Distributed by UW News Service, June 2, 2025

Link to original story: <https://www.uwlax.edu/news/posts/crossing-borders-building-skills/>

**Crossing borders, building skills  
  
Visiting physical therapy students from India experience innovation and community engagement at UWL**

Written by UW-La Crosse University Marketing & Communications

For Supriyo Sarkar, walking into UW-La Crosse’s cutting-edge research labs was a moment he won’t forget. The Doctor of Physical Therapy student from the KLE Institute of Physiotherapy in Belagavi, India, was able to explore UWL’s advanced facilities with technology from 3D motion capture systems and treadmill feedback to environmental chambers that simulate climate conditions during exercise.

“It was unlike anything I’ve done before,” Sarkar said. “It challenged my thinking and deepened my interest in research.”

Sarkar was one of three students from KLE who spent nearly three weeks on the UWL campus this spring, immersing themselves in the academic and cultural life of a Wisconsin university. The visit, held April 13 to May 2, was part of an ongoing exchange program between UWL and the KLE Institute designed to expose students to physical therapy practices across different healthcare systems and cultures.

Alongside two other KLE students, Shreyasi Ghatkar and Anuradha Paramshetti, Sarkar attended lectures, lab sessions, and clinical observation experiences — at Emplify Health and Dynamic Performance and Therapy — while also joining UWL students in community-based programs such as [EXPAND (Exercise Program for Adults with Neurologic Disorders)](https://www.uwlax.edu/academics/grad/physical-therapy/exercise-program-for-adults-with-neurologic-disorders-expand/) and [LEAP (Lower Extremity Amputee Program)](https://www.uwlax.edu/news/posts/leaping-forward/).

“This trip gave us a chance to witness how clinical care and technology can come together in truly patient-centered ways,” said Paramshetti. “I especially appreciated how UWL students are involved with real clients in their training — it was inspiring.”

One of the highlights of their visit was presenting original research at the APTA-WI West Central District meeting, hosted at UWL on April 29. For Ghatkar, it was a proud moment: “Presenting at the APTA event was an amazing opportunity to represent KLE internationally.”

But the experience went beyond labs and clinics. UWL students made sure their guests felt welcome in the community — organizing group dinners, sports activities, and time outdoors. Ghatkar fondly recalled playing pickleball and fishing in the Mississippi River. “Fishing with Charlie Ravanelli and playing pickleball at Trane Park with our new UWL friends will stay in our memories forever,” she said.

The exchange program between UWL and KLE began in 2021 with a Memorandum of Understanding, though the partnership was initially limited to online classes due to the pandemic. The first in-person exchange took place in January 2024, [when UWL students traveled to Belagavi](https://www.uwlax.edu/news/posts/cross-cultural-care/). This spring’s visit marked the return leg, bringing the collaboration full circle.

Steni Sackiriyas, a faculty member in [UWL’s Physical Therapy program](https://www.uwlax.edu/academics/grad/physical-therapy/), helped launch and coordinate the international exchange. He says the program offers students a rare chance to learn from one another while developing the cultural competencies essential for today’s globalized healthcare environments.

The academic and clinical exchange program has enhanced cross-cultural learning and exposed our students to advanced rehabilitation practices. "Our ongoing collaboration with UWL continues to enrich educational and clinical training on both sides,” said Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Principal of KLE Institute of Physiotherapy.

As the partnership continues to grow, both institutions hope to expand opportunities for students to explore physical therapy through new cultural lenses — and leave with more than just professional insights, says Patrick Grabowski, program director for UWL's DPT Program.