



Photo by Nathan Skid

## **Casandra Ulbrich, 35**

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By Sherri Begin Welch

Director of corporate and foundation relations  
**Wayne State University**

**Biggest achievement:** Her nomination and subsequent election to statewide office as a member of the **Michigan Board of Education**.

**Current goal:** To complete her doctoral dissertation on media framing and the 1967 Detroit riots.

Casandra Ulbrich was the first in her family to earn a college degree, something she said completely changed her life.

The passion that has given her for education is driving her to help ensure children wishing to go to college are prepared for it — and can get the financial assistance that they need.

As senior director of development for **Wayne State University's** college of liberal arts and sciences, she raised \$7 million to \$8 million of the college's \$30 million goal as part of the university's recently completed comprehensive capital campaign.

In her current role, Ulbrich oversees the university's grant proposal submissions to foundations and corporations and is serving as director of WSU's multimillion dollar "Aim Higher for Students" campaign to raise money for need- and merit-based scholarships.

Ulbrich was instrumental in securing a \$5 million grant from the **New Economy Initiative** for Fast Track to the Future, a WSU-hosted entrepreneurial training program for people from around the region.

She's bringing that same passion for access to education to her personal life.

In 2006, Ulbrich campaigned successfully to get elected to the **Michigan Board of Education**, which oversees public education in the state. The group is setting grade-level content expectations to align with Michigan's new curriculum and creating policies for teacher preparation institutions.

In that role, Ulbrich is pushing for public-private partnerships in K-12 public education, believing that public schools should be able to leverage corporate and other private support, just



as colleges and universities do.

To that end, she's meeting with community foundations to establish a mechanism through which the **Michigan Department of Education** can solicit private gifts to fund innovative educational programs that will filter into the public schools.

Ulbrich in 2008 was named the Board of Education's representative on the government affairs committee of the **National Association of State Boards of Education**, a committee charged with making recommendations to Congress on federal education policies.

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## **Crain's Forty under 40, Class of 2009**

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For 19 years, *Crain's Detroit Business* has honored the best and brightest in Southeast Michigan who have made their marks in business before age 40.

Crain's 40 under 40 Class of 2009 includes rising stars at large organizations and entrepreneurs finding success with a business niche or innovation. Still others are working to improve the operations and reach of area nonprofits or to improve the economic conditions of the region.

One honoree is leading the financial turnaround of a major regional hospital. Another helped attract much of the business investment in downtown Ferndale. Yet another is leading the way with cancer research and has started two companies taking lab research to commercialization. Others travel the world selling their products or managing export deals.

About 300 people were nominated for this year's class. Crain's evaluated candidates based on achievement and community impact.

A team of staff members evaluated candidates and checked references to develop our final list. It's a difficult task, but this year, and every year, the final list helps showcase the region's young leaders and their brainpower, creativity and business savvy.