

‘STEP’ behind the stories: Student helps produce entire edition of ‘Endeavors’

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/33611/step-behind-the-stories-student-helps-produce-entire-edition-of-endeavors/>

Morgan Counts’ job was hardly a one-day, or even one-semester, task: Help make a magazine.

Pretty much from scratch.

That was the challenge placed before the [University of Wisconsin Oshkosh student-athlete and Student Titan Employment Program \(STEP\) intern](#). A little more than a year from graduation, Counts got the opportunity to help lead and produce much of the content within [Endeavors](#), UW Oshkosh’s annual faculty “scholarship and inspiration” magazine, sponsored by the Office of the Provost.

The magazine hit the streets this spring. It was the culmination of months of research, interviews, writing and editing for Counts and her faculty collaborator, Grace Lim, a lecturer in the Department of Journalism and producer of “Beyond Classroom Walls,” the multimedia mirror of *Endeavors* that highlights excellence in teaching and learning at UW Oshkosh.

“You do talk about a lot of (faculty members’) research and their approaches to teaching and how they interact with students, but it really is to give whoever reads it an idea of a professor’s life outside their teaching roles,” Counts said. “... In the conversations we had, because we make that first interview so long, we have a conversation about their lives. I’ll say, ‘Start from the beginning... what was your childhood like?’ They share a lot of personal inspirations and things that happened in their life.”

In the nearly 60-page spring 2014 edition of *Endeavors*, Counts and Lim combined forces to profile five UW Oshkosh faculty members, including:

- [Scott Beyer, professor of Finance and Insurance in the College of Business.](#)
- [Eric Brunsell, professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and Human Services.](#)
- [Jennifer Considine, professor of Communication Studies in the College of Letters and Science.](#)
- [R. Shelly Lancaster, of the College of Nursing.](#)
- [Druscilla Scribner, professor of Political Science, in the College of Letters and Science.](#)

Counts is the solo author on three of the five faculty member profiles. She teamed up with Lim on elements within the two others. *Endeavors* is also a compilation of the annual teaching, research and other scholarly and creative achievements and awards earned by UW Oshkosh’s more than 600 faculty and instructional academic staff members.

Morgan Counts: I am a Titan...

“Morgan didn't flinch when I told her that she had to take on the bulk of the feature writing for the latest Endeavors magazine,” Lim said. “Previous issues were written by an entire class of journalism students.”

Lim said Counts developed into “her own worst critic,” meticulously self-editing her work and consistently polishing her profiles.

“Like all good writers, Morgan is learning that writing is rewriting,” Lim said.

Counts' and Lim's interview process was exhaustive. After two to three interviews with each faculty member, Counts also collected video interviews to incorporate into the project's Beyond Classroom Walls web features.

“I had written a profile for the first issues of Endeavors but strictly wrote the profile and handed it off, and the rest went from there,” she said. “This was my first time, from start to finish, to be a part of the whole process.”

“We started off by interviewing each professor for about an hour to an hour and a half,” Counts said. “We put that together and then interviewed them again – two to three interviews per person plus a photo shoot.”

The work to capture deeper profiles of faculty members took her, as the project's website suggests, well beyond classroom walls. She coordinated photography at tennis matches and collected family photos to help bring a richer storytelling into *Endeavors*.

“For (faculty members) it's a time to reflect on their lives,” Counts said. “Maybe they don't do it that much. For them, it's ‘how did I get where I am today?’”

As she readies for her final year at UW Oshkosh, Counts has plenty of valuable experience to propel her into a career. She has mulled the Peace Corps as a next step, an experience that would provide plenty of rich storytelling opportunities.

She also hasn't ruled out writing about military veterans' experiences – a world she was exposed to in her work with Lim and other students in the [War: Through Their Eyes](#) projects at UW Oshkosh over the last few years.

“I have grown a huge appreciation for in-depth writing and feature writing,” Counts said. “I have an interest, if I do writing, in investigative reporting – documentary style.”

“... She is the type of reporter that all editors want - she is not afraid to work hard and she manages to keep her sense of humor under extreme deadline pressure,” Lim said. “More importantly, she always gets the story.”

Learn more:

- [Endeavors – Spring 2014](#)
- [Endeavors – Spring 2013](#)