berkeley School of Law. Brown carried out his law clerkship for the U.S. Air Force J.A.G.

As an undergraduate at Western Michigan University, Brown was a member of the Lee Honors College, and majored in environmental studies as well as an ambitious student planned major, which he completed in 2005. He won the prestigious Morris K. Udall Undergraduate Scholarship, was a member of USA Today's All-Academic Team, and of Phi Beta Kappa. While at Western, Brown truly modeled a passionate commitment to environmentally and socially sustainable futures, both locally and globally, including: research for a National Science Foundation REU study; a fellowship in the Gibbs House for Environmental Research and Education; study abroad in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; employment in the Bronco Biodiesel initiative; president of Students for a Sustainable Earth; board member of the Kalamazoo Peace Center; and membership in numerous academic associations and clubs on campus.

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