

# IOWA WESTERN

A Magazine for Alumni & Friends



2022  
**OUTSTANDING  
ALUM**  
Chris LaFerla

in this issue

Fall 2022

2022 Outstanding Alum : Reivers on the Rise



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Molly Noon,  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Fall is my favorite time of year at Iowa Western.

I know they say spring is the season of new beginnings. But for me, fall always feels like the time for new growth and fresh starts at Iowa Western. The start of the fall semester brings students back to campus and fills Iowa Western with a palpable energy and air of eager anticipation. Whether it's new students arriving on campus for the very first time or existing students returning to complete their studies, the return to classes is an exciting time, filled with new experiences for all.

The fall semester also marks several new beginnings featured in this edition of the Alumni

and Friends magazine: the first student cohort of a new Musical Theater program, the opening of the Larry and Bunny Buss Regional Center for Career Academies in Missouri Valley and the celebration of a new Outstanding Alum, Chris LaFerla. The newness of the fall semester energizes campus and reflects what the college strives to provide to all- opportunities for new growth and fresh starts.

I invite you to come back to Iowa Western to feel the excitement and see the changes. If you can, visit us in the fall when the academic year has just started and campus is energized with the return of students. Fall will always be my favorite time of year at Iowa Western. No offense to spring, but fall is the season of new beginnings at Iowa Western.

Molly Noon,  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement



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Iowa Western Alumni Magazine

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Fall 2022

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# PALFINGER

World-renowned equipment manufacturer invests in homegrown talent...

By Carrie Chambers

PALFINGER is known worldwide for its impressive portfolio of cranes and hydraulic lifting solutions, but the company also recognizes the long-term value in lifting young professionals into successful trade careers.

The renowned equipment manufacturer has become a dynamic partner to Iowa Western, providing students both financial and educational support. The company has strategically combined an offering of state-of-the-art equipment and technical know-how to enhance instructors' efforts in building a strong pipeline of homegrown talent here in Council Bluffs and its surrounding communities.

Recently, the organization donated new welding kits and hoods to Iowa Western students. It also stocked the welding lab with the same equipment the pros use at PALFINGER. While the tools of the trade are important, PALFINGER's experts say investing time and technical training into the success of future trade professionals is even more valuable. The company has worked with instructors to incorporate real world lessons into the course curriculum. It also offers access to its trained welding professionals to help students hone their craft and meet industry standards and expectations.

PALFINGER has been honing its own craft for 90 years, starting in 1932 when Richard Palfinger opened his metal working and repair workshop for agricultural trailers, tippers, and vehicle bodies. Today, the company manufactures and assembles everything from cranes to lift gates, and creates vehicle bodies for the telecommunications, utilities, and construction industries.

Headquartered in Bergheim, Austria, PALFINGER has 12,000 employees and 31 production sites, including the Omaha Standard location in Council Bluffs. [u](#)



**PALFINGER  
PARTNERS WITH  
IWCC TO HELP  
STUDENTS REACH  
THEIR CAREER  
GOALS.**

## LARRY AND BUNNY BUSS Regional Center for Career Academies

(Left to Right) Marty Fonley, Superintendent of West Harrison / West Monona; Dr. Brent Hoising, Former Superintendent of Missouri Valley; Dr. Angie Huseman, Superintendent of Tri-Center; Bunny Buss and Larry Buss; Dr. Dan Kinney, President of Iowa Western; and Tom Ridder, Superintendent of Logan-Magnolia.



Iowa Western Community College's dream to open a regional center in Missouri Valley became reality with a large donation from two longtime community leaders. Larry and Bunny Buss announced a \$300,000 donation to Iowa Western in February to help establish a regional center for career academies in their hometown during a ceremony February 9.

Dr. Dan Kinney, president of Iowa Western, announced during a gathering of school officials and dignitaries that the new facility will be called "The Larry and Bunny Buss Regional Center for Career Academies" when it opens in Fall 2022. "The generosity of Larry and Bunny Buss will enable the college to offer quality programs for students across the region," Dr. Kinney said. "This facility will be a game changer for students that want to pursue careers and remain in our local communities."

The Buss donation was a key factor in the college applying for and receiving state funding to establish a new academy, Dr. Kinney said. The college received \$1 million from the Career Academy Incentive Fund, which was created through the reauthorization of the Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) fund in 2019. It provides targeted grants to support partnerships between school districts and community colleges that expand access to career academy programs, with a focus on programming delivered through regional centers.

Iowa Western intends to focus on agriculture, construction,

electrical and welding when it opens the door to the new regional center. High school leaders from Missouri Valley, Tri Center, Logan-Magnolia and West Harrison/West Monona were on hand for the donation announcement and praised the establishment of the new academies.

Larry and Bunny Buss have always been longtime supporters of education at all levels. Larry has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering from Iowa State University and a master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska. Bunny was a music major at Morningside College. Larry used his education to pursue highly successful careers in both engineering and farming. Bunny used her education in farming and music careers.

Larry and Bunny Buss said they have realized in their own lives the high degree of importance that education provides and the resultant opportunities that education makes available. For these reasons, they are in strong support of the regional center in Missouri Valley that will allow Iowa Western to provide education support to the school districts of West Harrison, Logan-Magnolia, Missouri Valley, Tri-Center, and possibly more districts in the future. "This center will greatly enhance the education opportunities that are available to all persons in this region. We are extremely happy that we can provide funding to make this regional education center happen." [u](#)

### What is a Career Academy?

Career academies are career-oriented programs of study that link high school technical education to college programs. Academies offer concurrent coursework where students earn both high school and college credit upon the successful completion of community college coursework. - [educateiowa.gov](http://educateiowa.gov)





“People *love* shopping for a cause and knowing their dollars are being invested back into our *community*.”

— Becca Wiggins



### Dusted Charm: A Family Affair

When Becca Wiggins, her mom Tracy Linquist and sisters Sara Berge and Rachel Adams – all former Iowa Western students – first started Dusted Charm, they knew it wouldn’t be easy. But this family was used to navigating tough situations.

Wiggins was working at the college while pregnant with her daughter Maisy. Shortly after Maisy’s birth, Wiggins learned she would have to leave the job she loved to provide 24-hour care for her baby.

“She was diagnosed with Type 1 Spinal Muscular Atrophy – the most extreme kind.” The genetic disorder progressively attacks the nervous systems and muscles. Doctors initially gave little Maisy 18 months to live, but thanks to a clinical trial and a breakthrough drug, things started to turn around. Though she’s bound to a power wheelchair and still needs extra care, the second grader is happy and thriving.

So is Becca Wiggins. She found herself with a bit more time to pursue a dream she, her mom and sisters had always talked about.

“I bought three runs of graphic t-shirts from a wholesaler and after I sold out, I kept reinvesting my profits,” she said.

Once her basement was filled with inventory, the family of entrepreneurs took the next big step. They opened their first 1,200-foot store in 2018, expanding into home, apparel, and gift retail. In 2019, the business grew over 300 percent and then another 50 percent in 2020 after renovating and moving into the old True Wheel Bicycle Shop on the historic 100

Block, allowing for 2,000 square feet of retail space in the heart of Council Bluffs.

Growth continued when they moved their shop online and nationwide through social sales and weekly live shows via social media. Today, Dusted Charm has a full staff and more than 6,000 app-based shoppers through their free Google Play and Apple App Store.

Wiggins attributes their success to finding her “why” and focusing on a niche. “We cater to size inclusivity and body positivity,” she explained. “We carry sizes small through 3XL and when you come into our store, there isn’t a Plus Size section. It’s all intermixed.”

The boutique also focuses on community, holding monthly “Give Back” events that donate 25 percent of sales to local nonprofits or causes – something Wiggins pledged to do after her own community showed up in the early days of Maisy’s illness.

“People love shopping for a cause and knowing their dollars are being invested back into our community.”

Continued next page



Jillian Flores Bennett:  
Back Home on the Hardwood

Jillian Flores Bennett remembers growing up in the early 2000s when she had a misconception about attending a two-year college. There was a social pressure to take a different route.

“Back then, it was like, ‘Go to a state school’ and that was it.” Today, she can’t imagine her life without Iowa Western, where she graduated, played basketball, coached, and has now returned as head women’s basketball coach.

After graduating in 2009, Flores Bennett went to Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas on a basketball scholarship. She returned to Iowa Western as assistant coach for three years and then took her first head coaching job in Texas at Our Lady of the Lake University. When her former boss, Lindsey Vande Hoef retired, Flores Bennett returned home to step into the role.

“I think when I was younger, I didn’t fully understand community.” She recognizes that community and culture are words people throw around a lot, but says those things are truly the appeal of Iowa Western. It’s no secret the college’s successful sports programs are also a big draw.

“Nationally, we’ve gained a lot of respect for the way we compete, but also the school in general. Just the different programs we’ve added, the growth on campus, the buildings, we’re constantly growing and it’s an exciting place to be.”

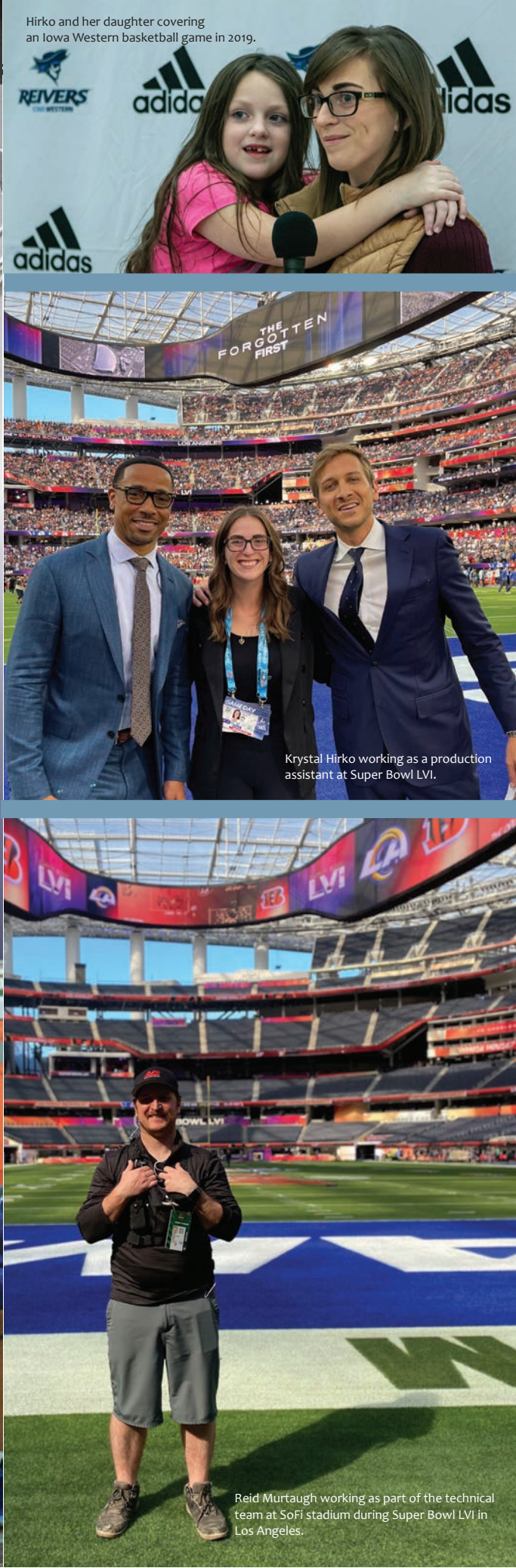
As for her goals in the upcoming season, Flores Bennett wants to build on her former boss’s success, attracting more people to the games. “I’d also like to get more student athletes from Omaha to Iowa Western. We’re right across the river but I think people in Omaha don’t really know what we have to offer.”

There’s one more goal she’s determined to achieve. “Obviously, I want to win. We’ve had a lot of national championships at Iowa Western. My sister was part of the women’s soccer team that won a national championship. So, I’m the only one who hasn’t won a ‘Natty’ yet. That’s the ultimate goal, athletically.”



Flores Bennett courtside as assistant coach during the 2019-20 season vs Moberly Area.

I AM MOST EXCITED ABOUT HELPING THE YOUNG WOMEN I COACH NAVIGATE SCHOOL AND BASKETBALL AND HELPING THEM REACH THEIR MAX POTENTIAL.



Hirko and her daughter covering an Iowa Western basketball game in 2019.

Krystal Hirko working as a production assistant at Super Bowl LVI.

Reid Murtaugh working as part of the technical team at SoFi stadium during Super Bowl LVI in Los Angeles.

Krystal Hirko & Reid Murtaugh:  
Ready for Primetime

When Krystal Hirko decided to go to college in 2013, she wasn’t entirely sure where, or what she wanted to do. “I’m a single mom so I wanted something that was fairly close.” The Bellevue, Nebraska resident looked into programs at the University of Nebraska Omaha and Lincoln, but it was the Sports Media Technology program at Iowa Western that caught her eye.

“Other colleges just offered broadcasting or mass communication; it wasn’t honed into anything specific. It piqued my interest that they had specific minors inside of their production program,” recalled Hirko. Reid Murtaugh, who now lives in Los Angeles, California, was drawn to Iowa Western for the same reason. He also enrolled in a production program in 2013.

“I went for audio engineering,” he said. “Like studio recording, music and mixing — stuff like that.” Murtaugh, originally from Harlan, Iowa, was living in Los Angeles when he decided to put his audio dreams on pause to learn everything he could back home. “I wanted to go to school out in L.A., but it didn’t work out because it was too expensive.”

Hirko and Murtaugh never got to know each other at Iowa Western, but their successful paths led them both to Super Bowl LVI in February of 2022. “I was a runner — a production assistant,” explained Hirko. “My sole purpose was to make sure that the ins and outs were flowing as needed. I was booking catering; I was picking up Drew Brees and making sure he got to the spot he needed to go. As an avid Saints fan, that was my life right there!”

Hirko says it was her most memorable job, even though she wasn’t part of the team that won an Emmy. “Our pre-game show won an Emmy for technical support. Had I been in any other role than the one I was in, I would have gotten one, but I’m going to pretend that I got one!” Murtaugh was on that technical team and, at the time of this interview, was anxiously awaiting his Emmy to arrive in the mail. “I’m an RF (radio frequencies) technician. We go out and set up receive sites where we need wireless camera coverage.” During the Super Bowl, Murtaugh’s team placed wireless cameras all over Los Angeles, throughout SoFi Stadium, on a boat, a drone, on helicopters and military planes.

Murtaugh credits his time at Iowa Western for his career and expanding interests. While in school he worked in production at the Mid-America Center and then at Midwest Sound and Lighting in Omaha. He says those jobs paved the way for his current role at Aerial Video System, now part of NEP Group, which is famous for some of the country’s biggest productions like the Oscars and the Grammys. “We do a lot of studio shows like The Voice. I got to do American Idol this year,” he said. Hirko was a freelancer during her gig at the Super Bowl, but after another freelance role at this year’s Kentucky Derby, Carr-Hughes Productions offered her a full-time production manager job. That means more experiences with the likes of NBC and ESPN. She says she’d be thrilled if she could work a Laker’s game one day, but for right now she’s happy with every opportunity — and so is her 10-year-old daughter. “She’s my number one fan, man. She loves it. She wears her Thursday night football jacket everywhere she goes!” [uw](#)



... I HAVE A LOT OF PRIDE FOR COUNCIL BLUFFS. I WANT TO BE PART OF MAKING IT A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE IN WHATEVER WAY I CAN.



# 2022 OUTSTANDING ALUM

## Chris LaFerla: Pride for Council Bluffs

By Kara Schweiss

Iowa Western  
Community  
College’s 2022

Outstanding Alum, Chris LaFerla, is a fierce advocate for education. He earned an associate degree from IWCC and followed up with bachelor’s and master’s degrees from other institutions, then made a career in the field of education including more than 15 years with Iowa Western.

He worked his way up to the position of Dean of Admissions and Records at IWCC before accepting his current role as Executive Director of the Council Bluffs Schools Foundation. LaFerla was also elected to the Council Bluffs Community School District’s Board of Education in 2015—he’s now in his second term and serving as president—and is treasurer for the Southwest Iowa Educational Foundation’s board of directors.

However, LaFerla said, “Things could have turned out very differently.”

His own education wasn’t a given, he explained. “There are a lot of people for whom college isn’t a question... For me that was not the case.”

LaFerla saw struggle in his family, including employment instability and financial insecurity.

“By the time I was a (high school) senior, there was very little assistance from anyone at home. I didn’t have a whole lot of mentorship and guidance. There was a lot of self-doubt on my part as to whether I could even succeed in college,” he said. “I think I enrolled at Iowa Western in August; it was kind of a last-minute decision. My high school baseball coach got me in touch with someone and I was offered a baseball scholarship.”

Now he’s made a career of creating opportunities for others.

“I look at public education as being the ultimate access to education; community colleges really do that for higher education, but public schools do that for absolutely everyone. If you’re talking about equity in education, that’s why the public school system was created. I really look at K-12 and higher

“ I look at *public education* as being the ultimate *access* to education. Community colleges really do that for higher education, but public schools do that for absolutely *everyone*. ”  
— Chris LaFerla

education as a continuum of learning and opportunity for people,” he said. “I think, as a person who came from some poverty—and I see it on a large scale in Council Bluffs—my ultimate dream would be to eradicate poverty in our community. There are a lot of different ways to approach that, but for me, education is a way out of that. Education is the way to eradicate poverty in our community.”

As Executive Director of the Council Bluffs Schools Foundation, LaFerla is responsible for overseeing the operation of the entire organization and leading approximately 50 employees.

“Through our programs, we are providing services to the children, families and staff of the Council Bluffs Community School District; engaging the community in supporting public education; and providing financial resources in support of improving innovation in our schools and ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed,” he said. “In terms of what I do day to day, that changes a lot, but it’s probably equal parts leadership for the team, fundraising, community engagement, and evaluating and improving our programming.”

LaFerla said he originally intended to become a teacher after finishing his studies at Simpson College in Indiana, Iowa.

“When I graduated with my bachelor’s degree, I was an education major and I completed my student teaching. I’m sure this is not uncommon, but after my student teaching I looked for a teaching job for a short period of time, but I realized my place wasn’t in the classroom,” he said. “I looked for a job in the Omaha area and I worked some jobs here and there, nothing I would consider a career. But I knew I wanted to work in education in some capacity.”

An admissions advisor position opened up at Iowa Western Community College. The career LaFerla said he “stumbled into” turned out to be a great fit. Over time, he became Assistant Director of Admis-

Continued on the next page





sions, Director of Admissions, and then Dean of Admissions and Records. While employed by Iowa Western, he also earned a master's degree in organizational leadership through Gonzaga University (Spokane, Washington).

"It's interesting when I think about Iowa Western, because for basically all of the memorable personal experiences I've had in my adult life, Iowa Western has played a role in some way," he said. "I was the first person in my family to attend college and graduate from college. I met my wife and got married while I was working there. I bought our first house while I was working there, had my children while I was working there. Iowa Western was a part of my life at many major milestones."

LaFerla said his years working for the college were fundamental to his professional development as well.

"That's where I really developed a passion for improving access to education. That has become the driving motivator in my career, and that happened because of Iowa Western," he said. "I don't think I realized that as a student there, but working there I realized just how important community colleges are for individuals who don't have the same type of access to education as more affluent people might."

At IWCC, he also witnessed the influence community colleges have on the local, regional, state and national economic and workforce development, LaFerla added.

"Through all of those positions I got to work with a lot of great people, and build teams and do a lot of great work within



LaFerla in front of his former high school, Thomas Jefferson High School.

## ...MY ULTIMATE DREAM WOULD BE TO ERADICATE POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

the department. But there were a lot of different projects I was given the opportunity to work on outside of the scope of those jobs, that was really rewarding as well. I helped establish the Pottawattamie Promise Scholarship Program. I worked on different student success initiatives, things like overhauling developmental math and English, new student registration and orientation programs, I participated on policy review teams and quality improvement committees and helped create professional development opportunities for the Student Services division," he said. "Doing a job and learning how to do a job is an experience in itself, but working in a higher education institution, you get opportunities to work on committees and projects and those types of things, and those shaped my outlook and my career as much as anything."

LaFerla grew up in Council Bluffs and lives there today with his wife, Lea and two pre-teen daughters. In addition to serving on the school board, he's president of the Leadership Council Bluffs Alumni Association board of directors and serves on the board for the Rotary Club of Council Bluffs.

"I'm really dedicated to the Council Bluffs community as my home, and I have a lot of pride for Council Bluffs. I want to be part of making it a great place to live in whatever way I can," he said. "When this job became available, I felt like it was an opportunity for me to have a broader impact in the Council Bluffs community through my professional work as well. At the foundation we provide programming and do fundraising support for the Council Bluffs Community School District. We're supporting kids in need and providing teacher classroom grants to support innovation."

LaFerla has connections to IWCC through


his work, such as the district's Plus One Pathways program that makes it possible for seniors to graduate with at least one post-secondary credential. The foundation also led a capital campaign for the TradeWorks Academy facilities at the district's two high schools. Now a \$20-million-dollar campaign for an early learning center in Council Bluffs is wrapping up.

"It will really change the landscape for preschool and early childhood education opportunities for the families in our community," LaFerla said.

The organization also operates the before- and after-school child care program for the district, which expands to a full day summer program and serves 500 children during the school year and 200 to 300 over the summer break.

"When the pandemic hit in March 2020, we were forced to close our doors, but within a week or two we and a team of people coordinated with other child-care providers to provide free child care to first responders and other emergency workers that we called the Emergency Childcare Collaborative," LaFerla said. "That was something we were all very proud to be part of."

Despite his accomplishments, LaFerla said he was "shocked" when he was notified that he'd been named as Iowa Western's 2022 Outstanding Alum.

"It's strange because I've obviously known about the alumni award and known people who've received the award in the past, but it never crossed my mind that someone would nominate me or that I would be considered for it. I'm extremely humbled and I am very honored to be recognized as an outstanding alum," he said. "Iowa Western has been such an important part of my life for so long." 





Keith Hale, Assistant Professor of Theater

# Musical THEATER

*Preparing for the future.*

By Kara Schweiss

When Iowa Western Assistant Professor of Theater Keith Hale studied for his bachelor's and master's degrees in theater, it was all about—and only about—cultivating talent, or as he explained, “In both my undergraduate and graduate program, we weren’t told how we were going to make a living.”

Hale’s students will have a much different experience, thanks to a new program of study launched this semester. Graduates of the new Musical Theater program will be awarded an associate of applied arts (A.A.A.) degree with curriculum and practice in vocal music, acting and dance to provide them with a background in various aspects of musical theater performance. Graduates will be prepared for a career in television, film or stage performance as actors, musicians, dancers, choreographers, directors, producers and theater technicians.

Courses range from standard dance, acting and voice to classes like Business and Financial Mathematics, The Business of Being a Performing Artist, and Workplace Empowerment.

“There are musical theater programs at many colleges, but our focus is specifically on a career and technical training program,” Hale said. “This is a brand-new degree. We wanted to create a two-year professional training program that was more like a conservatory.”

Market studies have demonstrated the viability of the career sector locally, regionally and nationally, Hale said.

“There’s a high demand for performers who can sing and dance and act. Musical theater is very big right now, lots of touring companies, so we want to give students an education and a training so they can go out and be marketable as performers,” he explained. “Part of our program



Photos from the 2022 Spring Musical *Frog and the Toad*.



will be making sure students have a resume and a voice tape, making sure that they have contacted an agent. One class they’ll be taking is The Business of Being a Performing Artist. We want to train our students to have a business plan and a sense of how to actually go out and make a living. We’re not just training their talent, we’re helping them create a plan for their future.”

Students will leave the program feeling confident they will have the skills needed to audition or enter the career field, Hale said. They’ll also have completed fundamental curriculum if they want to transfer to a four-year institution upon graduating from Iowa Western, or want to pursue an advanced degree sometime in the future.

“It’s geared toward students who want to complete that A.A.A. degree,” Hale said. “However, we’ll work with students who want to transfer, to help them get the credits they need.”


The initial cohort of students in the program is small, Hale said, but “I’m excited to have them.” He said he’s confident the program will see steady future growth, and now that it’s established, the plan moving ahead is to recruit for the program at schools within approximately a 50-mile radius. This includes

western Iowa, the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area, and some of eastern Nebraska as well. Students in

high school and middle school and possibly younger grades will be invited to performances and Hale said he’s looking forward to other youth education and outreach efforts.

“Probably next May we’ll do a theater workshop for junior-high and high school students,” he said.

In the meantime, the first group of students in the Musical Theater program will have plenty to keep them busy, Hale said.

“We’re doing four musical events next year, so there are lots of opportunities for students to get involved and have time on stage,” he said. 

**WE'RE NOT JUST TRAINING  
THEIR TALENT, WE'RE HELPING  
THEM CREATE A PLAN FOR  
THEIR FUTURE.**





# REIVER ATHLETICS

GoReivers.com

The 2021-22 Iowa Western athletic season was arguably the greatest season in school history. The Reivers claimed NJCAA national championships in volleyball, men's soccer, and women's indoor and outdoor track & field. Shotgun Sports added a national title as well, claiming the ACUI Division 4 High Overall championship.

National runner-up finishes in football, men's cross country and men's outdoor track & field along with third place finishes in men's indoor track & field and women's golf earned the athletic department its second Daktronics NATYCCA Cup and Learfield Directors' Cup for program excellence. The department ended the athletic season with 19 individual NJCAA national championships, 58 NJCAA All-Americans, and 149 NJCAA All-Academic student-athletes.

## VOLLEYBALL

In April, the Iowa Western Reivers claimed their first national title in 15 years. Seven months later, the Reivers won their second consecutive national title in a five-set thriller against New Mexico Military at the 2021 NJCAA Division I Volleyball Championship.

Iowa Western topped New Mexico Military by the scores of 18-25, 25-22, 21-25, 25-23, 15-12.

The win marks the third NJCAA Division I Volleyball Championship title in school history for the Reivers. Head coach Alicia Williams played a part in all three of the Reivers national titles, claiming two titles as a coach and helping Iowa Western capture the school's first national title as a player in 2006.

Setter Yadhira Anchante was honored as the NJCAA Betty Jo Graber Female Student-Athlete of the Year. Coach Williams' success on the court earned her a head coaching position at NCAA Division 1 Bradley University.

## MEN'S SOCCER

After finishing as the national runner-up in the spring, Mike Brown's squad found themselves back in the national tournament, receiving an at-large bid after falling to Iowa Lakes in the Midwest District final. Iowa Western defeated Coffeyville and Laramie County in pool play and took down tournament host Tyler JC in the semi-finals.

A 2-0 victory over Arizona Western gave the Reivers their second national title in school history. Mike Brown earned his 100th career coaching victory and still has yet to lose during the regular season in three years at Iowa Western. Moise Bombito, Yuta Ishizuka and Luka Nedic all earned NJCAA All-American status. Giorgio Probo was named the NSCAA Player of the Year.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

Head Coach Adam Sanchez entered his 7th season with the Reivers and led his squad to their 5th national tournament appearance during his tenure. In 18 seasons as a program, Iowa Western women's soccer has won the ICCAC regular season title 17 times and have not lost the throne since 2005. Sanchez also earned his 100th career victory at IW last season.

Paula Boza and Marie Quentel both garnered NJCAA All-American honors. Thirteen athletes earned NJCAA All-Academic honors and the team earned Academic Team of the Year status with a GPA of 3.45.



## FOOTBALL

Scott Strohmeier led his team back to the national title game for the first time since 2014 after defeating Snow College in overtime in the first-ever NJCAA Football Playoff. The Reivers ultimately fell to New Mexico Military Institute 31-13 in Little Rock, Arkansas, after stringing together 17 consecutive wins dating back to Game One of the

2021 spring season where they were upended by Snow to start the regular season.

Linebacker Jacob Ellis was named the NJCAA Co-Defensive Player of the Year, the 4th player to win national honors in the Strohmeier era, and the first defensive player from IW to receive national recognition. Ten players were named NJCAA All-Americans.

Former Reiver and Oklahoma Sooner defensive lineman Perrion Winfrey became the highest former Reiver taken in the NFL draft, going to the Cleveland Browns in the 4th round.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The first season at DII saw the Reivers post a record of 22-8 as the Region XI runner-up. Aleshia Jones, Ndidiamaka Ndukwe, Ruba Abo Hashesh, and Mary Delgado received All-Region XI recognition. Jillian Flores-Bennett was named head coach on March 28th after Lindsey Vande Hoef retired after seven seasons at the helm of the program.



## MEN'S BASKETBALL

Head Coach Chad Van Riessen's second year saw the team post a record of 21-9. DeWayne Vass, Jr., Roland McCoy, and Malik Brooks were named ICCAC All-Region XI. The team earned NJCAA Academic Team of the Year status with a GPA of 3.10.

## WRESTLING

The inaugural Iowa Western women's wrestling season saw all ten athletes qualify for the national tournament in Roseburg, Oregon. Nicole Montojo, Larissa Gallo, and Yariisa Gallo all wrestled their way to the finals with Yariisa winning her title match at 170 lbs with a second period pin.

Iowa Western again hosted the NJCAA Men's National Wrestling Tournament at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs. Josh McFarland became head coach Josh Watts' 4th men's national champion, defeating top ranked Deron Pullman of Indian Hills by decision 3-2.



Creighton Baughman and Fabian Padilla joined McFarland in becoming two-time NJCAA All-Americans and freshman Jakason Burks also earned All-American status.

## BOWLING

Iowa Western

Men's Bowling finished fourth at nationals with freshman Cameron Brundage rolling a three-game series of 720 to win the singles title. This was the highest mark in the singles championship since 2012. Derek Baucom finished in third place with 677 pins. On the women's side, Jerika Koopmeiners ended her national tournament as an All-American.

## CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK & FIELD

After winning the program's first team title in 2021, Iowa Western's women's indoor team successfully



defended their title, besting the field by a massive 62 points and was the only team to post a triple digit score. The women brought that success into the outdoor season, completing the double by defeating New Mexico JC by 19 points to claim the third team title. Men's track & field and cross country found success of their own with the track team earning a third place and national runner-up finish for the indoor and outdoor seasons. Men's cross

country also finished as the national runner-up; all three are the highest finishes in school history.

Iowa Western ended the cross country track & field season with 17 national champions and 28 NJCAA All-Americans. Doug Marshall was named the Midwest Region Men's and Women's Coach of the Year. Shellene Williams-Davis, Marc Bierbaum, and Jerramuse Amos all were named Midwest Assistant Coaches of the Year. Marshall accepted the Director of Track & Field position at the University of North Texas. Coach Bierbaum was promoted to Iowa Western's Director of Cross Country Track & Field in July.

## BASEBALL

In 20 seasons at the helm of the Iowa Western Baseball program, Head Coach Marc Rardin has sent 164 players to NCAA Division 1. After a season that saw Coach Rardin cross 900 victories, Marc finally found the right D1 offer for himself, taking the head job at Western Kentucky University. Coach Rardin finished his Reiver career with a record of 934-252, by far the most in school history, 3 national championships, 15 Region XI titles, and 12 trips to the JUCO World Series. In his final season, the Reivers finished 49-14 and were the Midwest District runner-up. Pitcher Brant Hogue earned NJCAA All-American honors.



## SOFTBALL

Iowa Western took care of business in the classroom once again. 24 student-athletes were named to the NJCAA All-Academic team with 11 posting a perfect 4.0 GPA. For the 19th season in a row, the program was named as an NJCAA Academic Team of the Year with a cumulative GPA of 3.79. Ben Greer was hired at Daytona State College and leaves IW as the second winningest softball coach in program history with a record of 248-129.

## SHOTGUN SPORTS

After five days and 3,000 targets, Iowa Western Shotgun Sports finished at the top of the standings in the Division 4 School High Overall competition of the 2022 ACUI Collegiate Clay Target National Championships. The Reivers and William Penn both broke 2708/3000 targets over six different disciplines throughout the competition, Iowa Western earning the 2-year crown and William Penn was awarded the 4-year title.

In Doubles American Trap, the Reivers defeated Lindenwood University by a score of 487 to 482 and became the first two-year school in the 55-year history of the championships to win an event. Iowa Western swept the top three spots out of all four divisions and 636 competitors. Sophomore Mitch Germany was perfect in the event, breaking all 100 of his targets, giving him the individual title.

Continued on the next page



GOLF

Iowa Western Women's Golf secured the highest team finish in program history, finishing in third place at the NJCAA National Tournament. Sophomores Luisa Gibson and Seira Kubo both finished as NJCAA All-Americans. The team won five tournaments during the season and were the Plains District Champions.

On the men's side, the Reivers made their 14th trip to nationals, finishing in 13th place. Gustav Sjöberg led IW, shooting a 293 during the four-round tournament. Men's and women's golf had nine golfers earn NJCAA All-Academic honors.

E-SPORTS

The inaugural Iowa Western E-Sports season saw Iowa Western claim a national title in Super Smash Brothers with Tony Merksick going a perfect 15-0 on the season. The Reivers also finished as the national runner-up in Call of Duty Gunfight.

CHEER AND DANCE

2021 marked the revitalization of competitive dance. In her first year, Head Coach Michaela Patterson's squad took 2nd place in Jazz and 3rd place in Pom at the ISDTA competition. The team also finished 4th in Pom, Jazz, and Hip-Hop at the DTU Nationals.

Raven Gau wrapped up her 4th season as the head cheerleading coach. The team took home 3rd place the UCA collegiate national championships in Orlando, FL.



Iowa Western Reivers NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Team Titles



Volleyball



Men's Soccer



Women's Indoor Track & Field



Women's Outdoor Track & Field



Shotgun Sports

Individual Titles

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

- Miracle Ailes Women's Indoor T&F High Jump, Women's Outdoor T&F Long Jump
- Hilda Chebet Women's Indoor T&F Mile, 3000m, 5000m, Women's Outdoor T&F 10,000m, 5000m, 1500m
- Victory George Women's Indoor T&F Triple Jump, Women's Outdoor T&F Triple Jump
- Alliyah McNeil Women's Outdoor T&F High Jump
- Nickisha Pryce Women's Indoor T&F 400m
- Antonia Sealy Women's Indoor T&F Pentathlon, Women's Outdoor T&F Heptathlon
- Women's Indoor T&F 4x400m Relay: Daniella Deer, Dyandra Gray, Alliyah McNeil, Nickisha Pryce

MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

- Shakiel Dacres Men's Outdoor T&F Discus
- Cortney Watkins Men's Outdoor T&F 110m Hurdles

WRESTLING

- Josh McFarland Men's Wrestling 184 lbs
- Yarissa Gallo Women's Wrestling 170 lbs

MEN'S BOWLING

- Cameron Brundage Men's Bowling



Shakiel Dacres

MEN'S SHOTGUN SPORTS

- Mitch Germany Shotgun Sports

E-SPORTS

- Tony Merksick E-Sports



Yarissa Gallo

National Player of the year



Giorgio Probo  
Men's Soccer  
NJCAA Junior  
College Division I  
Player of the Year



Jacob Ellis  
Football  
NJCAA Division I  
Co-Defensive  
Player of the Year



Yadhira Anchante  
Volleyball  
Back-to-Back  
NJCAA Division I  
Player of the Year

ALUMNI BOARD

- Pam Beall-Hill (President), '88  
Community Volunteer
- Diane Osbahr (Vice President), '90  
Iowa Western Community College
- Brandon Green (Secretary/Treasurer), '07  
Collins Consulting
- Emily O'Rourke (Alumni Director), '02  
Iowa Western Community College
- Jeannie Aldredge, '88  
SilverStone Group
- Joyce Bartels, '86  
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- Rhea Eitmann, '00  
Doll Distributing
- Brandon Juon, '00  
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- Chris LaFerla, '98  
CBCSD Foundation
- Bailey McQueen-Jones, '10  
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- Carol Robertson, '84  
Mills County Auditor's Office
- Michael Watkins, '89  
Watkins Marketing & Media
- Matt Wyant, '99  
Pottawattamie County

ALUMNI COORDINATOR



Emily O'Rourke is stepping into the position of Alumni Coordinator at Iowa Western. There are many ways for alumni to become involved at Iowa Western. Please contact Emily O'Rourke if you have questions or suggestions for alumni activities!

alum@iwcc.edu

ALUMNI INFORMATION

The Iowa Western alumni office aims to reconnect alumni with the college. Watch the Iowa Western Alumni Association Facebook and Instagram pages for the latest information.

To receive future alumni mailings, send your updated information to alum@iwcc.edu or visit us at iwcc.edu under FRIENDS & ALUMNI tab!

Facebook: Iowa Western Alumni Association  
Instagram: iwcc\_alum



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Iowa Western is proud to employ many alumni.  
You are invited to join them at our next alumni  
social on October 4, 2022.

**Alumni Social**  
OCTOBER 4, 2022

Scan the QR Code for more  
information or contact  
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**Diane**  
1990 Iowa Western Alum  
and 32-year employee of  
Iowa Western

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