

Bay Alumni Connections – Accessible Text Version (July 2026)

Welcome to the first edition of the Bay College Alumni Newsletter!

As a Bay graduate, you're part of our community for life, and that connection truly matters. This newsletter is all about keeping in touch, sharing what's new and exciting at the college, and highlighting the amazing ways our alumni continue to make an impact.

We hope it keeps you informed, inspired, and feeling connected to Bay. No matter where life takes you, you'll always be part of our story—and we're proud to be part of yours.

Follow us on social media and update your contact information and communication preferences at:

<https://www.baycollege.edu/about/alumni/>

Whether you want targeted information, are interested in sharing your story, volunteering, mentoring, or showcasing your skills and talents, we'd love to connect you with opportunities that make an impact.

Upgrading Technology to Improve the Student and Community Experience

Bay College is investing in major technology upgrades to enhance the student experience.

The College will transition to Ellucian Colleague, a modern student information system that streamlines activities such as applying, advising, registration, and billing. Students can expect smoother services and more accurate advising through improved access to information.

Bay is also launching Element 451, a communication platform that provides personalized reminders, updates, and guidance to help students stay on track.

Together, these upgrades will make it easier to navigate enrollment, stay informed, and move confidently from first contact through graduation.

Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Thad Strom

Bay College is pleased to announce Dr. Thad Strom as the 2026 Distinguished Alumni of the Year.

A Gladstone native, Dr. Strom serves as Associate Director of the Oscar G. Johnson VA Healthcare System. He began his academic journey at Bay College, earning an Associate in Arts degree in 1997 before completing a doctorate in Counseling Psychology.

Over nearly 20 years with the VA Healthcare System, he has advanced PTSD treatment, trained clinicians nationwide, and contributed to research that has improved care for thousands of veterans.

Since returning to Upper Michigan in 2018, he has provided innovative leadership at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Healthcare System and helped strengthen rural behavioral healthcare.

Dr. Strom credits Bay College with helping shape his success.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes graduates for professional achievement, community service, and their connection to Bay College.

Learn more or submit a nomination:

<https://www.baycollege.edu/about/alumni/>

A Message From the President

Dear Bay College Alumni,

I hope this message finds you well and thriving in your personal and professional journeys.

As I reflect on the strength and impact of our Bay College community, I am continually reminded that our alumni are among our greatest ambassadors. You represent the spirit of Bay College in communities across the Upper Peninsula and beyond.

At Bay College, we continue to focus on Student Success, Community Success, and a Culture of Success. We are also embracing this year's theme of Transformation through innovation, partnerships, and responsiveness to student and regional needs.

As alumni, you are an essential part of this journey. There are many ways to stay connected and engaged, including mentoring students, sharing professional experiences, participating in alumni events, and supporting the College through advocacy and philanthropy.

Thank you for representing Bay College with pride and purpose.

With appreciation,

Dr. Nerita Hughes
President, Bay College

Bay Snapshot

- 14,150+ alumni
- 18,179+ associate degrees and certificates awarded
- 17,011 credit hours completed across two campuses
- 51.6% of students enrolled exclusively in online courses
- More than \$2 million saved through Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives

Top Programs:

- Liberal Arts
- Nursing/Pre-Nursing
- Early Childhood Education
- Business Administration
- Social Work
- Radiography

Bay College Foundation

The Bay College Foundation supports student success by removing financial barriers through scholarships and by investing in programs, facilities, and initiatives that enhance the student experience.

During the past year, the Foundation awarded more than \$650,000 in scholarships to over 300 students.

The Foundation also partners with donors, alumni, and local businesses to support workforce development, academic programming, and campus improvements.

Learn more:

<https://www.baycollege.edu/about/foundation/>

Contact:

- foundation@baycollege.edu
- (906) 217-1700

2026 Degrees Conferred

Bay College awarded 199 degrees during the Winter semester, the highest number awarded in a winter term in more than five years.

Leading programs included:

- Liberal Arts – 36
- Welding – 14
- Nursing – 13
- Business Administration – 10
- Radiography – 10
- Criminal Justice – 8
- Social Work – 8
- EMT-Basic – 8
- Mechatronics and Robotics Systems – 8
- Business – 7

And many other academic programs across the college.

Arts and Culture on Campus

Bay College continues to support arts and culture throughout the community.

After last year's Bonifas Theater fire, Bay provided space for Players de Noc and Missoula Children's Theatre productions to continue.

This summer's highlights include:

Lunchtime Live Concert Series

Free outdoor concerts featuring local musicians and food vendors.

July 15

- Wingin' It
- Iron Mountain Campus
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. CT

July 14

- Reflections
- Escanaba Campus
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ET

August 11

- Socially Chemical
- Escanaba Campus
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ET

September 1

- George Sailor
- Iron Mountain Campus
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. CT

September 28

- Wingin' It
- Iron Mountain Campus
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. CT

Strings on the Bay

August 25

- "Once Upon a Piano, There Were Four Hands"
- Besse Theater
- Students admitted free

Additional performances and information:

<https://www.baycollege.edu/about/events/>

Norse Athletics

Bay College hosted the 40th Annual U.P. Sports Hall of Fame All-Star Basketball Classic on June 24.

Recent athletic honors include:

Baseball

- Avery Wilson – All-Conference Second Team
- Harrison Haigh – All-Conference Second Team
- Bon LaChance – Honorable Mention
- Jake Rolfe – Honorable Mention

Softball

- Joelle Jordan – All-Conference Second Team
- Arianna Hernandez – Honorable Mention
- Nina Bower – Honorable Mention
- Rylee Gerow – Honorable Mention

- Coach Tim McIntyre – Northern Conference Coach of the Year

Bay College's athletic tradition began in 1968. Today's Norse Athletics program includes:

- Men's Basketball
- Women's Basketball
- Volleyball
- Baseball
- Softball
- Men's Cross Country
- Women's Cross Country

For schedules and tickets:

<https://www.baynorse.com/>

Were you part of Norsemen athletics in the 1960s or 1970s? We'd love to hear your story.

Stay Connected

Alumni Engagement & Conference Services Coordinator

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