For the third time in five years, the River Hawks were crowned Hockey East Tournament Champions after defeating Boston College, 4-3, on March 18 at the TD Garden in Boston in front of more than 12,000 fans.

Junior forward C.J. Smith was named the Hockey East Championship Most Valuable Player after scoring two goals and setting up two others during the weekend pair of games.

“Wow, wow,” says Head Coach Norm Bazin. “It is such a relief; the guys bent in the third period, but they didn’t break. I am very, very proud of this group. It’s been an excellent year. The 22-game regular season is brutal in Hockey East and anybody can beat anybody. To beat Boston College three times in one year is a great feat, and I would like to congratulate them on a great season.”

Smith, senior teammates Joe Gambardella and Michael Kapla and freshman goaltender Tyler Wall were also named to the Hockey East All-Tournament Team.

The team would go on to defeat Cornell, 5-0, in the NCAA Northeast Regional Semifinals on March 25 at the SNHU Arena to advance to the regional finals for the seventh time in program history.

With eyes set on a national title, the team took on Notre Dame on March 26, but succumbed in a gritty overtime battle to Notre Dame in a 3-2 heartbreaker in the NCAA Northeast Regional Final. Senior defenseman Michael Kapla and freshman forward Ryan Lohin were named to the Northeast Regional All-Tournament Team.

UMass Lowell finished out the season with a 27-11-3 record. The 27 wins are the second most in the school’s 34-year history as a Division I program.

It was a great year, and this River Hawk senior class rounded out its impressive career with 99 wins—the most by a Hockey East club during the four-year period—and became the second winningest class in Division I history at UMass Lowell.

Gambardella recently signed a two-year, entry-level contract, effective for the 2017-18 season, with the NHL’s Edmonton Oilers.

He won the Walter Brown Award this season, given annually to the top American-born college player in New England. Gambardella is the first player from UMass Lowell to win this award. He was also honored by Hockey East as a second-team All-Star, a member of the Hockey East All-Tournament Team and the winner of the Len Ceglarski Sportsmanship Award for the second consecutive season.

Gambardella scored 128 points during his collegiate career and ranks ninth all-time on the UMass Lowell Division I scoring list.

Kapla and Smith have also signed on with NHL clubs—Kapla with the New Jersey Devils and Smith, who is forgoing his senior year, with the Buffalo Sabres.

Bazin, after guiding the River Hawks to 27 wins, a third Hockey East Tournament Championship and the program’s fifth trip in six years to the NCAA Tournament, has been named a finalist for the Spencer Penrose Award as the Division I Coach of the Year. Bazin, a past recipient of this award, was also named the 2017 Bob Kullen Award winner as the Hockey East Coach of the Year for the third time in six years.

The Penrose winner is scheduled to be announced by the American Hockey Coaches Association at the Frozen Four on April 5.

UMass Lowell NewsLine
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For more information, go to: www.uml.edu/news.
Chemistry Professor Designs Dentures that Heal

New Material Absorbs Medicines to Combat Infection

Chemistry Prof. Yuyu Sun already has patents on several antimicrobial additives for plastics, including one that prevents bacterial buildup inside dental tubing.

His latest project: designing dentures that can be infused with antifungal medications to treat denture-related stomatitis—inflamed, painful gums caused by a common yeast that builds up between the hard dentures and soft tissue. If left untreated, it can lead to open sores, systemic infection and even death.

Right now, some companies make dentures from material that incorporates an antifungal drug that is slowly released into the mouth. But after a few weeks, the drug is used up, and no more can be added. And drugs should only be given when they’re needed for an active infection, to prevent drug-resistant strains of yeast from developing, Sun says.

Sun has developed and patented a type of plastic that can absorb several different antifungal drugs or a combination of drugs. The drugs can be added if and when they’re needed, and once the stomatitis clears up, the dentures can be put in a quenching solution that neutralizes the drugs. The dentures also can be "recharged" with drugs if the infection recurs.

Sun is working with Chih-Ko Yeh, a professor at the South Texas VA Health Care System who treats a large number of veterans with denture-related stomatitis. Together, they have received $1.5 million in grants from the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

New National Cybersecurity Workforce Training Program Launches

itSM Solutions to Offer Courses through License with UMass Lowell

UMass Lowell and itSM Solutions LLC recently announced the launch of a new workforce training program focused on cybersecurity.

The program—available in class or online—is based on the cybersecurity framework issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology to protect the nation’s most critically important technology infrastructure that, if incapacitated or destroyed, would have a debilitating effect on national security, economy, public health and safety.

Larry Wilson, who teaches cybersecurity courses at UMass Lowell and serves as chief information security officer for the UMass system, created a program addressing all aspects of the framework, including security standards and core functions that align to the three stages of a cyberattack (before, during and after) and map directly between cyberthreats and security controls.

The result of Wilson’s work is the UMass Lowell NCSF Controls Factory Methodology.

"I developed the methodology as a communications aid to explain the key components of the UMass cybersecurity program to co-workers, managers, contractors and partners so that key stakeholders are better positioned to help us achieve our mission," says Wilson.

That methodology is the basis of the partnership between UMass Lowell and itSM Solutions, which will train professionals in government, private industry and at other academic institutions. Through the training program—NISTCSF.com—participants learn to identify potential threats and how to eliminate or address any of those threats.

itSM Solutions is offering the training program under a license negotiated by the UMass Lowell Office of Technology Commercialization.

Eat Your Peas

New Study Shows Vegetable Protein Can Benefit Muscle Strength

It’s long been known that protein is important for building bones and muscles. But does the source of protein—whether veggies or meat—matter?

New research results published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition shows that protein from plant-based foods and meat equally benefits muscle mass and strength in middle-aged and older adults.

Asst. Prof. Kelsey Mangano of the Department of Biomedical and Nutritional Sciences, lead author of the study, says that until now, we didn’t know if one protein source was better than the other.

"This study is significant, as it suggests that higher protein intake from any protein-rich food source will build muscles in adults," says Mangano.

"Whether you’re a vegetarian or a meat lover, the research results are good news for everyone," she says. "As long as overall protein intake is adequate, eggs, meat, seafood, legumes, nuts, beans and vegetables will all contribute to better overall muscle strength, which is even more important as we age."

Mangano, in partnership with researchers at Hebrew Senior Life’s Institute for Aging Research, used Framingham Osteoporosis Study data from 2,986 men and women, ages 19 to 72.

The study was funded by the NIH’s National Institute of Aging, the NHLBI Framingham Heart Study, the Framingham Osteoporosis Study and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Healthy Aging Dietetics Practice Group Research Award.
Google Challenged, Students Answered

Marketing Team Fashions Better Online Presence for Lowell Boutique

As Division I student-athletes, Elima Ahzi, Christa Doiron, Colleen Frank, Katie Luchino and Kelly Mankowich are used to competing at the highest level.

This semester, the River Hawks quintet is applying that competitive drive to a different type of playing field—the Google Online Marketing Challenge, an annual global contest in which college students create and manage an online advertising campaign for a business or nonprofit organization.

Ahzi and her Google Challenge teammates are working with Humanity Boutique, a women’s clothing store in downtown Lowell owned and operated by Ani Vong.

“Her fashion is very distinct and unique, and we’d love to help her get more people into the store,” says Luchino.

“You can read about marketing in class, but it’s different when you see the emotion of someone who’s put their life into building a business,” Luchino says. “Once you get into that real-life setting, you understand marketing in a whole new way.”

Contestants build a marketing campaign using Google AdWords, the search giant’s online advertising service. Google provides each team $250 to develop a three-week campaign for the clients, then uses an algorithm to determine the most successful campaigns. Five winning teams receive trips to Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

Vong could hardly believe it when Ahzi and several of the team members presented her with the idea before winter break.

“It was like a Christmas gift to me,” Vong says. “I run most of the business myself, so this is a big help. And it’s really great to have the students down here. I hope this helps to bring more business into Lowell.”

UMass Lowell Goes for a Record 480 Donors in 48 Hours

You don’t have to wait until November to give thanks for UMass Lowell.

On April 25-26, UMass Lowell will hold its first-ever Days of Giving, a two-day donor challenge open to all alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff and friends of the university. The goals: set a UML record by rallying 480 donors in the space of 48 hours and unlock $48,000 in challenge funds from an anonymous donor.

“This is a fun and easy way to give back to UML, while doubling the impact of your gift,” explains Theresa Lee, UMass Lowell’s executive director of development. “Whether you are a first-time donor or a longtime supporter, your gift of any size will help us meet our goal and receive $48,000 in matching funds.” Contributions will enhance the educational experience of all students by supporting financial aid and co-curricular and academic programs.

On-campus events are scheduled for both days, including an April 25 kickoff at University Crossing, featuring carnival fare and games (Noon to 2 p.m.), followed on April 26 by an ice cream social on the South Campus Quad (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and games and refreshments on the Cumnock Hall lawn (Noon to 2 p.m.).

To get involved and make your gift on April 25, go to uml.givecampus.com.

Activist on Human Trafficking Is UMass Lowell Peace Scholar

Noy Thrupkaew to Lead Events for Campus, Community

Noy Thrupkaew, whose investigative reporting has exposed human trafficking and labor exploitation across the globe, has been named UMass Lowell’s 2017 Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies.

Thrupkaew’s research, writing and public speaking about human trafficking shine a light on how the use of violence, fraud or coercion is used to force people into a range of roles not of their choosing. Her 2015 TED Talk, which has been viewed online more than 88,000 times, shares her realization as an adult that her childhood nanny was the victim of human trafficking. This discovery inspired her to work to expose the practice and advocate for improvements in law-enforcement response to stop it.

Thrupkaew has investigated some of the largest human trafficking cases in the United States, from uncovering human rights abuses of Thai farmers brought to the country for cheap labor to the plight of Indian metalworkers rebuilding oil rigs after Hurricane Katrina under threat of deportation.


As the Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies at UMass Lowell, Thrupkaew will lead a series of programs for students, faculty, staff and the community during April.

The Greeley Scholar program is funded by the Greeley Endowment for Peace Studies, established with a gift from the Dana McLean Greeley Foundation for Peace and Justice and a contribution from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts via the UMass Foundation.

Noy Thrupkaew, who works to raise awareness about human trafficking, has been named UMass Lowell’s 2017 Greeley Scholar for Peace.
New Honors Class Develops a Mindset for Adventure

Students Learn About the Hero’s Quest through Film and Literature

Jessica Fruth, a marketing major and honors student from Braintree, is a hard worker who aims for a career in advertising.

But a new interdisciplinary honors seminar, “A Call to Adventure,” has persuaded her that sometimes it’s important to take a break, step back and gain perspective. So instead of starting full-time work as soon as classes end in May, she’s planning a solo four-week trip through continental Europe.

Fruth wants to reconnect with nature, experience different cultures and contemplate her own life’s journey—and she says the class has given her the confidence to do it.

“A Call to Adventure” is taught by Julian Zabalbeascoa, a visiting professor in the Honors College. Students examine the stages of the hero’s journey, as described by mythology scholar Joseph Campbell, through movies and books.

In “A Call to Adventure,” Zabalbeascoa has students watch movies ranging from “Star Wars” to “The Graduate” and “Cinema Paradiso” and read books including “Wild,” by Cheryl Strayed, and “The Infinite,” a novel by Nicholas Mainieri about love in post-Katrina New Orleans and amid Mexico’s drug wars.

“I believe in the power of narrative to inspire us to seek new experiences, and those experiences give shape to our lives and reveal to us who we are,” says Zabalbeascoa.

First-year mechanical engineering major Ania Burgess says she took “A Call to Adventure” because she loves Zabalbeascoa’s active, hands-on teaching style. This is her third class with him this year. She took “First-Year Seminar in Honors” in the fall and traveled to Cuba in January.

“First-year seminar in Honors” in the fall and traveled to Cuba in January.

This class is a different kind of adventure—and it provides a welcome break from the intense science and math focus of her engineering classes, she says.

Matt Levenson, a sophomore majoring in criminal justice and minoring in psychology, heard the call to adventure before he ever took the class.

He loves to climb mountains in nearby New Hampshire or to explore Lowell with his roommates, and he’s planning several international trips, including a study-abroad experience in Portugal this summer. But “A Call to Adventure” has given him a broader perspective—and taught him that adventure is an attitude.

“This class is absolutely, 100 percent making me more intentional about the actions I take and the hero’s journey I want to be on,” he says.