

Chancellor's Award winners honored

January 19, 2022 - Ten winners have been announced for the 2020 and 2021 Chancellor's Awards at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Chancellor Maria Gallo honored eight staff members and two departments at the university's Spring Opening Meeting on January 18. Awards included the Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff and the Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff was first awarded in 1986 when UWRF faculty, staff and students were invited to nominate outstanding non-instructional staff for the award. The award was expanded in 2021 to include three individual categories – limited appointees, non-instructional academic staff and instructional academic staff – and one unit, department or program primarily staffed by academic staff.

Awarded since 1996, the Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff invites the university community to nominate university staff members in one of two categories: List A (blue collar, crafts/technical and law enforcement) or List B (administrative support, fiscal and staff services or supervisory/human resources/other. In 2021, a program category was added to recognize a unit, department or program primarily staffed by university staff.

Due to the pandemic, 2020 award announcements were postponed. Winners were announced in November 2021 and honored alongside the 2021 recipients at the Spring Opening Meeting. Honorees include:

Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff, 2020, List A: Jamie Dunn, Prucha Hall custodian. Dunn has spent more than two decades as a custodian at UW-River Falls. In their nomination materials, his nominators emphasized how his ability to both pivot and go the extra mile have contributed to the university over the years, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff, 2020, List B: Jason Winget, IT manager in the Division of Technology Services. A UWRF alumnus, 2021 marked Winget's 24th year of employment with the university. A member of the campus Emergency Management Team, he played an essential role in the COVID-19 pandemic response and his nominators repeatedly referenced his resourcefulness, creativity and leadership abilities during the unprecedented events of 2020 and 2021.

Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff, 2020: Connie Fassino, administrative program supervisor in Facilities Management. A UWRF alumna, Fassino has served in her role since 2019. Prior to her current position, she spent 12 years as the dean's assistant in the College of Business and Economics. In their nomination materials, Fassino's peers and supervisors repeatedly praised her patience, attention to detail and commitment to the university.

Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff, 2021, List A: Matt Quade, shipping and mailing associate in Central Receiving and Postal. A 2013 UWRF graduate, Quade began working in Central Stores and the mailroom upon his arrival as a student. After graduation, he joined the university as an employee and took on his current role in May 2016. In their nomination materials, all of Quade's nominators praised his dedication to his work, his professionalism and good nature, particularly in the face of extra challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff, 2021, List B: Lisa Owens, dean assistant in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. In her role, Owens provides administrative support for the college and its various academic departments. Her duties are vast, but according to her nominators, Owens' ability to manage them all is what sets her apart. She came to UWRF as a non-traditional student in 1987 and has been employed on campus in various roles since then. She joined CAFES in 2004.

Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff, 2021, Program/Unit/Department: Custodial Services. Custodial Services currently employs 12 staff members and one supervisor. The team provides cleaning, moving and general services for the UWRF campus, including approximately 1.3 million square feet of academic building space. Staff perform a wide variety of duties from larger projects like event setups and office moves to day-to-day tasks including snow and ice removal and recycling collection.

Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff, 2021, Non-Instructional Academic Staff: Ann Lawton, violence prevention coordinator. Lawton also serves the university as a lecturer in the Art Department, a board-certified art therapist in Student Health and Counseling Services and as the assistant director of URSCA (Undergraduate Research, Scholarly and Creative Activity). Her nominators lauded her many skills and contributions to the university, repeatedly emphasizing her willingness to wear many hats. No characteristic was mentioned more often than her sheer dedication to her work and the students.

Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff, 2021, Instructional Academic Staff: Grettel Hecht, lecturer in the Math Department. Hecht has been teaching at UWRF since 2014 and also serves as the university's remedial mathematics coordinator. Her commitment to all facets of her work has earned the admiration of her peers. Her nominators praised her initiative, creativity and enthusiasm in their nomination materials, along with her ability to reach a wide variety of students.

Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff, 2021, Limited Appointee: Cara Rubis, director of University Center and Dining Services. Rubis holds bachelor's and master's degrees from UWRF and has been employed at the university since 1998. In her role, she provides leadership and support for a variety of areas, including the University Center, contracted services including Dining Services and the Falcon Shop, the Involvement Center, Student Organizations, Student Events and Programs and more. Her ability to juggle a wide range of responsibilities and a large staff was repeatedly praised by the colleagues that nominated her.

Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Academic Staff, 2021, Program/Unit/Department: Financial Aid. According to Financial Aid Director Robert Bode, much of the work that the Financial Aid staff does in counseling students and families is done over the phone. The Financial Aid Office fields an average of nearly 650 phone calls a month, including over 1,200 calls a month during peak times. Additionally, staff members manage multiple financial aid programs and processes and are responsible for duties including reviewing financial aid applications, creating and communicating financial aid offers to families, balancing accounts and managing the university's complex financial aid system. The COVID-19 pandemic created significant changes and additions to grant programs, waivers, federal aid program rules, admissions scholarships requirements and more. Each of these changes required staff to learn, implement and utilize new policies and procedures, often in a short amount of time.

To learn more information about each award winner, view past honorees and find nomination criteria, visit <https://www.uwrf.edu/Awards/>.

COVID-19 vaccination, booster clinics at UW-River Falls open to community

January 6, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is partnering with Pierce County Public Health and Freeman Drug in River Falls to make free COVID-19 vaccines and boosters available to students, employees and community members.

The clinics will be held January 13 and 27. See details below regarding important details.

Pfizer booster, Thursday, Jan. 13, from 10 a.m.-noon, Falcon's Nest, University Center – administered by Freeman Drug by appointment only.

- To receive your booster, it must be five months (Pfizer), six months (Moderna), since completing your initial series, or two months (J&J) since receiving your first dose.
- Booster doses do not have to match your primary series vaccine, it is ok to mix and match vaccines. Please bring your vaccine record card with you.
- First and second dose recipients welcome. Individuals receiving their first dose of Pfizer are responsible for scheduling their second dose at another location (or with Freeman Drug).
- Sign up (by appointment only, no walk-ins) at <https://freemandrug.as.me/falcon>. If there are no times listed at the link, all time slots have been taken. To find other vaccine appointments, visit vaccines.gov.

Pfizer booster, Thursday, Jan. 27, from 10 a.m.-noon, Riverview Ballroom, University Center – administered by Freeman Drug by appointment only.

- To receive your booster, it must be five months (Pfizer), six months (Moderna), since completing your initial series, or two months (J&J) since receiving your first dose.
- Booster doses do not have to match your primary series vaccine, it is ok to mix and match vaccines. Please bring your vaccine record card with you.
- First and second dose recipients are welcome. If you receive your first dose of Pfizer, you are responsible for scheduling your second dose at another location (or with Freeman Drug).
- Sign up (by appointment only, no walk-ins) at <https://freemandrug.as.me/falcon>. If there are no times listed at the link, all time slots have been taken. To find other vaccine appointments, visit vaccines.gov.

Moderna and J&J boosters, Thursday, Jan. 27, from 1-4 p.m., Riverview Ballroom, University Center – administered by Pierce County Public Health by appointment only.

- To receive your booster, it must be five months (Pfizer), six months (Moderna), since completing your initial series, or two months (J&J) since receiving your first dose.
- Booster doses do not have to match your primary series vaccine, it is ok to mix and match vaccines. Please bring your vaccine record card with you.
- First and second dose recipients are welcome. If you receive your first dose of Moderna, you are responsible for scheduling your second dose at another location (or with Pierce County Public Health).

- Sign up (by appointment only, no walk-ins) at <https://piercecountycovid19vaccine.as.me/UWRF>. If there are no times listed at the link, all time slots have been taken. To find other vaccine appointments, visit vaccines.gov.

If questions, call Pierce County Public Health at 715-273-6755 or Freeman Drug at 715-307-9465.



Freddy's Pantry opens in Rodli Hall to address student food insecurity

CAFES started Free Food Shelf in spring 2021

January 27, 2022 - With nearly one-third of university students nationally food insecure, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls recently opened Freddy's Pantry in Rodli Hall to help provide grab-and-go foods for hungry students.

Freddy's Pantry in 268 Rodli Hall opened January 10, according to Kathleen Hunzer, Chancellor's Scholars, Honor Program and Falcon Scholars director.

"Any student can use it," Hunzer said. "We are not asking any questions. Students will have to swipe their ID or type in their identification number just for usage statistics."

The nearly 14-by-18 foot pantry will have insulated bags and currently has tables with breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack foods and personal hygiene items students may need, Hunzer said. It is open from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday.

"Students can fill a bag and have food that they can eat on the way to class and other items that would work for when they are home," Hunzer said.

Freddy's Pantry has a microwave so students can heat up a quick meal and eat it on their way to class. There is a refrigerator and freezer, allowing for fresh and frozen foods to be stocked and available.

Breakfast items available include cereal, dried fruit and hot cocoa. Lunch items are cans of tuna or chicken and ready-to-eat meals. Canned vegetables, rice mixes, soups, beef stew and macaroni and cheese are some of the dinner items available,

Hunzer said. There are some gluten-free items available, too.

The River Falls Community Food Pantry donated the food to start up Freddy's Pantry.

Financial donations sought

The pantry in Rodli Hall, named for the UWRF mascot Freddy Falcon, is the second one on campus. In spring 2021, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science dean's office, along with the Student Advisory Committee, repurposed a bookcase on the first floor of the Agricultural Science building to start a Free Food Shelf which offers prepackaged, shelf-stable foods such as canned meats, cereals, oatmeal, pasta and soup. There are also some personal hygiene items available. Students restock the shelf on a weekly basis.

Financial donations are needed to finish the shelving in Freddy's Pantry and to help provide needed items, including personal hygiene ones, Hunzer said. The UW-River Falls Foundation has set up a donation site to help support both pantries at <https://www.uwrf.edu/give/Freddys-Pantry.cfm>

"Any amount would be a help," Hunzer said, noting financial donations are most needed right now for the pantries as they determine what items students need most.

Rodli Hall was a perfect location for Freddy's Pantry because it has many student services in the building and is home to the Student Success Center, Ian Stroud, director of Student Success said.

"Accessibility and discretion are two significant location factors for food pantries," he said. "The second location provides both of that, while we are a bit more visible than the first location, we are more accessible with being close to Cascade Avenue for off-campus students and on-campus students without a meal plan can access the pantry. Additionally, we are now able to provide more nutrition options and can focus on tracking usage to better tailor resources and services to our students' needs."

According to National College Health Assessment data compiled in 2021 by the UWRF Student Health and Counseling Office, 30% of students polled limited what they ate to save money and just over 41% of students said they could not afford to eat balanced meals. If extrapolated to overall campus enrollment, roughly 1,600 to 2,000 students face food insecurity.

In a July Inside Higher Education article, 38% of students reported regularly missing meals since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Addressing student success

Not only are students not being nourished properly to focus on school, but it's affecting their ability to graduate. A total of 36% of students know someone who has dropped out due to food insecurity during the pandemic, according to Chegg research conducted in November 2020.

UWRF is seeing an increase in students experiencing some level of food insecurity, Stroud said. About a third of those are students identifying as underrepresented minority populations.

"If we want to address student success holistically, we have to look at every aspect in the student experience," Hunzer said.

“Student success is not something that just happens in the classroom and is reflected in grades. Student success is about all aspects of their experience.”

Hunzer used the example of having fresh fruit and vegetables available for students.

“Treating people experiencing daily living insecurities with dignity and respect is key to our work,” Hunzer said. “To support that mission, we want to have a wide variety of options for students, including fresh produce when possible. Just because someone needs assistance does not mean that they want macaroni and cheese or soup all the time, so having the refrigerator in Rodli will allow us to provide some fresh options like apples, yogurt, juice, bread, etc. It’s always great to take a bite of a crisp apple or use some fresh bread for a sandwich.”

When students struggle to afford food, miss meals, or worry about their basic needs, it can negatively impact their success, persistence and ability to graduate, Hunzer said.

Students may feel more comfortable visiting food pantries on campus, even though the River Falls Community Food Pantry is open to them. They also may not have transportation to the community pantry, Hunzer said.

Stroud encouraged students, faculty and staff to use both food pantries at any time.

“I often remind students to utilize the resources provided to them,” Stroud said. “This is a great resource for those carrying unnecessary stress or anxiety about where their next meal is going to come from. Our goal for this pantry is to be much more than providing a meal, and rather serve as a springboard for students to get other resources they need to be successful here at UWRF.”

Eventually Freddy’s Pantry plans to add a clothing closet with a rack of seasonal clothes, particularly winter wear.

Other ideas include getting cheese and meat ends donated from Falcon Foods and offering homemade ready-to-go meals, and possibly starting a campus garden to help grow food for the pantries. Chartwells has also provided some vouchers for cafeteria meals to help students.

Freddy’s Pantry will be run by Honors Program volunteers to stock shelves, market the pantry and write grants. It will provide leadership and volunteer opportunities for these students.

UWRF has an Emergency Grant/Loan Program that assists students with emergencies that can negatively affect success and progress toward a degree. The program can provide up to \$500 to address unplanned expenses such as utilities, housing, rent, food, meals, medical and dental expenses, prescription eyeglasses, personal automobile expenses, gasoline, public transportation costs, childcare and travel due to immediate family illness or death.

For more information about the program, email kathleen.hunzer@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3304.

Hukai named acting dean of the College of Business and Economics



January 7, 2022 - Dawn Hukai, associate dean and professor of accounting in the College of Business and Economics (CBE) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, has been named acting dean of the college. Hukai began her new position December 20.

Hukai began her career at UW-River Falls in 1998. She has served in several capacities on behalf of CBE including as the associate dean since 2009, and the Accounting and Finance Department chair from May 2018-December 19.

Outside of the college, she has also been active on campus and in the community. She has served on the UWRF General Education Committee; Sustainability Faculty Fellows; Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies; Faculty Senate committees; the St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation and the Institute of Management Accountants editorial board.

"I am very excited to continue to work to bring together students, staff, faculty, leadership, and the community to engage with integrity and innovation to positively impact the region," said Hukai.

"I very much appreciate Dr. Hukai's willingness to step into this role to serve her college at a crucial time in moving them forward," said David Travis, provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs. "I have great confidence that she will do a good job and I look forward to working with her."

Hukai has a Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management and is a licensed CPA in Wisconsin.

For more information, email david.travis@uwrf.edu.

Masquers to present 'Wonder of the World'

January 14, 2022 - The Masquers Drama Student Organization at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls will present "Wonder of the World" by David Lindsay-Abaire February 2-5 at 7:30 p.m. in the Blanche Davis Theatre in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

Nothing will prepare you for the dirty little secret Cass discovers in her husband's sweater drawer. It is so shocking that our heroine has no choice but to flee to the honeymoon capitol of the world in a frantic search for the life she thinks she missed out on. It's a wild ride over Niagara Falls in a barrel of laughs as Cass embarks on a journey of self-discovery that has her crossing paths with an assortment of hilarious characters.

This is a comedy for mature audiences. Performances will include a simulated gun and simulated gunfire.

The play is directed by Flora Sherr-Nelson, a UWRF Stage and Screen Arts major from Stillwater, Minn. The cast consists of Corinna Brose of Little Falls, Minn., as Cass; Meredith Bowermaster of White Bear Lake, Minn., as Lois; Ryan Huling of Farmington, Minn., as Captain Mike; Austin Albright of Roberts as Kip; Klara Fansler of Osceola as Karla; Michael Kerr of River Falls as Glen; Jillian Black of Shawano as Janie, Barbara, Helicopter Pilot, Waitress 1 and 2.

Tickets are free and may be reserved in advance at <https://marketplace.uwrf.edu/collections/theatre-2021-2022-season>

Tickets may also be obtained at the Box Office in Kleinpell Fine Arts on performance nights from 6:30-7:20 p.m.

For more information, call the Box Office at 715-425-3114.

Professor published in the American Mathematical Monthly

January 28, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls Mathematics Professor Alex Tupan knows sometimes making mathematical formulas visual helps students learn.



Tupan, who has taught in the Mathematics Department for 17 years, has the highlighted January article in the American Mathematical Monthly. Less than 10% of articles submitted to the publication are accepted.

In the article ["Inellipses of Convex Polygons, Brianchon's Theorem, and Bradley's Theorem"](#), Tupan explains how to construct ellipses tangent to the sides of a polygon. Bradley's Theorem is a formula addresses tangent lines drawn in the vectors of an ellipse gives six points, creating another ellipse, Tupan said. Brianchon's Theorem is a formula that explains how to position an ellipse in a more complex form such as a hexagon.

Tupan said he became interested in writing the article after he read another article that only addressed the issue using equations.

"I realized it was very abstract with complicated equations," Tupan said. "I thought it could be done more visually."

Tupan's article also was mentioned in a [tweet](#) from the [Mathematical Association of America](#), the world's largest community of mathematicians, students and enthusiasts.

Tupan teaches calculus for business students, number theory for math majors and mathematical writing at UWRF. He has his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Bucharest in Romania and his Ph.D. in mathematics from Johns Hopkins University.

He enjoys teaching and interacting with students.

"It's always fun to see their faces light up when they understand a concept," Tupan said.

Tupan said he is honored to have been published in the journal. This is his third time published in the American Mathematical Monthly.

In April 2020, Tupan had the article ["A Generalization of the Steiner Inellipse"](#) published and ["A Simple Proof of the Siebeck-Marden Theorem"](#) in September 2020.

For more information, email alexandru.tupan@uwrf.edu or call him at 715-425-4685.



JW Park, recently retired from UW-River Falls, conducts a holiday choral concert in 2021.

Professor retires, named artistic director for Seoul City Concert Choir

January 28, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls [Music](#) Professor [JW Park](#) is headed home.

Park, who has been the director of UWRF choral activities since 2003, retired on January 28 from the university. Park is moving to his hometown in Korea to become the artistic director and conductor of the Seoul City Concert Choir, a professional choir, on Monday, Feb. 7.

Park said he is honored to join the Seoul choir but is also saddened to leave his students and colleagues at UWRF.

Park decided to accept the position because it is an opportunity to work with a superb professional choir. He also wanted to move to Seoul where his spouse, Leonie, has been living since September, caring for a family member.

“I love teaching,” Park said. “My heart is in River Falls. It’s difficult to leave the students.”

Park said UWRF students are honest and a joy to teach, and he loved watching students grow and mature in their musical abilities while attending the university. Many of his students have gone on to teach in high schools and other colleges, he noted.

“I am very proud of the students I have taught from River Falls,” Park said.

Since he has been at UWRF, the choir has traveled seven times to sing and tour Thailand, Japan, China and Korea, Park

said.

He will also miss his colleagues, noting they have always been supportive of his work.

Park, of Richfield, Minn., taught private voice lessons, Concert Choir, Chamber Singers and conducting.

In a message to students, David Milne, chair and music professor, Stage and Screen Arts Department, congratulated Park on his appointment to a prestigious position and his retirement.

"We are deeply grateful and appreciative to Dr. Park for his distinguished teaching, service and contributions to UW-River Falls, and for his exceptional leadership of choral music at UW-River Falls for over two decades," Milne wrote. "Dr. Park's exceptional musicianship, teaching, mentorship and leadership will continue to be a great influence on our UW-River Falls students and alumni."

Dean Yohnk, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said UWRF was "blessed to have had Dr. Park's outstanding choral conducting capabilities for over 20 years. Many of us as lovers of music and as audience members have benefitted from his outstanding talents and skills."

A retirement reception was held January 27 for Park.

New faculty have been hired and will be announced soon to teach Park's classes, Milne noted.

An active lecturer and clinician, Park has given presentations throughout the United States, Korea and Japan. He has presented his lecture, "Breathing Without Breathing: Incorporating Tai Chi into Choral Warm-ups," at the American Choral Directors Association Regional Convention and the Wisconsin Music Educators Association Conference. His article on the same topic was published in the ACDA Choral Journal. He founded the group JW Chorale in Seoul, a festival choir that rehearses for two weeks and performs in July. In addition, he formed a female semi-professional choir composed of selected UWRF students and alumni called the Lumina Cantorum.

Park earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, a Master of Music in Voice degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, a Master of Music in Conducting degree from Cleveland State University, and his Ph.D. in music from Michigan State University.

He was a member of the Robert Shaw Festival Choir and performed many times in France, as well as Carnegie Hall in New York City.

For more information, contact Yohnk at dean.yohnk@uwrf.edu or 715-425-3777.

Special Regent Committee announces two finalists for UW System President

Candidate interviews next week

January 14, 2022 —The Special Regent Committee for the University of Wisconsin System Presidential Search has identified two finalists who have agreed to be interviewed for the position next week.

The finalists are:

- Jay O. Rothman, chairman and CEO of the law firm Foley & Lardner LLP in Milwaukee. He has served in that role since June 2011 and has been a member of the firm's Management Committee since February 2002. He joined Foley in October 1986 and has been a partner since February 1994. He earned a bachelor's degree from Marquette University and a law degree from Harvard Law School.
- James C. Schmidt, chancellor at UW-Eau Claire. He has served in that role since July 2013. Previously he was vice president for university advancement at Winona State University in Winona, Minn., and vice president for student affairs at Riverland Community College in Austin, Minn. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Winona State University, a master's degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, and a doctorate in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota.

Regent President Edmund Manydeeds III, chair of the Special Regent Committee, said the two finalists offer a depth and breadth of experience, including in the academic, business, and civic arenas.

"We have identified two excellent candidates, each of whom would be an outstanding leader for our university system," Manydeeds III said. "We believe their qualifications and experience provide the committee a great opportunity to pick a future leader for the UW System."

The finalists will interview Tuesday with the Special Regent Committee and other groups, including shared governance representatives, chancellors, and UW System executive leaders. Manydeeds and Search and Screen Committee chair Karen Walsh, the Regent Vice President, announced that because of the extraordinary public input in the process so far, there will be no public session with the finalists.

"Our diverse 21-member Search and Screen Committee included representatives from all universities and all campus constituencies, which helped us identify a list of viable candidates to forward to the Special Regent Committee," Walsh said. "We also held numerous valuable listening sessions at all of the universities and with all constituencies – often more than one. We look forward to the Special Regent Committee completing its work."

After the interviews, the Special Regent Committee will forward a recommendation to the full Board of Regents, which will make the final decision on hiring a new UW System President. A decision is expected by the end of January.

Biographical information and photos for both candidates are available online: [wisconsin.edu/presidential-search-2021/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/presidential-search-2021/).

Tommy Thompson has been serving as president since July 1, 2020. He announced this month that he would step down effective March 18. Thompson replaced former president Ray Cross.

The next UW System President will be the System's eighth since 1971 legislation unified two public university systems under a single Board of Regents. The system educates approximately 165,000 students at 13 universities across 26 campuses, serves more than 1 million Wisconsin residents through statewide outreach programs, and employs about 39,000 faculty and staff statewide. The total estimated annual economic impact of the UW System exceeds \$24 billion.

UWRF chancellor's statement on resignation of UW System President Thompson March 18

January 12, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo provided the following statement regarding UW System Interim President Tommy Thompson's resignation on March 18 which he announced last week.

"At UW-River Falls, President Tommy Thompson's legacy will endure as a champion for meeting the needs of campus and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a voice for the future success of students, business and industry through his advocacy for UWRF's Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech)," said Gallo. "We will miss his energy and authentic approach to engaging with students and employees. Having been hired under his leadership, I have also appreciated his trust and encouragement as UWRF's new chancellor and I wish him all the best."

Thompson began his duties on an interim basis 18 months ago. Read the statement by UW System Regent President Edmund Manydeeds III about Thompson's resignation [here](#).

UWRF chancellor's statement on Rothman selected as next UW System president

January 21, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo provided the following statement regarding the selection of Jay O. Rothman as the next University of Wisconsin System president announced today. The press release is available [here](#). To see a message from incoming UW System President Jay O. Rothman, visit this [link](#).

"I want to congratulate Jay Rothman on his unanimous selection as the UW System president by the Board of Regents," Gallo said. "I look forward to working with him, sharing the message of UWRF and strengthening the UW System for students and Wisconsin."

Rothman begins his duties on June 1. Rothman will be UW System's eighth president, succeeding current interim President Tommy Thompson, who has been in that role since July 1, 2020. Thompson has announced that he will step down on March 18.

Physics students receive national recognition

January 5, 2022 – The chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls has won an Outstanding Chapter Award from the SPS National Office.

The UW-River Falls chapter has been recognized 23 times with this award, an honor recognizing the chapter for its excellence as a top-tier student-led physical sciences organization. This designation is given to fewer than 10% of all SPS chapters at colleges and universities in the United States and internationally.

SPS is a professional association designed for students and membership is open to anyone interested in physics and related fields. It operates within the American Institute of Physics (AIP), an umbrella organization for professional physical science societies.

The UWRF chapter is advised by Physics Professor Glenn Spiczak and is led by student officers. The 2020-21 officers are:

Ian Carter, president (ian.carter@my.uwrf.edu)

Gretchen Hibbert, vice president (gretchen.hibbert@my.uwrf.edu)

James Bowers, secretary (james.bowers@my.uwrf.edu)

Collin Gartner, treasurer (collin.gartner@my.uwrf.edu)

Megan Rhea, social media manager (megan.rhea@my.uwrf.edu)

“Credit for the success of SPS at UW-River Falls goes to our students,” said Spiczak. “They are engaged and excited about physics in and out of the classroom. Recognition at this level is certainly worthy of their efforts.”

SPS chapters are evaluated on their level of interaction with the campus community, the professional physics community, the public and with SPS national programs.

The Outstanding Chapter Award recognizes high levels of outreach as well as unique approaches to fulfilling the mission of SPS to “help students transform themselves into contributing members of the professional community.”

In 2020-21, the UWRF SPS chapter was limited in its outreach efforts to the community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most years the chapter hosts on-campus events such as the Science Olympiad, Haunted Lab at Halloween, Exploration and Development of Space, 3M Super Science Saturday, Hudson Women in STEM+, and Physics Day with the Minnesota Twins.

For more information, email glenn.spiczak@uwrf.edu.

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UW-River Falls professor, alumna receive UW System honors

Rayne earns Outstanding Women of Color award, Velez LGBTQ+ Poorman award

January 24, 2022 - A University of Wisconsin-River Falls associate professor and an alum were named special award recipients by the University of Wisconsin System and were recognized by UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo at the Spring Opening Meeting on January 18.

Soil Science Associate Professor Natasha Rayne of the Plant and Earth Science Department was one of 14 recipients of the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award.

Alumna Faith Velez, a 2021 UWRF psychology graduate, was one of 11 honorees for the Dr. P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People.

They were honored in November at a ceremony and reception hosted by UW System Senior Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Warren R. Anderson.

UW System institutions submit nominations for the award.

Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award

2021 was the 26th anniversary of the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award which recognizes faculty, staff, students and residents for improving the status and climate for women and people of color and advancing the work of diversity, equity and inclusion.



At UWRF, Rayne teaches various courses including Introduction to Soil Science, Soil Fertility and Special Topics in Soil Microbiology. Her research focuses on nutrient cycling and the improvement of soil health using manure.

“My emphasis is in soil fertility,” Rayne said. “This area of research is important because with the growing world population, the demand for food is increasing and thus the demand for land to grow our food in. As a soil fertility specialist, my job is to think of ways to improve the ability of the soil to sustainably provide the

nutrients needed to grow healthy and high yielding crops.”

Rayne has supervised more than 15 undergraduate research projects. Her research also involves collaborative efforts with local industry and farmers. She is also an associate editor for the Agronomy Journal.

Rayne said the award came as a surprise.

“Receiving the award made me realize that my work and efforts do mean something to somebody,” she said. “It also carries with it an assignment to continue to work hard and do good because the things that look small in our own eyes might actually mean a lot to and make a difference in our community.”

In grad school, Rayne discovered her love for research and teaching.

“The opportunity that teaching offered – to be among people rather than just doing analysis in a lab – is what attracted me,” Rayne said. “Gaining knowledge through complex analysis in a lab or studies in the field is one thing. Making it relevant to others or awakening a desire in them to know more is a completely different thing and is precisely what I love about teaching.”

Rayne was attracted to UWRF because it was a smaller school providing opportunities to directly interact with students.

“The focus on teaching, primarily undergraduate students, has helped me as a teacher to grow in my pedagogy and find creative ways to instill in my students a greater desire to discover and a love for learning,” she said.

Dr. P.B. Poorman Award

The Dr. P.B. Poorman Award, in its 13th year in 2021, is given annually to LGBTQ+ people who have helped to create a safer and more inclusive climate. It celebrates the memory and legacy of Paula B. Poorman, a faculty member at UW-Whitewater who dedicated her life to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people.

Velez studied psychology with an emphasis on social justice and a minor in women's gender and sexualities studies.



“Having system-wide recognition of the advocacy work I did on campus was a really overwhelming feeling,” Velez said. “Being nominated for and winning this award felt like a win not only for my efforts but for the recognition that there is progress that needs to be made on our campus in order to continue to strive towards UWRF’s goals of inclusivity and that student voices matter. I hope my fellow queer students view this award as permission to continue to live authentically at UWRF.”

She served as a Falcon guide for UWRF Admissions and later worked in multiple internship positions to further push for inclusive college access materials and admissions programs. Through hosting community programming, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging service information nights, and personal advocacy for students and the community, she found herself becoming a better ally, a more informed queer person, and someone bringing plausible change on campus. She continued to hold a strong connection with the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Office, and served as an office intern during her last year on campus to help foster inclusive programming.

“As a student, my time at UWRF was incredibly impactful,” Velez said. “I feel thankful every day for my rigorous social, academic and leadership preparation provided through my time as a student, especially as I pursue my master’s degree. UWRF served as a place that allowed me to come in as a time freshman and leave with a reputation of being a dedicated student and a vocal advocate for others.”

Velez is a first-year graduate student at Marquette University pursuing a master’s degree within the education policy and leadership program specializing in student affairs and higher education and is a graduate assistant within the Center for Community Services which engages students in discerning their role in the struggle for a more just society through opportunities to explore diverse forms of service. She is hoping to take all the advocacy skills and personal confidence

gained during her time serving the UWRF LGBTQ+ community and apply it to a career within student affairs. She is excited to be a lifelong learner, an involved activist and an openly queer professional and mentor for the next generation of college students.

"The UW System is proud to recognize the tremendous achievements of this year's award recipients," Anderson said. "They are enhancing opportunities for our students and benefiting our communities through their leadership, scholarship and outreach."



UW-River Falls National Forage Bowl team (left to right) Jack Morrison (alternate), Kolby Beehler, Mitchell Oswald, Kira Jacobson, Sarah Anderson and Team Coach Associate Professor Yoana Newman.

UW-River Falls team again takes first at National Forage Bowl

January 24, 2022 - For the third year in a row, the team from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls captured first place at the National Forage Bowl competition. The competition takes place at the annual meeting of the American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) which was held January 9-11 in Wichita, Kansas, this year.

The UW-River Falls team, all crop and soil science majors, included Sarah Anderson of Antigo; Kolby Beehler of Foley, Minn.; Kira Jacobson of Cannon Falls, Minn.; and Mitchell Oswald of Brownsdale, Minn. Jack Morrison of Farmington, Minn., traveled with the team as an alternate. Yoana Newman, associate professor of crop science and Wisconsin Extension forage specialist, coached the team and accompanied them to Wichita.

The competition format is similar to Jeopardy and covers all aspects of forage production and management incorporating questions on forage quality, history, grazing management, hay and silage, plant morphology, poisons and toxicities, and soils and fertility. Individual team members first participate in a live forage plant identification challenge, with their individual scores averaged for each team to set up the playoff brackets. UWRF was ranked second in the plant identification and faced off against Kansas State University in the first round. The championship round, with UWRF taking on Purdue University, took place at breakfast on the final day of the conference in front of hundreds of conference attendees.

The team felt well prepared but challenged to bring home the win again. The 2021 AFGC was online only with no bowl competition.

"We had to work twice as hard to recover and started preparing for 2022 by having two in-person practices a week where Dr. Newman would quiz us on all the different possible categories," Anderson said.

When it comes to the team performance in the competition, Oswald probably said it best: "...man oh man were we ready. We knew the answers, and we went for them."

The dominating repeat win "shows that UWRF and smaller universities can match up with larger schools and provide just as great of an education," said Beehler.

Beyond the bowl competition, the students remarked that the AFGC offered a great opportunity to network with industry professionals and students from across the country.

"I will never forget sitting with the students from Auburn and discussing dialects and cultural differences between our regions of the country," said Anderson.

As is customary when teams travel to competitions, they check out local cultural and historical sites. The group visited the historic Delano district along the Arkansas River in Wichita and took a photo by the chrome Longhorn steer sculpture. The sculpture commemorates Delano's place at the end of the Chisholm Trail, where cowboys would rest and recreate after long months driving cattle up from Texas.

"I am confident any member of our team can take material learned in the classroom and implement that material in our careers and our futures in innovative ways," said Oswald. "This is a team of driven learners who will continue to seek after success in our careers and communities, serving not only ourselves but also others as we navigate the beginning of our careers."

Oswald will step into his career when he graduates in May. Anderson, Beehler, and Jacobson just graduated in December 2021. Anderson is an agronomist at River Country Cooperative in Athens. Beehler is a conservation agronomist for the Morrison Soil and Water Conservation District, based out of Little Falls, Minn. Her position is a partnership with Centra Sota Cooperative to bridge the gaps between producers, the public and the private sector. Anderson is an agronomist at River Country Cooperative in Athens.

For more information, email yoana.newman@uwrf.edu



Africa Night to celebrate Black History Month, campus diversity Feb. 24

February 16, 2022 - A celebration of Black History Month and diversity on the University of Wisconsin-River Falls campus will take place during Africa Night from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 24, in Abbott Concert Hall in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building. The free event is open to the public.

The Black Student Union (BSU), Student Involvement and the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging offices sponsor the annual event.

The first 150 people to attend will receive a water bottle from Didomi, which produces reusable and resilient water bottles, and donates 50% of profits from every bottle to provide 10 years of water access to an African resident in need. The company was founded in Minnesota by Lamah Bility, a UWRF alum, and Anaa Jibicho.

During the evening, there will be a traditional African drum performance, live painting with music, sharing of spoken word, a dance performance and contemporary fashion show, said BSU President Ezekiel Olakunle.

African cuisine will be served. Due to COVID-19 precautions, masks must be worn in all university buildings.

"It is a night full of great culture," Olakunle, a senior biology biomedical and health science major who is minoring in chemistry and psychology. "We want to share that culture with the community and show some of the amazing things our students are doing."

Africa Night was held virtually last year due to the pandemic, with students able to pick up food before the virtual showcase

events.

“It’s amazing to be back in person,” said Olakunle, who graduates in May and plans to work for a year at Hennepin County Medical Center getting clinical experience before starting medical school in fall 2023. “Africa Night is what made me fall in love with this school.”

Olakunle, of St. Paul, said Africa Night solidified his feeling of community on campus.

Planning the event takes months but brings BSU members closer together as they plan and build on the success of past Africa Night events, Olakunle noted.

“Africa Night is a bridge that brings people together from different backgrounds and cultures, Olakunle said. “It brings people together to celebrate Africa and Black African history and culture. Just learning about other people, cultures and their struggles is central to creating understanding. It is a great way to connect.”

Africa Night is part of the We Are Falcons Values Series, an effort that supports the campus values of academic excellence, innovation, being student-centered, global engagement, inclusiveness and engagement and how those values contribute to the larger UWRF community.

To learn more about Africa Night, email ezekiel.olakunle@my.uwrf.edu.

Cohler Coffee Concerts set at UW-River Falls, next is Feb. 11

February 2, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is hosting free Frances Cohler Coffee Concerts at noon on most Fridays through May 6.



The series features performances by UWRF music faculty as well as guest artists on Friday. All performances are free and open to the public. Performances are held in the Abbott Concert Hall in Kleinpell Fine Arts. Due to COVID-19 concerns, masks are required in all campus buildings.

Scheduled performances include:

Feb. 11 – Stillwater (Minn.)-native Solveig Neseth, soprano, and Denis Evstuhin, piano, who is the music curator and founder of the classical music series of the Museum of Russian Art in Minneapolis

March 4 - Maithree, World Music Ensemble

- March 25 - Mlada Khudoley, Russian soprano, who lives in Minnetonka, Minn., and Evstuhin, piano
- April 1 - Tadeusz Majewski, Polish-born pianist from Minneapolis
- April 22 - Ji Young Lee, an international pianist born in Korea, and Hector Landa, an assistant professor of music at UW-Superior, piano duet
- April 29 - Isles Ensemble, chamber music
- May 6 - Colleen Raye, Wisconsin-native alto

Coffee and cookies are served after each concert in the lobby. Concert performers may be subject to change.

The series is named in memory of Cohler, a New Richmond native and 1974 music alumna. The naming of the series was made possible through a generous donation from Mary Ella Jerome and her family foundation to honor their lifelong friendship and shared love of music that started at UWRF.

Donations are accepted through the [UWRF Foundation](#) to support the series.

COVID-19 study shows Americans safety-minded, except with family, roommates

February 24, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls Sociology Professor Paige Miller is part of a Louisiana State University (LSU)-Wisconsin study funded through the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership related to COVID-19. The Tommy G. Thompson Center funded the study "The Social Life of COVID-19: Fear, Uncertainties, Anxieties" in July 2020 for \$58,000.



The study is the U.S. portion of a larger National Science Foundation project taking place in eight countries that examines the role of social, political and economic factors in shaping community responses to COVID-19. The data will provide policymakers important insights into the factors shaping public perceptions and reactions to pandemics and information to craft appropriate and effective responses.

Survey data of more than 10,000 people across the nation was collected last summer about COVID-19 by Alchemer, a data and feedback collection company.

Miller, of the Sociology, Criminology and Anthropology Department, said researchers are just starting to analyze the data and expect to do so for about a year. Roughly six to nine research papers are expected to be written from the data collected.

Preliminary results indicate most Americans are familiar with expert advice on how to stay safe and are generally compliant with the most important recommendations such as wearing masks, social distancing and getting vaccinated, Miller said.

"New behaviors, for example wearing face masks, are considered much easier precautions than avoiding places, people or activities," Miller said. "The recommendation to avoid close contact with housemates is generally considered to be the most difficult, as well as the least necessary, by a large margin."

LSU Professor of Sociology Wesley Shrum believes most people aren't willing to change their household habits. Unfortunately, that does not bode well for the continued spread of the COVID-19 and its variants.

"The precautions most people take won't protect them because the way you normally get it is from people you live with," Shrum said. "Avoiding close contact with them is both the most difficult precaution and the one people feel is least necessary."

Some of the respondents to the surveys adhered to more questionable ideas on how to treat COVID-19 that do not have medical backing, Miller noted.

Also, experts were not ranked particularly high by respondents, including members of the media and government, in terms of their reactions to the pandemic and their reliability. Indeed, respondents' greatest concern is with false or inaccurate

information and the lack of agreement among experts. Medical professionals, though, were ranked more reliable, Miller noted.

Among study respondents, most had already been vaccinated while others said they were likely to get vaccinated—most agree vaccines are the main solution to the pandemic. And yet, a majority also worries vaccines may be harmful in some way.

“Interestingly, despite waning trust in media, government, and expert sources, many Americans are actually willing to follow expert advice related to vaccinations,” said Miller. “I think these findings really emphasize the importance of consistent and measured messaging from officials. They need to address people’s concerns in a manner that is both clear, empathetic, and avoids demonizing or further polarization, particularly if we want to increase compliance with this pandemic or with others in the future.”

Miller said future studies should address what losing trust in the media and the government means and what the broader consequences of that trend might be.

Now, nearly six months since the data were gathered, she does see a degree of pandemic fatigue, on the one hand, with many wanting to return to normalcy, while others continue to be quite cautious, even fearful, and may be for some time.

“The question now is where do we go from here,” Miller said. “How do we balance the risks of returning to some kind of normal versus the costs of doing so, recognizing there are also serious consequences of continuing to disrupt people’s lives?”

Miller has taught at UWRF since 2009. She has her bachelor of arts degree from Black Hills State University, Spearfish, S.D., and her master of arts and doctorate in sociology from Louisiana State University.

Miller enjoys teaching at UWRF.

“I appreciate at UWRF we are a teaching institute with our goal to be excellent in the classroom,” she noted, adding the university also gives professors opportunities to conduct research.

For more information, call Miller at 715-425-4435 or email page.miller@uwrf.edu.

Dance Theatre to present annual spring concert, 40th anniversary

February 2, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Dance Theatre will present their annual spring concert in Abbott Concert Hall in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building February 16-19 at 7:30 p.m.



Admission is \$5 for students and children, \$8 for seniors (60+), and \$10 for adults. Tickets can be purchased at the University Theatre Box Office beginning February 7, between 10 a.m. -1 p.m. Monday-Friday and at 6:30 p.m. on performance nights. Tickets may also be ordered online at <http://marketplace.uwrf.edu>.

The concert features the work of numerous UWRF Dance Theatre alumni, students, faculty, and professionals. The evening will consist of diverse dance forms including Modern, Hip Hop, Japanese, Peruvian, Swing, Jazz, and Contemporary dance.

Minneapolis Guest Choreographer Danielle Ricci created *We Know Not What We Do*, which wavers between beautiful and haunting. Her dance outlines the destruction humans have unleashed and presents a call for changes to preserve our planet. Torrion Amie, former UWRF dance faculty, has returned setting a dance called *The Power of Someone Who Saves*, which highlights the impact compassion can have on those

experiencing hopelessness. Faculty Choreographer Mari Kline-Kluck crafted a piece titled *reDress*, which explores disparities women face, as well as pressures to fulfill certain ideals. Kline-Kluck has also restaged *A Tensive Phobia* (premiered 2006) that examines the impetus of fear and anxiety. Alumni choreography team/married couple Jesse and Emma Hoekstra shaped a joyful social dance experience for the stage with their Swing Dance/Lindy Hop piece called *A Dance Break*. Alumni Choreographer Natsumi Kubo has been working with students to restage *Kodo-Soran* virtually from Japan. The piece fuses traditional Japanese dance with some exciting new elements that are different from its premiere with Dance Theatre in 2007. Join us for these and other amazing dances!

UWRF Dance Theatre, a modern dance company, has brought an artistic dance program to students who love dance for 40 years. UWRF Dance Theatre strives to provide rich dance experiences and performance to River Falls and the surrounding communities.

For more information, email mari.kline@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-0743.

Endowed scholarship named for first African American professor at UW-River Falls will help fund student education abroad

Education Abroad Fair Feb. 23 in Rodli Hall

February 9, 2022 -- With a successful Advancement Office campaign, University of Wisconsin-River Falls students can soon apply for \$1,000 scholarships to help cover the costs of education abroad programs endorsed by the UWRF Office of International Education.



The Dr. Robert B. Bailey III Legacy Scholarship is named for UWRF's founder of the Quarter Abroad program and the first African American faculty member.

Bailey, who many referred to as "Doc," started at UWRF in 1957 as a sociology professor and initiated what is now known as the Semester Abroad: Europe program in 1963. As director of the Quarter Abroad program, he traveled to Europe 19 times with students.

The University Advancement Office started the fundraising campaign for the endowed education abroad scholarships in 2018 and has raised about \$130,000, according to Advancement Officer Kellie Burrows.

"Any future funds raised will go into the endowment to offer more scholarships for education abroad programs," Burrows said, noting the goal is to award five \$1,000 scholarships, expected to be awarded next semester.

OIE renaming in June

In addition, as part of the fundraising effort, the Office of International Education will be renamed the Dr. Robert B. Bailey III Office of International Education. The official renaming will happen in June with donors invited to celebrate.

"This was a labor of love," Burrows said of raising the funds. "This is a long overdue honor to thank Doc for all the contributions he did. He was a visionary. He believed in travel and the opportunity to open students' eyes to the world and an opportunity they might not have had. He was an amazing man."

Fluent in Dutch, French and German, Bailey did his undergraduate work at Talladega College in Alabama. He was a Fulbright Scholar in England from 1951-52 and then studied for three years at the universities of Frankfurt and Munich and then completed a doctorate in sociology at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Bailey retired in 1991 from UWRF. He died in 1993.

A plaque will be placed outside the office entrance bearing Bailey's name and recognizing donors, Burrows said.

Two of the top donors were First National Bank of River Falls and Greg and Donna Lindberg, both 1970 alums. Greg has a degree in sociology and Donna in elementary education.

"They were vital in giving the large gifts that helped kick off the fundraising," Burrows said.

To find out more about contributing to the fund, contact Burrows at kellene.burrows@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4427.

Education abroad has had a dip since the COVID-19 pandemic, but students can find out more about studying abroad at the Education Abroad Fair from 2 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 23, in Rodli Hall.

Students can learn about programs in locations all over the world ranging from 10 days over Spring Break to an entire semester, said Kelsey McLean, Office of International Education interim department manager.

Life-changing experience

Whitney Baehr, a UWRF 2020 elementary education alum, took part in International Traveling Classroom her sophomore year. During the semester, students lived and studied across Europe and had the opportunity for independent travel while there.

"It was probably one of the most life-changing experiences I had," said Baehr, who is an outdoor educator, teaching elementary to high school students about nature and the outdoors. In March, she will be teaching in the state of Washington but also has taught in New England. "I was a people pleaser and would go along with what other people wanted to do. I became more confident in myself and the thing I could do alone. That is something I never would have done before."

Education abroad made Baehr a more globalized citizen with compassion for other cultures, she said.

Baehr also took part in a six-week study in Japan during the summer of 2019 where she taught English. One of her future goals is to teach abroad.

UWRF has a rich international education history, having reached No. 1 among the UW comprehensives for the percentage of students who studied abroad. This No. 1 ranking was achieved in 2018-19, prior to the pandemic, when nearly 18% of UWRF graduating seniors reported having had an education abroad experience.

"What is really unique on our campus is the deep level of faculty engagement," McLean said. "Faculty teach in, and lead many of our programs, which helps ensure the international experience is integrated into students' UWRF academic requirements."

Approximately 70% of UWRF students study abroad in short-term faculty-led programs.

Going abroad encourages students to try new experiences and learn about other cultures, McLean said.

"Students bring their experiences back to campus," McLean said. "They return changed. They come back to campus, and they are more open to embracing differences in our community and campus. It's a great experience for students to see the broader world."

The Bailey scholarship will be a great asset to students wanting to study abroad, she noted.

"We're excited to tell students about it," McLean said.

For more information on education abroad and the Office of International Education, contact studyabroad@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4891.



Founder of The Sioux Chef company to speak at UW-River Falls March 7

February 25, 2022 - Sean Sherman, founder and chief executive officer of The Sioux Chef, will speak Monday, March 7, at 7 p.m. in the Falcon's Nest in the University Center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The free and open to the public event is sponsored by the Student Involvement Office. Masks are required in university buildings.

Sherman, an author and chef, will speak on "The (R)evolution of Indigenous Food Systems of North America." There will also be a Q&A with Sherman.

A member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, Sherman was born and raised in Pine Ridge, S.D. Cooking in kitchens across the U.S. and Mexico for 30 years, Sherman is a world-renowned chef in the culinary movement of indigenous food systems throughout North America. His extensive studies on the foundations of indigenous food systems have led him to showcase Native American cuisine.

In 2014, Sherman opened the business, The Sioux Chef, designed to provide catering and food education in the Twin Cities area. He and his business partner, Dana Thompson, designed and opened the Tatanka Truck, which features 100% pre-contact foods of the Dakota and Minnesota territories.

In October 2017, Sherman and his team presented the first decolonized dinner at the prestigious James Beard House in Manhattan. His first book, "The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen," received the James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook for 2018. It was chosen as one of the top ten cookbooks of 2017 by the L.A. Times, San Francisco Chronicle and

Smithsonian magazine. That same year, Sherman was selected as a Bush Fellow and received the 2019 Leadership Award from the James Beard Foundation.

Sherman serves on the leadership committee of the James Beard Foundation Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans and was recently awarded The Ashoka Fellowship. In July

2021, Sherman and Thompson opened Owamni by The Sioux Chef, 425 W. River Parkway, Minneapolis. It is Minnesota's first full-service indigenous restaurant, featuring healthy Indigenous food and drinks.

The Sioux Chef team continues with its mission to help educate and make indigenous foods more accessible to as many communities as possible through the non-profit, North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems, at the Midtown Global Market, 920 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, and the accompanying Indigenous Food Lab, a professional indigenous kitchen and training center.

"Reclamation of ancestral education is a critical part of reversing the damage of colonialism and forced assimilation, and food is at the heart of this reclamation," according to the NaTIFS website. "NāTIFS will drive sustainable economic empowerment and prosperity into tribal areas through a reimagined North American food system that also addresses the health impacts of injustice."

Elise Peters, event and activities coordinator for the UWRF Student Involvement Office, said the event is part of the We Are Falcons Series that helps students learn about UWRF's mission, vision and values. The university's core values include being student-centered, academic excellence, inclusiveness, innovation, global engagement and integrity.

"I enjoy hearing from people I don't hear from every day," Peters said. "I can't wait to hear his journey of decolonizing food."

Gallo statement on State of the State address

February 16, 2022- University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo issued the following statement following the State of the State address Tuesday.

"I want to thank Gov. Tony Evers for his commitment to higher education and his recognition of the vital role Wisconsin public universities play in building the futures of our students and the communities we serve. The funding helps maintain the UW System's, including UWRF's, dedication to providing affordable education as well as much needed additional funding for counseling and other mental health services for our students."



Helping students succeed: Falcons Soar Award to provide guaranteed first-year, transfer student scholarships

February 3, 2022 - First-year and transfer students at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls are now eligible for a [Falcons Soar Award](#). These guaranteed scholarships are based on a student's grade point average at the time of admission to the university.

"Offering an exceptional education at a great value has always been our focus," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "Without scholarships, students may have difficulty paying for college. The Falcons Soar Awards will expand access and opportunities for our students, one of the many reasons UWRF continues to be a leader in social mobility for those seeking a degree."

UWRF Executive Director of [Admissions](#) Sarah Nelson said the first-year student scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$2,000, depending on a student's cumulative grade point average:

- 4.0 GPA and higher receive \$2,000
- 3.75 to 3.99 GPA receive \$1,500
- 3.30 to 3.74 GPA receive \$1,000

No ACT scores are required for consideration, Nelson noted.

Transfer students are also eligible for the Falcons Soar Award. All transfer students with a 3.40 cumulative GPA or higher will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

First-year and transfer students will automatically be awarded the scholarship. There is no need to apply for it, Nelson said.

“More than 1,800 students who have been admitted to UWRF for the fall have already qualified for the scholarship,” Nelson said. “We’re excited to offer these awards and make UWRF even more affordable for our students and families.”

UWRF awards about \$2 million in scholarships each year to students.

Students who receive the Falcons Soar Award are eligible to apply for additional scholarships, Nelson said.

Some of the competitive scholarships include:

- Chancellor’s Scholarship, a full-tuition or half-tuition scholarship for eligible first-year students that is renewable for four years
- Falcon Scholars Scholarship, a \$1,000 annual scholarship for first-year students renewable for four years, including an additional stipend of up to \$2,000 for a study abroad or undergraduate research experience
- Diversity Success Scholarship, \$1,000 to \$3,500, a one-time award given to ethnically diverse or economically disadvantaged first-year students
- Falcons Fly Higher Scholarship, \$500 to \$2,500, a one-time award offered to first-year or transfer students
- Study in Wisconsin Scholarship, \$3,000 a year, awarded to non-resident students and is renewable for up to four years

Learn more about additional scholarships offered at UWRF [here](#).

The UWRF Admissions Office offers campus tours daily. Campus Close Ups, Falcon Preview Days, and Admitted Student Days provide additional opportunities to explore campus, connect with faculty, and learn more about university resources. More information about upcoming visit events can be found [here](#).

For more information, contact the Admissions Office at admissions@uwrf.edu or 715-425-3500.

Hippy Feet founder to speak as Innovator in Residence

February 21, 2022 - Michael Mader, founder and CEO of Hippy Feet, is the spring 2022 Innovator in Residence at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. He will speak on "Removing Barriers. How an Innovative Idea Led to Social Change," on Tuesday, March 1, at 11 a.m. via Zoom.



The Innovator in Residence is part of an innovation program at UWRF's College of Business and Economics. Students learn to solve problems creatively and develop business models from their ideas in innovation classes and also compete in the campus Innovation Challenge. UWRF students have taken first place in the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament three times in the past six years and have gone on to start businesses that impact some of the biggest global issues, including homelessness and water security.

Mader's vision of helping homeless youth inspired the creation of Hippy Feet in 2016. The company initially donated one pair of socks for every pair sold, but quickly recognized and started addressing another urgent need - job training and transitional employment for young people experiencing homelessness.

Hippy Feet employs homeless youth, ages 16 to 24, in their packaging, screen printing, and embroidery operations. Mader hosts employment sessions at Hippy Feet's Minneapolis office and partners with local nonprofits to connect the young people Hippy Feet employs with emergency financial services, bus passes and gas cards for transportation, interview clothing, work boots, and other related items or services that ensure there are as few barriers to income as possible.

Mader honed the initial concept of Hippy Feet as part of the 2015 UWRF Innovation Challenge.

For more information about this event and to join the presentation, visit go.uwrf.edu/innovator or call 715-425-3335.

In-person Horse Judging Youth Clinic is back for 2022

February 23, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is offering a Horse Judging Youth Clinic on Saturday, March 26, at the Campus Farm, 1475 S. Wasson Lane, River Falls. The clinic is intended for 4-H and FFA youth members as well as agricultural education coaches interested in learning or improving their horse judging skills. Participants of all judging experiences and levels are welcome.

The clinic instructor is Casie Bass, assistant professor of animal science at UW-River Falls and coach of the UW-River Falls horse judging team.

Participants will learn how to evaluate horse balance, conformation, in-hand classes, as well as various performance classes. Participants will also learn how to:

- effectively take notes when judging various classes
- provide a solid set of oral reasons (with the opportunity to hear and give sets of oral reasons)
- accurately evaluate balance, conformation, muscling, and overall quality of stock breed horses
- correctly judge halter, Western pleasure, trail, ranch riding, hunter hack, and equitation based on the AQHA handbook

Both videos and live horses (for halter and performance classes) are included at the clinic.

The clinic will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 26. Costs are:

- \$90 for participants which includes lunch, snacks, a judging manual, a t-shirt, and participation in all activities
- \$50 for auditors which covers lunch, snacks, and listening to all activities (no judging manual or t-shirt provided)

The registration deadline is Wednesday, March 23. To register, visit www.uwrf.edu/ANFS/EquineClinics.cfm.

For more information, email Bass at casie.bass@uwrf.edu.

International artists' music, 2020 commissioned composer's music premiere March 3, (was delayed due to the pandemic)

February 23, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls 2020 commissioned composer Nirmala Rajasekar and her daughter, Shruthi Rajasekar, will have their music performed on Thursday, March 3, at 7:30 p.m. in Abbott Concert Hall in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

The event is free and open to all. Masks are required in university buildings.

The 2020 Commissioned Composers Project concert is being premiered late due to COVID-19 concerns.

The chamber music performance will be comprised of students from the UWRF Symphony Band. There also will be world drumming with director Pat O'Keefe, UWRF lecturer of music, and Nirmala as guest artist.



Nirmala is one of the premier Saraswathi veena players in the world, a vocalist, composer and educator. A celebrated composer, Nirmala has written traditional and collaborative music for orchestras, choruses, theater and chamber ensembles in Indian and Western classical music. She is the university's first Indian-women composers and UWRF's first-ever composers from a traditional art form to be the commissioned composer.

Nirmala has performed at several world-renowned venues including Siri Fort (New Delhi), Carnegie Hall, United Nations (New York), Sawai

Gandharva Mahotsav (Pune), the Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, Kalakshetra (Chennai), Gayana Samaja (Bengaluru), Chembur Fine Arts (Mumbai), Kolkotta Performing Arts Festival (Kolkotta), Rumi International Festival (Konya, Turkey), Musee Rietburg (Zurich, Switzerland) and many other venues in India, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Indonesia and Singapore.

She is a passionate educator who believes in passing on the art to the next generation with sincerity and dedication. She established the Naadha Rasa Center for Music and has served as its artistic director for the past 27 years.



Named by The Guardian UK as a composer "who will enrich your life," Shruthi is an Indian American musician exploring identity, community, and joy. Shruthi's music draws from her training in the Carnatic (South Indian classical) and Western classical idioms. Composition honors include the KHORIKOS ORTUS International Award and the Global Women in Music Award from the United Nations & Donne in Musica. As a soprano and Carnatic vocalist, Shruthi has been recognized by the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and the internationally televised Carnatic Music Idol USA. A graduate of Princeton University, Shruthi was awarded a Marshall Scholarship in the UK for graduate studies in composition and ethnomusicology.



The concert will feature the world premiere of the song “Elemental Spirit.” The concert also will feature the song “Son of Pandu.” King Pandu had five sons; together, they were known as the Pandavas. The Pandavas' story is told in the ancient Hindu epic poem “Mahabharata.” “Son of Pandu” explores the character of his third son, Arjuna, the hero

of the “Mahabharata.”

UWRF’s Commissioned Composers Project is the longest-running continuous composers project at a university in the United States.

“A world premiere of music celebrates the creative and is a gift,” said Music Professor Kris Tjornehoj.

The Commissioned Composer Project was started in 1967 by Professor Emeritus Conrad De Jong. De Jong's intention from the beginning was to ensure that contemporary trends in American music would become part of the repertoire of UW-River Falls music students.

Joint statement on updated masking expectations UW-River Falls, UW-Eau Claire, and UW-Stout

February 16, 2022- This morning, UW System President Tommy Thompson announced that he is working with UW System universities to end the mandatory masking requirements as soon as Tuesday, March 1, and no later than Spring Break. See the original news release [here](#).

As a result of this UW System decision, masking requirements will be suspended at UW-River Falls, UW-Eau Claire, and UW-Stout at the end of the day on Friday, March 11.

The universities are proud to have served their communities by offering testing, vaccinations and contributing to the overall public health in the region throughout the pandemic and are prepared to begin the transition from pandemic to endemic operations. Communities, school districts and institutions across the state are phasing out mask requirements as COVID-19 cases are declining and hospitalizations are decreasing.

Ensuring primary vaccinations and a booster shot have been received and wearing a well-fitted mask such as a KN95 or N95 continues to be the best protection against COVID-19. All who want to continue wearing masks on campus are encouraged to do so and to respect everyone's right to make that personal decision. The universities will continue to monitor COVID-19, consult with public health professionals and adjust policies if circumstances change.

Free COVID-19 testing remains available for university and community members at all three of the universities through Friday, April 1.

In addition to providing COVID-19 testing, the following vaccination clinics will be offered:

UW-River Falls Campus Vaccination Opportunity

Today, Feb. 16, until 4 p.m.

Falcon's Nest, University Center

No appointment required.

Go [here](#) for future dates.

UW-Stout Campus Vaccination Opportunity

Friday, Feb. 18

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Memorial Student Center - Cedarwood and Maplewood rooms

[Appointments are encouraged.](#)

UW-Eau Claire Campus Vaccination Opportunity

Wednesday, Feb. 23

8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Student Health Service

Students and employees can call 715-836-5360 for an appointment

For more information, please visit the following links:

UW-River Falls: <https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/>

UW-Eau Claire: <https://www.uwec.edu/coronavirus-updates/>

UW-Stout: <https://www.uwstout.edu/covid-19-coronavirus-planning-and-preparedness>

Lt. Gov. Barnes to speak on sustainability, Wisconsin Climate Action Plan at UW-River Falls Feb. 28

February 21, 2022 -- Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, chair of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change, will speak and answer questions from 3 to 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 28, at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in the Kinnickinnic Theater, University Center.



Barnes will talk about what students and community members can do about taking action on climate change solutions and discuss the Wisconsin Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report. The event is free and open to all. Due to COVID-19, masks are required in UWRF buildings.

UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo will introduce Barnes.

"I am thrilled Lt. Gov. Barnes is visiting the campus and sharing the message of sustainability and strategies to address the climate crisis," Gallo said. "One of the themes of my [Listening and Learning Report](#) released in January was to embrace a holistic approach to sustainability. Students want UWRF to expand our commitment to sustainability, and it is a priority for us."

The Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report was [published](#) in December 2021.

The report includes 55 climate solutions across nine sectors that will lay the foundation for the state to better adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, while also seeking environmental justice and economic opportunities in renewable energy and conservation.

Over the last year, the task force worked to identify strategies to combat climate change by studying recent science and data, learning from Native Nations, farmers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local governments that are already taking action to address the crisis, and, most importantly, listening to the experiences of Wisconsinites - particularly those of communities that have been excluded from policymaking in the past, according to a news release.

"The climate crisis is taking a toll on everyone in our state, but communities of color and low-income communities are more likely to face the harshest impacts of climate change, despite contributing the least to the problem," Barnes stated in the news release. "In order to address this crisis and the environmental injustices associated with it, we must take urgent action, and we must ensure those actions are equitable and inclusive—anything less will continue the long pattern of environmental racism we have witnessed in this country."

The solutions in the report range from the creation of a state office to address environmental injustices, green job training programs for displaced and marginalized workers, funding to help farmers adopt more sustainable practices, reimplementing transportation policies that promote clean, alternative methods of transportation, and statutory changes to help the energy sector transition to cleaner energy production.

“The people are ready for change,” Barnes stated in the climate report. “The people are demanding change. Farmers are choosing more sustainable agricultural practices. Utility companies are investing in renewable energy. And our local communities are reforming their policies to promote greener, cleaner economies. We can and must make Wisconsin a place where everyone can grow up in a safe and clean environment and has the opportunity to thrive, no matter their ZIP code.”

Barnes was elected lieutenant governor on Nov. 8, 2018. He is the first African American to serve in the position in Wisconsin, and the second African American to ever hold statewide office.

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Barnes is the son of a public school teacher and a manufacturing assembly line worker - both union members to whom he credits with shaping his worldview. A proud product of Milwaukee Public Schools, he graduated from John Marshall High School in 2003.

Barnes is a graduate of Alabama A&M University. After college, he worked for various political campaigns and in the city of Milwaukee mayor's office, and then as an organizer for Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope, a Milwaukee-based interfaith coalition that advocates for social justice.

In 2012, at the age of 25, Barnes was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly where he served two terms. His time in the State Assembly included serving as chair of the legislature's Black and Latino Caucus and becoming a recognized leader on progressive economic policies and gun violence prevention legislation.

The event is sponsored by the UWRF Sustainability Fellows and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

For more information on Barnes' visit, contact Grace Coggio, Sustainability Fellow and associate professor of communication studies at grace.coggio@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4298.



Professor named McKnight Artist Fellowships Program ceramic artist fellow

February 15, 2022 - Mike Helke doesn't want the pottery he creates to sit in a cupboard.

"I want it to participate in the daily rhythms of home life," said Helke, a University of Wisconsin-River Falls art assistant professor and ceramics program director. "I want my work not to be hidden. I want it to be out on a table and used. It is visual pottery. For me my work is not passive, it has a presence."

"Ideally, my pots help the user think, feel, question and wonder how things could be rather than how they should be," he said. "I hope the user's understanding of the pot evolves along with their personal perception of things while it might also help them imagine or re-imagine their own hopeful future."

Helke, of Stillwater, Minn., received a 2021 McKnight Artist Fellowships Program ceramic artist fellow. The fellowship continues through July. The fellowship provides support for individual artists and provides \$25,000 in unrestricted support for midcareer and discipline-specific artistic and professional development opportunities. He applied and provided a portfolio for the fellowship.

Helke used the funding to help supplement the construction of a 22-foot by 31-foot home pottery studio. Before, he had a smaller basement studio with the kilns outside.

"I am very grateful to the McKnight Foundation and living in an area that is so supportive of the arts," he noted.

Helke's mom, Connie, of Marine on the St. Croix, is a functional potter, so he grew up having access to making pottery. He

originally planned to study the natural sciences at the University of Minnesota but eventually decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in ceramics. He also has a Master of Fine Arts from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in Alfred, N.Y.

Trays, troughs, pitchers, pouring pots, bowls, salt dishes, mugs, tumblers and plates are handmade from stoneware, glazed with Shino, slips and stains and fired to about 2,260-degrees Fahrenheit. He also has architectural influences in his pottery.

"My work plays on a lot of different media, some are more sculpture and then others are more utilitarian," said Helke, who is married to Sarah Millfelt and has two stepsons. "Some things I make are less practical. They might shift to a different realm. The emphasis of those works might be more visual and/or conceptual than practical."

Art Professor Kaylee Spencer, assistant dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, said Helke is a star in the regional and national arts community.

"To him, this award gives recognition of the incredible success he has already achieved in terms of pushing the boundaries of creativity within his medium, and it gives him opportunities to explore and discover what's next," Spencer said. "Because the McKnight Fellowship is so competitive, it signals that the UWRF Art Department continues to be at the forefront of creativity and innovation. Mike's award will help us to continue to recruit the best students into our art programs."

Pots have practical, ritualistic and aesthetic functions. They help share culture, Helke said.

"Art, in general, is always a reflection of culture," Helke said. "It reflects the environment, materials, technology that a culture has access to as well as their ideologies, ethics, bias', etc. If you know how, it is a material you can do anything with. Its malleability and strength make it a miracle material. You can make roof tiles and tools."

When pots live with people, perceptions of the artwork change, Helke noted.

"My perception of objects evolve as I live with them," Helke said. "I have pots that my kids made when they were little, the way I thought about them ten years ago is completely different than how I perceive them now. The objects stay the same, but their meaning and function seems to evolve with me -- to me, there is something really profound about that."

Helke has taught full-time at UWRF for four years and three years before that was an adjunct professor. Teaching impacts his work as classroom discussions with students help stimulate ideas.

"I like the small community at UWRF," he said. "The students get to know one another. I'm the instructor but they are all resources to each other."

Spencer said Helke's work is always evolving.

"He makes functional pieces that offer subtle nods to the modernist past while delivering refreshingly new takes on familiar objects," Spencer said. "His work brings together striking forms with beautifully-designed surfaces that charge his work with a sense of play."

With the new studio, Helke has seen his work shift in scale to larger pieces because he does not have to walk pieces outside to the kilns.

“The students know and respond to that excitement and energy of change,” he noted. “They know what I am fired up about with something new and they respond to that energy.”

For more information and to learn more about Helke's pottery, visit his website at mikehelkepottery.com.



Scaling the heights: UW-River Falls student climbs Mount Kilimanjaro over winter break

February 7, 2022 - A University of Wisconsin-River Falls international student climbed to new heights over winter break.

Phanice “Nissy” Obasi, of Nakuru County, Kenya, a dual major in economics and computer science and information systems, spent seven days in December climbing and descending from Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain, in northern Tanzania. The mountain is 19,431 feet high.

Obasi, a senior international student who graduates in May, took the trip in with her brother, Jay, sister, Ma, and two friends, Muthee and Nguere.

Obasi finished her final exams at UWRF early and headed home to Kenya in mid-December. On December 15, she and her siblings drove six hours from Nairobi, Kenya, to Tanzania and stayed in Arusha, the town closest to the Roof of Africa, a nickname for the mountain.

The group, joined by about 18 other people: climbers, guides and porters, who carry the tents, food and other gear, started the ascent on December 16.

Obasi prepared for the trip by having morning runs during the fall semester and occasionally working out at the campus gym.

“It was not that bad,” Obasi said, noting she started out wearing a light workout shirt and yoga pants. “It had a slight incline. It was beautiful. It was so green and so many trees. It was warm; kind of like June or July in River Falls.”

First-starting-out hikers are encouraged to walk slowly to help acclimate themselves as they climb.

“The guides encouraged us to take it all in and to enjoy the experience,” Obasi said.

The group stopped at Machame camp having walked about 10 kilometers the first day.

On the second day, they ascended to about 12,500 feet on the mountain, walking about eight hours, to Shira Camp. The walk was still easy and Obasi noticed the terrain was becoming drier with more open land.

The third day was difficult, Obasi said.

“It was more of a climb than a walk,” she noted. “You had to hold on to the rocks and climb up.”

The group climbed to about 15,200-feet above sea level, but they descended to about 13,000 feet to sleep, which is part of getting acclimated to the elevation.

On the fourth day, they left the Karanga Campsite and hiked about seven hours with ever steeper terrain.

“We could see the peak,” Obasi said. “I was very happy to view it and at the same moment I wished everyone could experience this.”

Reaching the peak

They went to bed early and awoke at 12:30 a.m. on day five to make the final near eight-hour summit to the Uhuru Peak.

“We were dressed like we were going to the top of Mount Everest,” Obasi said, noting she was wearing four layers of clothing to stay warm and had toe and hand warmers. “We filled our water packs with warm water. If we would have known better, we would have used hot water because it froze. It was so cold. It was snowing. There was the kind of wind that pushes you off balance.”

“I had to stop so many times,” Obasi said, noting she and her sister were not feeling well from eating food they were not used to. “I didn’t think I would make it. The last day really takes everything out of you. I actually cried because it was so hard, but hey, I still made it!”

“When I saw the Uhuru Peak, Mt. Kilimanjaro board at the top, it was like the light at the end of the tunnel,” Obasi added. “You just take it in, knowing you made it.”

The group then started their descent, sliding on rock and snow. They stayed over one more night on the mountain and completed the descent the next day, leaving Mt. Kilimanjaro through the Mweka gate.

“I would definitely do it again,” Obasi said. “At the moment it might seem painful, but it is worth the experience when you can

wake up and see the highest peak of Africa.”

Obasi and her family started hiking mountains in the summer of 2019. They were looking for something to do and decided to hike Mount Longonot in Kenya, which is about 9,108 feet high.

“It was painful, but we have such good memories from that impromptu trip,” Obasi said.

The next mountain they tackled was Mount Kenya, the second-highest one in Africa, in December 2020.

Climbing builds emotional strength

Climbing mountains has given Obasi emotional strength and the fortitude to try new things.

“Take the plunge, you never know what you might find,” she noted. “You never have limits if you keep pushing them. You make yourself bigger. That is what life is, a very large adventure.”

Professor Tony Varghese, chair of the Computer, Information and Data Sciences Department, said Obasi asked to take an exam in a class early because she was going hiking with her family. Varghese was surprised to learn she was climbing to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

“In 20 years, I have only seen a few students like her,” Varghese said. “She took one of the hardest classes on campus, Calculus II, and it did not phase her at all. She seems to find her classes easy and at the same time she is very personable. She is going places. Mount Kilimanjaro is just the start.”

Obasi chose to attend UWRF because she liked the campus and her sister, Lister, is an alum.

“I really do well in a tight-knit community,” she noted. “I like the smaller classes and the opportunity for more conversation with your adviser and professors.”

After she graduates, Obasi is moving to New York to work as an analyst in investment banking.

She and her siblings are planning their next mountain climbing adventure as well. In about a year they plan to scale the Rwenzori Mountains, a range of mountains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mount Stanley, the highest peak, is 16,762 feet high. The Mountains of the Moon make up the source of the Nile River.

To learn more about international education at UWRF and the programs the university offers through Study Aboard, contact the Office of International Education at studyabroad@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4891.

UW-River Falls is No. 1 in the UW System for the percent of students who study abroad.



UW-River Falls Career Fairs help students find their future

February 10, 2022 - Dropping her books at the fall 2018 University of Wisconsin-River Falls Career Fair seemed like an embarrassing moment for Autumn Thorsen. Instead, it helped her find her future.

The marketing communications and communications studies dual major who graduated in December 2018 visited the UWRF Career Fair as part of a class assignment to share her resume and talk about her skills with at least three employers.

As she scrambled to pick up her books, Katie Kroll, director of development and internships at Northwestern Mutual, who was at the Career Fair came over to talk to Thorsen.

Kroll encouraged Thorsen to share her pitch.

"I froze up," Thorsen said. "She could tell I was nervous. She told me to take my time."

From that initial meeting, Thorsen interviewed with Kroll for a full-time position at Northwestern Mutual, which was not a good fit.

Not to be thwarted, Kroll kept in contact with Thorsen, waiting for the right job for Thorsen.

Thorsen joined Northwestern Mutual in April 2019 and is the director of culture and internships in downtown Minneapolis.

"You never know who you are going to meet at the Career Fair," Thorsen said. "You never know that dropping your books at an event will change your life and the person you meet will be your role model."

Thorsen loves the culture at Northwestern Mutual with a strong work ethic and a team approach to working together.

Spring Career Fair

The UWRF Spring Career Fair is Wednesday, Feb. 16, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center. The fair is open to UWRF students and alumni.

Eighty-four industry partners will attend the fair, the maximum allowed, said McKenna Pfeiffer, assistant director of Career Services.

"The No. 1 way jobs are found is through networking," Pfeiffer said. "For our students, the Career Fair helps bring organizations and positions to life. When students take advantage of stepping out of their comfort zones, that's when some of the best opportunities present themselves. We know students obtain internships and jobs from the Career Fair. It is all about the relationships."

Pfeiffer encourages students to come to Career Fair even if they are just starting their college education.

"It is an opportunity to start practicing talking to employers," she said. "First-year students benefit from the career exploration which is a huge component. They can learn how others in their major got where they are."

About 55% of UWRF graduates complete at least one academic internship, practicum or student teaching placement, Pfeiffer said.

Kroll said meeting students at UWRF is all about building relationships and making connections as an industry partner.

"Internships are the leading engine that feeds the whole system of our talent pool," Kroll added. "As an industry partner, we need to find different and innovative ways to connect with students and build rapport."

Kroll, of River Falls, said she is impressed with UWRF's student-focused environment.

"They want to partner with us and help with student development," Kroll said. "They go above and beyond to help students be ready for the professional world. As a leader in an organization, it is so valuable and so attractive."

Networking, finding opportunities

Kaylee Beier, a December 2020 business administration graduate with an emphasis in finance, is an associate financial representative at Northwestern Mutual in Woodbury, Minn. She started at the company in summer 2020 as an intern and then was hired full time in January 2021.

"I love the work we are doing," Beier said, noting she met Kroll during a mock interview in one of Beier's classes.

While at UWRF, Beier went to nearly all of the Career Fairs.

"Networking is very important," she said. "It's how I got all my jobs. You get to see opportunities, learn how to apply to places, show people your resume and get advice on it. You get a lot of insight into companies hiring."

Noah Hinsch, a May graduate in business administration with an emphasis in finance, started full-time at Northwestern Mutual in June as a financial advisor in Woodbury. He loves meeting clients and helping them with their finances. He did an internship with the company in January 2020 that he found on Handshake, an online recruiting platform that UWRF has had since 2016.

According to the company website, there are more than 9 million active student users, more than 1,400 college and university partners and 650,000 employers on Handshake.

“Handshake is all about removing barriers and providing access to internships and job postings,” Pfeiffer said.

The Fall Career Fair will be Oct. 12-13 in the ballroom in the University Center.

For more information on the Spring Career Fair or Career Services, email career.services@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3572.



UW-River Falls competes in Campus Race to Zero Waste competition

February 22, 2022 – With dedicated recycling and other campus-wide initiatives, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is focused on reducing its carbon footprint and educating students about sustainability.

The university is taking part in the [Campus Race to Zero Waste](#), formerly known as Recyclemania, that started in late January and continues until Saturday, March 26. The competition includes campuses across the U.S. and Canada.

The goal of the friendly competition among schools is to minimize waste on campus, encourage recycling and reduce the university's carbon footprint.

On average UWRF's recycling rate is about 30%, said Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias, noting there is room to improve that across campus.

Record high landfill diversion

In 2021 the university hit a record high of a near 56.5% landfill diversion, which includes recycling of batteries, scrap metal, electronics waste, appliances, light bulbs and pallets.

It also includes the surplus property program where office furniture and other equipment are reused by the university or sold if it can't be repurposed on campus, Klapatch-Mathias said.

Money raised from surplus items sold in turn helps fund other waste minimization and diversion activities such as a battery recycling program on campus. In 2021, 819 pounds of dry cell batteries were recycled.

"It is a newer program that not a lot of campuses do," Klapatch-Mathias said.

In 2021, almost 891.7 tons of waste was diverted from landfills. The university produced 687.9 tons of trash. In 2020, 43% of waste was diverted from landfills; the university sent nearly 988 tons of trash to the landfill and diverted about 754 tons.

"I am sensing we saw less move-out waste at the end of the school year," Klapatch-Mathias said, when asked about the change. "I think students came to campus with fewer things in 2021."

The university also has plastic film recycling areas in Hagestad Hall and University Center. In 2021, just over 166 pounds of plastic film was recycled.

Being a part of the Campus Race to Zero Waste competition helps raise awareness about waste generation on campus, Klapatch-Mathias said.

"I think it is important to give the university a sense of not just what we are recycling but what we are generating and how we are disposing of it," he said.

Weekly reports are gathered with waste and recycling materials weighed at the area solid waste station.

According to the Campus Race to Zero Waste website, over 1,100 colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada have participated in the competition, recycling and composting 1,064 million pounds of waste and preventing the release of nearly 1.62 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is comparable to removing over 335,000 passenger vehicles from the road for one year.

During the 2020 competition, 4.5 million students and staff from 300 U.S. and Canadian campuses recycled and composted 48.6 million pounds, stopped 380 million plastics containers from going to the landfill, preventing the release of 70,875 metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is equivalent to preventing the annual emissions from 15,047 cars.

Campus committed to sustainability

UW-River Falls is committed to sustainability. In Chancellor Maria Gallo's [2022 Listening and Learning Report](#), embracing a holistic approach to sustainability is one of the major themes.

UWRF has received national recognition for its sustainability efforts including:

- Featured in the [Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges 2022](#) edition which looks at whether students have a quality of life on campus that is both healthy and sustainable; how well a school is preparing students for employment in the clean-energy economy of the 21st Century as well as for citizenship in a world now defined by environmental concerns and opportunities; and how environmentally responsible a school's policies are.
- Listed in the [2021 Sierra Club's List of Cool Schools](#)
- In July, the campus became an affiliate of the [Bee Campus USA program](#), designed to help improve habitat for pollinators. There are 132 Bee Campus USA Affiliates in the nation.
- The university has a STARS silver rating from the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education](#). The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance

For the future, Klapatch-Mathias said he believes the university can become a STARS platinum school, the first in the UW System and in the Midwest. There are currently only 11 universities with a platinum rating in the world.

“Our students want us to be more sustainable. They want us to be STARS platinum,” Klapatch-Mathias said. “We are a small enough school with a culture for sustainability.”

UWRF students do pay a segregated fee that is put into a Green Fund to support sustainability on campus.

Other sustainability events

The campus will have March Forth to Earth Day where every Friday starting March 4 there will be an event to support sustainability. The kick-off event will be at the University Center.

On Earth Day (Friday, April 22), there will be a march to Veteran’s Park and at 5 p.m. a Zoom event to link everyone marching for Earth Day around the world.

From 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, April 24, UWRF is a co-sponsor of Earth Fest 2022 at Glen Park in River Falls. The free event will have free LED bulbs, free trees for the first 500 attendees, music, food, activities, a sustainability pledge booth, well water nitrate testing and a clothing swap.

There also will be a Sustainability Fair with exhibits, demonstrations and advocacy.

For more information, email Klapatch-Mathias at mark.klapatch@uwrf.edu.



UW-River Falls Symphony Band and St. Croix Valley

February 25, 2022 -- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Symphony Band and St. Croix Valley Symphony Orchestra will perform at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, in Abbott Concert Hall in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

The band is made up of UWRF students and the orchestra of students and musicians from the greater St. Croix Valley. UWRF Music Professor Kris Tjornehoj conducts.

The program includes a world premiere by UWRF Professor Emeritus J. Michael Roy titled "Triquetra: The Trinity Celtic Knot" featuring Denny McGinn on the horn. Other highlights include music from "The Damnation of Faust," "Hansel and Gretel" and symphonic dances from "West Side Story."

Admission is \$8/adults, \$5/seniors, \$2/students. Tickets are only available at the door.

The St. Croix Valley Symphony Orchestra has provided music to the St. Croix Valley for about 50 years.

For more information, call the Music Department at 715-425-3183 or visit www.uwrf.edu/music/events.

UW-River Falls Wyman Series: Editor, best-selling author Giridharadas to speak March 8

February 22, 2022 - Best-selling author, editor-at-large for Time magazine and MSNBC political analyst Anand Giridharadas will speak at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls on Tuesday, March 8.



Giridharadas will present on his book “Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World,” a New York Times bestseller. The book has been named one of the New York Times 100 Notable Books of 2018, listed as one of National Public Radio’s Best Books of 2018 and named one of the Washington Post’s 50 Notable Works of Nonfiction.

There will be an interview and Q&A session for the campus and community from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in 222 North Hall Auditorium. The event is open and free to all, and all are encouraged to attend a reception beginning at 4:45 p.m. outside the auditorium. Due to COVID-19 concerns, masks are required in university buildings.

Giridharadas will host a discussion for students from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Kinnickinnic River Theater, University Center.

“We’re thrilled to have Anand Giridharadas at UWRF for two events,” said Political Science Professor Neil Kraus. “His work has changed the debate about inequality in the United States, and we encourage the community to come to campus for what promises to be an important and engaging discussion.”

The book investigates how the global elite’s efforts to change the world preserve the status quo and obscure their roles in causing the problems they later seek to solve.

“There is no denying that today’s elite may be among the most socially concerned elites in history,” Giridharadas wrote. “But it is also, by the cold logic of numbers, the most predatory in history.”

“Winners Take All” also addresses the disparity in wealth.

“The top 10 percent of humanity have come to hold 90 percent of the planet’s wealth,” he wrote. “It is no wonder that the American voting public—like other publics around the world—has turned more resentful and suspicious in recent years, embracing populist movements on the left and right, bringing socialism and nationalism into the center of political life in a way that once seemed unthinkable, and succumbing to all manner of conspiracy theory and fake news.”

A New York Times Book Review by Joseph E. Stiglitz called the book “entertaining and gripping. For those at the helm, the philanthropic plutocrats and aspiring ‘change agents’ who believe they are helping but are actually making things worse, it’s time for a reckoning with their role in this spiraling dilemma. I suggest they might want to read a copy of this book while in the Hamptons this summer.”

NPR’s Jessica Smith wrote Giridharadas “zeroes in on what he sees as a glaring hypocrisy among affluent elites: that while

many well-meaning (and well-off) Americans claim to want to improve society's inequalities, they don't challenge the structures that preserve that inequality, not wanting to jeopardize their own privileged positions."

Giridharadas is the author of the books "The True American" and "India Calling" and the newsletter The.Ink that investigates politics and culture, money and power and telling the truth. He was a foreign correspondent and columnist for The New York Times from 2005 to 2016 and has also written for The Atlantic, The New Yorker and The New Republic. He is a former McKinsey analyst, an Aspen Institute fellow, a visiting scholar at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University. He appears regularly on TV and the radio in the United States and globally, including on CNN, MSNBC, NPR, Morning Joe and The Daily Show.

Born in Cleveland, Giridharadas was raised there, in Paris and Maryland. He was educated at the University of Michigan, Oxford and Harvard. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Priya Parker, and two children.

For more information on the speaker, visit www.prhspeakers.com/speaker/anand-giridharadas

The events are sponsored by the Walker D. and Helen Bryant Wyman Visiting Professorship which features prominent scholars speaking on timely topics. The professorship was established in 2015 with a generous gift from son, Dr. Bry Wyman.

Zimmer appointed new Foundation president

February 23, 2022 – Amy Zimmer, an experienced non-profit finance leader with more than 20 years in management, is the new president of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Foundation. Zimmer succeeds Janet Burns who retired in late December after more than three years as president and another nine years as accountant.



Prior to her UWRF Foundation appointment, Zimmer was the senior director of finance and administration for the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, an independent nonprofit organization which supports St. Paul community libraries. Zimmer has also served with the Greater Twin Cities and St. Paul Area United Way, Minnesota's Washington County, Minnesota's Office of the Legislative Auditor and Honeywell.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my early tenure with the UWRF Foundation and look forward with great anticipation to working with the Board of Directors and university leadership to grow our endowment and provide increased and critical support for UWRF's students, faculty, programs and projects, such as the Science and Technology Innovation Center," Zimmer said. "I also have a personal connection to UWRF. My daughter is a senior in elementary education. She has had a wonderful college experience."

Zimmer now leads the UWRF Foundation team that receives, manages, and disperses Foundation funds consistent with board policy, donor wishes and the strategic initiatives of the university. Zimmer reports directly to the UWRF Foundation Board of Directors and collaborates with UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo and Assistant Chancellor for University Advancement Rick Foy.

Zimmer earned her bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

"We are delighted to welcome Amy Zimmer to this vital UWRF Foundation leadership role," said David Drewiske, chair of the foundation's board of directors. "Amy's non-profit finance experience and her results-driven approach to management will serve the foundation well."

"We also express deep appreciation to previous president Janet Burns for her outstanding service and contributions to the Foundation and UWRF. We wish her all the best in retirement," Drewiske added.

For more information, contact Zimmer at 715-425-4268 or amy.zimmer@uwrf.edu.



Ag engineering tech student starts own business creating western scarves

March 24, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls senior Naomi Dolton started sewing in her dormitory two years ago to give herself a study break.

"I love to sew," Dolton said. "I didn't have a good sleep schedule. It was something I could do with my hands and give my brain a break from studying." At first Dolton, a senior in agricultural engineering technology from Racine, Minn., made hair scrunchies and would sell a few on the UWRF campus and at area horse tack sales.

At one of the sales, Dolton saw a wild rag, a type of cowboy heritage scarf typically made with silk.

Inspiration hit. Dolton wanted to try and make a similar product without the high price tag using a lightweight satin material.

"Finished wild rags made of silk can range from \$50 to \$100," Dolton said.

In January 2021, Dolton started her own business Rags N Ranchwear. Initially, she did all the sewing of the neckwear apparel herself but as orders increased, she ended up having items sewn by others, getting fabric wholesale and selling the wild rags nationwide.

"It still gets that silk-feel without paying silk prices," Dolton said, noting her scarves cost \$25. "I want to be able to make stuff people can afford without breaking the bank."

Some people wear wild rags when competing in a show with their horses. They are often seen at the Wisconsin Ranch Horse Association Shows, Dolton said. Others choose to wear the scarves as a fashion statement and to stay warm.

The rags come in two sizes, the traditional that are 36-inches by 36-inches and the mini rags that are 20-inches by 20-inches and tend to be more popular with western dressage riders or those wanting a smaller wild rag including children, she noted, adding they can also be styled as a headband.

"When I first started doing the western rags, I thought it would be a side gig and I expected it was something to help pass the time," Dolton said.

In September 2021, she registered Rags N Ranchwear with the Minnesota Secretary of State becoming an officially licensed business.

"I have learned so much about social media management," Dolton said, noting she also had learned business skills including working with people and satisfying customers.

Dolton will have her wild rags at the UWRF Tack Swap and Consignment Sale on the Campus Farm, 1529 S. Wasson Lane, River Falls, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 30. That is the same day as the Colts in Training Open House to showcase the 43 colts that have been trained by students and will be sold through an online auction.

Dolton will also sell her wild rags at the Midwest Horse Fair April 22-24 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. She will also be at the Minnesota Horse Expo April 14-16 at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in St. Paul.

Jesse Guenther, a senior majoring in animal science with an equine emphasis, said she loves that every item from Rags N Ranchwear is handpicked with consumers in mind.

"Naomi finds new patterns and colors for inspirational wild rags that speak to you," Guenther said. "Each time you go to her booth or website you always find something different. Something you must have."

Guenther said she is impressed with Dolton starting her own business while in college and admires how Dolton strives to be both a good student and strong business owner.

"Naomi is a wonderful person who has strong core values and believes in hard work," Guenther said. "She has worked countless hours to build Rages N Ranchwear up from scratch and is continuously trying to make improvements. From interacting with customers to creating new products, she places personal touches on every interaction making herself and Rags N Ranchwear memorable."

If anyone is thinking of starting their own small business, Dolton urges them to follow their dream.

"It might not be going at the speed you want," Dolton said. "You learn life skills and you determine what the business is and what it is going to be."

After she graduates in May, Dolton will work full-time at American Engineering Testing in Rochester, Minn., as an environmental engineering testing technician. She was an intern last summer at the company in quality assurance.

To learn more about Rags N Ranchwear, contact Dolton on her Facebook site or at ragsnranchwear@gmail.com.



First doctoral program starts in May at UW-River Falls

March 15, 2022 -- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will make history this summer as the university's first Doctor of Education degree begins.

The Ed.D. program in Montessori Studies is one of the first such programs in Montessori studies in the United States.

The hybrid program gets underway Monday, May 23, with 14 students from across the nation. The students will start their two-week residency at UW-River Falls on Monday, June 20. There will be an on-campus opening on Saturday, June 18.

The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents approved the program in February 2021.

"We have a very diverse group," said Kateri Carver, interim director of the Ed.D. Montessori program and director of the graduate Montessori Teacher Education Department. The three-year program includes 54 credits.

"The UWRF program is novel and exciting because it has several specific tracks within the Montessori Studies Program such as intergenerational care and social justice," Carver added.

"At the core of Montessori education methodology is the importance of dignity and respect of the individual," Carver said. "It is about the potential of the student to become the best person they can be and contribute to the world. Integral to the philosophy is that we're not alone. We are in a community and a network that should be part of a purpose."

Although the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy have been around for over 100 years, there have been very few doctoral programs in the world that have focused on the Montessori method of education.

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator and innovator. She opened the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. She graduated from medical school in 1896, one of the first female physicians in Italy. She opened a full-day childcare center in a poor inner-city district of Rome, the first of its kind. Using scientific observation and experience, Montessori designed learning materials and a classroom environment that fostered the children's natural desire to learn and provided them the freedom to choose their educational materials.

With March being Women's History Month, it is of note Montessori campaigned vigorously on behalf of women's rights. She wrote and spoke frequently on the need for more opportunities for women and was recognized in Italy and beyond as a leading feminist voice.

UWRF 1907 alum Helen Parkhurst, a Durand native and named a UWRF Distinguished Alum in 1960, studied with Montessori in Rome and for a time served as director of all Montessori schools in the U.S.

She wrote several books on education and developed the Dalton Plan, a method of education where students work at their own pace and receive individual help from the teacher when necessary.

"Her intelligent activity is truly rare and precious," Montessori once said of Parkhurst's career.

Learning from each other, networking

Carver said she is thrilled to have the doctoral program start.

"It is exciting to think about embracing a co-teaching model at the UWRF campus at a graduate level," Carver said, noting both professors with Montessori education credentials along with other professors will be teaching classes. The goal is to collaborate and apply knowledge.

UWRF started the Master Montessori Program in 2012. There are fewer than 10 university-based such programs in the nation. The program is accredited through the Montessori Accreditation Council of Teacher Education (MACTE).

"We are one of only two public universities in the U.S. that offer Montessori Teacher Education programs," Carver said.

During the summer residency portion of the program, Ed.D. students are encouraged to stay on campus. Students will engage in networking events and cohort community-building activities.

"It is all about learning from each other and networking and supporting one another," Carver said.

For more information about the new degree, email kateri.carver@uwrf.edu.

Foaling Around with Wisconsin 4-H Program wins awards

March 9, 2022 -- Katie Stenroos, Evan Henthorne, and Casie Bass have been awarded both the Wisconsin Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (WAE4-HYDP) Collaboration/Partnership Award and the Excellence in Animal Science Programming Award for the Foaling Around with Wisconsin 4-H Program. Stenroos and Henthorne serve as Wisconsin 4-H program educators for Douglas and Adams counties, respectively, and Bass is an associate professor within the Animal and Food Science Department at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Stenroos and Henthorne are both UW-River Falls alumni, where they earned animal science degrees focusing on equine science and agriculture education. Foaling Around with Wisconsin 4-H, which occurred over 12 weeks during spring 2021, was the first state-wide and semester-long program to invite all Wisconsin 4-H youth participants.



Despite face-to-face restrictions due to COVID-19, Stenroos, Henthorne and Bass wanted to provide a learning opportunity for Wisconsin 4-H youth. Foaling around with Wisconsin 4-H, which was facilitated by college students in Bass' Equine Reproductive Techniques course, offered 4-H participants the chance to follow Kitty, a UWRF-owned broodmare, through her gestation and foaling. Every other week over the spring semester, 4-H participants watched a short, equine-related informative video that was prepared by Bass' students. The following Friday, they were able to connect live with Bass and her college students at the UWRF Campus Farm.

The extension project was mutually beneficial as it created opportunities for 4-H youth to chat with college students while simultaneously giving those college students the unique teaching

experience created in this class-led extension project. Over the semester, the college students discussed topics and answered questions related to equine nutrition and reproduction, basic equine management, and the physical and behavioral changes Kitty experienced throughout her gestation. Toward the end of the semester, participants were able to watch a video of Kitty delivering her foal, a healthy colt. Additionally, 4-H students completed educational worksheets covering the information they were learning over the semester. The leading 4-H participant earned the right to name Kitty's foal and had the opportunity to meet Stenroos, Henthorne and Bass, some of the college students, and of course, Kitty and her foal, named Klover, during the 2021 summer.

For more information, email casie.bass@uwrf.edu.



NSF funding supports continued research at South Pole neutron monitor

March 11, 2022 - A University of Wisconsin-River Falls professor has received a National Science Foundation award to support faculty and student research projects.

Physics Professor Suruj Seunarine garnered the \$450,000 NSF grant, paid out over three years, that will allow faculty and students in the Physics Department to continue to pursue science while operating and maintaining the neutron monitor station at the South Pole.

The monitors at the South Pole are part of an international network that detects and measures radiation from space that reaches the Earth's surface. UWRF, along with the Universities of New Hampshire and Delaware, are part of the decades-long experiment that began in 1950s.

"I was just relieved that the experiment would continue," Seunarine said. "I have been working on it since 2012. If we didn't get funding, we couldn't continue operating the South Pole neutron monitor."

The NSF funding supports a post-doctoral research assistant at UWRF for three years and allows UWRF students and faculty to make field trips to the South Pole to maintain and calibrate the station.

One part of the project is purely for science, to measure the cosmic rays that come to Earth, Seunarine said. "It is useful to students to study the cosmic radiation that arrives on Earth," he noted. "It helps build our body of knowledge about cosmic rays and what is going on from a physics perspective in our solar system."

Also, the monitors measure radiation levels that could impact human activity on Earth and in space and interfere with electronics or the power grid.

"In some cases, the radiation could be harmful to astronauts on the space station," Seunarine said, noting the information is also helpful to aircraft pilots to avoid radiation exposure.

"We provide the data from the neutron monitors in almost real-time," he noted.

The grant links all U.S. neutron monitors into the Simpson Neutron Monitor Network, coordinating the operations and data analysis. University of Chicago Professor John Simpson, who died in 2000, invented the neutron monitor in 1948 after his work on the Manhattan Project. During a massive solar flare in 1956, data collected by neutron monitors gave the first indication of the existence of the heliosphere, indicating that the sun's magnetic field extends well beyond the orbits of planets.

Supporting undergraduate research

UWRF supports undergraduate research. The university offers the NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates: Research in Neutrino Astrophysics in the summer. About six non-UWRF undergraduate students and two to four UWRF students participate in summer research projects with the South Pole neutron monitors of the IceCube Neutrino Observatory.

IceCube is a research facility at the South Pole that searches for nearly massless subatomic particles called neutrinos. These high-energy astronomical messengers provide information to probe the most violent astrophysical sources: events like exploding stars, gamma-ray bursts, and cataclysmic phenomena involving black holes and neutron stars. The design and development of the detector were only made possible through individuals and institutions known as the IceCube Collaboration, which includes more than 300 people from 56 institutions in 14 countries, including UWRF.

REU students receive a stipend and funding to cover their travel and living expenses at UWRF. Students, who come from around the country, acquire research skills that are transferrable to many science, technology and engineering fields.

"We have been fortunate to get a significant amount of NSF-support for research projects, and almost all of those funds support students," he said. "That's important to me. I'm not just doing research alone in my office. I'm surrounded by students doing research in a meaningful way. We're involving them in research where they get paid to do research, collaborate with other researchers and present their work at local and regional conferences. They also get to network with scientists in the field."

Physics students Gretchen Hibbert and James Bowers had internships funded last summer through NSF funds. They worked a research project titled "Geomagnetic Effects on Particle Propagation at the South Pole."

Hibbert, of Maribel, a senior graduating in May, said the paid internships covered the costs of staying on campus over the summer.

"It allowed me to focus on the internship rather than have to work a job and work on the internship," Hibbert said. "You are doing something you love and is relevant to what you want to be. If you have the opportunity to take internships whether they are on- or off-campus, go for it. It can be fulfilling and is a great resource."

Bowers, of Richfield, Minn., said the internship allows students to earn professional development to put on resumes and

graduate school applications.

"It was an amazing opportunity," Bowers said. "It allows the ability to network. Gretchen and I made great connections with professionals across the work."

They both also were able to work with their peers across the world and develop camaraderie in their research.

Traveling to the South Pole

Seunarine has been to the South Pole five times, three times for UWRF. Travel to the South Pole has been restricted due to COVID-19 concerns.

"When we can go, we spend 1 ½ weeks doing maintenance and calibration work on the neutron monitor," he noted, adding a student usually travels along to experience the research. The equipment during the pandemic has been maintained by researchers who spend the winter at the South Pole.

"It is very cold, and I would imagine it is the closest thing to being on another planet," Seunarine said, noting the station is the only structure. "As far as you can see on the horizon is flat, white ice and you are standing on 10,000 feet of ice."

In February, temperatures plummet to 30 to 40 degrees below zero with windchills of nearly 70 below zero.

"You are well prepared with clothing for the cold," Seunarine said. "The thing that is difficult is you are not prepared for the altitude and the lower oxygen levels."

Obesity documentary wins top Wisconsin broadcast award

March 7, 2022 - Brooke Shepherd, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, has earned a top award from the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association (WBA) for her reporting on obesity in western Wisconsin.



Shepherd won first place in the news series and documentary category in the annual WBA Student Awards for Excellence. Her reporting during the summer of 2021 resulted in a 30-minute radio documentary, "Obesity trend in western Wisconsin worries experts."

Shepherd's work was supported by a Donovan E. Rasmussen Broadcast Journalism Fellowship through the UW-River Falls Foundation. The documentary aired on the campus radio station, WRFW.

Shepherd, from Stillwater, Minn., graduated in December 2021 with majors in journalism and animal science and a minor in Spanish. While at UWRF, she served as assistant editor and editor of the student-run campus newspaper, the Student Voice.

The award was announced during the WBA Student Seminar held March 5 in Middleton.

The documentary is available on uwrfjournalism.org at <https://bit.ly/35RwqrY>.



Purr-fect: Falcon Feline Adoption Program finds homes for shelter cats

March 23, 2022 -- Nearly 40 people lined up on a recent Wednesday in Hagestad Hall for a chance to meet, pet and interact with K.C. and Zack, two cats living in a small animal shelter being operated by University of Wisconsin-River Falls students.

The shelter, which is a collaboration with the Dunn County Humane Society, is part of the capstone Animal Science 421 Advanced Canine and Feline Management class. Students keep the shelter clean and feed and give needed medications to the cats. Twenty-five students are part of the class and 15 have chosen to be part of the optional Falcon Feline Adoption Program. The program can provide services to four cats at a time.

"Our students need applied animal activity," said Beth Rausch, Animal and Food Science Department associate professor who is also a veterinarian. "This is a way they can get care and management experience on cats. Some cats have been at the Dunn County Humane Society shelter for over a year waiting for a home. What we excel in is taking special needs cats."

The Falcon Feline Adoption Program opened in October 2021 and has helped the Dunn County Humane Society find homes for about a dozen cats, Rausch said. Initial funding came from part of a U.S. Department of Agriculture Capacity Building Grant Rausch received.

Rausch is not aware of any other student-run, university-driven programs.

"The No. 1 thing I see is the incredible teamwork," Rausch said. "It gives me goosebumps. This is a group of students who are coming together and making this happen. It is another applied experiential learning experience for our students. Those experiences are so important to our students. It helps companion animal students see the future and provides applied

learning opportunities.”

Students monitor the behavioral and physical health of the cats as well as use social media to help promote adoptions. The humane society handles the final adoptions, approving the homes for the cats, Rausch said.

Grace Berends, a senior majoring in Animal Science - Companion Animal, started in January with the Falcon Feline program.

“I like being a part of this because I like helping cats at the shelter,” Berends said. “I like that we have the space the cats can play. I love seeing them come out of their shells. When Zack first got here, he was super shy. He would hide. Now he is super loving.”

Being a part of the program helps Berends, of St. Charles, Minn., learn how a shelter operates and cares for the animals.

Sierra Jossart, a senior Animal Science -Companion Animal major from Milwaukee, said she is learning but also enjoying caring for the cats.

“It’s fun, especially when they are cuddling you,” she said, smiling. “I was interested in the program to learn more about cats and about their behavior and their body language toward each other. To be able to do this hands-on experience helps solidify what I have learned in class. I am glad to be part of this unique program. This is why you go to school to have a great experience like this. I appreciate the program and the opportunity to be part of it.”

Jamie Wagner, Dunn County Humane Society kennel manager, said Falcon Feline provides a safe, healthy place for the cats to grow and be socialized.

“It is a benefit for us because we can get the cats living cage-free and they get excellent care from the students,” Wagner said. “They are seeing a different audience for adoption that we might not see at the shelter in Menomonie.”

The students are doing a fantastic job caring and socializing the cats, Wagner noted.

“The students are always coming up with ideas for enrichment for the cats,” Wagner said. “They even rotate the toys, so the cats won’t get bored.”

The Dunn County Humane Society is a no-kill shelter with about 40 cats available for adoption. To learn more, go to dunncountyhumanesociety.org.

The furniture in the Falcon Feline program is reused from the university Surplus Property Program and many of the enrichment opportunities for the cats are made from recycled materials. Litter boxes are made from cardboard, which will break down in a landfill, Rausch said.

Falcon Feline is a program that became a reality because of cooperation between University Police, Facilities Management, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the Food and Animal Science Department and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Rausch noted.

Falcon Feline is open from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays through the end of the spring semester to allow anyone to meet the cats and fill out an adoption application with the Dunn County Humane Society. Email uwrf.falconfelines@gmail.com to make an appointment to visit the cats.

At the recent open hours, K.C. and Zack purred as they were cuddled by potential adopters and took time to chase a feathered interactive toy. Those attending smiled and laughed at the cats' antics.

"Compassion for animals transcends humanity," Rausch said. "I see that through this program with my students. All of them are welcome and all of them feel welcome. It speaks to student belonging."

For questions or to learn more about the Falcon Feline Adoption Program, email beth.rausch@uwrf.edu.



Students Rames Frisch, in tractor, Alex Pierson and Kyle Leis conduct research to determine how to improve a 1960s combine's performance.

Students learn teamwork, research skills to make older combines more efficient and profitable for small farms

March 10, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls [agricultural engineering](#) and [agricultural engineering technology](#) students are researching ways to make older combines more efficient and improve profitability for smaller farmers.

The research is part of a \$150,000 United States Department of Agriculture grant led by Sierra Howry, associate professor of agricultural economics, and Matt Digman, former assistant professor of agricultural engineering.

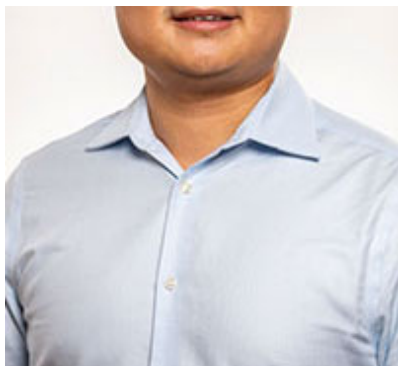
Using a 1960s Oliver combine, agricultural engineering senior Alex Pierson, of Mayer, Minn., along with junior Kyle Leis, of Wilton, and Rames Frisch, a first-year student of Wausau, both agricultural engineering technology majors, developed two methods to potentially make the combine more efficient in harvesting with a new header configuration.

One method used a series of small brushes bolted to the head auger to help push the wheat grains toward the middle of the auger and hence being better transported to the feeder house. The other used a 5/16th piece of plastic sheeting to help fill the space underneath the auger and prevent loss of grains.



The students worked with Bob Zeng, assistant professor of agricultural engineering, and Youngmi Kim, associate professor in agricultural engineering.

“The students are redesigning old equipment to improve the productivity, efficiency, profitability and sustainability of small farms in support of local farming movement



toward low carbon footprint circular food production systems,” Zeng said.

Smaller farmers – those with five to 50 acres-- may not be able to afford new combines and could potentially increase productivity with a low-cost redesign.

“It is more affordable for small-scale farmers to be more efficient rather than buying new equipment,” Pierson said.

Initial data suggests the shim created high 90% efficiency and the brushes in the upper 80% efficiency, compared to 80% efficiency with no modifications. However, the students will analyze the data further. They will eventually share their findings with stakeholders including local farmers.

Being a part of the research as a first-year student created a hands-on learning environment, Frisch said.

“It definitely teaches you a lot just coming into a project,” he noted.

Leis agreed. “I like to work with my hands slinging wrenches,” he said, noting an important part of the project to him was making sure farmers would have the skillset to redesign their equipment cost-effectively.

Kim noted the project allows students from different majors to work collaboratively.

“It is beneficial in the real world,” Kim said. “They are getting the experience of working as a team. It challenges students. Students must understand the problems. They must think of alternative solutions, compare them and choose the best one to solve the problems. They gain project management skills. They will present their work to the Industry Advisory Board members in May.”

Pierson, who graduates in May, said being part of a design and research project is a tremendous addition to her resume.

To learn more about the program, email Zeng at zhiwei.zeng@uwrf.edu.

UWRF’s agricultural engineering degree offers three focus options including machinery systems; food and process systems; and natural resources and environmental systems.

The agricultural engineering technology degree focuses on applied science and engineering and using existing technology to solve real-world problems in the food, fuel and fiber industry. The university also offers a [minor in agricultural engineering technology](#).



Students to present projects at Research in the Rotunda March 9

March 3, 2022 -- Research on rats' empathy, alternatives to summer forage and exploring environmentally friendly ways to create chemical reactions are some of the research seven University of Wisconsin-River Falls students will present on Wednesday, March 9, at the State Capitol Rotunda in Madison for the 18th annual Research in the Rotunda.

"We are absolutely delighted to welcome back the University of Wisconsin System Research in the Rotunda after a year off due to the pandemic," said UW System President Tommy Thompson. "This signature event is a celebration of our student's undergraduate research and their innovative thinking to help find solutions to problems here in Wisconsin and beyond."

Undergraduate researchers from across the UW System, along with their faculty advisers, will share their research findings on a variety of topics with legislators, state leaders, UW alumni and other supporters. Research in the Rotunda is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thompson is scheduled to give brief remarks at noon.

Social behavior in rats

Sid Peck and Dan Roever, UWRF seniors dual majoring in psychology and neuroscience, will present their research "A Friend in Need, Investigation Empathy and Prosocial Behavior Utilizing Rat Models."



Part of the research was to replicate other research that found that in most cases a rat will help free another rat they cohabitate with trapped in an adjacent tube, particularly if there is a treat incentive. When a light source is added, the nocturnal rodents sense danger and the rate of freeing the other rat drops.

"We already know rats are social creatures," Roever said. "We're investigating how far that goes."

"We're slowly making the environment more threatening to them by adding light and making the arena bigger," said Peck, of New Richmond.

The two plan to study the area of the rats' brains to determine which are associated with empathy.

Both enjoy the undergraduate research opportunities available at UWRF.

"It helps bring the material to life and reinforce what I'm learning," Roever, of River Falls, said.

Doing undergraduate research gave Peck a unique opportunity to be more involved at the university.

"We have some of the coolest professors here," he said. "Asking questions is encouraged. Experiential learning is encouraged."

Greener chemistry

Max Lewis, a junior majoring in biochemistry, will present his research on “Investigating Mechanochemical Means to Greener Transfer Hydrogenation.”



In his research, Lewis, of St. Paul, studied creating a chemical reaction induced by mechanical energy versus using solvents, which are toxic and difficult to dispose of. Different types of metal balls were added to water and substrate and shaken for up to 16 hours as the mechanical agent. Initial research showed nickel-manganese alloy worked the best.

“We would have to determine if it can be scaled up and if it would work on a larger economy of scale,” Lewis said.

Lewis is looking forward to Research in the Rotunda.

“I thought it would be a great opportunity to share my research and to get to know some of the other research students from other UWs,” Lewis said. “I also thought it would be a good experience to explain research to people who aren’t scientists and share why research is important.”

Alfalfa alternative

Jack Morrison, a junior crop and soil science major, will present his research on “Summer Annual Options for Wisconsin.”



The research was designed to find an alternative to alfalfa forage in case of winter kill. In his research, Morrison, of Farmington, Minn., found Sudan grass and millet showed the highest level of crude protein and digestibility of five summer annuals he looked at. Crude protein was 15%. Alfalfa has 19% protein.

“Climate change is real,” Morrison said. “Farmers are going to have to make changes and roll with the punches winter cold can kill off alfalfa, and hot summers can cause more drought.”

Morrison said he chose UWRF because the smaller classes allow him to get to know his classmates and professors.

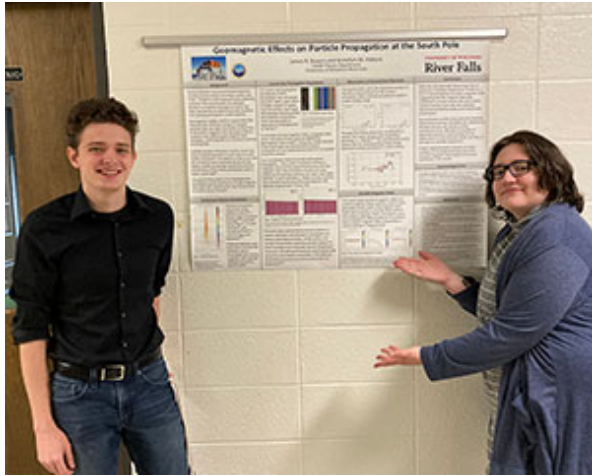
He is excited to take part in Research in Rotunda.

“I want to promote the undergraduate research at UW-River Falls because I think it is important,” Morrison said. “It gives me the option to do research as an undergraduate and that is a cool part of UWRF. I want to make sure the legislators know we’re out here.”

Geomagnetic effects on particle propagation

Physics majors Gretchen Hibbert, of Green Bay, and James Bowers, of Richfield, Minn., will present their research on “Geomagnetic Effects on Particle Propagation at the South Pole.”

The two took part in a paid internship last summer through National Science Foundation grant funds to conduct the research.



Using a simulated model of the South Pole, the students set out to determine if the geomagnetic field of the earth impacts the cosmic ray particles measured at earth's surface by Neutron Monitors. The results they gathered were inconclusive, largely they believe because of equipment limitations for the simulation.

"We have set a baseline for future work," Bowers, a junior, said, noting that other researchers will have the opportunity to build on their work.

They both are looking forward to sharing their research with legislators.

"It is an amazing opportunity just to be able to go and present,"

Hibbert, a senior, said.

Gender inclusivity

Senior Aspen Larsen, a social work major from Wauwatosa, is presenting research on "The Impact of Gender Inclusivity on the Education of Student in College and Universities."

Larsen started the research as part of a Research Methods class.



"Gender inclusivity is something I am fairly passionate about being part of the queer community myself," Larsen said.

Larsen worked on student opinions of gender inclusivity and is also working on faculty opinions for Larsen's senior thesis.

Larsen's research indicates most students are comfortable with sharing their preferred pronouns particularly in classroom settings where professors ask everyone.

"Even a large majority of cisgendered students agreed they were not uncomfortable being asked their pronouns," Larsen said. "I was fairly surprised overall the response was mostly positive in support of gender inclusivity. When everyone is sharing their pronouns, it doesn't single out people. It creates a safer environment."

Larsen is excited to present the research at the State Capitol and sharing the information to make a difference for other students.

University Theatre to present 'Cabaret'

March 17, 2022 - University Theatre at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls will present "Cabaret" by Kander and Ebb March 31- April 2 and April 7-9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Blanche Davis Theatre in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

"Cabaret" is a fierce and sensual musical set in the seedy underground nightclub culture of 1929-30 Berlin. A struggling American writer meets a colorful cast of characters including a vivacious and morally questionable cabaret singer, a respectable spinster landlady, a successful Jewish grocer, and the hedonistic dancers of the Kit Kat Klub. The charismatic gender-bending Master of Ceremonies oversees the proceedings as the characters search for ways to navigate the alarming influence of the Nazis as they ascend to power.

Please note: This production contains mature language and themes including violence, drug use, and abortion.

The play is directed by UWRF theatre instructor Kathy Welch. The cast consists of Adrienne Quinlan of Watertown, Minn., as Sally; Billy Chester of Medford, Minn., as Cliff; Meredith Bowermaster of White Bear Lake, Minn., as Emcee and Customs Officer; Jesse Ahlgren of Prescott as Ernst and Sailor 2; Mitchell Engel of Jordan, Minn., as Schultz; Etta Frase of Oakdale, Minn., as Fritzie Kost; Flora Sherr-Nelson of Stillwater, Minn., as Schneider; Michael Kerr of River Falls as Nazi Bodyguard, Sailor 1, Bodyguard, and Cabaret Customer; Meghan Jirik of Rochester, Minn., as Max and Nazi Bodyguard; Holly Zimmerman of Antigo as Party/Cabaret Guest; Amanda Marecek of Black River Falls as Lulu; Autumn Wood of Somerset as Rosie; Cailyn Kuechle of Kimball, Minn., as Victoria; Katie Byers of Osceola as Bobby; Layla Murray of Big Lake, Minn., as Frenchie; Maggie Wallin of Downing as Chanteuse; Sophia Hilo of Rosemount, Minn., as Texas/Gorilla; and Lillian Stanley of Vadnais Heights, Minn., as Helga.

Tickets are \$15/adults, \$10/seniors 60 and over, and \$5/UWRF students and others under 18. Advance ticket sales are at <https://marketplace.uwrf.edu/collections/theatre-productions> or at the Box Office in Kleinpell Fine Arts weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. beginning March 22. Tickets may also be purchased at the Box Office on performance nights from 6:30-7:20 p.m.

For more information, call the Box Office at 715-425-3114.

Book by Joe Masteroff. Based on the play by John Van Druten and stories by Christopher Isherwood. Music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb.

CABARET is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC.

www.concordtheatricals.com



UW System President Thompson visits on Farewell Tour, dessert created in his name

March 11, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-System President Tommy Thompson capped off today's visit to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a special dessert created by Dairy Pilot Plant Director Michelle Farner called The Tommy Cheesecake Truffle, or "The Tommy" for short.



Farner later confirmed that the Freddy's Dairy Bar November special will forever be "The Tommy," in honor of Thompson's birthday.

"That's fantastic," Thompson exclaimed as he received one of the desserts from Farner, who added whipped topping before handing it to Thompson. The dessert was made with chocolate ice cream, fresh raspberries, cheesecake balls and white chocolate syrup. "I love it. Thank you," Thompson added.

Thompson visited campus as part of his UW System president Farewell Tour. He also visited UW-Superior today.

"This was an exciting and fun day," UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo said. "It was an honor and privilege to share our gratitude for everything President Tommy Thompson has done for UW-River Falls, the UW System and the state of Wisconsin."

Thompson was greeted on campus by shared governance chairs, city leaders and UWRF administrators who expressed their gratitude for his time as UW System president. Of note was how Thompson's leadership kept campuses and communities

safer in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thompson paved the way for UWRF to offer campus and community testing and vaccinations. The city of River Falls Mayor Dan Toland issued a proclamation of appreciation, and the UW-River Falls Faculty Senate passed a resolution summing up the many ways that Thompson's brief, but impactful 20-month leadership of the UW System indeed demonstrated how he was the right person for the job at just the right time.

During his visit, Thompson wanted specifically to connect with students and affirm his support of them.

He toured the campus radio station WRFW-FM in North Hall and was interviewed about his career by Student Program Director Michelle Stangler.

He then traveled to Freddy's Pantry in Rodli Hall to learn about the new food pantry that opened this semester.

Thompson even took a little time to recruit students for UWRF doing an impromptu meeting with families taking campus tours in South Hall as part of the UWRF Campus Close Up.

He had lunch with students from different groups including the Chancellor's Student Ambassadors, Honors Program, Student Government Association and Student Involvement interns.

A video created by University Communications and Marketing showing highlights from Thompson's visits to campus over the years was gifted to Thompson. Go to YouTube [to view it](#).

Thompson resigned as the interim UW System president effective Friday, March 18.

Thompson succeeded former UW System President Ray Cross who announced his retirement in October 2019 and retired in June 2020. The former Republican governor has held the role since July 1, 2020, after the UW System conducted a failed presidential search to replace Cross.

Thompson was first elected to public office in 1966 when, at the age of 24, he won election to the State Assembly. The citizens in Thompson's central Wisconsin district elected him as their representative for 10 consecutive terms. Republican colleagues voted Thompson assistant minority leader in 1973 and minority leader in 1981.

In 1986, Thompson defeated incumbent Tony Earl to become governor of Wisconsin. He won re-election an unprecedented three times in 1990, 1994 and 1998. He also served as the 19th U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services in the cabinet of U.S. President George W. Bush.

In January, the UW System Board of Regents selected Milwaukee Attorney Jay Rothman to succeed Thompson as UW System president.

UW-River Falls adopts Vision Statement and Core Values, foundations for university planning

March 21, 2022 - After two years of campus strategic planning, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls has updated its Vision Statement and Core Values.

Chancellor Maria Gallo said the Vision Statement and Core Values are foundational for university planning.

The Vision Statement and Core Values were consolidated in a consensus workshop held in January and reviewed in the context of a Listening and Learning Report developed from a listening tour Gallo held from July to December.

"The Vision Statement addresses our deep commitment to student success, a culture of caring and belonging, and exceptional education for all learners," Gallo said. "It speaks of our practice of preparing students for successful careers to lead their best lives as productive and engaged citizens, as well as our dedication to serving the needs of our region, the state and beyond. Holistic sustainability is built into both our Vision Statement and Core Values."

The Vision Statement and Core Values have been adopted by all four shared governance groups on campus including Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Council, University Staff Senate and the Student Government Association, Gallo added.

In the Vision Statement, UWRF recommits to being a student-centered institution that provides programs to serve the region, state and beyond as well as to expanding access to opportunities for all learners.

"We strive to partner with the communities we impact to bring about positive change locally, regionally and globally," the vision statement notes.

The seven Core Values include:

- Student Success, including offering an affordable, outstanding education ensuring that all students are supported and have the opportunity to succeed and social mobility
- Excellent Teaching and Learning
- Community of Inclusion and Caring
- Local/Global Service and Engagement, embodying the Wisconsin Idea of servant leaders who work to bring positive transformations to the community, region and state and fostering a global perspective.
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Sustainability

David Travis, provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, said the new Vision Statement and Core Values align with UWRF's first Academic Plan completed in spring 2021.

"This has given us greater clarity as we complete the new strategic plan and develop specific goals and metrics to track our

progress,” Travis said. “This is a crucial time in the history of UW-River Falls following a two-year pandemic. Higher education will never be the same. Thus, it is appropriate that we’ve revisited our Vision and Core Values and are now using this as a baseline for completing the new strategic plan.”

Mathematics Professor Alex Tupan chaired the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, a group that gathered nearly two years of input as part of the campus strategic planning process.

“The vision and core values represent what the school stands for,” Tupan said. “Updating them helps UWRF keep its values at the center of its decision-making. Many nice things can be said about the document. For example, I was impressed with its attention to inclusivity and its many aspects. Likewise, I’m happy that the statement has a focus on sustainability. It was a much-needed update. It will be very useful in our effort to put together our school’s strategic plan.”

To see the UWRF’s Vision Statement and Core Values, visit <https://www.uwrf.edu/about/mission-vision-values>.



UW-River Falls CAFES team celebrates 25th year raising funds at Relay for Life to fight cancer

March 24, 2022 – Joanne Kenney has walked for a quarter of a century as a member of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Relay for Life River Falls-Pierce County team to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

Kenney, who is retired from the city of Hudson and used to work at UWRF in the Plant and Science Department, has had cervical and breast cancer and knows money is needed to help fight cancer as well as work toward a cure.

"I survived it," Kenney said. "I want to help other people survive it. I know good medical care and the advances in technology and early screening helps save lives."

Relay for Life will start at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 1, and end the following day at 12:30 a.m., at River Falls High School, 818 Cemetery Road. Teams can still join the event by visiting <http://www.relayforlife.org/riverfallswi>.

The relay returns to River Falls this year after being virtual in 2020 and combined with St. Croix County in 2021.

Over two dozen teams are expected to participate in the relay that will be emceed by UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. The opening ceremony is at 6 p.m. At 9:30 p.m. a Luminaria Ceremony is scheduled to remember those lost to cancer in Pierce County and reflect on the journey of those who have survived. As the sun sets, relay teams help light pre-made luminaria bags that are dedicated in honor or in memory of a loved one.

The UWRF CAFES team is the only team that has participated in all 25 years of the relay.

Fay Westberg, retired UWRF academic department associate, started the team in 1998 and has helped keep the team involved throughout the 25 years.

"Seeing the community come together is so key," Westberg said. "There are parts that are very emotional and celebratory. When they do the survivors walk, there are people from the community I know who I didn't know they had cancer."

Dave Trechter, professor emeritus in agricultural economics, has participated with the team since 2008. His wife, Kris Allen, who worked in the UWRF Outreach Program, died from ovarian cancer in 2012.

"It was always just amazing to see the whole town out to support this," Trechter said. "When you get the diagnosis, you just feel so alone. To be surrounded by others who have gone through the same thing is really affirming."

Sue Freiermuth, a retired UWRF academic associate and cancer survivor, said one of the most exciting parts is seeing UWRF students either walk or volunteer for the relay.

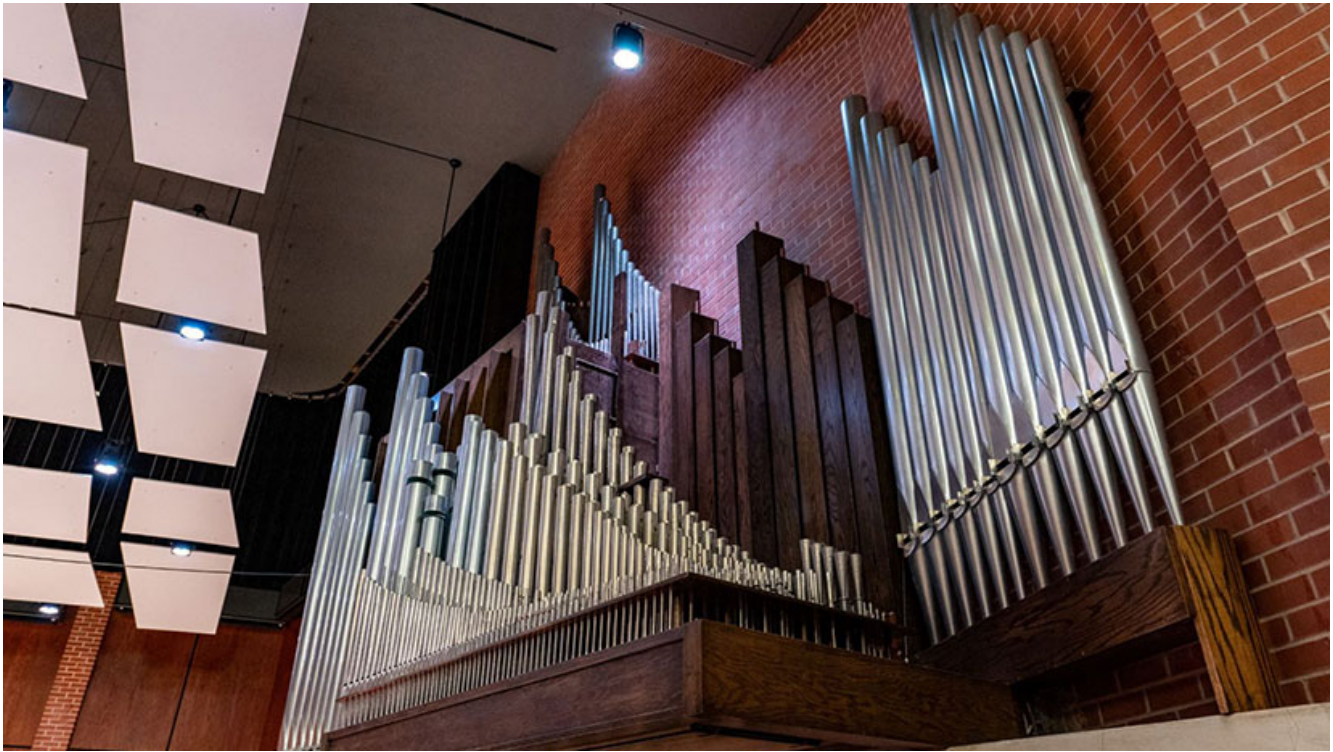
"It is just great to see all the faces," Freiermuth said.

Phaedra Raethke is the honorary survivor for the relay. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in January 2018. Raethke has had 23 rounds of chemo, 30 rounds of radiation and five surgeries in 2 ½ years.

Amy Jenkins is the honorary caregiver for the relay. Her husband, Brian, who died in 2014, was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer at age 34.

The CAFES team's goal is to raise \$5,000 this year. To date, the team has raised nearly \$90,000 over the years.

CAFES team members said as they are walking, they will think of those who are still fighting and those who have lost their battle with cancer.



UW-River Falls Foundation raising funds to restore 1974 pipe organ in Abbott Concert Hall

Free concert April 5

March 28, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls senior Evan Pechacek knows with a little tender loving care the 1974 Hendrickson pipe organ in the [Abbott Concert Hall](#) in [Kleinpell Fine Arts](#) could serve future music students for years to come.

The [music education](#) major from Hudson has taken lessons on the organ for three years while at UW-River Falls.

"The organ has a lot of options," Pechacek said. "It's not the biggest one in the world, but it definitely has some ability."

The organ needs repair work, a good cleaning and the electronic circuitry updated.

The cost to restore the organ is estimated at \$150,000. Replacing it would cost nearly \$600,000.

A UWRF Organ Restoration Showcase is scheduled at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5, in Abbott Concert Hall to kick off a [UWRF Foundation](#) fundraiser to restore the organ. Pechacek will perform as part of the showcase as will Laura Edman, UWRF applied faculty organ instructor; Thomas Barnett, UWRF music professor and trumpet player; and trumpet player Tyler Barnett. Guest organist Bill Chouinard appears on the program as well. The showcase is open to the public.

"Students need an instrument that is inspiring," Edman said. "The organ should be reliable and function using modern technology that replaced outdated electrical connections years ago."

The organ has 22 ranks, 17 stops and 1,258 pipes. It is a complex instrument with many moving parts. The wear and tear of

continual use and minimal maintenance such as annual tunings have taken a toll on the instrument over the years.

Electrical systems in the organ console are outdated and unreliable. Electronic technology has advanced to a high degree, and midi capabilities would make the organ adaptable for individual students and multiple collaborations. The pipes are full of dust that affects tone color and causes ciphers, a stuck note or continuous sounding of a pipe after a key is released.

The mini concert will share music, and historical context of the organ, as well as, show some items that need restoration to update the instrument.

Recently, Pechacek pushed the organ from its storage area out onto the Abbott Concert Hall stage, donned his special shoes that protect the organ pedals and practiced for his senior recital which was Saturday.

“An organ is an instrument like a piano that can be used in a variety of ways,” Pechacek said. “You can accompany a person singing, with other instruments or as a solo instrument. There is so much you can do with an organ with its many tone colors. I feel fortunate to have been able to learn the organ as part of the music program at River Falls. I want to see that continue.”

The organ was built by Charles Hendrickson of St. Peter, Minn.

David Milne, Music Department chair, noted no two organs are the same because they are hand built.

Abbott Concert Hall was renovated in 2019. At that time, however, funding was not available to restore the organ, Milne said.

“The concert hall is state of the art and a beautiful facility,” Milne said. “Traveling artists regularly come and play piano here. We want our organ to be to that level as well, so artists want to come and perform on it. We also want to provide the best instrument we can for our students to learn to play the organ. The acoustics in the newly renovated hall enhance the sound of the instrument and would add to the beauty of an updated instrument.”

To donate to the organ restoration, go to the foundation giving page at <https://www.uwrf.edu/Give/Organ-Restoration-Fund.cfm>.



Ivan Konev, right, performs in 2015 at UW-River Falls with his spouse, Natalia Moiseeva. The couple are taking part in a concert at The Woman's Club of Minneapolis on March 27 to raise money for Ukraine relief.

UW-River Falls music lecturers to perform in concert to benefit Ukraine relief effort

March 22, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls [music](#) lecturer and piano instructor [Ivan Konev](#) is grateful he is still able to text his aunt who is caring for his grandmother in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, to get updates on how his family is doing as Russian attacks continue in the country.

The internet is still working there, and they have access to water, Konev, of Shoreview, Minn., said, noting other parts of the country have not been so fortunate.

“They have been spending a lot of time in a bomb shelter because of the air raid alerts,” he noted, adding he also has cousins living in the area. “It is terrible to see all the ruins there. It’s heartbreaking.”

Konev, who was born in Ukraine, and his spouse, Natalia Moiseeva, a UWRF lecturer of music, violin and viola, are taking part in a fundraising concert at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 27, at The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis.

All donations collected will be designated for Ukraine relief efforts through Eastern Europe Crisis Response or Lutheran Disaster Response. Checks made out to either of those organizations are preferred. The fundraiser is co-presented by The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis and Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church.

Konev will be a featured performer with Isles Ensemble, an 11-member chamber orchestra he is part of. The group will perform chamber music by Dvorak and Tchaikovsky as well as several works by Ukrainian performers.

Moiseeva will be a guest performer during the concert.

Ambassador Eric Rubin, president of the American Foreign Service Association, former U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria and former deputy political counselor to Kyiv, Ukraine, will speak.

Founded in 2004, Isle Ensemble’s mission is to build a vibrant chamber music community in the Twin Cities. The group has Sunday concerts at Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church. Members of the group regularly perform in the Minnesota Orchestra and teach on the faculties of the universities of Minnesota, the International Cello Institute, and Carleton and Macalester colleges. To learn more, visit the website <https://islesensemble.org>.

Konev and Moiseeva have performed in the past in Ukraine and wanted to help raise funds for relief efforts. Konev has performed with the Kharkov Philharmonic Orchestra and Yalta Symphony Orchestra in Ukraine.

“I just really want to make a contribution to easing the situation there,” Konev said. “There are millions of refugees, and they need help. I felt we needed to do something, especially because I have strong connections to the country.”

Konev completed his bachelor’s degree in piano performance from the Music College affiliated with the Moscow Conservatory and his master’s degree in piano performance from Gnessin’s Music Academy. He earned his doctoral degree in piano performance from the University of Minnesota.

Moiseeva earned her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Russia.

For more information on the fundraiser, contact Kevin Winge, Woman’s Club executive director, at kevin.winge@womansclub.org or at 612-813-5324.

UW-River Falls ramps up for its Annual Giving Day on April 8

March 25, 2022 -- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Foundation's annual Giving Day is Friday, April 8.

Each spring, the university holds its annual day of online giving to support the Falcon Annual Fund, an unrestricted fund to support the university's most pressing and immediate needs.



This year's theme is Welcome Back Home featuring a friendly competition between the East and West sides of campus, along with those who commute and those who did not attend the university but still support the Falcon community. This year will feature a Welcome Back Home Happy Hour at Junior's Restaurant and Tap House, 414 Main St. S., River Falls, from 4-6 p.m. for the Falcon community. Anyone who has proof of donation will receive complimentary appetizers and half off a special UWRF-themed

drink.

"Funds raised on Giving Day go to the Falcon Annual Fund to help fund the highest needs of our campus," said annual giving manager Lindsey Nelson. "We appreciate your support on Giving Day as we work to meet the needs of today's students and future Falcons."

Tax-deductible contributions to the UWRF Foundation may be made at the Giving Day website at go.uwrf.edu/givingday.

New this year is the addition of multiple matching gifts which help donors' dollars go further and double their impact.

Giving Day starts with a Chancellor's Challenge at 8 a.m. where funds will be matched up to \$1,000. Those donating during this time also have a chance to win tickets to a Falcon football game (VIP Suite) with Chancellor Maria Gallo.

Donations will also be doubled at 10 a.m. up to \$2,000; noon, \$3,000 match; 2 p.m., \$2,000 match; at 4 p.m. there will be a \$1,000 match for alumni from the past five years; and at 6 p.m., \$1,000.

Those donating at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. will have a chance to win a UWRF basket.

For further details, contact Nelson at 715-425-4933 or lindsey.nelson@uwrf.edu.

UW-River Falls receives \$260,000 from Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin to train next generation of water scientists

March 29, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will receive \$260,215 in support from the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin this year to enhance its water-related academic programs.



The funding is part of a statewide initiative, backed by the Wisconsin State Legislature and Gov. Tony Evers, to tackle 10 grand water challenges and support curriculum development, undergraduate research opportunities, career development, and field training experiences for students interested in studying water-related fields at the 13 UW schools.

Funding included support for the following projects at UW-River Falls:

- Two new water-focused courses: microbial ecology course and a transdisciplinary water-centric course
- Three new water-centered courses in collaboration with other universities
- Three new student experiences to provide high impact training for youth and undergraduates
- Support and expansion of the work of the UWRF Ecological Restoration Institute which provides trainings and certifications and hands-on experiences
- Collaborative planning for water research at the Mann Valley Farm, a campus laboratory farm.

Geology and soil science Professor Holly Dolliver, chair of the [Plant and Earth Science Department](#), said UWRF is a leader in freshwater education and research and actively sought project funding.

“These projects will provide great opportunities for students and faculty,” Dolliver said. “It’s an exciting time for freshwater science in the UW System and especially for UW-River Falls.”

A diverse group of faculty across campus will participate in projects funded through FCW.

Jill Coleman Wasik, associate professor of [environmental science](#) and campus FCW Steering Committee member, agreed.

“I think we have some great projects, and they are coming from areas outside of departments like Plant and Science and in the agricultural and environmental engineering areas where we have some real depth in our scientific water expertise,” she noted. “We have faculty across campus who stepped up with ideas to share their water expertise, too. This is a chance to work across our institution and UW System to create exciting, real-world opportunities for students to study water no matter their disciplinary background.”

“Water is an umbrella topic,” Wasik added. “Water is a spiritual topic, a health topic, a scientific topic, a recreational topic and a connection to the community. Water touches everyone on a personal level, and many people already understand that. We also want to bring that water-awareness to the forefront for students so they better understand how water intersects with what

they are studying and its role in their future professions.”

David Travis, UWRF provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, said he was pleased UWRF was involved with FCW.

“I am very proud of our faculty for stepping up to demonstrate that UWRF is not only a leader in Northwest Wisconsin in freshwater research but is recognized statewide for this expertise,” Travis said. “The funding supports many new opportunities for our students to get involved in freshwater research while collaborating with students and faculty at other UW System schools to share our freshwater resources.”

“This funding allows us to highlight the amazing natural freshwater resources that exist in this part of the state including right on our campus,” he added. “Not only will this benefit UWRF students, but it will also allow students from other campuses and around the region to come here and learn about the virtues of freshwater and how to preserve this valuable resource.”

Overall, the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin will support 42 grants to further develop UW System-wide water science programs, internships and research opportunities. High school and undergraduates will have opportunities to participate in hands-on field and research experiences with faculty throughout the state, allowing them to develop a diverse range of skills.

The collaborative is also partnering with industry, nonprofits and community organizations to increase career development opportunities for students. Grant descriptions are available at freshwater.wisconsin.edu.

“Water is one of the fastest-growing sectors of our economy,” said Marissa Jablonski, executive director for the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin. “With these funds, the 13 UW universities can expand training opportunities for students and prepare them to meet the needs of Wisconsin’s workforce and address our state’s biggest water challenges.”

Wisconsin has abundant water resources, however, factors such as invasive species, pollution and climate change could significantly impact water safety and economic growth. The state of Wisconsin and the Freshwater Collaborative have identified 10 grand water challenges facing the state and are currently focusing research efforts on the top two: agricultural water management and water quality safety/emerging contaminants.

Startup funding for the Freshwater Collaborative was provided in 2019 by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the UW System. In July 2021, the Wisconsin State Legislature and Gov. Evers approved \$5 million in the current biennial budget to expand the collaboration’s ability to train water professionals and establish Wisconsin as a leader in water-related science and economic growth.

For more information on the FCW, contact Heidi Jeter at hjeter@uwm.edu or 414-251-7445.

About UW-River Falls

Founded in 1874, UWRF is one of 13 comprehensive universities in the prestigious University of Wisconsin System. We’re a leader in exemplary teaching, undergraduate research and sustainability. Our mission is to help prepare students to be productive, creative, ethical, engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective.

About the Freshwater Collaborative

The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin is a partnership of Wisconsin’s 13 public universities, connecting with industry partners, local communities, policymakers and advocacy groups. Its mission is to establish Wisconsin as a world leader in

freshwater science, technology, entrepreneurship and economic growth. The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin is training the next generation of scientists to solve global water resource problems through academic programs, collaborative research and career development across the UW System. Learn more at freshwater.wisconsin.edu.

UW-River Falls to host Agricultural Technology Contest April 2

March 29, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will host the annual Agricultural Technology Contest on Saturday, April 2. After being unable to host an in-person event for the past two years because of the pandemic, UWRF will welcome back to campus over 1,000 middle and high school students representing over 60 schools from both Minnesota and Wisconsin to partake in 15 different competitions.

The Agricultural Technology Contest encompasses competitions focusing on agricultural technology and mechanics, agronomy, dairy cattle evaluation, farm business management, floriculture, forestry, horse evaluation, livestock evaluation, milk quality and products, nursery and landscape, poultry, veterinary science, and wildlife. Nine of these competitions serve as qualifying contests for the Wisconsin FFA Association Career Development Events held in Madison.

UWRF provides other unique opportunities through the Agricultural Technology Contest. Middle school students have the chance to demonstrate their skills in agriscience with a contest specifically design for their age group. Furthermore, chapters have the opportunity to compete in an invitational crop show.

In addition, this year UWRF will facilitate the Wisconsin FFA state contests for agricultural communications and food science and technology virtually at the end of April. The teams that place first will advance to compete at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis in October.

Each year it takes more than 100 volunteers to ensure successful contests. Faculty and staff of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences serve as chairs for each of the contests. Ethan Heelein, an agricultural education major from Genoa City, is this year's contest coordinator. Tim Buttles serves as the faculty chair of the contest.

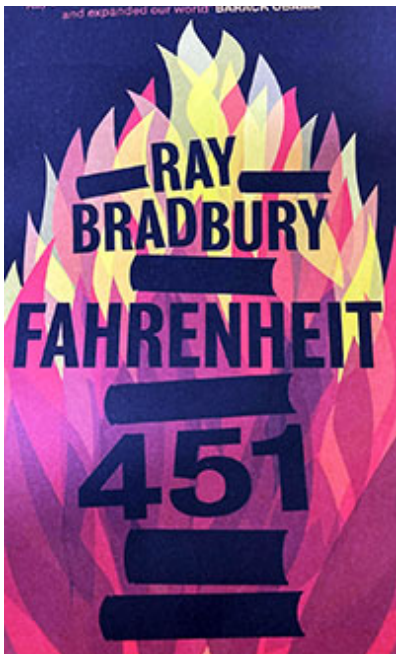
To learn more about the contests, visit the Agricultural Education Department website at www.uwrf.edu/AGED For more information, call contest Assistant Coordinator Kendra Jentz at 608-642-1253 or email kendra.jentz@my.uwrf.edu.

'Fahrenheit 451' to be read aloud at UW-River Falls to raise awareness about book bans

NOTE: The reading is **postponed until Wednesday, April 13**, because of the rainy forecast.

April 1, 2022 -- Starting at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 6, Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451" will be read aloud at the Outdoor Classroom near Kleinpell Fine Arts (KFA) on the University of Wisconsin-River Falls campus by volunteer students and staff.

The reading will go on until about 5 p.m. Volunteers will change out and continue the reading every 20 minutes.



"This is the most famous banned book," said Professor Mialisa Moline, chair of the English Department. "I wanted to start with the most identifiable banned book, which is actually a story about banned books."

"Fahrenheit 451" is a 1953 dystopian novel that presents a future American society where books are outlawed, and "firemen" burn any that are found.

The idea to read a banned book started after the McMinn County School Board in January decided to remove the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel "Maus" because of "inappropriate language."

Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for the work that tells the story of his Jewish parents living in 1940s Poland and depicts him interviewing his father about his experiences as a Holocaust survivor.

"This also seemed like a good time with the pandemic winding down," Moline said.

"People are reading more because of the pandemic."

There will be a limited number of copies of the book available at the reading.

"One of the reasons I wanted to read it out loud is because of one of the main reasons it was banned," Moline said.

"Speaking it aloud shows it is not harmful. Reading banned books aloud

gives more of a social acknowledgment to the book than there is an individual reading it in isolation. We are affirming as a group of scholars, just because a book is offensive, doesn't mean it shouldn't be read."

The goal is to teach students to question why books are banned, Moline said, noting books are banned by both the left and the right of the political spectrum.

A display of about a dozen banned books is on second floor in KFA. It was created by student Taylor Kiel, a senior majoring in professional writing and creative writing. Kiel picked the books and created the display as part of an internship with the English Department. The display will remain until October, which is Banned Book month.

"My personal favorite is '1984,'" Kiel said. "It was banned and burned in Russia for being against Communism. It was banned in the U.S. for being pro-Communism. It shows how each person reacts differently."

Kiel also learned that when books are banned, it tends to increase their sales. The books are from the 1950s up to 2020.

Three of the books on display were written by the late UWRF English Professor Nicholas J. Karolides, who taught about book banning.

Kiel will be taking her turn to read aloud from "Fahrenheit 451."

"I love literature," Kiel noted. "It is not good to ban books. It's against our right of free speech."

The university has not done an aloud reading of a banned book in over 15 years, Moline said.

In case of inclement weather, the book reading will be moved to Wednesday, April 13, and if the weather is again an issue that day to Wednesday, April 20.

For more information, contact Moline at mialisa.moline@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4445.

56th Commissioned Composer Concert is April 21

April 6, 2022 -- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will welcome featured composer Alex Shapiro to Abbott Concert Hall on Thursday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m. for the university's 56th Commissioned Composer concert. The concert is free and open to the public.



Shapiro is on campus April 19-21 for a three-day residency. She will also present a convocation in 129 Kleinpell Fine Arts on April 21 at 3 p.m. where she will discuss her new composition.

Shapiro is known for her genre-blind acoustic and electroacoustic works. Published by her company Activist Music LLC, Shapiro's music is heard daily in concerts and broadcasts across the U.S. and internationally and can be found on over 30 commercially released recordings.

Shapiro began her career scoring for commercial visual media and later established herself in the professional chamber music world. Since composing her first wind band work in 2007, she has become noted for adventurous electroacoustic pieces for the field at all performance levels and is sought after for her seamless melding of live and recorded sounds, often including striking visual and physical elements. Shapiro uses technology in each aspect of a commission, from the creation of the music to "webhearsals" in which she coaches thousands of musicians around the world, to customized multimedia material delivery webpages, and the public reach of the finished piece through social media. Visit her website at www.alexshapiro.org.

Educated at The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music, Shapiro is an enthusiastic leader in the new music community and advocates for other artists through speaking appearances, articles, and volunteerism. She has been a repeat clinician at countless conferences and university residencies, speaking about creative uses of technology in concert performance. She also has many published writings.

Each year, UW-River Falls commissions a composer to write a piece of music for the student body. The composer also makes a campus visit to interact with the students and take part in the premiere performance of that work.

UWRF Professor Emeritus Conrad De Jong began the Commissioned Composer Project in 1967. It is the longest-standing program of its kind in the United States and places a national spotlight on the UW-River Falls Music Department.

For more information, email patti.cudd@uwrf.edu.



Ag Day on Campus celebrating 10 years since event began

April 5, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau will host Ag Day on Campus on Tuesday, April 19. The event is free and open to all.

The event will give UWRF students and community members an opportunity to engage with the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) student-led organizations and agriculture-related companies to learn about the positive impact agriculture is making.



“Let the Good Times Grow” is the theme for the event. This is the 10th year since Ag Day was first introduced. It has continued to grow each year. More than 20 organizations and companies will share how they are innovating change for the future and caring for the land and animals.

After a canceled event in 2020 and a modified event in 2021 because of COVID-19, this year's Ag Day will bring back traditional and some new elements to engage with people of different backgrounds.

Ag Day will showcase agriculture and will include interactive activities from Wisconsin's own agriculture ambassador Alice in Dairyland; Princess Kay of the Milky Way, the ambassador for Minnesota dairy farmers; many animals, tractors and more activities.

The main event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the UWRF University Center mall area. There outdoor event will include interactive booths from organizations and agricultural-related companies.

There will be a special red ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. to celebrate 10 years to kick off the event with speakers from Minnesota and Wisconsin agriculture.

Ag Day will conclude with a free dinner and keynote speaker Kim Bremmer at 5:30 p.m. in Room 200 of the Agricultural Science building. Bremmer will speak on “Leadership in Advocacy to Let the Good Times Grow.” She began Ag Inspirations LLC in 2015 and has been advocating for farmers as a professional speaker, traveling across the country as well as internationally. She is passionate about protecting the use of science, technology and innovation in how we grow and raise food. Bremmer is also on the board of directors for her County Farm Bureau. Bremmer is a vocal champion of agriculture everywhere she goes from the grocery store to the airport.

For more information, check out UWRF Ag Day on Campus on Facebook.

University of Wisconsin-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau

The UWRF Collegiate Farm Bureau was established in 2012 as a voice for agriculture on-campus. The organization connects students through agricultural advocacy, education, professional development, and interaction with industry leaders. More than 50 organization members are active throughout the school year.



Alum's children's books share autism journey, family to speak on campus April 27

April 18, 2022 -- At 28 months of age, University of Wisconsin-River Falls alum Lindsey Moreland was diagnosed with autism after showing classic signs including not responding to her name and banging her head into walls.

"It was devastating," Lindsey's mom, Lauri Moreland, recalled. "We called it the death sentence. There was nothing good to read about autism. We were told by a social worker that Lindsey would probably live in an institution. Everything was what she was not going to do."

Now 28, Lindsey has come to appreciate how autism has shaped her.

"Autism is my superpower," Lindsey often notes. April is recognized as Autism Awareness Month.

In 2011, Lindsey's junior year in high school, she saw Temple Grandin speak at UWRF. Grandin is an author, professor and public speaker on both autism and animal behavior.

From there, her family decided it was time to tell Lindsey's story by using Grandin's example and finding acceptance of herself.

"We don't always know why some therapies work for Lindsey and not for someone else," Lauri said. "Don't judge people. You never know what a family is facing. Now we know life is better with autism."

Lindsey, who lives independently in River Falls, is an author, motivational speaker and artist.

Her most recent children's book, which she co-authored with her aunt, Linda Wagner, "Little Lindsey is a Picky Eater," is available at Target.com. Lindsey, who earned her associate degree from UWRF in December, works as a guest advocate at the Hudson Target.

"I love to shop there," Lindsey said. "My co-workers are really friendly and very accepting of who I am. Target accepts differences and also is inclusive."

At speaking engagements, Lauri, Lindsey and Lindsey's sister, Brittany Moreland, share their stories. Brittany has been diagnosed with epilepsy, mental health concerns and a learning disability.

"By sharing our family story of living with autism and mental health concerns, I hope to inspire others to live, survive and thrive in today's society," Lindsey said. "I also am on a mission to spread awareness about bullying and to accept differences. Understanding each other better is a great way to share acceptance."

The three will be speaking at UWRF from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, in North Hall Auditorium on "Autism: A Family Lives Beyond the Label." The event is free and open to all. It is hosted by the Disability Rights Education Activism Mentoring.

The first book the family published was in 2017. "Autism: A Family Lives Beyond the Label the Lindsey Moreland Story" has chapters written from different family members' perspectives. Lindsey writes of first learning she had autism, Britany, Lauri and Lindsey's father, Todd Moreland, grandma, Ida Feyereisen, and Wagner.

Wagner, a 1993 UWRF alum with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a teaching certificate in elementary Spanish instruction, teaches 3rd grade in Hudson.

Wagner said she witnessed the challenges Lindsey's family faced as Lindsey grew up.

"As a mother, teacher and aunt, I searched for books that could help families with autism," Wagner said. "I found very little and knew there was a need for more information in the autism world. Lindsey has worked hard to become a successful adult in a world that does not always understand the special needs of people with learning differences. The support she received along the way was tremendous from family, friends, therapists, teachers and even strangers."

Lauri asked Wagner to help tell their family story. The goal was to write it for the purpose of giving others hope and sharing their family's struggles along the way. Lindsey volunteered in Wagner's classroom several years ago, and in one of Lindsey's classes at UWRF, she made a children's book about having autism.

"My students at the time loved it and were very curious," Wagner said. "They wondered why there weren't more books about children with autism, specifically children's stories. As a result, the idea for the Little Lindsey series was born. Lindsey helps me as a writer to understand how hard it was for her with certain day-to-day experiences. I test the books out on my students and family before we make final decisions."

Lindsey also has another children's book "Little Lindsey Gets a Haircut." All the books are illustrated by Jodi Youngman, an artist from North Hudson.

"I thought the children's books would be educational and more from the standpoint if there was a child with special needs, it would help other children understand," Lindsey said.

The family is planning a third children's book at the end of this year where little Lindsey makes a friend.

Lindsey also creates graphic pencil, pen and ink, colored pencil and acrylic paint art.

"Being an artist is my gifted talent," Lindsey said. "I began to develop my talent around 13 years old. Unlike other children my age who were selling lemonade on the street corner, I tried selling my art. Although it didn't go as well as I hoped, I continued to pursue my art in middle school, high school, and beyond. The inspiration for my drawings comes from my passions. I am fascinated with the details of the Titanic, still life drawings, famous celebrities and animals. Depending on the topic, subject matter and my mood, these drawings help me communicate with the world."

To learn more about Lindsey's story, view her artwork and learn more about her books, go to autismlm.com.

Art on Tour to stop at Chalmer Davee Library

April 28, 2022 – For one week, the traveling exhibition Art On Tour which highlights the works of Minnesota Poet Laureate and quilter Gwen Westerman will be on display at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chalmer Davee Library.



The exhibit opens Monday, May 2, in the main area of the library across from the circulation desk. It features poetry and two quilt squares created by Westerman. The exhibit closes Monday, May 9, according to Lesley Dame, library administrative assistant.

“The addition of my poetry alongside my quilts brings together both forms of my piecing and layering processes in words and fabric. Both involve (a) focus on small pieces and finding a rhythm as they are put together to create something larger,” Westerman said of her quilt and poetry displays.

Westerman was named Minnesota's Poet Laureate in September 2021. Westerman teaches American and Native Nations works of literature, technical communication and humanities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She has received awards for her work on Dakota history and language, and recognition for her work as a scholar, poet and artist.

The exhibit is part of the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read in the St. Croix Valley, which aims to inspire meaningful conversation, artistic responses and new discoveries and connections in each community. The Davee Library was part of this year's Big Read of “An American Sunrise” poems by Joy Harjo, Poet Laureate of the United States. The book revisits the homeland her ancestors were uprooted from in 1830 because of the Indian Removal Act.

Having travelling exhibits like this are good for both the campus and the community, Dame said.

“It is about bringing people together to experience another genre and learn more about the area and diverse cultures,” she said.

The library is open Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to midnight and Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library will be open Saturday, May 7, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 8, from noon to midnight. For all hours, go [here](#).

The library is also home to the Harriet Barry Gallery which is open to the university community, local artists and members of the public. In addition to the gallery, the library houses several free-standing glass cases as well as two recessed wall spaces for exhibits. The library adheres to the American Library Association's policy on exhibit spaces by providing exhibit space as a venue for individuals and groups to display works of art, publicize special events, promote a cause or an organization or show off a hobby.



UW-River Falls senior Skylar Youngren sets out some of her ceramic pieces as part of the Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree exhibition in Gallery 101 of the Kleinpell Fine Arts. The eight seniors will display their work through Friday, May 6.

BFA exhibition in Gallery 101 at UW-River Falls

Reception Friday, May 6, from 3-6 p.m.

April 20, 2022 – Eight University of Wisconsin-River Falls seniors will present their Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree exhibitions in Gallery 101 of Kleinpell Fine Arts through Friday, May 6. On display are LEGO, graphic design, ceramics, paintings, printmaking, reclaimed woodwork and an art history presentation.

Exhibiting are Shelby Behrens, Ethan Eberhardt, Maggie Hermersmann, Breanna Larson, Savannah Linkert, Gabrielle Pechacek, Eva Schrank and Skylar Youngren.

Shelby Behrens, of River Falls, has a primary emphasis in printmaking and a minor emphasis in art history. On exhibit are traditional prints and illustrations that showcase the derealized abstraction of the human condition and its relation to our homes and bodies.

Ethan Eberhardt, of Eau Claire, has a major emphasis in graphic design. On exhibit are examples of LEGO creations accompanied by self-designed instructions and packaging. The work is a representation of his love of stories and how they're explored through interactive media.

Maggie Hermersmann, of Woodbury, Minn., has a major emphasis in graphic design. On exhibit is a collection of posters, hand decorated clothing and 3D work. The work is an abstract reflection of meaningful life events.

Savannah Linkert, of North Branch, Minn., has a major emphasis in graphic design. On exhibition is Linkert's exploration

within reclaimed wood, design and photography visually representing homespun work.

Gabrielle Pechacek, of Hudson, has a major emphasis in painting. On exhibit is a collection of oil paintings based on the concepts of time, memory and spirituality.

Eva Schrank, of River Falls, has a major emphasis in art history. On exhibit is a mixed media installation consisting of video projection and movement of the human body. The work focuses on the role of the body as a medium for performance art.

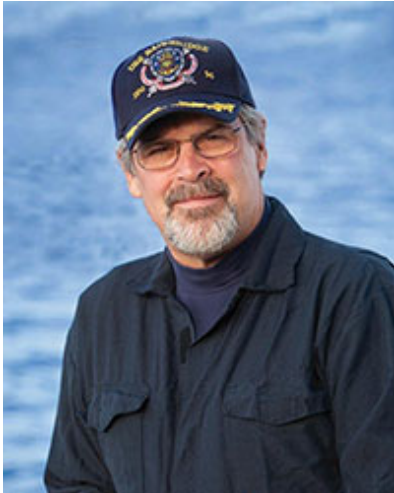
Skylar Youngren, of Woodbury, Minn., has a major emphasis in ceramics and a minor emphasis in drawing. On exhibit is work based on her love for fantasy stories, video games and Japanese designs.

A public reception is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. on May 6 at the gallery.

For more information, call the UWRF Art Department at 715-425-3266.

Capt. Richard Phillips to speak at spring commencement

April 19, 2022 -- For several days in April 2009, Capt. Richard Phillips became the center of an international drama when he was captured by pirates who attacked and boarded his ship.



Phillips will bring his inspirational story of perseverance and teamwork as part of the two University of Wisconsin-River Falls commencement ceremonies at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 7, in the Knowles Field House in the Falcon Center.

Having a speaker like Phillips is in response to student requests, said Chancellor Maria Gallo.

"He will inspire our graduates and their guests with his story of courage and leadership during a crisis and beyond," Gallo said, adding Phillips will be motivational and connect to the university's values.

UWRF will graduate more than 700 students during the spring commencement ceremonies. At 9 a.m. the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and the College of Business and Economics and Graduate Studies will hold a commencement ceremony. The College of Arts and Sciences and College of Education and Professional Studies ceremony is at 1 p.m.

Phillips, of Underhill, Vt., authored a book about his experience that became the inspiration for the critically acclaimed, award-winning film "Captain Phillips" starring Tom Hanks. The movie was nominated for several Academy Awards.

Phillips was held captive for several days by pirates who hijacked the Maersk Alabama. It was the first hijacking of a U.S. ship in more than 200 years.

To protect his crew, Phillips made a conscious decision to put himself directly in harm's way and offered himself as a hostage to get the pirates off the Maersk Alabama.

The standoff dragged on until April 12, when Navy SEAL snipers shot the three captors holding Phillips on a lifeboat. Within minutes, Phillips was rescued.

Phillips was hailed as a hero.

"The real heroes are the Navy SEALs and our nation's men and women in uniform," Phillips said in a 2014 article published in the Weirton Daily Times. "They do the impossible every day. I don't consider myself heroic. I consider myself a lucky guy. I'm not exactly intelligent or brave and all that. It was my duty."

Phillips will address students about starting their professional careers and lives.

Phillips is a graduate of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, a member of the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots Union, and a licensed American merchant mariner. He became captain of the Maersk Alabama in 2008. He

married Andrea Coggio in 1987. They have two children, Mariah and Danny.

Commencement ceremonies will also be available via livestream. For more information, go to the [commencement website](#).

Chancellor Gallo named chair of national women's executive council

April 18, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo was elected in March as the chair of the American Council on Education (ACE) Women's Network Executive Council (WNEC).



Gallo will serve in the position for two years. She has served on the WNEC since June 2018, most recently as the group's vice chair.

ACE Women's Network is a national system of networks within each state, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia with the goal of advancing and supporting women in higher education. The state networks are linked to one another through ACE WNEC, a group of senior women executives from across the country who serve as both mentors to the state chairs and advisers to ACE on the overall functioning of the ACE Women's Network.

According to ACE's American College President Study 2017, only 30% of the nation's college and university presidents are women, up just a few percentage points over the past decade. Of those, 78% of women presidents are serving their first presidency. The goal of ACE's multi-association national initiative Moving the

Needle seeks to increase the number of women leaders, with a goal that at least 50% of college and university presidents will be women by 2030.

"By providing mentorship to other women leaders, we serve to build a national pipeline of women prepared to advance to senior and executive-level positions in higher education," Gallo noted.

What is now named ACE WNEC was founded with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation in 1977. The executive council uses geographic locations to divide mentoring responsibilities for individual state networks among its members.

As chair, Gallo will work directly with the director of ACE Leadership to coordinate activities.

Gallo succeeds Sonoma State University President Judy Sakaki. The immediate past chair of the WNEC serves on ACE's Board of Directors.

Gallo was named UWRF's chancellor in July 2021 after serving five years as the Delaware Valley University president in Doylestown, Penn. Before that she was dean and director of Research and Cooperative Education at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. Her research interests included plant molecular biology and genetics and plant-microbe interactions. Gallo earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and Ph.D. in genetics from North Carolina State University.

ACE is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. To learn more, visit acenet.edu.

Chancellor Gallo starts endowed scholarship for first-gen STEM students

April 5, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo kicked off the university's Giving Day week by establishing a new endowed scholarship for first-generation students interested in pursuing a degree in the sciences, technology, engineering and math.

The UWRF Foundation scholarship is named the Dr. Maria Gallo STEM Scholarship Endowment.

The \$1,000 scholarship is slated to be awarded for the first time in the 2022-23 academic year.



"I created this to seed student success," Gallo said. "A significant barrier with education can be the financial piece for students. I want to help alleviate that so they don't have to worry about the financial part quite as much so they can get their education, have extra time to spend on their studies and enjoy the college experience."

The new endowed scholarship helps kick off UWRF Foundation's Giving Day on Friday, April 8.

Giving Day supports the Falcon Annual Fund, an unrestricted fund to support the university's most pressing and immediate needs. Tax-deductible contributions to the UWRF Foundation may be made at the Giving Day website at go.uwrf.edu/givingday.

New this year is the addition of multiple matching gifts which help donors' dollars go further and double their impact.

Gallo, a first-generation student, started as the UWRF chancellor in July 2021 after serving five years as the Delaware Valley University president in Doylestown, Penn., the university's first woman president. Gallo earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and Ph.D. in genetics from North Carolina State University.

Before her DeVal post, Gallo was dean and director of Research and Cooperative Extension of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa and was professor and chair of the Agronomy Department at the University of Florida where she specialized in crop improvement.

Gallo, a Fulbright Scholar, noted scholarships helped her throughout her educational experience and she wanted to help pay that forward to UWRF STEM students.

The UWRF Foundation offers about 325 endowed scholarships, said Assistant Chancellor for University Advancement Rick Foy.

"Endowed scholarships provide students with critical financial resources, opening the doors to quality educational opportunities and a premier collegiate experience at UW-River Falls," Foy said. "The availability of a scholarship is often a

crucial determining factor for a student going through the college decision-making process. We work with donors to establish criteria for their scholarship awards based on financial need, merit or academic field of study. An endowed scholarship provides a donor the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy, changing the lives of UWRF students forever.”

An endowed scholarship is a permanent fund. The UW-River Falls Foundation invests the fund's resources, and a specific portion of the income is spent annually on the scholarship award to the selected student. The remaining earned income is added back to the fund, ensuring the continued life of the endowed scholarship. The minimum funding needed for an endowed scholarship is \$25,000. All contributions to the endowment through the UWRF Foundation are tax deductible.

Anyone interested in establishing an endowed scholarship, contributing to the Dr. Maria Gallo STEM Scholarship Endowment, or other scholarships should contact Foy at 715-425-4291 or richard.foy@uwrf.edu.



A legislative luncheon hosted April 4 at UW-Stout featured university chancellors, area lawmakers and UW System officials. Front row from left, state Sen. Janet Bewley, UW-Eau Claire Chancellor James Schmidt, UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank and UW-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo. Back row, state Rep. Clint Moses, UW System Board of Regents President Ed Manydeeds, state Sen. Jeff Smith, state Rep. David Armstrong and state Rep. Rob Summerfield. Missing is state Rep. Warren Petryk.

Chancellors update lawmakers on visions, needs for their universities' futures

Three leaders co-host luncheon for lawmakers from the region

April 7, 2022 -- Chancellors of the three University of Wisconsin System schools in west-central Wisconsin offered visions of their schools' futures as they met with a group of state legislators.

Maria Gallo of UW-River Falls, Katherine Frank of UW-Stout, and James Schmidt of UW-Eau Claire gave presentations April 4 at UW-Stout as they co-hosted a luncheon for six area lawmakers, an annual event that rotates between the universities.

They discussed their needs for state funding to achieve key components of their plans and how their universities must evolve to meet workforce needs.

The chancellors were joined by Ed Manydeeds, president of the UW System Board of Regents.

Legislators attending were:

- Rep. David Armstrong
- Sen. Janet Bewley
- Rep. Clint Moses
- Rep. Warren Petryk
- Sen. Jeff Smith
- Rep. Rob Summerfield

"I was impressed and very encouraged to know how forward-looking these chancellors are," Bewley said. "This group is always looking to the future, how to serve students and how to serve the state."

Armstrong appreciated the chance to hear the chancellors in a small group setting and came away with a better understanding of each school's mission.

"The beauty of this event is that I saw the strengths of each campus, and I don't want to do away with that. We need to keep their distinctness and strengths and not homogenize them," Armstrong said.

That sentiment was echoed by Schmidt, who said that "each of our missions is so distinctive, but yet we've found a way to work together."

Gallo said that an investment in the UW System is an investment in Wisconsin. "We need to use the strength of all our institutions for the betterment of the state. The Wisconsin Idea is what public higher education is all about."

Frank discussed UW-Stout's planned \$109 million renovation of Heritage Hall, a major academic hub that is critical for meeting workforce needs associated with statewide priorities. The building serves key campus programs in hospitality, education, food science and dietetics, and mental health counseling. The project would have an economic impact of nearly \$2 million and support more than 1,300 jobs during one year of construction.

"One-third of our students pass through Heritage Hall each semester," Frank said.

Currently, the project is in the planning and design stage supported by funding from the UW System.

Gallo and Schmidt explained their proposals for new science buildings to replace aging structures and help transform key areas of their central campuses. More importantly, the buildings, like renovated Heritage Hall, would provide students with cutting-edge classroom and lab technology for high-demand programs the universities offer.

UW-River Falls' SciTech building has been approved by the state legislature. Gallo expressed her appreciation to the legislators for their support. SciTech is a unique project that will offer a university-business collaboration center, a clear testament to the importance of programs and facilities like it to regional employers, she said.

Funding for the first phase of UW-Eau Claire's Health Sciences building has been approved, and design is underway. Second-phase funding for construction needs state approval.

Bewley said she views UW System academic buildings as part of the state's infrastructure. "In the Legislature we're very

aware of the state's infrastructure needs," she said.

The chancellors highlighted other ways their schools are striving to meet the needs of students, such as the FOCUS2030 strategic plan at UW-Stout; new majors and a Dairy Pilot Plant renovation at UW-River Falls; and the expansive Sonnentag Center and County Materials Complex funded generously by alumni John and Carolyn Sonnentag, nearing construction at UW-Eau Claire.

The leaders also noted their universities' efforts to provide hands-on learning opportunities through internship programs, research opportunities and high-impact experiences.

- Nearly 36% of UW-River Falls graduates are in STEM fields. UW-River Falls produces the third highest percentage of graduates with STEM degrees in the UW System.
- UW-Eau Claire is a highly ranked undergraduate research institution, Schmidt said. The school will host the 2023 National Conference on Undergraduate Research, which annually draws more than 4,500 students and faculty from around the U.S.
- All UW-Stout students participate in at least one experiential learning opportunity like internships, co-ops, and practicums, and UW-Stout continues to be a leader in the UW System with an employment rate of 98.4% within six months of graduation. "This is a key feature of the UW-Stout polytechnic approach and adherence to our distinct mission," Frank said.

At all three institutions they are working to "meet people where they are" to recruit new students into the future. At UW-Stout, for example, 18% of students are online.

Innovative programming and drawing out-of-state talent will be important as forecasts show the number of high school graduates in Wisconsin dropping significantly in three years, Schmidt said.

The luncheon included UW System University Relations officials Kathy Divine, director of state relations; Deej Lundgren, director of state relations; Allison Steil, director of federal relations, and other officials from the three universities.



Dr. Imtiaz Moosa Philosophy and Ethics Speaker Series inaugural event April 25

April 12, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls philosophy Professor Imtiaz Moosa loved to teach, was dedicated to his students and had a zest for life.

Moosa, Ph.D., taught at the university from 1989 until he died in December 2020.

To honor his legacy at UWRF, the Dr. Imtiaz Moosa Philosophy and Ethics Speaker Series was established in 2021 with generous gifts from the Moosa family and many campus and community members. The goal of the speaker series is to feature leading experts and thought leaders on a variety of pressing philosophical, social justice and contemporary ethical issues.

"Dr. Moosa demonstrated a vibrant spirit, a love of teaching, a steadfast dedication to our students and a true zest for life. We believe this philosophy and ethics speaker series will be a meaningful and lasting tribute to a memorable educator and remarkable person," noted Dean Yohnk, College of Arts and Sciences dean.

Yohnk said he would regularly hear from students how Moosa impacted their lives.

"I have had many students and alumni tell me they had a great opportunity learning about philosophy and ethics with him,"

Yohnk said. "They explain that they were impacted by his passion, intelligence and enthusiasm. To the end, Dr. Moosa remained dedicated to his students."

The speaker series seemed like a good fit to honor Moosa, Yohnk said.

"The series allows people to come together and talk about important issues in philosophy and ethics in today's world," Yohnk said.

There will be a dedication ceremony at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 25, of a plaque honoring Moosa at the Kinnickinnic River Theater, 320 University Center. The plaque will be hung outside Moosa's favorite classroom in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

The inaugural event of the speaker series is a discussion by Gordon Marino, Ph. D., professor emeritus of philosophy and curator of The Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. He will speak at the theater at 4 p.m. At 5 p.m., a reception will be held in the Falls Room, 4 University Center, with Moosa's family and friends.

"I am both honored and humbled to be the first speaker in the series," Marino said. His lecture is titled "Six or Seven Lessons I have Drawn from My Long Walk with Soren Kierkegaard."

Marino has spent decades studying the Danish poet, theologian and philosopher Kierkegaard, 1813-1855.

"In my talk, I will discuss Kierkegaard's positive views of anxiety, the distinction he draws between despair and depression, the relation between moods and what Kierkegaard terms 'earnestness.' Along the way, I will try to slip in a Kierkegaardian critique of the current tendency to "medicalize experience" that is, treat every emotional perturbation as though it were an illness," Marino said.

"He had a distinction between wisdom and knowledge," Marino said. "Wisdom is deeper than the abstract understanding."

Marino earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, and B.A. from Columbia University. His areas of specialization include History of Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and Kierkegaard. He teaches philosophy and related courses as a professor at St. Olaf College and holds a position as the curator of the Kierkegaard Library.

In 2018, Marino published his most recent book, "The Existentialist's Survival Guide." He has authored and co-authored numerous works, including "Kierkegaard in the Present Age." His articles have appeared in internationally acclaimed news sources and periodicals including Atlantic Monthly, New York Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal and the American Poetry Review. He is also a veteran boxing trainer and an award-winning boxing writer.

Having a speaker series is important to share wisdom, especially in a time when the humanities are being cut at many educational institutions," Marino said. "I am sure the much-beloved Professor Moosa would agree that we need to show the ways in which the study of the humanities helps us become human."

Moosa, who died in December 2020, was born in Africa and moved to Canada at age 16. He had a degenerative eye disease, which caused him to lose his eyesight in 2006.

In an interview for a university series titled Shaping Minds, Moosa talked about what he enjoyed about teaching:

“The highlight of my classes is when we are opening our souls, when we are talking about life in its rawness. When we are now philosophizing in a passionate way. It’s almost a Zen-like experience,” Moosa said. “When students really start talking and revealing and asking and probing and questioning and they take possession of the material and I become only accessory to the discussion. I’m not a professor anymore, I’m just part of the group. Those are the high points in the classroom.”

Neil Kraus, chair of the UWRF History and Philosophy Department, said rational, informed debate on important topics is needed now more than ever.

“Our hope is that we can use the Dr. Imtiaz Moosa Philosophy and Ethics Speaker Series to address many of the most important issues we face, including the precarious state of democracy itself,” Kraus added.

UWRF Professor of Economics John Walker said he enjoyed talking to Moosa about ideas.

“He was always open to what my perspective was, and I reciprocated that,” Walker said. “It made for some really interesting conversations in which I felt I learned a lot. Imtiaz was a very kind person. He was interested in people no matter what their station in life was. He was also a very resilient person. The way he kept going after he lost his sight was really inspiring. A very appreciative person as well. Imtiaz would be all in for the speaker series. He loved ideas and learning.”

More than \$30,000 has been raised to help provide financial resources for the annual contemporary philosophy and ethics speaker series.

To donate to the Moosa speaker series, go to <https://www.uwrf.edu/Give/MoosaMemorial.cfm>.

Ecological Restoration Institute program manager wins statewide award

April 4, 2022 -- Ecological Restoration Institute Program Manager Kelsey Cowart will receive a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources award for her work with the University of Wisconsin-River Falls two school forests.



The 2021 Learning Experiences and Activities in Forestry plaque will be awarded to Cowart Wednesday, April 6, in Stevens Point. The award recognizes individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to school forest programs.

Cowart said she was pleased with the award and its recognition.

The LEAF Program is Wisconsin's K-12 forestry education program created in 2001 to help promote forestry education in Wisconsin. It is a partnership between the WDNR-Division of Forestry and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education in the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point.

UWRF is one of the few higher learning institutions that has property registered in the school forest program, most school forests serve K-12 programs. The university has two registered school forests.

School Forest 1 is on the south end of campus and is about 10 acres. School Forest 2 is on the north end of the Mann Valley Farm and is about 14 acres.

In the nomination, it was noted "Kelsey and her work with forestry faculty members has transformed our school forests into high impact spaces that support our campus and community. She has perfected the delicate balance of providing support while giving the students time and space to learn and explore independently. Earlier this year she and a colleague received funding from the Quiet Trails Fund through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to establish trails and foster increased use of one of our school forest lands. It is incredible to see these spaces being used by our students and community. She has done a phenomenal job taking on the responsibility of managing the two registered school forests that have been underutilized ever since they were registered in 2005."

Cowart has also worked with students to remove buckthorn, an invasive species, from School Forest 2. Signing for the newly created trail in the forest is expected to be placed this spring.

"We want these forests to be used by everyone on campus," Cowart said. "For our students, the natural resources give them a chance to develop plans or be part of the management. They can see what to expect when they are working in the field. They also get to be part of a transformation that they will be able to see years from now."

Last year students helped plant 1,000 trees during Earth month in both forests. This year an additional 300 trees will be planted this spring. School Forest 1 is being restored to a white pine forest and oak savanna and School Forest 2 will largely remain an oak woodland forest.

Students who are taking a chainsaw safety course certification through the Ecological Restoration Institute are helping to remove red pine trees that are aged in School Forest 1.

Students will also help with a controlled burn of Riverside Prairie next to the north fork of the Kinnickinnic River this spring to help nurture native species.

The institute is part of the Plant and Earth Science Department in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. The institute is funded through the Environmental Studies Opportunity Fund, a fund created and sponsored by donors to the University Foundation. The fund also provides scholarships to students majoring in conservation and environmental science.

Some of the certifications offered to students predominantly in conservation and environmental planning and environmental science include chainsaw safety training, wildland firefighter training, boat safety, ATV/off-road education and tractor training. The certifications are offered free to students.

"It is a way for our students to develop skills and be more marketable to employers," Cowart said.

Students are also able to get employment through the institute. Part-time jobs are offered during the school year and full-time ones in the summer.

According to the LEAF website, there are 412 registered school forest parcels with over 28,000 acres of land.

Wisconsin forest products provide more than 60,000 jobs and contribute more than \$24.1 billion to the state's economy annually.

More information about the Ecological Restoration Institute is available by contacting Cowart at kelsey.cowart@uwrf.edu.



Chancellor's Award for Students 2022 recipients: left to right, in front Joe Schlies, Chancellor Maria Gallo and Brigitte Ledferd. In back, Ian Carter, Kit Zuelke, Natalie Rodgers, Courtney Carson, Kaye Anderson and Isabella Forliti.

Eight students presented Chancellor's Awards

April 20, 2022 – Eight University of Wisconsin-River Falls students received the Chancellor's Award for Students on Tuesday.

The Chancellor's Award is the highest non-academic honor students can receive at the university. It recognizes students who have shown distinguished leadership and service while on campus.

"The honorees are a testament to our mission to prepare students to be productive, creative, ethical, engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective. A review of the nomination materials submitted makes it clear our students are successfully living this mission," said Chancellor Maria Gallo.

Gallo congratulated the recipients and encouraged them to continue their commitment to excellence and service.

Chancellor Award recipients are:

- **Kaye Anderson**, of River Falls, a senior studying psychology and English education. Anderson is a writing tutor, Ability Services Peer Mentor, a Chancellor's Student Ambassador, a member of Aspiring Educators and the UWF Disability Advisory Committee. In a nomination letter, Anderson was noted for her caring disposition for other students, the offices she works in and for helping others reach their goals.

- **Courtney Carson**, of Eagan, Minn., a senior chemistry major. Carson is a member of the Women's Golf Team, a Peer-Led Team learning leader, a WiSys Student Ambassador and a chemistry tutor. Carson was hailed for her leadership and compassion and for making the university better through her involvement.
- **Ian Carter**, of Platteville, a senior majoring in secondary education and physics graduate school track. Carter serves as the chapter president of the Society of Physics Students, played football, is a UWRF Math Contest member, a Physics Help Center tutor and has been involved in three Undergraduate Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities research grants. Carter was lauded by a nominator for his "epitome of outstanding service, leadership and values."
- **Isabella "Izzy" Forliti**, of White Bear Lake, Minn., communication studies major. Forliti is the Student Voice newspaper editor, a Student Involvement events intern, Chancellor's Ambassadors public relations officer and chair of the Student Media Committee. Under Forliti's leadership, the Student Voice has been honored for its journalism. In the 2020 Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest sponsored by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation, Forliti won a second-place award for a feature story about learning opportunities in the UWRF greenhouses.
- **Brigitte Ledferd**, of Arbor Vitae, a junior criminology and sociology major. Ledferd is president of the Student Government Association, a member of the COVID-19 operations team and spearheaded a Safety Committee, which is focused on keeping students safe on campus as well as strengthening mental health support services. With another year at UWRF, Ledferd is looking forward to the possibility of participating in the Semester Abroad Europe Program to further expand her education.
- **Natalie Rodgers**, of Sun Prairie, senior communication studies major. Rodgers is president of the Chancellor's Student Ambassadors, manages the University Center's Information Desk, has been involved in shared governance and is on the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Council. Rodgers was honored in part for her dedication to seeing other students succeed and her commitment to making UWRF an amazing university.
- **Joe Schlies**, of Denmark (Wis.), an agricultural business major. Schlies is a member of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Student Advisory Council, a member of the Student Government Association, a graduate of the Agricultural Business Leadership Program and serves as vice president of the UWRF Agricultural Business and Marketing Society. One nominator pointed out that Schlies is "not afraid to dedicate his time and energy to learn about issues facing UWRF students and to work collaboratively with students and staff to create solutions."
- **Kit Zuelke**, of Stratford, a graduate student majoring in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Zuelke is an accomplished researcher and traveled to Japan to volunteer as an English language teacher and American culture counselor and is on the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee. Zuelke was lauded for his English as a Second Language Center work as a student tutor while an undergraduate and then as a student manager while a graduate student.

The awards were presented during a reception in the Riverview Ballroom, University Center. Jamie Zamjahn, assistant chancellor for student success, introduced the recipients.

Beth Schommer, chief of staff and Chancellor's Award for Students Committee chair, noted students are nominated by a faculty member, staff member or a student peer. Student recipients demonstrate undergraduate research, inclusivity and service to the community and university. First awarded in 1980, the award has been presented to 310 outstanding students.

For more information, email Schommer at beth.schommer@uwrf.edu.

Finals Fest concert to feature Minneapolis indie rock band Bad Bad Hats

April 26, 2022 – As the academic year winds to a close, University of Wisconsin-River Falls will host Finals Fest on Saturday, April 30, featuring the Minneapolis-based indie rock band Bad Bad Hats.



Finals Fest kicks off at 5 p.m. with a pre-party on the campus mall outside the University Center that will include Colleen the Dream, the 20-foot fiberglass cow, student organization craft events, henna tattoos, caricature drawings, a mobile photo booth and a stress-relieving mobile rage room and more. Participants write what is stressing them out with markers on plates and then smash the plates as a cathartic activity. Food trucks will be available for community members to buy food. In case of rain, most events will move into the University Center.

All events are free and open to the public, except for some free food and giveaways that are reserved for UWRF students.

Bad Bad Hats, named for a trouble-making character from the Madeline children's books, will take the stage in the Falcon's Nest in the University Center starting at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

"We're trying to keep it a little more local this year with the band," said Elise Peters, event and activities coordinator for the UWRF Student Involvement Office, the Finals Fest sponsor. "Finals Fest is a fun, traditional end-of-the-semester event to give students a chance to relax and have fun before finals start. When we ask alumni and students, one of their favorite memories is Finals Fest."

This is the first time since 2019 that Finals Fest has been fully in-person because of COVID-19 restrictions, Peters said.

Bad Bad Hats was formed in 2012. Their 2015 debut album "Psychic Reader" caught the attention of The New Yorker, National Public Radio, Pitchfork and Paste. The band has toured the U.S. extensively supporting artists from Margaret Glaspy, Hippo Campus and Third Eye Blind. In the band's bio, they note their music "honors classic pop songwriting, with nods to nineties rock simplicity and pop-punk frivolity."

"Lightning Round," the band's second full-length album was recorded live in a studio. The album marks the final release with contributions from original member Noah Boswell, who will be leaving the group in the fall to pursue a master's degree. The band will continue with Kerry Alexander, Connor Davison and Chris Hoge. They have plans to tour the country this year.

Commencement at UW-River Falls is Saturday, May 7, with final exams scheduled for Monday-Thursday, May 9-12.

For more information about Finals Fest, email Peters at elise.peters@uwrf.edu.



Food Ready Space opens at St. Croix Valley Business Incubator Center

April 13, 2022 -- When the new 3,000-square-foot Food Ready Space opened in February at the St. Croix Valley Business Incubation Center, it required no marketing before all seven spaces were filled with entrepreneurs ready to launch or grow their businesses.

State and local licensing laws require that most food products publicly sold must be produced in commercial-grade kitchens, which can prove too costly for many upstart and small food business owners.

"We did see a gap and a need for this in the area and we helped fill it," said St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center Director Sheri Marnell.

At the center, members rent a 225-square-foot food production space and can choose to rent four-foot sections underneath a kitchen hood with fire suppression equipment to install equipment such as stovetops and ovens. Members bring in the equipment they need at the Food Ready Space.

The center first opened in January 2018. It is a collaborative effort of four founding partners including UW-River Falls, the city of River Falls, Chippewa Valley Technical College and the River Falls Economic Development Corp.

"The partnership of the organization is really the key to the success of the center," Marnell said of the nonprofit organization.

The center is a business incubator which provides management guidance and technical assistance to new business owners, as well as a variety of workspaces available for rent from cubicles and private offices to co-working rooms and industrial

space. A total of 29 businesses are on site, creating a 96% occupancy, Marnell said.

“We are creating an entrepreneurship ecosystem,” Marnell said. “The center is available to all members 24-7. Being an entrepreneur can be pretty lonely. Being around like-minded individuals, you get to collaborate and learn as well.”

Marnell is available to the incubator tenants as a coach and adviser to talk about what is working with their businesses and to help them establish goals to grow their businesses.

The center provides UWRF the opportunity to work with businesses and the community and connect students with business and faculty research with businesses, Marnell said.

“From the university perspective, it would be great to have professors utilize space and do class projects. Ultimately, we want to grow economic development in the area,” Marnell said. “We want our students to have places to work and be exposed to as many career possibilities as possible and we have nearly 30 different businesses under one roof, what a great opportunity for us!”

There are student internship opportunities with the center as well.

Josh Woll, a UWRF senior majoring in marketing communications and communication studies, interned at the center from April 2021 to February. The role included office management, running the center’s social media and other marketing.

“To this day was the best job I’ve ever had,” he said. “I love the people I was able to collaborate and connect with and learn their stories and what made their businesses unique.”

Woll, who graduates in May, has rented space in the center and is starting his own marketing company, Visionary Solutions Media.

Myron Marko, a UWRF alum who graduated in May 2021 with a degree in business administration-management, is renting one of the Food Ready Spaces for his business Holy Donuts.

Marko, originally of Amery, started Holy Donuts in 2016 when he was a sophomore in high school.

Marko first made donuts by hand for fun with a small ring donut maker he found.

Later when his parents told him it was time for him to get a job, Marko started making donuts out of a small trailer his dad originally bought for a mobile deer shack and Holy Donuts began. His first festival selling donuts was at the Amery Fall Festival in September 2016.

“We had a really good day there even though I could only make eight donuts at a time at the fryer,” Marko said, noting he stores his trailers outside the center. “People were lining up because they were supporting me.”

Marko never expected to be an entrepreneur and start his own business.

“It started as a way to avoid getting a normal job,” Marko said. “It’s rewarding. I get to see customers enjoy the donuts and I get to do so many different things every day.”

In addition to Holy Donuts, Food Ready Space tenants include Simply Sourdough, a bakery making sourdough pretzels, bagels, challah, sandwich bread and more; Rising Bread Company, a bakery specializing in naturally leavened and long-fermented loaves of bread and pastries using locally sourced, certified organic grain; Mindful Fork, a business providing healthy ready-to-eat meals; Anytizers, a food truck serving sandwiches and soups; Bug and Mini Co., makes consumable products for immune health, including elderberry syrup and fire cider; and Blue Haze, a startup producing smoked products.

Members in the Food Ready Space signed two- to four-year leases.

Marko enjoys being part of the center with the other food businesses.

“It’s cool. It’s like having co-workers plus community,” he said.

For more information on the resources available at the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center, visit <https://www.stcroixinnovation.org/>.

Free leadership seminar addresses using uncertainty to create opportunity

April 14, 2022 -- The St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center and the UW-Stout Discovery Center Leadership Institute will hold a free interactive seminar on “Leading Through Disruption: Using Uncertainty to Create Opportunity.”

A virtual session format is planned from 9 to 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 20, and an in-person session from 9 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, April 21, at the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center, 1091 Sutherland Ave., River Falls.

There is no cost to attend the seminar thanks to partial funding from EDA CARES grant ED20CHI3070030 which supports innovative leadership for the COVID-19 pandemic response. Register at <https://www.uwstout.edu/outreach-engagement/lifelong-learning/leadership-development/leadership-institute/leading-through-disruption-using-uncertainty-create-opportunity>.

Sheri Marnell, director of the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center, will present along with Marya Wilson, UW-Stout assistant professor in the Operation and Management Department.

The innovation center was established by UW-River Falls, Chippewa Valley Technical College, city of River Falls, and the River Falls Economic Development Corporation. The center is a business incubator which provides management guidance and technical assistance to new business owners, as well as a variety of workspaces available for rent from cubicles and private offices to co-working rooms and industrial space.

The session will cover:

- Disruption and what has been experienced
- Leadership preparedness for disruptions
- Minimizing uncertainty and fear during a time of disruption
- Visioning the transformational possibilities for organizations

“Our whole world has been disrupted in the last two years. It has not been easy. Leading teams through it has been pretty tough,” Marnell said. “In a time when companies are having a hard time attracting talent, it is a great time to focus on training your leaders. People do not leave jobs; they leave bad leaders.”

In addition to the seminar, there will be a one-on-one coaching session with Wilson to assist those attending with specific questions about their organizations.

Marnell thrives in spaces of change. She has a B.S. in apparel design and development and an M.B.A. and Ph.D. in business management.

Wilson has a B.A. in psychology, an M.S. in management technology, an M.A. in human development, and a Ph.D. in human and organizational systems. In addition, Wilson is working to complete her International Coaching Federation certification.



Imtiaz Moosa's siblings Rahim Moosa, left, and Taslim Moosa, with Dean Yohnk, UWRF College of Arts and Sciences dean, with a drawing of Imtiaz presented to them at the inaugural Dr. Imtiaz Moosa Philosophy and Ethic Speaker Series event April 25.

Moosa family visits UW-River Falls, attends inaugural speaker event

April 27, 2022 – Two siblings of University of Wisconsin-River Falls philosophy Professor Imtiaz “Imi” Moosa recalled the many letters and well wishes they received after their brother died in December 2020.

“He was a star,” Rahim Moosa said of his brother Imtiaz. “We got letters from students telling us how he had changed their lives. It sounded like he was really a favorite professor. We knew he was a good speaker. We did not know how loved he was until we got their stories.”

Taslim Moosa, Imtiaz’s sister, agreed. “We would not have guessed his students enjoyed him so much.”

Rahim and Taslim visited UW-River Falls on April 25 for the inaugural Dr. Imtiaz Moosa Philosophy and Ethics Speaker Series. The speaker series was established in 2021 with generous gifts from the Moosa family and many campus and community members. The goal of the series is to feature leading experts and thought leaders on a variety of pressing philosophical, social justice and contemporary ethical issues.

During the ceremony, a plaque was dedicated honoring Imtiaz that will be placed outside his favorite classroom in Kleinpell Fine Arts, Room 302.

Dean Yohnk, College of Arts and Sciences dean, presented Rahim and Taslim with a drawing of their brother created by Billy Thao.

In addition to his siblings, Rahim's spouse, Andrea Mills, and their children attended the inaugural speaker series. Another sibling, Mehmona Moosa-Mitha, an associate professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, was unable to attend the event.

The inaugural speaker for the event was Gordon Marino, Ph.D., professor emeritus of philosophy and curator of The Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. His lecture was titled "Six or Seven Lessons I have Drawn from My Long Walk with Soren Kierkegaard."

Imtiaz was enthusiastic about debate and ethics.

"I'm sure he would be overjoyed and thrilled with the series," said Rahim, a professor in the Department of Pure Mathematics at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. "He really enjoyed talking with students and other people about philosophy and everyday questions about ethics."

Attending the speaker series allowed the family to celebrate Imtiaz's life. Only Rahim was able to attend his brother's funeral service because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This was a way to celebrate and remember him," said Taslim, of London, Ontario, who teaches in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Western Ontario. "It is a huge honor to be here. I am thankful for everyone who took the initiative to write to us. It was good for us to see he had built a community of warmth around him."

Imtiaz taught at UW-River Falls from 1989 until his death. He was born in Africa and his family emigrated to Canada when he was age 16. He had a degenerative eye disease, which caused him to lose his eyesight in 2006.

When he lost his sight, Imtiaz continued to show the strength of will and immense energy, his siblings recalled. The brothers would go hiking in Wyoming and Imtiaz would walk over 10 blocks to teach at UWRF regardless of the weather and would decline rides to enjoy the outdoors.

During the ceremony, Yohnk told the Moosa family that Imtiaz had a family at UWRF. "I hope you take that away in your heart," he said, "How appropriate that every year we will have a time of coming together to honor him."

Professor Neil Kraus, chair of the History and Philosophy Department, said Imtiaz challenged students to think about things they never thought of before and to think in diverse ways.

"He welcomed debate and his classes exemplified what higher education should be in a democracy," Kraus said.

More than \$30,000 has been raised to help provide financial resources for the annual contemporary philosophy and ethics speaker series.

To donate to the Moosa speaker series, go to <https://www.uwrf.edu/Give/MoosaMemorial.cfm>.



Nilsestuen Legacy Event speaker addresses family farm generational transitions

April 21, 2022 – Family farms have about a 12% chance of being handed down to the third generation, according to the director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and founder of the Purdue Institute for Family Business.

“Family is the backbone of agriculture,” said Maria Marshall, Ph.D. and Purdue University agricultural economics professor. Yet, diverse interests and more family members involved can create conflict.

“More people mean more problems,” Marshall said. “More problems mean more policies. You might need job descriptions and determine who are managers. We don’t see our family with open eyes like we see an employee.”

First-generation to second-generation occurs about 30% of the time.

Marshall spoke at University of Wisconsin-River Falls on April 20 in the University Center as part of the Rod Nilsestuen Legacy Event. Nilsestuen earned his undergraduate degree from UW-River Falls and was the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection agency when he died in 2010. The program’s mission is to encourage creative thinking, research, education and outreach in the areas of cooperative business and development, wise rural land use and leadership. The event was sponsored by the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that provides development opportunities for emerging leaders expressing interest in applying and advancing the principles of cooperation and in promoting farmland preservation, land stewardship and sustainability. The UW-River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences also sponsored the event.

William Nelson, of the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, noted the organization has given over 2,000 programs over the past 20 years on farmland preservation, which was a priority to Nilsestuen.

Marshall's research and extension programs focus on small business development and family business management on areas such as the resource exchange between the household and the business, and disaster recovery. She has published over 90 articles and presented to over 3,600 established and nascent business owners, nationally and internationally.

There has been very little study into family farm generational transitions, Marshall said, noting there is a major shift coming in farms and other small rural businesses.

"Baby boomers are retiring and that is going to impact businesses in the rural area and small towns," Marshall said.

Family businesses are the only ones that are affected by socioemotional wealth, which are emotional ties to a business.

What happens is the generation transferring out of the family business often increases the estimated market value of the business by 30% because of the emotions toward the farm or business. The successor generation believes they should get about a 57% family discount.

That can create conflict, Marshall said.

The most important consideration is families need to work together as assets are moved from one generation to the next, which on average takes about 6 ½ years.

The cohesion of the family is the goal as change occurs, she noted.

"We want to keep the family together and talking," Marshall said. "Families can disagree and stop talking to each other. That is not what we want. We want them to talk and continue to gather during the holidays. We need to think about more than just production."

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Roever receives Lydecker Student Research Award

April 21, 2022 – Senior Dan Roever has been named the recipient of the 2022 Drs. Ann and William Lydecker Student Research Award at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Each year since 2011, the Undergraduate Research, Scholarly and Creative Activity (URSCA) Office has recognized an outstanding undergraduate's research efforts coupled with service to and/or involvement in UW-River Falls.

The award was created by William (Bill) Lydecker, now deceased, to honor his late wife Ann, UWRF chancellor from 2000-04, who died in a car accident south of River Falls in March 2004. Ann was the university's first woman chancellor.



Roever, of River Falls, will graduate in May with majors in neuroscience and psychology with an emphasis in mental health.

"I was pretty surprised by the award," Roever said of the \$1,066 he received. "I feel honored."

He has been active in both collaborative and independent research. Roever's independent research includes:

- A Friend in Need: Investigating Empathy and Prosocial Behavior Utilizing Rat Models: For this project, rats are placed in an arena containing another restrained rat, and the free rat is provided the opportunity to release its trapped counterpart. Previously, rats have been shown to release the trapped rat despite it being a distressful endeavor, an act which is believed to reflect the experience of empathy. The research expands on this work by seeking limits to this behavior by introducing factors such as aversive stimuli, examining the morphology of the animal's neural tissue, and expanding the paradigm for use with mouse models.
- The Role of Chronic Caffeine Administration on the Attenuation of Depressive Behaviors in Long Evans Rats: In the research, rats are subjected to a chronic unpredictable stress model, followed by a regiment of caffeine treatments to determine if caffeine may mitigate the effects of stress and might be a useful addition to treatment approaches for major depressive disorder.
- Effects of Nucleus Accumbens Inhibition on the Expression of Stress Induced Behavioral Sensitizations: Drug addiction is a major health concern, and research indicates people exposed to stress are more susceptible than others. This experiment seeks to determine if inactivating the Nucleus Accumbens will prevent the expression of stress-induced behavioral sensitization in response to nicotine.

Roever presented at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research, Research in the Rotunda, the Midwest Psychological Association Conference and the UWRF Falls Gala. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society and Psi Chi National Honors Society for Psychology, serving as the current president, and is a part of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, the UWRF Honors Program and is the current club president of the UWRF Psychological Sciences Club. He

is a member of the Student Undergraduate, Research, Scholarly and Creative Activity Council (SURSCA) and is the current president. He is also a member of the Midwest Psychological Association and the Society for Neuroscience.

Following graduation, Roever will continue to work on research projects at UWRF and plans to volunteer with area mental health groups.

His goal is to attend graduate school to become a clinical psychologist.

He at first got involved with lab research work because he knew he needed the experience to get into graduate school.

"I found out I enjoyed doing research," he noted. "I have always liked psychology and am interested in why people do what they do. I also like to help people. It was a natural fit."

He chose UWRF because it was close to his home and affordable. He also enjoys having the opportunities to do undergraduate research. Roever is the Neuroscience Lab and Animal Colonies, instructor, caretaker and coordinator for professors James Cortright and Daniel Ehlinger. He is responsible for the care of the animals and keeping the lab clean and organized.

Survivors Memorial initiator to speak as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 11, 2022 – The founder of Break the Silence and the initiator of the nation's first permanent memorial to survivors of sexual violence will speak at University of Wisconsin-River Falls on Monday, April 18.



Sarah Super, who is a board member of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, will speak at 7 p.m. in the Falcon's Nest, University Center. She will address the importance of allyship for sexual assault survivors. The event is free and open to all.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The event is sponsored by the Student Involvement Office and the Violence Prevention Office.

Super, a sexual assault survivor, said after she was assaulted by an ex-boyfriend in 2015, sharing her story helped her heal.

In the days after the assault, her assailant and his family sought community support, while she remained an anonymous victim.

"Your goal is your healing," said Super when asked her advice to sexual assault survivors. "You do what you need to heal and for me, that was telling my story.

"I didn't know when I told my story that would be the spark that ignited Break the Silence," she said, noting hundreds of sexual assault survivors reached out to her and shared their stories.

Break the Silence was first held in August 2015 with a community truth-telling event at the Ukrainian Event Center in Minneapolis. Sexual assault survivors shared their stories. After each story, the audience repeated, "You are strong, you are courageous, you are inspiring." Then the survivor lit a candle and placed it in the center of the room.

She also wanted to dismantle the myth that women who are sexually assaulted are weak and not strong enough to take meaningful social action.

The idea to create a Survivors Memorial, which is located at Boom Island Park in Minneapolis, is a reminder that survivors surround us. Memorials play an important role in the stories we tell and the experiences we acknowledge publicly, Super noted. The Memorial to Survivors of Sexual Violence was dedicated on Oct. 10, 2020.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 1 in 3 women and nearly 1 in 4 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes.

The Survivors Memorial has been well received, Super said.

"It is amazing that people understand the need for this space and are respecting it," Super said.

Elise Peters, UWRF Student Involvement Office events and activities coordinator, saw Super speak in the Twin Cities a few years ago and wanted to bring Super to campus to speak.

“Sexual assault awareness, allyship and visibility are imperative,” Peters said. “We hope her powerful work will connect and support students. Most importantly, we hope this experience can give voice, and help break the silence around a topic that can be challenging to talk about and navigate.”

As part of the event, participants will have the opportunity to work on a community art project with Eoin Breadon’s Design Foundation II class in the Art Department.

For more information on the speaking event, email studentinvolvement@uwrf.edu.

UWRF and CVTC sign Guaranteed Admission Program Agreement

April 11, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo and Chippewa Valley Technical College President Sunem Beaton-Garcia signed a Guaranteed Admission Program Agreement April 5.

The agreement creates a seamless process for CVTC students who are part of the Liberal Arts Transfer Associate of Science degree or complete the University Credit Transfer Agreement to be admitted to UW-River Falls and complete a bachelor's degree.

The agreement was signed at the St. Croix Business and Innovation Center, a business incubator partnership between UWRF, CVTC, the city of River Falls and the River Falls Economic Development Corp.

It was noted it was a fitting site for the signing given the collaborative nature of the center.

"We are both about student success," Gallo said just prior to signing the agreement. "This is about how we can grow and serve students better in the state."

Beaton-Garcia said the partnership with UWRF has been wonderful. "It's institutional alignment," she said. "It's a means of eliminating barriers."

Gallo and Beaton-Garcia exchanged pens with their respective college logos during the signing.

David Travis, UWRF provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, said UWRF wants more CVTC students to transfer and finish their four-year degrees and find their path to success.

"It's so nice to talk collaboration with a college right in our backyard," Travis said. "I have seen students come from CVTC to UWRF and they have a reputation of doing very well."

About 50 students transfer each year from CVTC to UWRF. The majority are liberal arts, nursing assistants, emergency medical technicians, business management and early childhood education students.

CVTC also has the College Transfer Academy where high school students can earn up to 28 credits at the CVTC River Falls campus or online. Twenty-six credits will then transfer to a state technical college or university.

"We feel it is a good pipeline for UWRF, and a good opportunity to partner so we can continue to grow the academy," said Shana Schmidt, CVTC director of college effectiveness.

Valerie Young, transfer coordinator for UWRF Admissions, said for UWRF's Wisconsin partners, CVTC is the No. 1 transfer institution in the state.

UWRF is transfer-friendly with more than 60 transfer agreements with institutions, Young said.

"We want to make a nice smooth transition so we can help students have a simple way to get to UWRF," Young said.



UW-River Falls chancellor to sign sustainability commitment April 24 at Earth Fest event

City, school district, CVTC part of resolution re-affirming sustainability commitment

April 14, 2022 – During Earth Fest 2022 on Sunday, April 24, educational and community leaders will come together to sign a Sustainability Commitment.

University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo will sign the commitment along with representatives from the city of River Falls, the River Falls School District and Chippewa Valley Technical College.

“UW-River Falls is committed to sustainability,” Gallo said. “Sustainability is part of our Mission, Vision and Core Values statement. Last fall I held a listening and learning tour to hear from internal and external stakeholders. One theme I heard from many students was their passion for sustainability. UWRF will continue to seek innovative sustainable practices that address sustainability including social, economic and environmental justice for current and future generations. At UWRF, we endorse the values, principles and practices of sustainability and will seek opportunities for collaboration, communication and partnership in joint sustainability efforts.”

The signing will take place in River Falls at 3:15 p.m. at the Glen Park pavilion where Earth Fest 2022 is being held.

Ten years ago, a commitment was signed by UWRF, and it is time to reaffirm that moral compass, said UWRF Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias.

“It shows we are taking sustainability seriously and we are doing what we can to improve the world for future generations of students and our community,” he said.

Earth Fest 2022 is a free, open community celebration scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m. in Glen Park. There will be food samples, sustainability exhibits, music and activities including tree planting, the opportunity to drive an electric vehicle and a clothing swap. A special event planned at 4:15 p.m. will recognize COVID-19 heroes.

Limited parking will be available at and around Glen Park. Free shuttle transportation is available from the River Falls High School where there is event overflow parking.

Visit hope4creationrf.org for a full schedule and other Earth Month events planned in April. In case of inclement weather, most events will be held at the River Falls High School, 818 Cemetery Road.

During Earth Fest, those attending can sign an individual Sustainability Pledge and one for churches, businesses and organizations. Those signing the commitments will receive action items to take to be more sustainable. The action items were developed by UWRF sustainability students.

Events are planned throughout April for Earth Month.

On Thursday, April 21, at 6 p.m. Christie Manning, director of sustainability and faculty member in the Environmental Studies Department at Macalester College in St. Paul, will speak on “Mental Health Impacts of Our Changing Climate” at the River Falls Public Library or virtually. Go to the hope4creationrf.org website for more information.

“We know students, staff and faculty have climate anxiety from climate change,” Klapatch-Mathias said.

Manning’s research focuses on how people respond to the climate crisis, and she is particularly interested in the psychological circumstances that motivate community-level climate action.

On Saturday, April 30, at 10 a.m. the UWRF Ecological Restoration Institute and guests will talk about “Your Pet Will Hurt the Environment ... If You Let It” at the UW-River Falls Library.

For more information on UWRF sustainability, contact Klapatch-Mathias at mark.klapatch@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4333.



UW-River Falls home to Princess Kay and Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs

April 21, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls student Anna Euerle loves to tell the story of sitting for more than eight hours in a 40-degree cooler as her likeness was carved into 90 pounds of salted butter after she was crowned the 68th Princess Kay of the Milky Way at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds last August.

Euerle, of Litchfield, Minn., is a senior majoring in food, science and technology. She serves as Princess Kay of the Milky Way, the official goodwill ambassador for nearly 2,200 Minnesota dairy farm families.

Wearing a winter coat, Euerle's likeness was carved into the butter at the Butter Sculpture Booth in the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Dairy Building by Linda Christensen. It was Christensen's 50th and final year carving the Princess Kay of the Milky Way winner at the Minnesota State Fair.

"I got to take the sculpture home after the fair," Euerle said. "It is in a freezer by itself at my grandma's house. I was going to have a big corn feed and use the butter for that. We are waiting though. It's a fun keepsake but I would love to use it."

Fellow UWRF student Jackie Rosenbush, of Spooner, a junior agricultural education major, is Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs. Rosenbush was named in January to serve the year-long term.

Each year, the Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs travels throughout the state promoting the educational, agricultural, social, cultural and commercial opportunities available at Wisconsin's fairs.

"What drew me was I have the opportunity to represent all 75 county, local and state fairs in the state of Wisconsin," Rosenbush said. "I will try my best to get to every one."

"My mission is to educate others about agriculture and this position gives me that opportunity," Rosenbush said.

Rosenbush is quick to point out, however, that fairs are really for everyone young and old, regardless of their background.

"If your niche is cake baking, there is a place for you at every county fair," she noted. "They are about 4-H and other youth groups as well as adults. There is a place for everyone at the county fairs."

Rosenbush will serve as the official hostess of the Wisconsin State Fair from Aug. 4-14 in West Allis.

Rosenbush, who was involved with FFA starting in 2015 and included serving on the Wisconsin FFA State Officer team from 2020-21, farming has been a part of her life.

She and her sister, Kate, co-own a 100-head sheep farm in northern Wisconsin that Rosenbush cares for on weekends even as a member of the UW-River Falls track team.

"Weekends are not weekends, they are for work," she noted. "It's lambing time, so we have been very busy. I love it. It has taught me discipline and dedication."

The farm, which started in 2006, is named RN'R Romneys and Columbias.

"We work a lot with sheep at the fairs," Rosenbush said. "We really are interested in wool production."

Rosenbush chose UW-River Falls for its agricultural business program.

"This campus is beautiful," she said, while being interviewed during campus Ag Day on April 19 hosted by the Collegiate Farm Bureau. "I love every day here. UW-River Falls definitely felt like home."

Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs had 33 contestants this year for the title and is chosen by a panel of three judges representing the fair, marketing and hospitality industries. Rosenbush was crowned at the Wisconsin Association of Fairs Convention in Wisconsin Dells.

Euerle, who has her associate degree in agriculture business from Ridgewater College in Willmar, Minn., started her first semester at UWRF this spring. When she first visited campus in the fall, she knew it was a good fit.

"I loved it," Euerle said. "I don't feel like a number here. I wanted a good hands-on experience. I'm really blessed I chose it."

Being Princess Kay has allowed Euerle to talk to consumers and have genuine conversations about dairy farms and producers.

"It's more than the dairy farmers," she added. "It's the nutritionists, the veterinarians and everybody I call the support staff of dairy farmers. The Midwest Dairy has also provided me with a fabulous foundation to work with the dairy community. I get to share with others about the community, including other women interested in it."

Euerle has had the opportunity to meet younger students in K-12 schools.

“I go into the classroom and take them on a virtual reality 360-degree visit to a robotic carousel dairy,” she noted. “The students just love it. It has just been a blast.”

During Ag Day, Julia Nunes, of Chippewa Falls, the reigning Alice in Dairyland, also visited campus. Nunes is the first Alice to serve two consecutive terms in the program’s history. She started serving as the 73rd Alice in July 2020 and her term as the 74th Alice will end in July.

Alice in Dairyland is a full-time public relations and communications professional for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

“My favorite part of the job is meeting farmers and letting them shine,” Nunes said, noting she promotes Wisconsin’s diverse \$104.8 billion agriculture industry.

Nunes, who used to work in River Falls, has ties to the university as well. Her current significant other, Kendall Keegan, is a 2019 alum and her sister, Katrina, is also an alum.



Students during the Soil Judging Competition in Nebraska.

UW-River Falls judging teams earn two national championships

April 13, 2022 -- Two University of Wisconsin-River Falls judging teams brought home first-place overall national wins earlier this month.

The Soil Judging Team and the Agricultural Business Team, both part of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, each garnered top finishes in the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Judging Conference in North Platte, Neb. The students were in Nebraska from March 28 through April 3.

It was the first time UWRF had an Agricultural Business Team compete at NACTA.

"We didn't know what to expect," said Brenda Boetel, team coach and professor and chair of Agricultural Economics. "It was incredibly exciting to have them do so well."

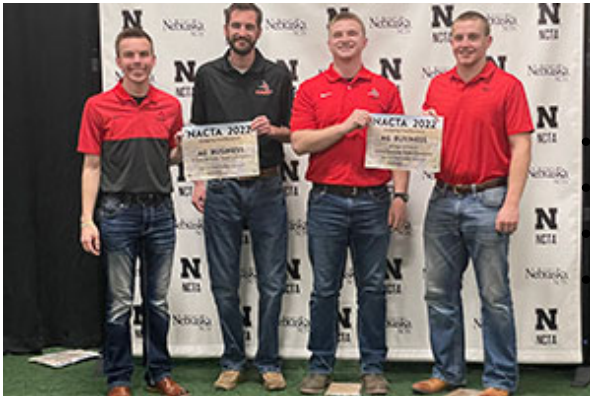
Holly Dolliver, coach for the Soil Judging Team and geology and soil science professor, said it is amazing to see the UWRF teams compete against well-respected agricultural institutions such as Purdue, Kansas State University and Iowa State.

"Winning is not the objective," said Dolliver, who is also the chair of the Plant and Earth Science Department. "Learning is top priority and I am so pleased with the motivation and commitment of our UWRF students. They are there for the right reasons."

CAFES Dean Dale Gallenberg congratulated the teams. He pointed out while there are certainly social aspects for students

involved with judging teams, participation provides substantial professional development opportunities for students. Students enhance their communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills and learn teamwork. “Our students are competing against their peers from across the country regardless of the size of the home institution. It demonstrates the quality and commitment of our students and the programming we have here at UWRF.”

“Depending on the specific discipline and judging competition, direct contact with industry may be an additional benefit,” Gallenberg said. “There is an opportunity for students to network and work closely with potential employers. This year’s contests included the option for tours to a feedlot, a fish hatchery, and a public power source working with irrigation.”



Four students, all agricultural business majors, competed for the Agricultural Business Team. They included:

- Joe Schlies, of Denmark, junior
- Grant Buwalda, of Waupun, junior
- Chester Donkers, of Faribault, Minn., senior
- Curtis Weltzien, of Arcadia, senior

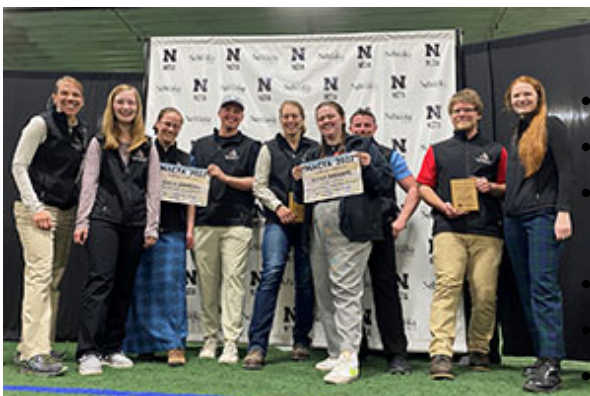
The competition included a written exam that runs the gamut of agribusiness knowledge, Boetel said. The students presented a business analysis on a crop consulting firm, which won first place in the competition. Amber Remble, associate professor of agricultural economics, is also a team coach.

Building confidence

“The competitions help the students recognize how much they have learned,” Boetel said. “It helps them to build confidence that the decisions they are making are right and not to second guess themselves. It highlights the level of education they are getting at UWRF.”

This was the first time the judging teams were able to compete in NACTA since 2019 because of COVID-19, Dolliver said.

“The first day in Nebraska I was reminded how important these experiences can be and just how transformative they are. These experiences are incredible in terms of what they can do for our students,” Dolliver said.



Seven students were part of the soil judging team. They included:

- Megan Culpitt, of Norwalk, first-year, crop and soil science major
- Eileen Mullet, of Hayward, junior, crop and soil science major
- Dagan Lance, of Mukwonago, sophomore, crop and soil science major
- Kira Jacobson, of Cannon Falls, Minn., crop and soil science major
- Dave Nonemacher, of Turtle Lake, senior, agricultural business major
- Linus Chaple, of St. Paul, senior, crop and soil science major
- Savannah Lynch, of Green Bay, junior, environmental science, major

Chaple took first place overall as an individual and Lynch took first place at pit No. 4.

The strength of the team is its diversity of students from various majors, Dolliver said.

“As a team, these students train together and help one another learn and prepare,” Dolliver said. It is a great opportunity for our upper-class students to build their leadership skills.”

Hard work pays off

Chaple said he was pleased the team's hard work paid off.

“It feels really good that I won an individual first place, it's a real confidence booster,” he noted. “It feels good to do well in a competition related to the field that I intend to work in. It was a wonderful experience to get to travel out to Nebraska. We got to get to see the tallest sand dunes in North America I would have never gone out to see otherwise. Judging competitions help teach you how to learn as a team. In our week of outdoor practice, we were helping each other understand what's happening with the soils so that we could all do the best we could.”

Buwalda, who won a third-place individual award in agricultural business, said it was a great experience to represent UWRF and compete with his friends.

“I think it shows how great of professors and instructors we have here at UWRF helping us be prepared, to put us in the position to win and compete well,” he said. “Personally, it was great to see how my years of hard work and dedication in the classroom paid off and I could see I have put myself in a place for success, both now and in the future. It is also an incredible experience to build relationships and friendships with those around you and make memories that will last a lifetime. “

The Soil Judging Team members started in January studying Nebraska's soils. Because of the wintry weather in Wisconsin, they get few if any practice days in the local fields before heading to the Cornhusker State. During the week leading up to the competition, students visited 10 practice sites in Nebraska, Dolliver said.

On competition day team members traveled to four sites to identify soil features and characteristics such as the percentage of sand and clay, make interpretations such as the potential for runoff issues and to determine if the site would be good for a house. They competed against 14 teams from four-year universities. There also were four teams from two-year institutions.

Lifelong friendships made

As part of the judging competition, they must describe the texture of the soil, and define how much of the soil is comprised of sand versus clay, determine the type of soil it is and how useful it would be for agriculture, Dolliver said.

Dolliver said she was proud of the work the students did and the character they showed continuing to study Nebraska's soils even with 20-degree temperatures and fierce spring winds.

“I think the legacy experience is far beyond the championship,” Dolliver said. “It is much more about the skills they learned and the lifelong friendships they make. They also have the pride of representing their university.

At NACTA, UWRF was also the champions of the Ag Knowledge Bowl contest. Team members included Donkers; Weltzien; Schlies; and Mitchell Oswald of Brownsdale, Minn., a crop and soil science major.

The Crops Team also took fourth place out of 13 teams at the contest. The team is coached by Veronica Justen, associate professor of crop science.

Team members included Oswald; Jack Morrison of Farmington, Minn., a junior; Nick Hiebl of Edgar, a senior; Alexandria Broderick of Pound, a junior; and Jack Wolter of Waconia, Minn., a junior. All are crop and soil science majors.

UW-River Falls registers record-breaking Giving Day

Donors contribute more than \$95,000 to UWRF Foundation

April 14, 2022 -- University of Wisconsin-River Falls donors contributed at historic levels during the UWRF Foundation's annual Giving Day on April 8.

The grand total of more than \$95,000 made it the most successful Giving Day in the event's eight-year history.

"The significant support demonstrates our donors' enthusiastic commitment to UWRF's mission," said Rick Foy, assistant chancellor for University Advancement. "On behalf of all of us at UWRF, I express deep appreciation to the many donors who made Giving Day memorable and meaningful."

The \$95,150 raised far surpassed the goal of \$50,000. Nearly 160 donors contributed to a variety of UWRF funds and programs, ranging from the Falcon Annual Fund, to scholarships, to Falcon Athletics. According to Foy, several donors provided generous matching gifts, which made Giving Day contributions even more impactful.

Plans are already underway for next year's UWRF Giving Day, scheduled for Friday, April 14, 2023.

Tax deductible gifts to the UWRF Foundation may always be made to support the university's students, faculty, programs and projects at <https://www.uwrf.edu/Give/Waystogive/GiveNow.cfm>.

For more information, contact Foy at 715-425-4291 or richard.foy@uwrf.edu



UW-River Falls welcomes Cybèle Young as Wyman Visiting Professor in Art April 11-15

April 6, 2022 – Toronto-based artist and author Cybèle Young is the Spring 2022 Walker D. and Helen Bryant Wyman Visiting Professor in Art at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls April 11-15.

Young is a renowned artist and author whose work is exhibited and collected internationally. She works in a diverse range of mediums, but always at the root is a close connection to the hand, to paper and to the drawn line. Young has both written and illustrated eight picture books to date.

Engaging with abstract and familiar motifs, she juxtaposes sculptures to create a sense of dialogue or play between them. Her intricate sculptural artworks are inspired by seemingly insignificant day-to-day experiences where objects imply human interactions and small observations become fantastic.

“Engaging with abstract and familiar motifs, I juxtapose sculptures to create a sense of dialogue or play between them,” Young says. “I approach my work in series and components, ultimately building an ongoing inventory of personal experience and observation. I compile these in various arrangements to create communities that interact and form new relationships – much like the small seemingly insignificant moments in our everyday lives that come together to create unexpected outcomes.”

Young will be demonstrating her process of paper sculpture and construction to UWRF students during the week of her visit. She will hold a free public lecture on Wednesday, April 13, at 6 p.m. in 222 North Hall to present her work and process. She will also collaborate with the glass program to create collaborative work on Tuesday and Thursday, April 12 and 14. The glass studio will be open for all to come and watch. Cybele’s visit will culminate with a discussion and critique of the resulting glass

work that UWRF students helped her create on Friday, April 15.

For more information, call the UWRF Art Department at 715-425-3266.



UWRF Dairy Plant Manager Michelle Farner, left, leads a tour of the Dairy Plant for Natasja Spaargaren and Alfred Pot, both from the Aeres University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands.

AERES officials visit UW-River Falls, meet faculty, administrators for collaborative efforts

May 10, 2022 -- The new dual degree program in international food operations management between University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Aeres University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands is expected to be a win for students and industry.

That is according to Natasja Spaargaren, Aeres University head of international studies and consultancy.

“For students, first and foremost, it is crucial for them to get an international experience,” Spaargaren said. “The joint program between UWRF and Aeres will show them the North American and European perspectives. Our students will get to come to UWRF for a year to study and students from UWRF can come to Aeres for a year. It will help prepare them for international jobs. At Aeres, they will learn more about the business part and at UWRF, the operations management part. I think it is great for anyone who wants to work in the food industry.”

Studying at both institutions will give students a worldview, Spaargaren said.

“The universities are different,” she said. “The cultures are different. Seeing the differences creates opportunities. It inspires us to improve and learn. It is beneficial to help create new ideas and innovation.”

Spaargaren and Alfred Pot, Aeres team leader in agrotechnical and management, visited UWRF May 9-10. While at the university, they met with campus administrators and faculty from the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

They toured the Dairy Plant, which is undergoing nearly a \$6.5 million renovation, to modernize the 30-year-old Dairy Plant and provide more effective teaching and training through the introduction of food products and security technology.

The goal of the renovation project is to:

- Enlarge the cheese manufacturing area and include dedicated space for raw milk processing and separation.
- Modernize the Dairy Plant equipment and processes to provide more effective teaching and outreach programming. The Dairy Plant will be more than 6,000 square feet.
- Introduce additional product and processing safety and security features by integrating separation of raw product handling and whey processing.

The renovated plant facilities will allow for the quadrupled production of cheese and ice cream throughout the year.

"It's important we try to duplicate the automation a student will see in the dairy industry," said Michelle Farner, UWRF Dairy Plant manager, who led the tour. "We have amazing pieces of equipment being installed, including a few pieces from the Netherlands, that will make the Aeres students feel at home when they come to UWRF."

Students will arrive from Aeres in Dronten, the Netherlands, for classes in 2023-24. Then, UWRF students will travel to the Netherlands the following year when they are in their third year. The cultural exchanges will then continue for students in their second and third year of college.

During the tour of the plant, Spaargaren expressed excitement about the renovation.

"It's lovely and so exciting," she said, noting her university has had a smaller dairy processing unit operating for about a year. The university also works with a local cheesemaker for additional student training. "This is beautiful. Students will be very excited for the technology and the information management part."

In the Dairy Plant, Farner showed a horizontal cheese vat, which is how much of the cheese is made in the industry, as well as a more traditional open cheese vat for teaching.

"Once this is done, it is going to be transformational," Farner said of the Dairy Plant. "There will be nothing like it. We have great company partnerships and have accepted many generous donations through this project."

Spaargaren said industry donations show the support the companies have for UWRF.

"These companies truly believe this is important or they wouldn't make a donation," she said, adding companies will benefit from students' training and knowledge.

"Companies wanting to export from the U.S. to Europe have to follow the rules of exporting and vice versa," Farner said. "These students will be able to help with that."

The Dairy Plant will allow students to learn skills relevant to the dairy industry, expand opportunities in the plant to emulate current industry standards and increase the pool of qualified dairy industry employees.

Pot was visiting UWRF to discuss potential collaboration with agricultural engineering and agricultural engineering technology.

“I want to create a new program and hope to learn from them,” he said. “We will see what opportunities there are.”

Fundraising is continuing for the Dairy Plant at UWRF.

With a contribution of \$1,200, two milk cans will be engraved with the donor’s name. One will be displayed in the Dairy Plant renovation donor alcove, and one will be sent to the donor for their desk or to display. To learn more, visit [https://www/uwrf.edu/UniversityAdvancement /MilkCanCampaign.cfm](https://www/uwrf.edu/UniversityAdvancement/MilkCanCampaign.cfm).

For questions or more information on the Dairy Plant, email Farner at michelle.farner@uwrf.edu or Julie Stuckey with the University Advancement Office at julie.stucky@uwrf.edu.



BFA graduate creates UW-River Falls sweatshirts, inspired by pop artist Andy Warhol

May 18, 2022 -- In her University of Wisconsin-River Falls senior Bachelor of Fine Arts exhibit, Maggie Hermersmann has a picture of herself as a young child drawing on an easel.

It is a reminder of how she discovered her love of art at an early age.

"I have always been an artist," Hermersmann said. "Since the time I could walk, I was creating things."

The graphic design major graduated on May 7.

Hermersmann, of Woodbury, Minn., creates her graphic designs and apparel under the name Maggie Winters.

"I wanted a name that everyone could spell," Hermersmann explained. "I like that the M is an upside-down W and vice versa and how it looks graphically."

Hermersmann chose graphic design as a major because she was interested in having an online presence for her artwork as well as having the option to create websites and logos and help companies with branding.

In her artwork and designs, Hermersmann likes to incorporate bright colors and is inspired by pop and post-modern artists.

"When I was a little kid, I went to a museum in Milwaukee and saw work from Andy Warhol," Hermersmann said. "I saw his work and I was just intrigued by it, particularly the Campbell's Soup Cans, which still has a hold on me. I've always been inspired by Andy Warhol. He used bright colors. What even interested me more was the Campbell's Soup Cans artwork was

so simple and yet it was so different. He could find beauty in something we look at all the time and probably have cans of it in our cupboard.”

Bright colors help attract people to Hermersmann work and then slowly she wants them to discover the details she includes in her graphic designs, she said.

Her latest collection is titled “518.” It is based on her birthday, May 18.

“This is a number that resonates with me a lot,” Hermersmann said. “I consider it my angel number. I see it everywhere. It’s a number that points me in the right direction.”

The Gallery 101 exhibit included two chairs which Hermersmann used to invite viewers to come into the space and stay awhile.

“I didn’t want people to feel they had to stand eight feet away. I wanted to welcome them into the space,” Hermersmann said. “I wanted people to feel invited into the work I created. I wanted them to get up close and see what’s going on in the posters and the longboards.”

As part of the exhibit, Hermersmann painted two long skateboards with images of an octopus suffering from toxic waste in the ocean and a jellyfish unable to breathe with plastic wrapped around it.

Some of Hermersmann’s apparel designs include vinyl cutouts of the UWRF map, a symbol of where she earned her degree. She hand creates each one of the apparel items. The vinyl cutout is designed to move with the wearer and is durable.

Other articles of clothing include a smiling face logo with the words “I’m Happy You’re Here.” She created the design to promote suicide awareness.

“It is subtle enough people can wear it,” she noted. “Yet it sends an important message.”

The sweatshirts also carry designs on them that are important to her, including a mushroom, which is her favorite food, a butterfly that represents transformation and 518, her favorite number.

Bella Osterbauer, a junior graphic design and art education major, has one of Winter’s hoodies and believes the suicide prevention one is meaningful and designed well.

“What I like most about Maggie’s art is that she inspires me to create,” Osterbauer, of Osceola, said. “I know I have a bias towards Maggie’s art because she is my friend as well as an artist, but even before we were close, I always could tell it was her work because it was always my favorite during critiques. Her approach and style when designing is always beyond anything that I imagine. Maggie’s artistic style has always seemed to come naturally to her in a way I both envy and admire.”

UWRF art Professor Dan Paulus said Hermersmann’s work is embedded with personal meaning and articulates her experiences and the world around her.

“Something unique about her work is that it’s highly conceptual but also open to interpretation,” Paulus said. “Her style is contemporary retro, and her work is sensitive to art history but merges it with current styles and trends. Maggie’s work utilizes bright hues that catch the eye mixed with high contrast imagery to tell the viewer a specific story. The nature of her work

makes it well adaptable to many different kinds of formats from posters to sweatshirts.

“She has a passion for the wearables,” he added. “Her style and meticulous attention to detail are a perfect combination for the creation of meaningful clothing items. There’s a ton of potential with wearables and the artwork she has already created. On top of the current line she’s created, I could see her poster work translated or modified to fit the wearable format and believe she would be successful in creating clothing items that people would want to wear.”

In the future, Hermersmann plans to create more collections and expects to release her next one in mid-to late-summer. Many of these collections will touch on social movements and environmental issues. To learn more about Maggie Winters and upcoming collections, go to her website www.maggiewinters.design.

As she looked at her two-year-old picture of her drawing in the exhibit, Hermersmann added, “I think it really represents 518 and being about me and my life,” she said. “It’s about my dreams as a little kid coming true. It almost makes me cry. I did it. I became an artist.”



CAFES awards scholarships and recognizes outstanding faculty member

May 4, 2022 – More than \$235,000 was awarded to students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) at the University of Wisconsin River Falls at the 56th Annual Scholarship and Awards Recognition Program on April 21. The 185 scholarships were awarded to continuing students who will be sophomores, juniors or seniors in the 2022-23 academic year.

Four new scholarships were among those awarded:

- The Meydam-Larsen Agricultural Education Scholarship endowed by alumni and long-time UWRF employees Katrina Larsen and Mark Meydam for agricultural education majors actively involved in student organizations.
- The Cole Berra Memorial Scholarship funded by family and friends in memory of Cole, a junior in Ag Engineering Technology who passed away last fall after a courageous battle with cancer.
- The Frank and Helga Onan Scholarship established by Gary Onan, Professor Emeritus of Animal Science, in honor of his parents who were outstanding supporters of higher education.
- The Isometric Micro Molding, Inc. Scholarships, a leader in precision/micro manufacturing and industry partner in New Richmond interested in supporting engineering students.

Following the presentation of the scholarships, CAFES Dean Dale Gallenberg presented the 2022 CAFES Outstanding

Faculty Award, the highest award bestowed upon a faculty member in the college. The awardee is also honored nationally with the Teaching Award of Merit from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) in recognition of meritorious efforts in college teaching.

The 2022 honoree is Agricultural Education Professor James Graham. Graham's nomination materials highlighted his commitment to integrating high impact practices with a focus on service learning and collaborative assignments and projects that connect students with the community and area high school agricultural education programs. His teaching excellence is also reflected in his high student evaluation scores. He averages more than 70 advisees per year yet still earns their praise.

"Dr. Graham has always made me feel welcome and understood. As a transfer, he made my transition easy and greatly reduced the stress of it all. I could not have asked for a better advisor," a student wrote.

"Graham is always there to help whenever one of his advisees has questions," wrote another.

Graham has a strong record of service in the college and beyond. He is the long-time adviser for the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, held leadership roles on Faculty Senate, served as the national president of Alpha Tau Alpha, has been instrumental in the development, advising and judging of the Wisconsin FFA Parliamentary Procedure competitions, and conducted numerous workshops and held committee service responsibilities for the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators.

"A review of Dr. Graham's record of activities and accomplishments clearly shows why he is an obvious choice for this award," Gallenberg said. "He puts students first and his commitment to their educational experiences through the agricultural education program furthers that priority. Beyond this, his record of service to the department, college, and university is outstanding."

For more information, email laura.walsh@uwrf.edu



Capt. Phillips tells UW-River Falls graduates: Life will be a wild ride, mind that helm

May 7, 2022 -- Capt. Richard Phillips told University of Wisconsin-River Falls graduates Saturday life will be a wild ride.

"It will be fun, challenging, sad, tearful, adventurous and fulfilling," said Phillips, who was captured by pirates in April 2009 after they attacked and boarded his ship the Maersk Alabama. "You will surprise yourself with what you are, can and will do. Remember, we only get out of life what we put into it."

Phillips shared his message at two commencement ceremonies in the Falcon Center's Knowles Field House. More than 800 students graduated.

Chancellor Maria Gallo congratulated the graduates on their accomplishments.

"Graduates, over the years UW-River Falls empowered you to grow as people and scholars," Gallo said. "You took chances, grabbed opportunities and never gave up. On this college journey, you showed everyone that you are strong, competent and compassionate. There is no doubt in my mind that you have and will continue to make our world a better place."

Through his life experience, Phillips listed some of the most important things he had learned.

"You are stronger than you ever know," said Phillips, who wrote a book that became the inspiration for the film "Captain Phillips." "You can do more, and you can take more. The strength is already inside of you. Don't worry and cause angst about problems or storms on the horizon. You will figure it out and then act."

Don't lose your compass, Phillips added.

"Don't stop short of your ultimate goal and always keep it in mind," he said. "Failure is only final when we give up, give in or quit. Many first steps to success are preceded by failures."

A focused, dedicated and professional team can overcome many obstacles and most problems, Phillips said.

"Learn to not surrender but work through your adversities together as a team," he noted.

Phillips urged students not to worry about money in their first jobs provided they gained experience, knowledge and responsibility.

"Challenge in work is more important than money," he noted. "Time is more important than money."

Phillips encouraged students to better themselves so that later they could help others.

He urged students to consider getting into politics and public service and to use their energy, dedication and ideas to solve problems through compromise.

He noted their generation is the most photographed one.

"They say character is what you do when you don't think someone or a camera is around," he said. "Remember that in your life. Today, there is little privacy real or cyber. Make your decisions as if people are in the room seeing you. Transparency makes it easier to do the right thing."

Phillips reminded students they are the captain now of their lives.

"Your ship sails now. Where will you navigate to? Where will you end up? Set your sail, captain. Mind that helm," he said.

Faculty Senate Chair Doug Margolis said the education students received will develop and evolve during their lives.

"But what starts in the classroom is only the lighting of a wick," Margolis noted. "That light burns inside you and will shape how you see and understand your world. Every day you will face experiences and challenges that will deepen your understanding and sharpen your skills."



Community answers call to provide caps and gowns to UWRF students

May 13, 2022 -- When University of Wisconsin-River Falls alum Andrew Turner learned some graduating students needed commencement regalia for the Saturday, May 7, graduation ceremony, he answered the call.

Turner, along with dozens of others, donated the cap and gown he wore when he graduated from UWRF. He graduated in spring 2021 with a degree in marketing communications.

UWRF students were shorted about 30 caps and gowns because of a supply chain issue with the supplier.

The university put out the call just two days before commencement through social media asking staff, alumni and community members to donate any black regalia they may have, including master's degree hoods.

The call was answered, even though the regalia could not be returned to donors. The Registrar's Office in North Hall collected the caps and gowns.

"I donated my cap and gown because I remember how excited I was to decorate my cap and to wear the suit signifying exit as a student and entrance as a full-time worker," said Turner, administrative assistant in the UWRF Teacher Education Department. "I also know students have a lot on their plates already with finals, jobs afterward and the debt that comes with it. I wanted them to have one less thing to worry about."

The donations were appreciated, said David Travis, provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs.

"I can't thank those who donated their regalia enough," Travis said. "I was just amazed by the response that we received."

This is just proof of the generosity the community, alums and staff have. I know our students appreciated it and acknowledge how the donors helped make their commencement day special.”

UWRF was not alone in the supply chain issue, other universities faced similar issues not receiving enough regalia, said Mesa Carlsen, UWRF event coordinator.

“It is absolutely amazing the heartfelt response we had from alumni, staff and the community,’ Carlsen said. “This is a fantastic story of how caring the campus and community are toward our students.”

UWRF plans to keep some of the donated regalia items to have on hand if needed.

Jaclyn Lee, curriculum enrollment coordinator in the Registrar’s Office, donated the cap and gown she wore when she graduated from UWRF in spring 2020. She also had another gown that she had from a friend that she donated as well.

“It was an easy decision,” Lee said. “There were current students that were in need. I was happy to see somebody would be able to use it.

“It was fun seeing all of the alumni and community members who dropped off their miscellaneous regalia and were happy to help the students out,” Lee added. “Some were new, and some were over 50 years old but looked new. It was awesome to see.”



Employment among recent grads at UW-River Falls hits 94%

First Destination report data ties record high from 2016

May 2, 2022 -- A new report by Career Services at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls found that despite the economic impacts of COVID-19 the school's graduates were in high demand.

The First Destination Report revealed that 94% of graduates from August 2020 through May 2021 advanced their careers within six months of earning their diplomas by either finding employment or continuing to graduate school.

That is up 6% from the previous year of 88%. The latest report ties the 2016 record of 94%.

The 94% includes 15% of students who are continuing their education.

Career Services Director Melissa Wilson credited the academic preparation of the students for the high percentage of students employed or continuing their education.

"Much of their success can be credited to the faculty and their dedication to serving students during a time of uncertainty, and their continued focus on education for our students using different methods of delivery," Wilson said.

Career Services Assistant Director McKenna Pfeiffer noted the report captures 80% of students who graduated from UWRF during that period, which is a high percentage.

This cohort of graduates would have had the unusual experience of virtual Career Fairs and experienced unprecedented changes in the way their coursework was delivered. Additionally, some may have experienced internships being canceled or becoming virtual, Pfeiffer noted.

"They have lived the art of change," Pfeiffer said. "From their college experiences to their job searches. It is impressive to see the graduates come through the second year of the pandemic this strong. What is fun to observe is this group's overall engagement in experiential learning."

A total of 76% of students participated in an academic internship, research, or a student teaching experience.

According to data, 2.5 out of 5 graduates participated in two or more experiential learning experiences, Pfeiffer said.

"There were some participating in up to five," she noted. "They are thirsty for hands-on and relevant experiences where they have an opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom."

Wilson agreed experiences outside the classrooms are important not just to students but also to employers.

Of the graduates, 89% stayed in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Graduates were hired in 34 states and six countries at 688 unique companies.

The average starting salary of graduates was \$48,131, up \$2,200 from the last report.

Graduates from 2020-21 found work at 43 companies that are ranked in the Fortune 500. Some of those who hired multiple graduates included Amazon, Andersen Corp., Fastenal Co., Land O'Lakes, Medtronic, Target, 3M, Northwestern Mutual and Corteva.

Hired before graduation

Gina D'Agostino, who graduated in May 2021 with a degree in marketing communications, did an on-campus internship her first year at UWRF doing social media for the men's hockey team and then one in graphic arts at Menasha Packaging Company in Neenah in summer 2018. She also did a summer internship in social media at the NBC Golf Channel in Orlando in summer 2019. She was at Walt Disney World in Orlando for a spring internship in sales and merchandising at the Animal Kingdom theme park, which was shortened because of COVID-19.

While at UWRF she attended every Career Fair.

"Even if I wasn't looking for a job or internship, I went to go and meet employers and improve my communication skills," D'Agostino said. "I would ask people what they did for a living and get ideas about careers."

D'Agostino, of Bloomington, Minn., works at the JW Marriot in the Mall of America as a group coordinator in the event planning department. She coordinates room blocks for social and professional groups and small corporation meeting rooms. She was hired in April 2021 before she graduated from UWRF.

"I really do enjoy the hotel industry," D'Agostino said. "I like collaborating with people and making their vision come to life during an event."

D'Agostino worked at Career Services while a student and used the services available to all students to improve her resume writing skills and job interview techniques.

Good value

Of significant interest was that 90% of graduates strongly agreed or agreed that UWRF was a big part of the next stage of their career path. Also, 89% of graduates strongly agreed or agreed their degree was a good value for the investment.

Wilson also credited the high number of graduates employed because of the UWRF Career Fairs and Career Treks, including the UW System virtual Career Treks, which allow students to learn more about potential employers.

Students who are graduating in May are encouraged to complete the next First Destination Survey. Go to the Career Services [website](#) to learn more.

Survey results are valuable to future students to learn about what's possible after graduation and help Career Services plan to meet future students' needs.



Design Foundation 2 students lined up their Falcon Regatta boats before they launched them in the Kinnickinnic River.

Falcon Regatta returns, student-designed boats take on Kinnickinnic River

May 12, 2022 – Ten boats made from newsprint and duct tape by students at University of Wisconsin-River Falls launched into a chilly Kinnickinnic River Tuesday as the Falcon Regatta returned.

No lie. Bull Ship proved to be the winning design.

Students with Eoin Breadon's Design Foundation 2 class created the boats as their final project.

Working in teams of two, 20 students researched, designed and fabricated a flotation device that would support the weight of one of the team members. The challenge is they could only use 400 square feet of newsprint paper and 18 rolls of duct tape per team. They then raced about 25 yards down the Kinni near the City Hall of River Falls.

Samantha Harms, a junior computer science and information systems major, piloted the winning boat, decorated with horns to look like a bull. Her team member was Ellie Fisher, a sophomore BFA art and psychology major.

"We did research different types of boats and floatation devices," Harms said. "Laying down and propelling the boat both with your feet and hands seemed like a good design. I even had paddles for my feet. We also didn't want it to be too deep of a boat. I didn't want the bottom to give out."

Bull Ship also had straps to help Harms stay on it and a pointed edge to help cut through the water.

Harms enjoyed the class and learning to turn two-dimensional ideas into three-dimensional ones.

"I've learned a lot about looking at things from different perspectives," Harms said. "Your first idea may not be the best one. We designed the boat so the only thing that could go wrong is human error."

After winning the Falcon Regatta, which first started in 2013 but has not been held since 2018 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Harms said the water was a bit chilly.

"It was very cold," Harms, of Oswego, Ill., said. "I didn't expect to quite take off like that. It had some flaws and definitely took on water."

Fisher said she and Harms wanted to focus the design on speed and stability.

"We got an automatic A for winning," Fisher, of Stillwater, Minn., said. "I'm pleased with how it went. I'm jealous of other people's artwork on their boats."

Breadon, associate professor and Art and Design department chair, said the final project brings together all the themes students have studied over the semester. Including drawing, scale drawing and creating a template to assess their design.

"It is a culmination and helps students understand how to build and work with three-dimensional large sculptural pieces," Breadon said, noting in a school format it is difficult to create large-scale sculptural works because of financial and logistical restraints. "It is also just fun."

Despite several students reporting the difficulty of the project, Breadon said it is quite easy.

"The biggest thing is getting them to believe it is a functional reality," he said.

One boat that was not so lucky and took on quite a bit of water was Duck Boat designed by Lane Bohlig, a junior majoring in graphic design, and Kaito Nishino, a junior art major from Fukuoka, Japan.

The boat sported a yellow duck head and Nishino wore a matching cap created from duct tape.

"We were inspired by those giant swan paddle boats," Bohlig, of Beaver Dam, said. "I think we might have made the boat too deep. It was a fun project. We spent a lot of time working on it."

Bohlig said the class has allowed her to learn more about including depth in her designs. "I didn't expect to like this class as much as I did," Bohlig added.

Quinn Stoerzinger, first-year art education and BFA photography major, was part of a team that developed a canoe-looking boat with floatation devices on the side.

"This was a difficult project," Stoerzinger, of St. Paul, said. "It took a long time. I love being able to come out and race and be competitive."

“What I am learning from this project is to make something sturdy and create supports and how different designs affect our boat,” Stoerzinger said. “It’s kind of like an engineering class.”

Stoerzinger, of Maplewood, Minn., is looking forward to being able to take what he learned in the class to students when he starts teaching.

“It will open their minds to 3D art and sculpture and how to use different materials. It will also teach them how to work together to make a practical design work.”

Four alumni recognized during Evening of Excellence

May 5, 2022 -- Four University of Wisconsin-River Falls alumni will be recognized Friday, May 6, at the 2022 UW-River Falls Evening of Excellence in the Riverview Ballroom, University Center.

Awards given will include the Distinguished Alumni Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award, the Outstanding Service Award and the Outstanding Young Alumni Award. The awards recognize UWRF alums and their accomplishments.

Distinguished Alumni Award



Paul Dykstra, a 1983 graduate in accounting, earned the Distinguished Alumni Award. Dykstra, who will speak at both UWRF commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 7, is an independent board member and recent past chair, president and chief executive officer of Phoenix-based Viad Corp., a \$1.1 billion New York Stock Exchange company with domestic and international operations in marketing and event services, travel and recreation service and formerly payment services.

Dykstra has been a member of the UWRF Foundation Board since 2017 and has chaired the investment committee for four years. He also served on the board previously from 1998 to 2003.

Before leading Viad, he was president and CEO of Global Experience Specialists, a \$600M global exhibition and event company in Las Vegas. Before his time at GES, he served as the senior executive vice president for MoneyGram International, Inc. in the Twin Cities area, a \$550M payment systems company. He has an MBA from the University of St. Thomas.

Dykstra was also a member of UWRF's first national team champion. The 1983 men's hockey team earned the NAIA national title and was inducted into the 2013 UWRF Athletic Hall of Fame. Dykstra also competed for the Falcon's men's golf team.

"Choosing the Distinguished Alumni is always such a rewarding experience for the External Relations Committee," said committee Chair Stacy Vollmers, an associate professor in the UWRF College of Business and Economics. "We have outstanding nominees each year, making a positive difference in the world around them. This year Paul Dykstra stood out for his significant contributions to business, the community and UWRF."

Established in 1959, the UWRF Distinguished Alumni Award is the most prestigious recognition of UWRF alumni accomplishments.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Ramona Raehsler received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Raehsler grew up in Rock Elm where she attended a two-room schoolhouse from first to eighth grade and later high school in Elmwood.



She knew she wanted to go into teaching when she was in high



school. She would read to third grade students and enjoyed how loving and kind the children were.

Raehsler graduated from UWRF in 1971 with a degree in elementary education and then went on to earn two master's degrees from UWRF, one in education in 1987 and the other in school psychology in 1990. In 2019, she received the Faculty Recognition Award for the Sociology, Criminology and Anthropology Department at UWRF.

After 30 years of teaching, she is retired from St. Bridget Catholic School in River Falls.

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the accomplishments of alumni who have provided long-time exceptional service and leadership in their profession, community, and continuing interest and loyalty to UW-River Falls. The UW-River Falls Alumni Association established this award in 2014.

Outstanding Service Award



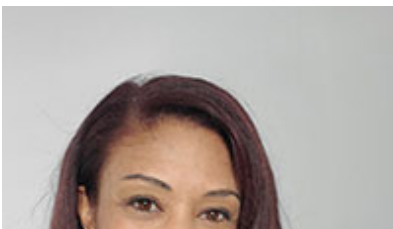
Katie Ryan Niznik, a 2010 UWRF sociology graduate, began her career that same year as an undergraduate children's services intern for Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence in River Falls and after the internship accepted a full-time position there. Over the years, Niznik has worked as a crisis advocate, volunteer services coordinator, legal advocate and sexual assault services coordinator. She is currently the sexual assault services director.

Niznik has been the UWRF campus victim advocate since 2016. She serves the campus community by facilitating training sessions on healthy relationships and consent, providing emotional support to student victims and survivors in the aftermath of sexual assault and assisting students with navigating the complicated Title IX process after an incident.

She has a master's degree in counseling and psychology from St. Mary's University in Minnesota.

Established in 1983, the Outstanding Service Award recognizes individuals and organizations outside of the university community who have made exemplary contributions to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls through their support of the university's goals and their volunteer efforts on our behalf.

Outstanding Young Alumni Award



Sydney Hall Wittmier, a 2008 graduate in applied physics, is a senior project manager with Minneapolis-based Mortenson Construction in charge of quality control and project management in their Wind Energy Construction Project Division.

One of her largest projects has been as the assistant project manager for the

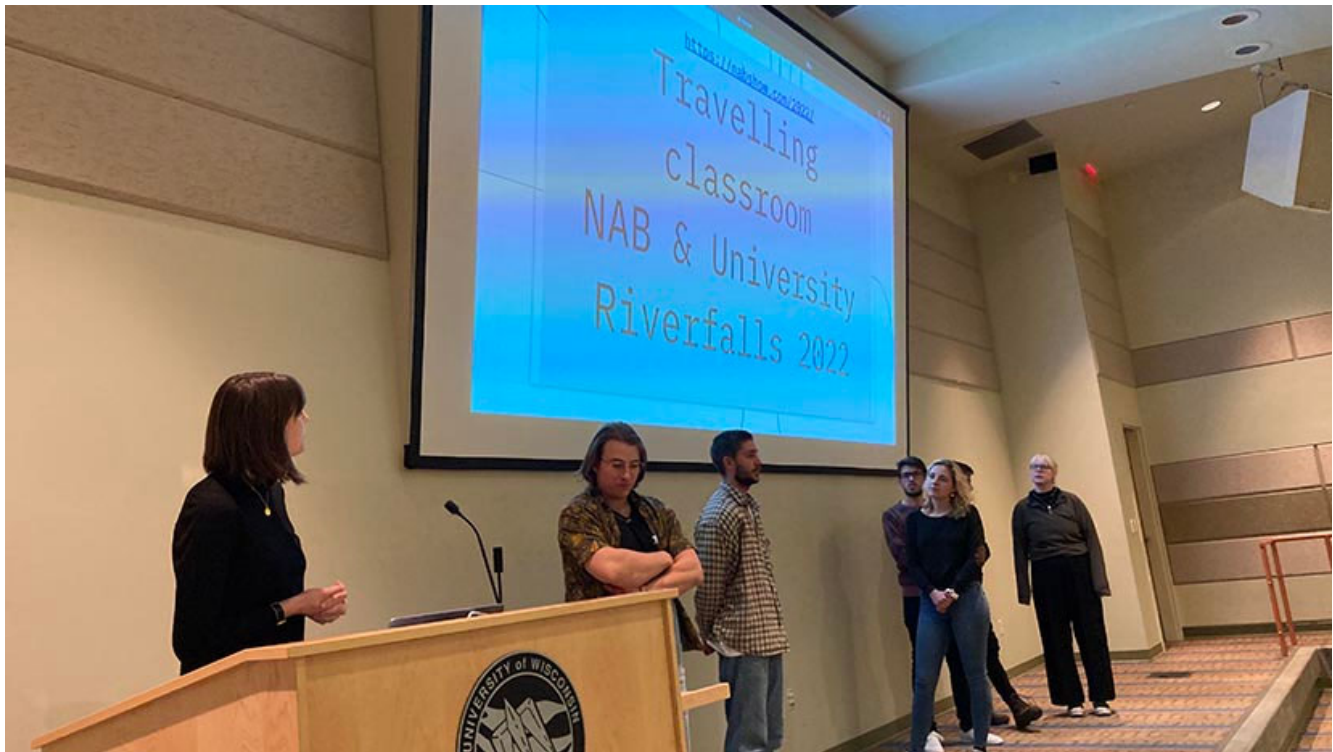


construction of U.S. Bank Stadium in the Twin Cities. The structure is lauded for its translucent roof and walls, its ability to withstand and channel heavy snow loads and a retractable wall. It also was finished on budget and almost two months ahead of schedule.

She serves on the board of the Family Partnership. Wittmier volunteers with the Architecture Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program and Girls Taking Action, a mentorship program. She was the 2021 featured speaker at the Groundbreaking Women in Construction Conference and a Minneapolis/St. Paul Journal's 2022 "40 under 40" honoree.

Wittmier also has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota.

The Outstanding Young Alumni Award recognizes the accomplishments of individuals who have excelled in professional and civic accomplishments within the last 15 years. The UWRF Alumni Association established this award in 2014.



Students from RheinMain University in Germany talked with UWRF students and staff about some of their film experiences and a trip they took to the National Association of Broadcasting Conference in Las Vegas.

German university, UW-River Falls students share love of video and film work

May 11, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls students and nine students from RheinMain University Media Conception & Production in Wiesbaden, Germany, were able to collaborate and share their love of video and film work from April 28 through May 3 for the Global Design and Media CoSpace International Traveling Classroom.

UWRF has had an agreement with RheinMain University since 2011 for student and faculty educational exchanges. This year was the first time in two years a group of students, staff and faculty from Germany have been able to visit UWRF because of COVID-19. However, student semester exchanges have been continual.

On May 3, students from Stage and Screen Arts Professor Erik Johnson's Electronic Field Production class presented their collaborative storytelling videos about a robotics facility at the University of Minnesota featuring interviews with Professor Junaed Sattar and his graduate students that also included a UWRF alum Chelesy Edge. RheinMain students presented their research and experiences at the National Association of Broadcasting conference in Las Vegas where they learned about the latest equipment available for video and filmmaking.

Rory Goodell, a UWRF sophomore majoring in Stage and Screen Arts, said he enjoyed having the RheinMain students visit UWRF.

"It's a breath of fresh air," Goodell, of Minneapolis, said. "It's a great experience to get to know other people from different parts of the world. A lot of the RheinMain students have had professional experience with film. Yet we are all here for the same reason to learn. There is a mutual understanding. It's just a mutual understanding of expressing stories. At the same time, everyone has different viewpoints and styles."

Logan Carlson, a first-year stage and screen arts student, said he enjoyed learning different perspectives from the RheinMain students.

"It was interesting to see the experiences they have and how they incorporate that into their film," Carlson, of Woodbury, Minn., said. "They also get a chance to see our perspectives. It is just a great exchange. Filmmaking is a universal language that everyone can understand. It's a way to share our passion for it."

Justin Roessler, a final year student at RheinMain university where he is studying media conception and production, said he was excited to come back to the United States and visit Las Vegas and River Falls. Roessler lived in Boston from 2017-18.

"I always enjoy the culture of the people here in the U.S.," he said. "UW-River Falls seems to have a very unique, very personal learning experience."

Roessler did interview some UWRF students during mock interviews.

"It was fun to sit side by side and talk and see how they present themselves and deal with tricky questions," he added.

Johnson said he enjoys seeing the students interact and share their work.

"Working with RheinMain faculty, staff and students has been a highlight of my career," he added.

RheinMain requires students to study abroad, noting on the university website that intercultural skills are a plus for students to find work and encourages students to look beyond their horizons and learn about other cultures.

Roessler encouraged UWRF students to consider visiting Germany and experiencing RheinMain.

"I feel education is very different here in the U.S.," he said. "Money is spent differently on education in Germany. It is spent on educational equipment and technology. I think students would really benefit from that. We have a unique campus and a unique department. Going to experience diverse cultures is something people should do."

Marc Urban, a master's degree student at RheinMain University, wanted the opportunity to visit Las Vegas and River Falls.

"I really like it here," Urban said. "You have a nice sense of community here. There is quite a lot going on here. It's been fun and there has been great hospitality. It's been a great learning process. The best takeaway is getting to know new people."

Ginther honored as UW-River Falls 2022 Wisconsin Distinguished Agriculturalist

May 2, 2022 – Francis G. Ginther, professor emeritus of youth development, was honored as the 2022 Wisconsin Distinguished Agriculturalist by the UW-River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) on April 21 in front of a crowd of nearly 200 students, faculty, staff, supporters of the college, and Ginther's family and friends.



The occasion was the college's 56th Annual Scholarship and Awards Program back in-person for the first time in two years. Ginther spent 30 years as a 4-H youth development agent. Twenty-eight of those years were with Pierce County, where he guided one of the largest 4-H programs in Wisconsin consisting of nearly 900 community club members and more than 200 adult volunteer leaders.

Over the course of his career, Ginther planned, coordinated, and conducted hundreds of youth experiential learning events including camps, field trips, conferences, adult and youth leadership trainings, and countless fair educational activities. Ginther was instrumental in training over 100 4-H interns in partnership with fellow extension faculty, promoting extension and agricultural education as a highly relevant and successful career path. Because of his years of experience, he became a 4-H program area liaison mentoring new educators and troubleshooting issues with experienced 4-H faculty and staff across Wisconsin. Ginther also served multiple years as the academic department

chair for the UW-Extension Department of Youth Development and was chair of the Committee of Professors for the Youth Development Section of the Department of Extension Faculty.

His work with extension earned Ginther the Distinguished Service Award in 2003 and the Colleague of the Year Award in Colleague Development in 2015. In 2014, Ginther and the Pierce County 4-H staff team were recognized with the National Excellence in 4-H Club Support Award for their Multicultural Leadership Day program. Ginther was also honored with the National 4-H Meritorious Service Award in 2018.

CAFES Dean Dale Gallenberg presented Ginther with the award. He shared some comments from faculty and staff who worked with Ginther over the years on how he was so successful:

"Frank genuinely loves working with people."

"He had a wonderful ability to assess each kid as well as each adult volunteer and match them to activities where they would be successful. His goal was to develop leadership and project management life skills so that the Pierce County 4-Hers would be successful in their future."

"Frank is approachable and has a consistently positive attitude. He is a humble servant."

After receiving the award, Ginther addressed the audience and described one of his favorite roles of his career.

“Introducing people around me to the outstanding difference that extension-work can make in communities is energizing and fulfilling, He said. “Many of the interns that I hired over the years actually went on to do extension or agricultural education work and I am very proud to have played a small part in helping them do so.”

Ginther revealed that humble side his colleagues mentioned, stating that he didn't know that his work was any more distinguished than so many other hard working people in Wisconsin agriculture and natural resources, but went on to say, “I do know, however, that making a difference in communities and in the lives of people is good work, and I encourage all of you to find ways to check-up on the needs of those people and places around you. Give others a chance to learn from your effort, especially young people, so that future leaders can grow, and go on to do distinguished work of their own.”

The Wisconsin Distinguished Agriculturalist Award was established in 1970 to recognize individuals who have provided leadership, service and other contributions to the broader agricultural community. A charcoal sketch of each honoree hangs in the Agricultural Hall of Fame in the Agricultural Science building on the UW-River Falls campus. To see previous honorees, visit www.uwrf.edu/CAFES/Awards.cfm

For more information, email laura.walsh@uwrf.edu.



Graduating student to run startup business at St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center

May 2, 2022 - An internship at the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center turned into an entrepreneurial pursuit for one University of Wisconsin-River Falls graduating student.

Josh Woll, who graduates May 7 with dual majors in marketing communications and communication and media studies, started Visionary Media Solutions, a startup digital media and marketing company.

Woll, originally of Woodbury, Minn., and now of River Falls, is leasing a cubicle space in the center to run his startup business at. He started leasing the space in March.

The center, located at 1091 Sutherland Ave., River Falls, provides incubation space, training and support to foster entrepreneurship and enhances businesses' success resulting in a more vibrant regional economy, new job opportunities and increased wealth. UW-River Falls, the River Falls Economic Development Corp., the city of River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College are partners in the center.

Woll, who was an intern at the center from April 2021 to February, heard from many small business owners at the center they needed marketing expertise and social media management and knew other business owners with the same need.

"I picked up a real need for consistent marketing and web development in the area," Woll said. "I am not only good at that, but I also enjoy it. This is kind of a golden opportunity. There is a market for this business I can provide, and I have an incredible support system to start and run my business."

Woll enjoyed interning at the center. "I was able to collaborate and connect with entrepreneurs and learn their stories and about what made their businesses unique," he said.

"Part of what I love about the innovation center is it is a very collaborative environment," Woll said. "Connections are formed weekly."

Businesses can learn marketing and social media management, but often owners don't have the time nor the revenue to hire staff, Woll noted.

"I found a niche," he added. "I am fresh out of college so I can use the experience. I love small businesses and that is a market I can cater to."

Center Director Sheri Marnell believes Woll will do well with Visionary Media Solutions.

"He has that growth mindset and will take advantage of the services we have and serve the community," Marnell said.

Brienna Schuette, a UWRF associate lecturer and internships program coordinator in marketing communications, said it is unusual for graduating students to start their own companies.

"We're seeing students become more and more entrepreneurial as time goes on," Schuette said. "The speed at which technology evolves and the movement to more remote work has allowed students who want to launch businesses to do so. Today's students are incredibly tech-savvy and the ability to work from anywhere allows flexibility in producing projects from campus or home. Several students in our program have their own businesses specializing in social media's user-generated content and influencer marketing, as well as photography and graphic design."

Woll was an ambitious but understated student, Schuette said, noting she first met him when he took her Marketing Communications 100 course.

"He always shows up, engages, listens to learn and does the work," Schuette said. "He's a no-drama, noticeably professional, get-stuff-done kind of guy. Josh asks great questions and thinks critically -- in a good way -- about decisions and their impact on his academic success, as well as how they will impact others. It's not surprising to me that he's a young entrepreneur. He's got the professionalism, network and ambition to be very successful."

Woll chose to attend UWRF because he wanted to stay close to home and liked the beauty of the campus.

He chose marketing communications because he enjoys being creative and the major allows for that.

While a student at UWRF, Woll participated in the Liberty Society, a group that encouraged open discussions and the expression of ideas.

He also loves creating music. He plays the guitar, ukulele, piano, mandolin and bass. He also writes songs and plans to eventually release some of his music.

"When I play music, I really feel it," he said. "I barely know the notes and chords. I play from the heart."

Woll would encourage others if they are interested to start their own business.

“If you are passionate about it, do your research and determine if you have a good idea and how effective it might be,” he said. “The only way you know if it can succeed is to jump in and try it. Put in the work. When you are working on your own business it is exponentially more rewarding. To build your brand and business and see it come together and flourish is incredible.”

UW-River Falls commencement ceremonies are at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday in Knowles Field House in the Falcon Center. A total of 805 students are part of the two ceremonies that also will be livestreamed. For more information, go to the [commencement website](#).

Mom travels 20 hours by plane to attend son's commencement at UW-River Falls

May 9, 2022 – Samira Teymurova traveled 20 hours one way by plane from her home country of Azerbaijan to see her son, Jamal Teymurlu, walk across the University of Wisconsin-River Falls commencement stage May 7.



"It's worth it," Teymurova said. "I knew I needed to go and be here."

Her son, who graduated with a degree in applied physics engineering, fulfilled a dream his mother had for herself, to study in the United States.

"I wanted to study in the U.S.," Teymurova said. "I didn't have the opportunity. He kind of continued my dream. That's why I wanted to see him in the gown and graduate. Graduation is very important in our family."

In Azerbaijan, Teymurova is a principal in the Baku Modern International School.

"I'm really proud of him," she added smiling. "That's a serious major he chose. He did it. Well done," Teymurova added, patting her son's hand fondly.

Living the American dream

Teymurlu plans to stay in River Falls and is applying for work permits. He wants to work in the industry, and potentially the aerospace industry.

"I want to stay in this country," he said. "It's a country of opportunities, especially for work. I want to live the American dream."

Eventually, he plans to return to school for a master's degree in the field of sports management.

"I think having two different degrees gives you more options," he said.

UWRF Admissions Counselor Cory Clark met Teymurlu through their love of sports before Clark started working at UWRF.

"Jamal is a go-getter," Clark said. "He is going to work hard for everything he wants. If you challenge him by saying he can't do it, he is going to do everything he can to achieve the goal and prove you wrong."

Clark described Teymurlu as outgoing, welcoming and mindful of others he meets.

"Jamal is a person you want to have in your community," Clark said. "He is a big-hearted individual who is open to conversations and erudition while being willing to share information about his experiences and culture, which is why I believe

Jamal has enriched the UWRF community. The exhibition of his style kind of showed a new flare that you don't see on campus too often. And it's going to be hard to forget his contagious and memorable smile that can light up a room."

Stage and Screen Arts Professor Erik Johnson met Teymurlu in a 48-hour film competition. He is also a student in Johnson's History of Film class.

"We are so lucky to have had Jamal as a student at UWRF," Johnson said. "He has shared his passion for film in class. He is very charismatic and has a bright future."

Teymurlu did have the opportunity in spring 2020 to study abroad in Scotland. The trip was cut short because of COVID-19 restrictions, and he returned to Azerbaijan. He returned to UWRF in fall 2020 for classes and was able to visit again in summer 2021.

Making new connections

Azerbaijan, which is independent and democratic, is located at the boundary of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, bounded by the Caspian Sea to the east with a population of 10.11 million and the language is a dialect of Turkish.

Teymurlu was part of EducationUSA, a U.S. Department of State program that promotes higher education to students around the world. He traveled to the U.S. while in high school for a summer camp and visited Florida.

"I decided I wanted to go to a college in the U.S.," he said. "I like the democratic life where you get to choose your general education classes. I wanted to be independent and make new connections."

He learned of UWRF in fall 2017 from EducationUSA.

"One day he came back with a booklet about UW-River Falls," Teymurova said. "I hadn't heard of Wisconsin. I could barely pronounce it. We started researching it. It was scary. I was afraid it would be really cold."

Teymurlu at first thought he was applying to UW-Madison because he did not know there were different colleges in the UW System and questioned why there was a Falcon as the university mascot versus Bucky Badger.

UWRF is second home

"I saw how affordable it was and I saw the program," he said. "For me, it is a second home now."

His father, Mahmood Teymurov, liked the country and the more rural setting of the university and encouraged his son to attend UWRF. Teymurlu also has a sister, Nargiz Teymurlu, who has visited UW-River Falls, and is graduating from high school in Azerbaijan this year.

Teymurlu never visited campus before arriving to take classes when he was 17 years old.

Azerbaijan has 11 years of school versus the U.S.'s 12 years.

His mom traveled with him when he started at UWRF, and she is now on her fourth trip to UWRF.

"I needed to see the community and campus and where he would stay," she said. "When I saw the environment and I met with the chancellor, I was impressed how supportive the campus was to international students and I saw the care."

Teymurlu said he is pleased his mother attended his commencement and is proud he is graduating from UW-River Falls.

"I did this," he said. "I didn't let them down. For my family, and for myself, education is very important."



Moving out sustainably at UW-River Falls: Students donate items to help others

May 31, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls senior Julia Miller recently folded clothes donated by fellow students as they moved out of student housing at the end of the academic year. The clothing will go to several agencies to help the River Falls community.

“This is a ton of stuff that gets diverted from the landfill and can go to the thrift stores,” said Miller, of New Richmond, who is the president of the UWRF Green Team, a student sustainability group. “People can buy items at lower prices saving them money and items get reused that helps limit the amount of new clothes made.”

Miller was helping sort donated items at the UWRF South Fork Suites conference room at the Don’t Throw It, Donate It! collection.

Students donated clothing, household items, nonperishable food, school supplies, electronics, sporting goods, personal items, books and other items including furniture.

The items were donated to the River Falls Community Food Pantry, Treasures of the Heart, the River Falls School District, and The Closet at Our Neighbor’s Place. Some of the nonperishable food items will also go to the two Freddy’s food pantries on campus.

Collecting items from students moving out of the residence halls started in 2006. This year is the 14th year of the collection as

the program was not available in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bins were placed in student housing for donations from May 4-17.

"It's all about diverting usable items from the landfill," said UWRF Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias. "It is also about helping people in need and donating back to the community."

A total of 6,433 pounds of items including 1,439 pounds of food were collected.

The breakdown and items collected included: clothing - 1,630; personal - 85; electronics - 38; books/DVDs/CDs - 61; school supplies - 620; household - 1,652; sporting goods - 21; furniture - 38.

A total of 175 volunteer hours went into the project.

In 2019, the last time the collection was held, 6,241 pounds of donations were collected. Of that, 5,004 pounds were items donated and 1,460 was food donations. Of the items, 1,977 were clothing, 1,859 households, 546 school supplies, 262 books, DVDs and CDs, 167 sporting goods, 102 personal and 91 electronics.

Kaeli Evers, a senior majoring in animal science from Clintonville, recently helped sort donated items.

Evers, an Honors Program student, was using the opportunity to help fulfill required volunteer hours for the program.

"I really like the idea of doing something to be more sustainable," Evers said. "I like that it also gives a way for students to give back to the community."

Evers remembered when she moved out of the residence halls about two years ago and ended up throwing items that someone else might have been able to use because the program could not operate because of the pandemic.

"I really enjoy thrifting, too," Evers said. "There are a lot of environmental impacts with producing clothing, and it is good to avoid usable items going to the landfill."

Evers and Miller said they were both surprised by the number of items donated by students.

"Sustainability is important," Miller said. "Our generation is really concerned about climate change and the water. Doing something helps both for mental health and the feeling that we are doing something to help the world."

In Chancellor Maria Gallo's Listening and Learning Session Report, one of the major themes was to embrace a holistic approach to sustainability. To read the report, go to <https://www.uwrf.edu/Administration/upload/22-0062-Listen-and-Learn-Report-Web.pdf>.

The Don't Throw It, Donate It! program is a collaborative effort between the Sustainability Office, Green Team student organization and Residence Life.



New Community Planning Club members gather student opinions on city's comprehensive plan

May 25, 2022 – Brooklyn Weller is hoping the city of River Falls will consider more public transportation options to help University of Wisconsin-River Falls students who may not have cars.

Weller, of Rochester, Minn., is a sophomore majoring in criminology and psychology and is also an at-large senator with the Student Government Association. The association has a task force looking into options to return a safe ride program to the university.

"It would be nice if the city added public transportation or rideshares," Weller said. "I think that would give more opportunities for students who need to pick up groceries or go to a drug store."

Weller was one student who had her voice heard thanks to the new student Community Planning Club.

The club started this semester on campus. On April 28, club members encouraged students and staff to share their opinions through a table in the University Center on three plans that will guide the future decision making and investment in River Falls.

The plans the city is updating include:

- Comprehensive Plan that will establish visions, goals and direction to guide decision making for the next 20 years.
- Bike and Pedestrian Plan that focuses on the system of infrastructure and resources that provide for bicycle and

pedestrian movement.

- Outdoor Recreation Plan will assess current recreational offerings, complete an assessment of future needs and outline a recommendation plan for future investment.

CJ Sycks, of Andover, Minn., is the president of the Community Planning Club.

Sycks, a junior majoring in conservation and environmental planning, said she and others in her major wanted a club to help learn more career options, have speakers and work on projects outside the classroom.

"This event is to help Community Planning Club members get a feel for what community engagement is," Sycks said.

Christopher Holtkamp, an assistant professor of environmental planning and the club adviser, said the club allows students to socialize and have events related to community planning.

Gathering information for the city of River Falls also helps student voices be heard, Holtkamp said.

"One typically underrepresented group in planning efforts is students," he noted. "Students don't typically attend town hall meetings or answer long surveys. This creates an opportunity for students to provide information."

The group specifically targeted transportation for the event to learn how students move around the city. Students and staff received information to respond and give more feedback on all three of the plans.

The goal is to make students feel more engaged and a part of River Falls, Holtkamp said.

"Students don't always feel like they are a part of the community," he noted. "But they are. They are here for nine months a year for four, sometimes five years."

For students who are part of the Community Planning Club, engaging with other students allows them to take part in a real-life community planning effort.

"They get an opportunity to meet city staff and share their findings," Holtkamp said.

Having a club also opens the door to having members attend state planning conferences, Holtkamp said.

Earlier in the semester, the club held a contest on designing a roundabout.

"It's a way to apply what they have learned in the classroom and engage in a fun activity," he noted.

To learn more about the city's updated plans, go to engagerf.org.



RCU Foundation announces support for Science and Technology Innovation Center

Donation names SciTech presentation room, provides boost to fundraising efforts

May 9, 2022 -- The RCU Foundation, a supporter of organizations and initiatives throughout western Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota, announced a commitment today of \$100,000 for the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech).

In acknowledgment of RCU Foundation's support, the largest gathering space in the new facility will be named the RCU Foundation Presentation Room.

"The Royal Credit Union Foundation was formed to make a difference in our communities," said Tom Huffcutt, secretary of the RCU Foundation. "SciTech is critical to the success of area business and industry and will help train the next generation of science and technology leaders. The foundation is honored to support this important project."

The state of Wisconsin is providing \$111.73 million of the \$116.73 million needed to construct SciTech. UW-River Falls is charged with raising the remaining \$5 million for the project, where students from a wide range of majors will engage in immersive high-impact learning experiences in biology, chemistry, physics and the psychological sciences.

"All of us at UW-River Falls express deep appreciation to the RCU Foundation for its generous commitment to SciTech," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "We are honored to partner with the RCU Foundation on a project that positively impacts our campus, faculty and students as well as our community and the entire region."

In addition to providing critically needed lab and research space, SciTech will feature the innovative University Business Collaboration Center (UBC2), which will actively engage business and community partners in discovery, innovation and talent development at UWRF. The UBC2 will offer students increased internship, research and career opportunities while providing employers facilitated access to student talent, as well as faculty and staff expertise.

The SciTech groundbreaking is planned in fall 2023. The project is expected to be completed in late 2025, with a grand opening and inaugural classes in January 2026.

For more SciTech details, including opportunities to support the project, visit <https://www.uwrf.edu/scitech/> or contact Rick Foy, UWRF assistant chancellor for University Advancement at richard.foy@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4291.



Student earns graduate school credits while at UW-River Falls

Noble-Meraz wants to work in child protective services

May 4, 2022 -- When Lexi Noble-Meraz begins her graduate school career at UW-Madison, she will already have one year of credits under her belt thanks to her University of Wisconsin-River Falls social work undergraduate degree.

"UW-River Falls is accredited by the Wisconsin Council on Social Work Education, so my senior year counted as my first year of graduate school," Noble-Meraz said. "When I applied at UW-Madison, I applied as an advanced student. I have one more year of graduate school."

Noble-Meraz also received the Martha N. Ozama Scholarship which covers all her tuition and segregated fees at UW-Madison. She also has been accepted into the Title 4E program for those who want to work in child protective services. As part of the program, she will receive a stipend and specific coursework and in exchange, after graduation, agrees to work one year in child protective services.

This summer Noble-Meraz will work a temporary full-time position in Washington County, Minn., as a kinship worker. Her main role is to find relatives of Foster Care children and determine if they want to become caretakers during the child protective services process. She also will assist in finding permanent options for Foster Care children if their parents' rights are terminated.

Eventually, after graduate school, Noble-Meraz would like to earn her law degree.

"I want to work with policy reform and create policy to help with some discrepancies in our justice system, so it is a more equal system for all individuals," Noble-Meraz said. "Parental rights are high on my list. The law typically leans toward the mother in divorces. I would like to see reform to help fathers get equal rights."

Noble-Meraz, who will graduate with honors on Saturday, decided to major in Spanish largely because her father, Javier Meraz Martinez, is originally from Mexico.

"I want to be able to translate at a professional level for individuals for who English is not their first language," she noted.

As a natural helper, Noble-Meraz believes in assisting others when possible.

"I think that's who I am," she said. "I don't want other people to fail. If I can help them, I will take time out of my day."

This semester she is interning at the Washington County, Minn. child protective services unit as a general case management worker to reunify families.

In her first year at UWRF, Noble-Meraz, of Independence, volunteered with St. Croix Hospice to work with adults with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

"As the disease would progress, the verbal aspect of the individuals would tend to dissolve to the point they can't communicate verbally, and they can't hold on to new information," she noted.

That lead to her working at ACR Homes, a group home for nonverbal adults with disabilities in Stillwater, Minn.

"It was a way to push me out of my comfort zone," Noble-Meraz said. "We had to perform medical tasks and take residents on trips even though they couldn't tell us what they wanted or needed."

This past summer Noble-Meraz interned through the Area Health Education Center at the Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley-Lunda Center in Black River Falls.

"Working with a large group of children at the same time taught me patience and understanding and learning the need to adapt," she noted.

Shawyn Domyancich-Lee, assistant professor in the Social Work Department, said Noble-Meraz is an engaged student with personal and professional experiences she readily shares in class to help students connect content to real-life situations.

"I've seen Lexi grow quite a bit in her field placement," Domyancich-Lee said. "She's really come out of her bubble and taken risks and stepped outside her comfort zone and it's paid off as can be seen by her getting offered a job for the summer and being admitted to Madison. We are very proud of her."

While on campus, Noble-Meraz has also been a part of the Student Social Work Association and was a resident assistant in Prucha Hall for two years and has held a job since 2016 at Kwik Trip.

Noble-Meraz chose to attend UWRF because it was smaller and allowed her the opportunity to make close friends and know her professors.

“UW-River Falls has given me countless opportunities,” she said. “It has helped me grow. In Spanish, my writing was not the strongest and the department helped me build that up. Social work helped with my interpersonal skills, active listening and how to understand what an individual is going through. It is a close-knit community. You will have someone to go to if you are struggling.”

Travel is important to Noble-Meraz and encourages others to do take opportunities to study abroad, something she was not able to do because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Noble-Meraz has been to Mexico, France and Columbia.

“I like seeing new things,” she said. “I like being emerged in new cultures.”

UW-River Falls commencement ceremonies are at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday in Knowles Field House in the Falcon Center. A total of 805 students are part of the two ceremonies that also will be livestreamed. For more information, go to the [commencement website](#).

Students named in each college for highest GPA

May 23, 2022 – Four students earned the Rochelle Junkman Seymour Award for having the highest grade point average (GPA) in their respective colleges at University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The students were given a stole to wear during commencement ceremonies on May 7.

College of Business and Economics

Lauren White, a business administration management graduate, earned the award for the College of Business and Economics. White, of Elk River, Minn., had a 3.97 GPA.



White started at UWRF as a junior after earning her associate of arts degree while at Spectrum High School. She started taking college courses in 10th grade and garnered 60 college credits before she graduated high school. Her high school focused on college preparation and worked with Anoka-Ramsey Community College.

“It was definitely strange when I moved into college and was living with those my same age and having to explain we would not be in the same classes,” White said.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, White had most of her classes online.

“Probably most of the people I graduated with have no idea who I am,” she added.

“Most have been here four years and got to do their first- and second-year in person.”

Sometimes White wishes she could attend UWRF longer but is grateful she got her associate degree while in high school.

“It saved me from paying for two years of college,” she noted. “I’m also graduating at age 20 with a full-time job. It was such a great opportunity. My high school was challenging but supportive. It helped me get prepared for college.”

White started May 16 as a business operations coordinator for Open Systems International in Medina, Minn.

White chose UWRF because it was close to home and accepted all her credits. She was proud to receive the award for her GPA.

While at UWRF, White enjoyed playing intramural sports.

“I got to be with my friends,” she said. “We played as a big group.”

Eventually, White hopes to earn her master’s degree while continuing to work.

College of Education and Professional Studies

Mary Bronk, who graduated with a degree in elementary education, garnered the award in the College of Education and Professional Studies.

Bronk, of Lewiston, Minn., graduated with a 4.0 GPA.



"I am honored to have received this award because it recognizes the hard work and dedication to my academic performance that I put in throughout all four years at UWRF," she said. "It wasn't easy balancing many different commitments on campus, but my classes and studies always came first."

Bronk is in Thessaloniki, Greece, student teaching abroad through the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching Program. UWRF is one of 16 universities across the U.S. that are part of the program that sends teacher candidates overseas for a two- to three-month placement in an international classroom.

"The best part about going abroad and being in an international classroom for me has been getting to know students from many different countries and adapting my lessons to meet their individual needs," Bronk said. "It's so much fun getting to know students on a personal level and having them share about their backgrounds and native cultures."

College of Arts and Sciences

Eryn Keenan, a dual major in psychology and communication studies, earned the award for the College of Arts and Sciences. Keenan had a 4.0 GPA.



"I was not expecting it," she said. "I am internally motivated. Getting the award, for me, was just a bonus. It was nice to have the acknowledgment and recognition for my hard work."

Keenan earned her associate degree at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, Minn., before transferring to UWRF because all her credits were accepted.

"I walked the campus one summer day and I could see myself here for the next couple of years," Keenan said.

Now that she has graduated, Keenan plans to travel for the summer and then look for a career in human resources. Eventually she would consider returning to school for a master's degree.

Last year all of Keenan's classes were online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her senior year was the first year she was able to be on campus for classes.

"This year I was able to meet a lot of people and make some great friendships," she added.

Keenan, of Minneapolis, is thankful for her family and friends who provided emotional support while she was in college.

College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES)



The award in CAFES went to Curtis Weltzien of Arcadia, an agricultural business graduate. Not only was Weltzien the leader in terms of his GPA but he is also the all-time intramural wins leader at UWRF, having just passed 500 career wins. He has a love for competition and put in the extra effort needed to find a win.

A friend summed Weltzien up by saying, "Curtis is going to give his all, make you laugh along the way, and stick to honesty and integrity better than super glue."

Weltzien is returning to his family's dairy operation.



UWRF's first environmental engineering degree student to graduate Saturday

May 6, 2022 -- When the University of Wisconsin-River Falls added an environmental engineering major two years ago, Zach Maier knew it was a good fit for him.

Maier, of Spring Valley, was studying environmental science and enjoyed working outdoors with water. He would have graduated last spring from UWRF but instead decided to pursue an environmental engineering degree.

"I liked problem-solving," he said. "I could still work with water quality but more on the applied side."

Maier, who graduates Saturday, accepted a job in January as a water resource engineer for Westwood Professional Services in Minnetonka, Minn. He starts June 1. He will be determining runoff from after solar power panels or wind farms are added to agriculture fields as well as determining if farm and field roads can handle the weight of the wind turbines.

"I am looking forward to solving real-world problems," he added.

Going into environmental engineering, Maier didn't realize he would be the first person to graduate from UWRF with the degree.

"I was just really attracted to what an environmental engineer would do," he said. "I'm very proud of graduating with the degree. It was a lot of hard work. Because it is new, there is a learning process as students are going through the program."

Joel Peterson, professor and department chair of the Environmental Engineering Department, said Maier will do well in the industry.

"Zach is thoughtful and thinks through the range of potential solutions before deciding on a course of action," Peterson said. "I also think he'll do well because he is personable and is able to get along with people. That will serve him well because in the private industry, you not only work with clients but go out and get new clients. I think his future employer also saw that the engineering courses Zach has taken have prepared him to hit the ground running. Because our engineering professors have industry experience, they are aware of the kinds of skills, knowledge and abilities that will make students successful engineers and structure courses and course content appropriately."

Having Maier as the first graduate in environmental engineering shows UWRF is serious about engineering, Peterson added.

"It shows that UWRF is committed to producing high-quality engineering graduates," Peterson said. "Students studying engineering at UWRF have small class sizes, lots of interaction with professors who have worked in industry, and we are substantially less expensive than large public universities or private universities."

After he graduates, Maier will be taking his Fundamentals of Engineering Exam and after four years of work experience, he will take a Principles and Practice of Engineering Exam to become a professional engineer.

"I want to become a professional engineer because it would give me more responsibility and the ability to lead a team of engineers," he noted.

While going to UWRF, Maier worked for three years at a nearby dairy farm, Southern Fork Dairy, milking cows twice a day and doing some fieldwork. This past summer he worked in landscaping at Pondering Gardens in River Falls as a landscaper.

He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, an honor society for superior scholarship, and has been the co-vice president for the past two years.

He also enjoys fishing, ice fishing in the winter, bass fishing and trout fly fishing.

Maier chose UWRF because he liked the smaller class sizes.

"I feel like I have a good connection with my professors," he said. "Anytime I have a question, I am able to ask them because it is easy to get in touch with them."

He also encouraged other students to consider majoring in environmental engineering.

"I think if anyone has a strong interest in math and problem solving and the natural side of problems, it would be a good fit," he said. "You are providing solutions."



Kurt Vogel, far right, talks with students in the Animal Welfare Lab at UW-River Falls.

UW-River Falls Animal Welfare Lab promotes undergraduate research, garners \$210,000 USDA grant

May 16, 2022 -- The Animal Welfare Lab at University of Wisconsin-River Falls has garnered a \$210,000 two-year grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to continue the research started by two recent graduates.

Karly Anderson and Elizabeth Ries, recent UWRF graduates, started researching the thickness and brain features of pig's heads to determine the best locations to place captive bolts for euthanasia in 2019.

The funding will be used to conduct similar research using cadaver heads from pigs and cattle and allow current students to engage in undergraduate research. The new USDA funding will help expand the original line of research, which sprouted from curiosity and initial support from the National Pork Board.

"The research we conduct in the Animal Welfare Lab is designed to avoid causing discomfort to animals however we can," said Kurt Vogel, associate professor of farm animal welfare and head of the Animal Welfare Lab. "It's not just more humane for the animals, it's also better for the people who conduct and later use the research from a mental health perspective. The way we treat the animals that benefit us affects how we see ourselves and treat each other."

The Animal Welfare Lab was established at UWRF in 2012 and is a hub for undergraduate research, teaching demonstrations, and animal welfare judging and assessment. The lab was established with a grant from Oscar Mayer, part of the Kraft Heinz Company.

The grant was from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. It is part of the NIFA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Welfare and Well-Being of Agricultural Animals program. The program supports objective evaluations of current animal agricultural production practices and the development of new or enhanced management approaches that aim at safeguarding animal welfare while sustaining or improving production efficiency.

Preparing the next generation

The lab's mission is to prepare the next generation of animal caretakers and welfare scientists to care for animal resources in ethical and sustainable ways and to conduct applied animal welfare and behavior research that can be readily translated to field use.

"One of our goals is to conduct research that is suitable for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals and to get students' names on those publications," Vogel said. "That helps UWRF students as they apply to graduate or veterinary schools. In the Animal Welfare Lab, we try to see ourselves as a pre-graduate program. Students get some of the opportunities and experiences they would get from a master's degree program at a larger research university. This eases the transition to the next step in their education and allows them to hit the ground running."

Anderson, who earned her degree in animal science, is a graduate research assistant and Ph.D. student in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and an affiliate of the Animal Welfare Lab at UWRF. Anderson conducted her master's degree program in a cooperative between the University of Minnesota's College of Veterinary Medicine and UWRF. Her dissertation research is a continuation of her undergraduate and master's degree research. Anderson is pleased the research can continue in the Animal Welfare Lab. The use of cadaver heads from animals slaughtered for food in this research allows for gathering information without inflicting pain or suffering to live animals.

"So far, we have found that the frontal placement has the least risk for failed euthanasia attempts for market hogs when compared to behind ear placement for market hogs and when compared to the temporal and behind ear placements for mature breeding swine," Anderson said, who was the UWRF Animal Welfare Lab coordinator from September 2019 to December 2021. "Ultimately, this work will help to positively influence the animal agriculture industry by applying science to guide management decisions and practices."

Undergraduate research experience

"The experiences provided at the UWRF Animal Welfare Lab are truly invaluable and I am very grateful for them," Anderson said. "I enjoyed everything about my undergraduate research experience at UWRF. Simply put, I would not be where I am today without the opportunity to learn about the research process and my involvement in the captive bolt euthanasia research as an undergraduate student at UWRF. What started as a simple undergraduate research project grew into a larger project which was funded by the National Pork Board and comprised my master's work and has grown even further to the work that we'll be starting this spring funded by the USDA that will be the focus of my Ph.D. research. It has been a very enjoyable process for me to be involved in every stage of planning, grant writing, and project execution with this line of research over the last three years."

Anderson added that UWRF has a special atmosphere to support the growth and development of students with interests in farm animal welfare. That environment comes from the faculty.

“Dr. Vogel is a wonderful leader, with the unique ability to share his passion for animal welfare science with others,” Anderson said. “Drs. Brian Greco, Kate Creutzinger, and Arquimides Reyes are all also wonderful collaborators at UWRF that I am grateful to have the continued opportunity to work with and learn from.”

Ries earned her animal science degree in spring 2020 and is a third-year veterinary student at the UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine. She had never done a research project and found it fun and interesting.

“I grew up on a pig farm and had a lot of experience with pigs and the swine industry, so being able to conduct a research project that would benefit the future industry was a really great opportunity,” Ries said. “I am interested in becoming a large animal veterinarian with an interest in swine, so the research project was definitely a great topic for me and my future career. It has been beneficial for certain topics that we have talked about in vet school, and I appreciate the knowledge that I gained and how it has helped my education so far.”

Each year about 15 UWRF students are involved in applied welfare or behavior research projects at the lab and paid for their time, Vogel said. This provides students with income. That financial support comes from a combination of external grant funding and the UWRF Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity (URSCA) program.

“If we don’t find ways to pay students for their time, we are exploiting their excitement,” Vogel said. “When you pay them, they take the work more seriously. It creates the right kind of atmosphere where they know they are valued contributors to the work.”

Breanna Weiler, a senior animal science major from Junction City, has participated in research in the Animal Welfare Lab focused on brain damage from captive bolt applications.

“The research is what helps me gain more knowledge and understand what we can do in animal welfare,” she said, noting the experience also will help her get accepted into veterinary school. “I have always been interested in making things better.”

For more information on the Animal Welfare Lab, email Vogel at kurt.vogel@uwrf.edu.

UW-River Falls Symphony Band to perform Thursday

Cohler Coffee Concert Series to host Colleen Raye Friday

May 3, 2022 -- The final University of Wisconsin-River Falls Symphony Band Concert of the academic year is Thursday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. in Abbott Concert Hall, Kleinpell Fine Arts.

Featured guest performer is James Devoll, flute player with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Other music selected by conductor and artistic director Kristin Tjornehoj includes: "Danzón No. 2" by Arturo Márquez; "Victor Barrio" (Pasodoble #9) by Javier Pérez Garrio; "Emblem of Unity March" by J.J. Richards; "Suite of Old American Dances" by Robert Russell Bennett; Gary Kuo's "The Grand Sierras," and UWRF 56th Commissioned Composer Alex Shapiro's "Tight Squeeze."

Shapiro is known for her genre-blind acoustic and electroacoustic works. Published by her company Activist Music LLC, Shapiro's music is heard daily in concerts and broadcasts across the U.S. and internationally and can be found on over 30 commercially released recordings.

Tickets are available at the door. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$2 for students.

Cohler Coffee Concert

The Frances Cohler Coffee Concert Series wraps up the academic year from noon to 1 p.m. on Friday, May 6, featuring Colleen Raye with the St. Croix Valley Symphony Orchestra. Raye will share popular works from films including "Evergreen," "A Million Dreams," "You've Got a Friend in Me," "Skyfall" and "When You Wish Upon a Star." Adi Yeshaya, piano; Gary Raynor, bass; and David Schmalenberger, drums, join the orchestra for the performance.

Raye, a Wisconsin native, began her singing career at age 15. She is not only a vocalist but also a vocal and performance coach and producer and composer. She has traveled the country performing on a variety of stages.

The noon performance is free and open to all in Abbott Concert Hall.



Ceremony June 18 to celebrate first doctoral program at UW-River Falls

Doctor of Education program is one of first in Montessori education

June 9, 2022 – An affiliated researcher with the University of Kansas Center for Montessori Research will be the guest speaker at a ceremony June 18 recognizing the start of the first Doctor of Education degree at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Maria McKenna, Ph. D., who is also an associate professor of the Practice at the University of Notre Dame, will speak on the importance of expanding Montessori education into other disciplines and fields of study.

“She [McKenna] has research experience both inside and outside of Montessori education and will share her knowledge,” said Kateri Carver, interim director of the Ed.D. Montessori program and director of the graduate Montessori Teacher Education Department.

The ceremony will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, June 18, at the Lydecker Living Learning Center, which connects the J.H. Ames Suites to the South Fork Suites building.

McKenna holds a joint appointment in the Department of Africana Studies and the Education, Schooling, and Society program. She is also a faculty fellow for both the Institute for Educational Initiatives and Notre Dame’s Poverty Studies Program. As a qualitative researcher with expertise in child-centered research, McKenna studies the philosophy of educational care and space, youth empowerment, and the social and cultural contexts of education related to equity and

inclusion. McKenna serves as a conduit between the Montessori community and mainstream educational researchers in a variety of areas. She has been published in several academic journals and presses and serves on the editorial and review boards of various publications, including the Journal of Montessori Research.

The Ed.D. program in Montessori Studies at UWRF is one of the first such programs in Montessori studies in the United States.

During the ceremony, those who have helped start the program will be recognized for their efforts, Carver said.

"It really has been a community effort to bring this forward and to birth this doctoral program," Carver said.

The hybrid program has 14 students from across the nation. The students will start their two-week residency at UW-River Falls on Monday, June 20.

The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents approved the program in February 2021.

Montessori education methodology emphasizes the importance of dignity and respect for the individual and the potential for students to become the best people they can be and contribute to the world, Carver said. Integral to the philosophy is that no one is alone, and everyone is part of a community and a network that is part of the purpose.

Although the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy have been around for over 100 years, there have been very few doctoral programs in the world that have focused on the Montessori method of education.

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator and innovator. She opened the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. She graduated from medical school in 1896, one of the first female physicians in Italy. She opened a full-day childcare center in a poor inner-city district of Rome, the first of its kind. Using scientific observation and experience, Montessori designed learning materials and a classroom environment that fostered the children's natural desire to learn and provided them the freedom to choose their educational materials.

David Travis, UWRF provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, said he is thrilled UWRF is launching its first doctoral program.

"This allows UWRF to build on its strong reputation in preparing future leaders in the fields of education," Travis said. "The new Montessori doctoral program at UW-River Falls is a landmark achievement in the history of this campus. Given that this university started as a Normal School focused on educating future teachers, it is appropriate that our first doctoral program is in the field of education."

UWRF started the Master Montessori Program in 2012. There are fewer than 10 university-based such programs in the nation. The program is accredited through the Montessori Accreditation Council of Teacher Education (MACTE). The university is one of only two public universities in the U.S. that offer Montessori teacher education programs.

During the summer residency portion of the program, Ed.D. students are encouraged to stay on campus as they will engage in networking events and cohort community-building activities.

Carver said starting the doctoral program and having the students on campus will be a wonderful opportunity for the campus

and the River Falls community.

"It is exciting to know the campus is so dedicated to innovation and undergraduate, master and doctoral level academics," Carver said.

For more information about the new degree or the ceremony, email kateri.carver@uwrf.edu.



Taunya Kobernick, left, recipient of the UWRF Pre-Service Educator Award, with College of Education and Professional Studies Interim Dean Stacy Furness.

Early Educator, Pre-service Educator awards presented

Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education announced winners in May

June 10, 2022 – Two area mathematics teachers were honored as recipients of the Wisconsin Association of College for Teacher Education (WACTE) award winners from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Taunya Kobernick, a seventh-grade mathematics teacher at New Richmond Middle School, received the 2022 UW-River Falls Pre-Service Educator Award. Emily Amundson, a high school mathematics teacher in St. Croix Falls garnered the UW-River Falls Early Educator Award.

Kobernick was nominated by UWRF Mathematics Professor Erick Hofacker. Kobernick has worked closely with the mathematics education program at UWRF since 2014. In his nomination, Hofacker described Kobernick as a wonderful role model who provides math apprentices the opportunity to get involved immediately when they work in her classroom.

“Taunya has worked with math apprentices in practicum experiences every year from 2015 to 2021 and with math student teachers every year from 2018 to 2022,” Hofacker said. “Mrs. Kobernick has participated in over 450 hours of professional development grants and projects conducted through the UW-River Falls mathematics education program. Her participation in all of this work with former and current teacher candidates shows her commitment to life-long learning and being a great teacher and mentor to young teachers.”

Amundson is a 2020 graduate of the UWRF mathematics education program.

She was nominated by her former mathematics apprentice block Professor Mary Wright.



In her nomination, Wright described Amundson as a teacher who motivates her students through multiple engaging techniques.

“She encourages her students to present their work with their peers and participate in mathematical discussions,” Wright noted. “She wants mathematics to be fun and exciting, yet she challenges them with high-level problems. Ms. Amundson has engaged her students in mathematical modeling problems in the past and plans to continue to do more of this in the future.”

Amundson has provided ongoing mentorship for UWRF mathematics apprentices. She plans to begin her graduate studies at UWRF in secondary mathematics this summer.

Kobernick was Amundson’s former mentor teacher. Both were able to attend each other’s award announcements virtually. The awards were given at their schools in May by UWRF College of Education and Professional Studies Interim Dean Stacy Furness.

The Pre-Service Educator Award is presented to an outstanding educator who has demonstrated a sustained pattern of mentoring pre-service educators for at least five years. The award recipient is selected on the ability to model professional responsibility; evidentiary assessment; effective classroom management; the ability to mentor pre-service teacher candidates in developing their capacity to be a leader; and the ability to nurture candidates as they face a wide range of issues.

The Early Career Educator Award is presented to an outstanding educator within the first three years of her or his professional career. The award recipient will be selected based on any combination of the following: positive impact individual has on schools or communities; innovation in designing learning experiences; and advocacy for students.

Each university/college in Wisconsin confers the two awards.

For more information about the WACTE awards, email stacy.furness@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3774.



Hukai named interim dean of two colleges, potential merger in works

June 30, 2022 – Dawn Hukai will soon have a new title as interim dean of two colleges at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, but she still enjoys being a professor and teaching in the classroom, too.

On Friday, July 1, Hukai will become the interim dean of the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS). She has been the acting dean of CBE since January.

Hukai will teach Managerial Cost Accounting this fall and Accounting Systems in the spring, both third-year courses.

“Being in the classroom keeps me in touch with students,” Hukai said. “It helps keep me in touch with what educators are experiencing in the classroom. That is extremely important with the huge changes in technology. As their leader, I am not asking them to do something I am not doing.”

David Travis, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, said Hukai has the experience for the positions.

“Dr. Hukai is ready to step into this role and serve the colleges and help them move into the future,” Travis said. “I appreciate her willingness to help in this transitional period.”

By July 2023, with additional campus input and formal UW System approval, UW-River Falls expects to move from a four-college university to three colleges. CBE and CEPS would combine with three distinct schools under a single dean. New names for that college and the schools should be finalized in fall 2022. UWRF's other two colleges will remain the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES).

Merging CBE and CEPS will save about \$250,000 a year in administrative costs and will help to ensure that multiple professional accreditations can be maintained, including the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International designation.

"The new college will provide a greater infrastructure of support," Travis said. "This includes more support staff, increased professional development opportunities and backup for individuals that currently have no support. It also will create better balance in college size, shared governance representation and budget."

The change also will open opportunities for greater collaboration between staff and the potential for innovative academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate level, maximizing the combined expertise of those in the new college.

"Economies of scale are an important part of providing greater opportunity and flexibility for academic units," Travis said. "This restructure will create a more level playing field where academic units from all three colleges are able to bring new ideas forward for consideration and proper support."

"CEPS has about 1,200 students and CBE about 600 students enrolled in classes," Hukai said. "The year of running the two colleges under one dean will allow for aligning of policies, procedures and exploring new academic program offerings."

With Hukai becoming the interim dean of both CBE and CEPS, Stacy Furness, who was the interim dean of CEPS, will become the associate dean for CEPS. Tim Buttles will be the interim assistant dean of CEPS. An interim associate dean for CBE has not been named.

Hukai, who has been with UWRF since 1998, enjoys telling the story of how she was hired at the university to teach in the Accounting Department and when she arrived in the fall, the department had merged and was part of the School of Business and Economics.

"I tell that story for those expressing concern about change," Hukai said. "I wouldn't have had the opportunities at UWRF without that restructuring."

Hukai, who is a licensed Certified Public Accountant, came to UWRF because she wanted to be part of a teaching institution. She originally planned to be a financial accountant but discovered she loved teaching while in college when she helped others with their homework. She also found out there was a need for accounting professors.

She has her Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management and her undergraduate degree in accounting from UW-Parkside in Kenosha.

Hukai took her first accounting course in high school during her senior year. That same year she went to a DECA competition which prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges. She took second place in an accounting competition, which solidified her interest in accounting.

Hukai is an avid video game Pokémon Go player and tries to play every day. She has collected more than 5,000 Pokémon characters since she started the game in 2016. She also plays the game with others, providing a social group.

“I love it because it gets me walking,” she said. “The first two weeks I started, I lost 10 pounds. I need an incentive to exercise.”



Visitors enjoy an outdoor concert at the Melvin Wall Amphitheatre on campus. File photo.

Return to the hill: summer concert features Kids From Wisconsin July 19

June 6, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will hold a free concert from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, featuring the Kids From Wisconsin at the Melvin Wall Amphitheatre outdoor stage on campus.

This is the first time since 2019 the Kids From Wisconsin have performed at the university because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s been so long since we’ve been able to come together and be on the hill,” said Elise Peters, events and activities coordinator for Student Involvement. “We’re excited to bring back this event again.”

The Kids From Wisconsin’s Big Bang Boom Tour will highlight the eclectic fads, explosive dance crazes and bands that have burst forth onto the music scene. British invasions, Swedish bands, Motown, Swing dance and Disney are just some of the influences that have ignited today’s music genres. The concert is a high-powered two-hour Vegas-style production featuring some of Wisconsin’s most talented singers, dancers and instrumentalists in celebrating the world’s most dynamic and impactful music styles and cultures.

Kids From Wisconsin started in 1969.

This year’s cast includes trumpet player Ava Redmond of River Falls. Redmond graduated from River Falls High School and is planning to attend UW-Eau Claire this fall to major in trumpet performance and music education. She participated in wind

symphony, jazz band and pit orchestra and was a soloist in the 2021 state champion marching band.

Grilled food, beverages and ice cream will be available for purchase at the concert. Smoking and carry-in alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Personal picnics and beverages are allowed. Dogs are allowed but must be leashed at all times.

In case of inclement weather, the show will be held in Hunt Arena at the Falcon Center.

For weather updates or more information on accommodations, call Student Involvement at 715-425-4747 (press No. 1 for event updates) or visit <http://www.uwrf.edu/StudentLife/ActivitiesAndEvents/SummerConcertSeries.cfm>.

Science writer public interview is part of Chancellor Gallo's inauguration

Annie Murphy Paul part of Day of Engagement Oct. 19

June 7, 2022 – A Day of Engagement with a featured interview with science writer Annie Murphy Paul will kick off the celebration of the inauguration of University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo.



Paul is the author of "The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain," which was published in June 2021.

In her book, Paul said people need to think outside their brains. The feelings and movement of one's body, the physical space one learns and works in, and the minds of those around each of us can help a person focus more intently, comprehend more deeply and create more imaginatively.

The book outlines the research behind a new vision of human ability, exploring the findings of neuroscientists, cognitive scientists and psychologists. It examines the practices of educators, managers and leaders who are already reaping the benefits of thinking outside the brain.

Paul will be interviewed at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 19, in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center, by Cathy Wurzer, a UWRF alum and Minnesota Public Television and Radio host. The event is free and open to the public.

The Extended Mind was selected as Amazon Editors' Pick for Best Nonfiction, was one of the 50 Notable Works of Nonfiction by the Washington Post and was named by the New York Times as a Notable Book. Her TED talk has been viewed more than 2.6 million times. Paul is a recipient of the Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Journalism Fellowship, the Spencer Education Journalism Fellowship, and the Bernard L. Schwartz Fellowship at New America. A graduate of Yale University and Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, she is currently a Learning Sciences Exchange Fellow at New America.

The UWRF Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will host an on-campus book discussion of Paul's book.

"Annie Murphy Paul is an acclaimed science writer," said Jenna Lindseth, Inauguration Committee chair. "Her approach to thinking is significant for all educational institutions and has a revolutionary framework to extend the brain's power. Paul's focus on the science of learning is an excellent fit as we at UWRF celebrate new leadership in Chancellor Gallo, who is dedicated to education."

Chancellor Maria Gallo's inauguration will be held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 20, in the Riverview Ballroom, University Center. To learn more about inauguration events, go to uwrf.edu/inauguration. The installation is open to all.

Gallo started as the 20th chancellor at UWRF in July 2021 after serving five years as president of Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Penn. She was dean and director of Research and Cooperative Extension at the University of Hawaii in

Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources from 2012 to 2016. Her research interests included plant molecular biology, plant genetics and plant-microbe interactions.

Before that, Gallo, a Fulbright Scholar, was a professor and chair of the University of Florida Agronomy Department where she specialized in crop improvement. She also taught three genetics courses.

In the mid-1990s, Gallo conducted research at the University of Minnesota Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, and the Plant Molecular Genetics Institute.

She earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and Ph.D. in genetics from North Carolina State University.



Washington Technology Magnet High School students build a chair out of newspapers as part of an Upward Bound class.

Upward Bound program garners \$1.8 million, five-year grant

UW-River Falls helps Washington Technology Magnet high school students prepare, enter college

June 28, 2022 – Newspaper became a media to build a chair for some University of Wisconsin-River Falls Upward Bound students from Washington Technology Magnet High School in St. Paul.

In some cases, the paper chair held up a person, in others, the paper crumbled.

Thirty-nine of the 73 Upward Bound students are on campus weekdays through the end of July for the summer program. Upward Bound is a free college preparatory program that generates the necessary skills and motivation to help students complete a college program. Upward Bound prepares high school students for college through tutoring, academic skill building, social and cultural activities and academic and career awareness.

UWRF's Upward Bound program received a \$1.8 million U.S. Department of Education grant in May to continue the program for five years. Students enroll in their first year of high school and continue in Upward Bound their entire high school career.

In addition to mentoring, learning test-taking skills and how to apply for financial aid, during the summer students stay in residence halls and eat in the University Center. They take English composition, read a book and discuss it and take science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related courses.

Katie Caruso, a 2010 UWRF alum, helped teach the chair engineering activity as part of STEMteach, a graduate teaching licensure program at UWRF.

"Paper is readily available and because it is paper it is not real supportive," Caruso said, noting this added a challenge to the project. "This was fascinating because we got to engage with students at a level we are going to be teaching. It was such a successful feeling to see them light up as they work on the project. It's cool to see how you can energize people to think deeper about science."

Upward Bound Director Bee Vang said UWRF's Upward Bound program began in 1999.

Having the grant extended for five years means Upward Bound can continue to help first-generation and/or low-income students gain access to higher education.

In addition to pre-college counseling and mentoring, Upward Bound students get to experience classes they may not have been able to otherwise. Some students are participating in a horse camp with animal and food science Associate Professor Casie Bass, Ph.D., to learn about and work with horses this summer.

"A lot of the work they do is interdisciplinary and collaborative and involves critical thinking," Vang said. "They are using their minds to problem solve. It's the whole experiential learning. You learn by doing and understanding it and determining what careers call to you."

Students also learn time management, Vang said.

"We give them structure and some freedom to make personal decisions on their time and to realize there are consequences to some of those decisions," Vang said.

Upward Bound has proven to be successful, Vang noted. Seventeen of the 18 students that finish the program this year are going on to college, the other student is opting to enter the military.

Cha Moua, who just graduated from Washington Technical Magnet, is in his fourth year with Upward Bound and plans to study business at Augsburg University in St. Paul

"Without Upward Bound I wouldn't be where I am now," Moua said. "I wouldn't know where I want to go to college and what I want to study."

"I like the group activities with Upward Bound," he added. "You get to interact with other students and get to know them better. It helps you to know what it is like living in a dorm and going to college."

Ducci Yang, another recent Washington Technical Magnet graduate, plans to attend the University of Minnesota to possibly study marketing or earn a dental degree. She is also in her fourth year with Upward Bound.

"Upward Bound is a good program because it helps us experience what it is like to be a college student," Yang said. "Upward Bound is part of my identity. It has helped me to give back to my community. It has made me a better person."



UWRF Assistant Professor Grace Lewis is researching potential new uses for milk ingredients and byproducts in the Dairy Plant.

UWRF Dairy Innovation Hub researches potential new uses for milk ingredients and byproducts

June 15, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls Assistant Professor Grace Lewis is looking to find value-added products for milk proteins.

Lewis, who is part of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, was hired and started in August through funding from the Dairy Innovation Hub to specialize in dairy processing. Her position is 60% research and 40% teaching.

The Dairy Innovation Hub, which launched in 2019, harnesses research and development at [UW–Madison](#), [UW–Platteville](#) and [UW–River Falls](#) to keep Wisconsin's dairy community at the global forefront of producing nutritious dairy products in economically, environmentally and socially sustainable ways. It is supported by a \$7.8 million annual investment by the State of Wisconsin. Lewis has recently received support from the Dairy Innovation Hub on two research projects.

The Dairy Innovation Hub awarded Lewis \$50,000 funding in April for a two-year study that will investigate high-pressure homogenization and other processing aids to alter the most abundant protein in milk, casein. The goal is to optimize the process of using casein proteins as an encapsulation compound for use in the food or pharmaceutical industries. Casein is highly digestible and could help protect food compounds, medicines, or vitamins from heat and light stressors while also increasing the bioavailability of the encapsulated compound.

Finding uses for whey

Lewis is also working with Youngmi Kim, associate professor in the Agricultural Engineering Technology Department, on another two-year project funded through the hub for \$100,000 that will study the use of whey proteins from milk in combination with other food waste products to create biodegradable food packaging or food container materials.

Kim pointed out that whey is generated in large volumes as a by-product of cheese manufacturing but because of its high organic load can be difficult to dispose of. It contains 55% of the total nutrients of milk and has been used as a protein source in the food and beverage industry.



"Diversifying whey protein applications and expanding markets for whey is important for a sustainable dairy economy," Kim said. "Our research focuses on developing a food packaging film/coating material based on whey protein. We particularly are interested in improving the properties of whey-based film/coating by incorporating lignin, a renewable polymer derived from plants. We expect that lignin will improve the mechanical strength and water barrier properties of whey-based film/coating. The whey-based film/coating can be used as a packaging material for dairy products -- liquid milk, soft cheese, yogurt, etc. -- to improve the overall sustainability of dairy products. The long-term potential outcomes of this project include diversifying whey protein applications and expanding markets for whey, reducing whey disposal and its associated pollution problems and fostering the growth and sustainability of whey market and economy."

The DIH funding will purchase a texture analyzer that can be used in several food science and food process engineering courses at UWRF. The funding will benefit students not directly involved in the research, Kim said.

"I am excited to be working with the Dairy Innovation Hub collaboratively," Lewis said. "It is all about helping the dairy industry. We are trying to find ways to move the dairy industry into the future and to find new uses for dairy ingredients. The Dairy Innovation Hub is investing in the future."

Two students, Yihong Deng, of River Falls, and Kate Petersen, of Clear Lake, both food science and technology majors, will be conducting research this summer with Lewis on the projects specified above in a newly renovated lab space.

Lewis, in collaboration with UW-Madison, has also received funding from the National Dairy Council to research the use of a milk lactose-derived sweetener in various food products. The \$163,000 two-year project, funded in February, will begin in September. The UWRF Dairy Plant is an asset to this research project as it will be used to create test chocolate milks and ice creams using this sweetener.

The Dairy Plant is undergoing nearly a \$6.5 million renovation to modernize the 30-year-old plant and provide more effective teaching and training through the introduction of food products and security technology. Fundraising is continuing for the plant project. To learn more about fundraising efforts, email Julie Stucky in University Advancement at julie.stucky@uwrf.edu.

Dairy Products Evaluation Team competes

While at UWRF, Lewis has taught undergraduate courses in dairy manufacturing and food science with an emphasis on dairy processing and human health. She also is the coach for the Dairy Products Evaluation Team.

This past spring, the team competed at the 98th National Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest. The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association hosted the event at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee.

The students evaluated six dairy products – 2% fluid milk, butter, cheddar cheese, vanilla ice cream, cottage cheese and strawberry-flavored Swiss-style yogurt. The team placed second in cheddar cheese evaluation and third in milk evaluation.

Team members Kaitlin Pescinski placed third in the individual cottage cheese evaluation and Carlie Nelson garnered a fourth individual award in milk evaluation. Nelson was also honored with the Joe Larson Merit Award which recognizes undergraduate competitors who best uphold the ideals of the contest including potential leadership, professionalism, mature behavior and an understanding of the importance of dairy sensory evaluation.

Nelson, of Stanley, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in food science and technology, is working for Foremost Farms in their management trainee program in Marshfield.

Nelson said she enjoyed Lewis's enthusiasm for dairy and her willingness to share her knowledge on the future of the dairy processing industry.

The hardest part of the competition was tasting eight samples right in a row because there are many different defects to learn for each product and they sometimes can be difficult to discern, Nelson said.

"It was very exciting for our team to place so well considering we were all so new to the competition and weren't able to practice as much as other teams," Nelson said. "It was also cool being the first UWRF team there."

Pescinski, of Shawano, who graduated in May with a degree in food science and technology emphasizing in dairy management, said Lewis is a "very dedicated and hardworking professor who provides quality lecture and lab experiences. She makes a great addition to the Food Sciences Department and the Dairy Innovation Hub."

Pescinski said she was proud of the team as first-time competitors taking on universities from across the nation.

"A lot of the other universities spend many more semesters or even years preparing, but Dr. Lewis's teaching of the concept of the competition and dedication to getting us quality samples of the six different dairy products proved successful," Pescinski said.

Oddly, Pescinski, who is working as a landscape/horticulture intern for the city of Cottage Grove, Minn., placed in the creamed cottage cheese contest, a food she does not like. Dairy competitions can be difficult, she noted.

"There are so many defects that the general consumer would not be able to pick out and certain dairy products have a very subtle flavor or texture differences, while others have a very strong flavor that needs to be distinguished as a defect or not," Pescinski said "It can also be difficult as a competitor to be good at all the products when they are unique in flavor, texture and appearance. It takes a combination of trained senses and memorization of how the scorecard works in reference to rating."

UWRF school counseling alum named Bush Foundation Fellow

Abdikarani to pursue certificate in Islamic psychology, develop training to help Muslim-American youth

June 21, 2022 – During Kaltun Abdikarani's first semester at University of Wisconsin-River Falls as a school counseling program graduate student, she learned not to advise people.



"Counseling is about using tools to bring out people's inner wisdom and to help them learn more about themselves," said Abdikarani, of New Brighton, Minn. "I combined that with the knowledge of my Islamic faith. Putting them together helped me to have a better impact."

Abdikarani, a May 2020 UWRF school counseling master's graduate, was one of 24 new fellows chosen by the Bush Foundation for their work in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share that same geography. She will receive up to \$100,000 to fund 24 months of study and reflection to build her leadership skills.

The Bush Foundation, based in St. Paul, Minn., chose Abdikarani from among 468 applicants. More than 2,400 people have received support from the fellowship over the past 60 years.

"I am so grateful and so honored for this," she said of being named a Bush Fellow.

Abdikarani plans to pursue a certificate in Islamic psychology, develop resources and training for teachers and parents of Muslim-American youth and collaborate with spiritual leaders and mental health professionals to cultivate wellness in a culturally responsible way.

Her goal is to reform the program children attend to receive an Islamic education.

"I want to engage youth with spiritual knowledge that supports them in embracing their whole identity," Abdikarani said.

Traditionally, Islamic education and the Quran are taught through memorization, she said.

"We don't go into the meaning," Abdikarani said. "Without learning the meaning, many don't know how the teachings apply to everyday life."

After experiencing childhood trauma, Abdikarani found faith. Islam helped her become more resilient, she noted.

"A big part of my healing has been learning and embracing my faith," Abdikarani said.

Islam teaches of Fitra, the belief that every child is born with a good nature and the environment changes that nature. Counseling taught me how to guide and support people in rediscovering and aligning themselves with that good nature, she said.

Abdikarani attended UWRF for school counseling because counselors help youth to grow socially, emotionally and holistically.

“To me, faith is part of that,” Abdikarani said. “If we want to give somebody a holistic understanding of faith, we must be mindful of how we teach it, how we live and nurture it.”

Abdikarani chose to attend UWRF for her master’s degree because of the flexibility of the schedule that fit her life as a mother of two children with her husband, Jama Adam. She also received the Advanced Opportunity Program Fellowship from the state of Wisconsin which covered most of her graduate costs.

She earned her undergraduate degree in business and marketing from Ohio State University but knew she had other interests in helping others. She worked for seven years in schools as a paraprofessional in mental health and early childhood until she decided to attend UWRF.

Abdikarani, a life and spiritual counselor and coach, started the [Hikma Academy](#) in 2014, which offers the study of Islamic wisdom for intentional living. The academy offers the study of the Quran that helps lead participants to mindfulness and intentionality in every aspect of their lives.

UWRF Counselor Education Professor Mark Gillen said he was thrilled to see Abdikarani named a Bush Foundation Fellow.

“They are hard to get,” he said. “This is a huge deal.”

Seeing graduates from the master’s program parlay their education to other endeavors and using the skills they learned at UWRF is exciting to see, Gillen said.

Abdikarani grew while in the school counseling program.

“She has very good counseling skills and understands working with people,” Gillen said. “She is caring about people. She is a unique and wonderful person to be around. She has a deep sense of compassion. This shines through when she is engaged in work with others.”

Abdikarani also gives back to UWRF by being part of the Stakeholder Committee that helps advise the program, Gillen said.

“She reflects what our students get out of their education and how they take it and add to it,” Gillen said. “We want people to follow their passions, no matter where it takes them.”



UWRF's Lawton awarded Board of Regents' Academic Staff Excellence Award

June 6, 2022 – Ann E. Lawton knows the importance of art to help and serve others.

Lawton, a University of Wisconsin-River Falls lecturer in the Art Department, the art therapist in Student Health and Counseling Services and the campus violence prevention coordinator, has received the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents' Academic Staff Excellence Award. The award was announced by UW System today.

She will be honored at a ceremony in Milwaukee on Friday, June 10.

"To receive the Board of Regents' Academic Staff Excellence Award is an immense privilege that I am humbled by," Lawton said. "I could only have achieved it through the support of my colleagues and community at large."

As part of the award, UWRF received \$7,500. Half of it will go to pay a violence prevention graduate intern and event programming and the other half will go to provide more art therapy services on campus, Lawton said.

Lawton, a UWRF 2008 alum in broad area art, started teaching at the university in 2011, became an art therapist with Student Health and Counseling in 2013 and the violence prevention coordinator in fall 2020.

"All of my work shares the common mission of cultivating connection and relationships," Lawton said. "Yet what often goes

unsaid is that art is the running thread that emboldens the efficacy throughout my roles and binds them together.”

As a lecturer, two of the core classes Lawton enjoys teaching are Introduction to Visual Arts and Introduction to Art Therapy.

In the classes, her goal is to have students develop critical thinking skills and understand history and culture better through art. She also believes she learns just as much from students in her classrooms as they learn from her.

Art therapy can help those impacted by unhealthy relationships and relational trauma including domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, stalking, gender-based violence and harassment.

“When we are affected by hardship and trauma, words often fail to describe experiences and affect recovery,” Lawton said.

“Where words fail, art thrives in the ability to heal, cope and transform.”

Art can also help educate, noted Lawton, who has a master’s degree in art therapy from Mount Mary University in Milwaukee.

“When art-based experiences are paired with challenging content, something remarkable occurs in participants, regardless of their background or skill level with art,” Lawton said. “Artmaking alleviates psychological defenses, creates opportunities for verbal discussion, builds self-esteem and promotes self-awareness and empathy. These are all attributes necessary in addressing and facilitating change to dismantle the culture of sexual violence and unhealthy relationship behaviors.”

In a letter nominating Lawton for the excellence award, Nathan Riel-Elness, UWRF student conduct coordinator, noted one fitting example of Lawton’s excellent performance is her work with Athletics, particularly a training module to educate student-athletes about healthy relationships.

“This will ensure that everyone is on the same page with baseline information about sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence,” Riel-Elness stated. “This allows Ann to have more time focused on deeper conversations and providing a more impactful experience with the students. This module can be expanded to be used for all student organizations as well.”

Lawton received the UWRF College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award for Excellence in 2018. In 2021, she received the Chancellor’s Academic Staff Excellence Award, said David Travis, provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs.

“Ann’s work impacts our entire campus and community in a way that truly embodies the ‘Wisconsin Idea’ in that her ‘education hugely influences people’s lives far beyond the boundaries of the classroom,’ or in Ann’s case, far beyond the boundaries of her job,” Travis noted.

Lawton also has presented on art therapy in the community and facilitated individual and group art therapy sessions throughout the area.

As an artist, Lawton tends to work in mixed media creating collages.

In January 2022, Lawton had an artwork included in the “Home” Juried Art Exhibition at the Artless Bastard Gallery in De Pere. In June 2022, Lawton will be presenting her use of art and her violence prevention work and facilitating a project at Kolaj Fest in New Orleans. In the fall, she will exhibit her art in a Group Exhibition as part of the Indiana Green Invitational at the Levee Gallery in Princeton, Wisconsin.

“The arts form community and relationships,” Lawton said. “But most importantly it serves as a catalyst of empowerment.”

To learn more about Lawton and her artwork, view her website at aelawton.com or Instagram: [@ae_lawton](https://www.instagram.com/ae_lawton).

UW System Academic Staff Excellence awards also went to Robin Jens, assistant dean of student service, College of Nursing and interim student service director, Zilber School of Public Health at UW-Milwaukee and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at UW-Eau Claire.



Zeb Rivard performing the National Anthem at UWRF's commencement ceremonies May 7.

UW-River Falls graduate to sing opera this summer in Italy

June 2, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls recent graduate Zeb Rivard has never seen an opera.

He did not even realize an opera was all singing with no spoken lines.

Rivard, who graduated May 7 with a degree in music and composition and an emphasis in vocal performance, is headed to Italy this summer to sing in two operas for the Festival of International Opera Italia Summer Opera Festival. FIO's mission is to discover future opera stars and provide young artists with a true international operatic experience, according to the Atlanta-based nonprofit group's website.

Rivard's UWRF vocal teacher Mitra Sadeghpour learned FIO was seeking opera performers and asked Rivard if he was interested.

"That sounds awesome," Rivard recalled saying. "I auditioned with a recording and video footage. I will be flying out Tuesday, June 28, and starting on Saturday, July 2. There will be five weeks with four voice lessons a week and vocal coaching and Italian classes with an international language school."

During the festival Rivard, a bass-baritone, will be in the supporting role of Antonio, the Count's gardener, in Mozart's opera "The Marriage of Figaro" and Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi" as the doctor.

"This is just a great learning opportunity and that is what I am most excited about," Rivard said. "It was just such a surprise. It really hasn't sunk in yet. I have never been to Italy. I never planned to be an opera singer."

Rivard will return to the U.S. in mid-August.

Sadeghpour, artist-in-residence at UWRF, said Rivard has been central to choirs and the music program while at the university.

“Zeb will have the opportunity to study in the birthplace of this art form,” Sadeghpour said of opera. “By far the best way to learn the Italian language is by being immersed in it. Young artists from around the U.S. and the world will be there and he will begin to build his professional network as well as continue to grow his musical and language skills. Zeb has a beautiful bass-baritone voice, which means he has great low notes and great high notes.”

Rivard, of Somerset, sang along with the radio as a child. He joined the choir in elementary school and continued to enjoy singing.

“I grew up listening to country music,” he noted.

When he started at UW-River Falls, he planned to major in psychology and criminology and pursue a career with the FBI, but after joining the UWRF Concert Choir and Chamber Singers, he knew his interest was music. Rivard switched to a music education major but eventually decided that his true passion is to teach college-level vocal performance.

At some point, he plans to attend graduate school to fulfill that dream and believes the festival will provide more experience.

“This is a great opportunity for Zeb, he will learn so much in a relatively short amount of time, and his new knowledge, experiences and relationships will help prepare him for his search for a graduate program in voice,” Sadeghpour said.

Rivard performed at both commencement ceremonies on May 7, singing the national anthem.

“It was great,” he said of performing at his own graduation ceremony. “It was definitely the largest crowd I have ever sang the national anthem to before.”



Participants in the 4-H Spark Days at UWRF participants learned about making ice cream and food engineering.

UW-River Falls helps spark interest in agriculture and animal science

UW Extension, Wisconsin 4-H, Institute of Positive Youth Development hosts events for youth to explore, discover career options

June 22, 2022 – Madelyn Stein decided to sign up for 4-H Spark Days held at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls on Monday, June 20, partially to see if an agricultural career was right for her but also for fun and camaraderie with other youth.

Stein, 14, of Stratford, was part of a workshop taught by Youngmi Kim, associate professor of agricultural engineering technology, learning the food engineering process of making ice cream.

Students used ingredients to make ice cream during the workshop.

“It was a really neat experience adding all the ingredients and waiting for the liquid to become ice cream,” Stein said. “It was fun. There is just so much to do. I wanted to see if I have an interest in or want to do anything in agricultural business.”

About 75 students in grades 7-12 attended the 4-H Spark Days sponsored by Wisconsin 4-H. The daylong event focused on programs and majors in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Students learned about cheesemaking, sheep reproduction, animal nutrition, plant science and were able to take tours of the

Campus Lab Farm and the Mann Valley Lab Farm.

Kim, who taught with Patrick Woolcock, assistant professor of agricultural engineering technology, said the goal of the workshop was to help students understand how ice cream is made on a large scale.

"I wanted them to gain an understanding of how the industry works and understand some of the key ingredients in ice cream to improve the texture, which are milk and air. It's important that kids at a young age get exposed to different areas of engineering and activities that deal with food process engineering. They are important jobs to make sure food is processed safely. It's critical for our society but a lesser-known engineering," Kim said.

The ice cream was a hit given a day where temps climbed into the upper 90s.

Katie Stenroos, Douglas County 4-H program educator who helped organize the event at UWRF, said the 4-H Spark Days is a new program hosted by the Institute of Positive Youth Development, UW Extension and the Wisconsin 4-H program.

"It is about sparking their interests and what they may want to do as careers and giving them experiences," said Stenroos, a 2017 UWRF alum in animal science and a 2018 master's degree alum in agricultural education.

"I volunteered to do one of the days because we wanted to do a regional focus," Stenroos said. "I know UWRF is a good school. It's the premier school for agriculture in the state. CAFES staff were so helpful, and I want to thank them for that."

An Urban Agriculture/City Spark Days was held June 21 at UW-Milwaukee. Students learned about urban agriculture, film, architecture, freshwater sciences and library sciences at the university.

UWRF Crop Science Professor Veronica Justen showed students fungus growing on clover using a stereo scope as well as shared equipment used to test moisture in the campus greenhouse.

"It was exciting to have middle school and high school students to come to campus and learn what programs we have," Justen said. "I'm always excited to share about plants, how we keep them healthy and the fun careers there are in the plant sciences."

Michelle Farner, UWRF Dairy Plant manager, had students taste different cheeses and learn about the process of making cheddar cheese during a workshop on cheesemaking. Students also were able to see milk coagulate, the start of cheese curds.

UWRF's Dairy Plant is undergoing a \$6.5 million renovation to modernize the 30-year-old plant and provide more effective teaching and training through the introduction of food products and security technology. Fundraising is continuing for the Dairy Plant.

Finn Lettau, 15, from Neenah, attended the 4-H Spark Days at UWRF at his father's urging.

"I really enjoyed it," Lettau said. "I learned a lot about sheep reproduction and water quality. I liked seeing the filter we used to learn about water molecules and water quality. It was fun."



UW-River Falls laboratory farm to host Pierce County Dairy Breakfast June 18

Mann Valley Farm to highlight research, dairy cows

June 8, 2022 – For the first time, the Mann Valley Laboratory Farm at University of Wisconsin-River Falls will host the Pierce County Dairy Breakfast.

“We feel that it is a wonderful way to showcase the technology, innovation and research that goes into agriculture today,” said Mary Brand, a member of the Pierce County Dairy Promotion Committee that plans the breakfast. “The Mann Valley Farm is an important asset to our area. This gives the public a chance to see the leading-edge research that is being done there.”

About 2,000 people from Pierce County and the surrounding area are expected to attend the dairy breakfast on Saturday, June 18, Brand said. Dairy breakfasts are planned throughout Wisconsin in June to celebrate the dairy industry and dairy month. To learn more, go to wisconsindairy.org.

The Pierce County Dairy Breakfast will be served from 7 to 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$8 for those 12 and older; \$5 for ages five to 11; and free for younger children. Food includes waffles, sausages, Culver’s custard and cheese curds.

Mann Valley Farm, 129 S. Glover Road, is about 2.5 miles northwest of River Falls at County Road MM and S. Glover Road. The farm has 475 acres and is comprised of dairy, beef, sheep, swine, cropping, feed processing, and composting enterprises and the St. Croix Valley Bull Testing Station. In addition, the Dairy Learning Center highlights indoor classrooms, a milking center, a pavilion for livestock sales and shows and 82 acres of state forest.

Along with seeing the farm, including the Dairy Learning Center, there will be kids' activities with the help of Pierce County 4-H members including face painting, coloring and puppet making. Pierce County Land Conservation will also host a soil display, Brand said.

UWRF professors will share their research, including:

- Sylvia Kehoe, Ph.D., animal and food science, calf research
- Patrick Woolcock, Ph.D., agricultural engineering technology, research on compost and biochar impacts
- Steve Kelm, Ph.D., Animal and Food Science Department chair, will be available to answer questions and discuss the Dairy Innovation Hub

Mann Valley Farm veterinarian Dr. Frank During, Pierce Veterinary Clinic, will be available to talk about animal health and the Farm Nutritionist Sheldon Betzold will address animal nutrition.

Tom Brown, UWRF dairy enterprise manager, said he is excited to share the farm with the community.

"As an industry, every dairy needs to do their part in promoting the products we work so hard to produce," Brown said. "It is important for people not connected with the industry to have exposure to where their dairy products come from. This is a working farm. We want to show people what we do every day."

Brown noted the Mann Valley Farm is not only a working farm, but also a teaching institution and research facility.

The farm is also committed to sustainability. For example, compost is used as cow bedding and then eventually is sold to garden and flower shops for soil.

"We're so happy to host this," Brown said. "We are so proud of this farm. We are excited for people to see the positive changes we have made with the animals and the farm."

The farm has 100-head of dairy cows, most of them registered Holstein. The cows recently, over two days, produced 18,000 pounds of milk. That is 92 pounds per cow per day, Brown noted.

Brand said dairy breakfasts also help show how farmers care for their animals and land and their commitment to being good stewards. It also highlights the diverse types of farming.

"We all need to eat," Brand said. "It's important people see what we do on our farms and in dairy operations and appreciate the work we do that leads to the food we eat."



UWRF student Michelle Stangler interviews Tommy Thompson, former UW System president and governor.

UW-River Falls student garners broadcast journalism fellowship

June 27, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls junior Michelle Stangler focuses on sharing positive stories about agriculture.

Stangler, an agriculture marketing communications and journalism major, is the recipient of the Donovan E. Rasmussen Broadcast Journalism Fellowship.

Through the fellowship, Stangler, of Watertown, will spend six weeks this summer reporting on local farm products that go directly to consumers, known as farm to fork, in western Wisconsin. Her work will be featured in a broadcast documentary.

The Donovan E. Rasmussen Broadcast Journalism Fellowship allows a journalism major to pursue a six-week summer reporting project. The goal is to produce a 30-minute audio documentary about a public affairs issue relevant to western Wisconsin. The student receives a \$2,000 stipend, paid from an endowment funded by the late Donovan E. Rasmussen, a supporter of small-town radio, said Journalism Program Director Andris Straumanis.

Stangler hosts a radio show, "Sharing Positivity," during the school year on the campus radio station WRFW-FM 88.7, a Wisconsin Public Radio affiliate. She started the radio show in the fall of 2020 to share positive music but has expanded it to include music and talk.

Earlier this year, Stangler was able to interview former Gov. Tommy Thompson for WRFW when he made his final visit to

UWRF as the UW System president.

"When I am 80 years old, I want to have that much enthusiasm," Stangler said. "It was such a good experience. I got to show him the station. He was interested in hearing how the station operates and how it helps students."

Straumanis, an associate professor in the Communication and Media Studies department, said Stangler is a highly motivated student.

"Ms. Stangler clearly is committed to telling the story of agriculture," he said. "She is involved in several organizations or projects, including serving as the program director for the student-run radio station, WRFW-FM."

Stangler also helped promote the 10th Annual Ag Day this spring at UWRF as a member of the Collegiate Farm Bureau. More than 400 students attended the event in April to learn more about agriculture.

"We are all agriculture consumers," Stangler said. "We all consume food or wear something. With the theme of 'Let the Good Times Grow,' we wanted to emphasize that."

Stangler grew up on a small dairy farm in Watertown with about 50 milking cows. That piqued her interest in agriculture. She exhibited dairy at county fairs and eventually expanded into poultry and joined National FFA.

She was a broadcast news desk intern at last year's National FFA Convention and plans to help in some capacity this October.

From 2019 to 2020 she was state FFA vice president and is still actively involved with the organization.

Stangler participated in Poultry Evaluation and Career Development. She started judging poultry in 2016 and enjoys learning more about the poultry industry.

She has already participated in two internships while at UWRF. She was a social media intern for GENEX Cooperative, a beef and dairy breeding company, this spring and spent summer 2021 as a Mid-West Farm Report intern, creating agriculture-related broadcast stories and social media articles.

Stangler is also a correspondent for the Wisconsin State Farmer newspaper as part of her goal to have more positive stories written about agriculture.

She chose UWRF because the university is well-known for its agricultural education. She recently graduated from the university's Agricultural Business Leadership program and her goal is to graduate without any student debt. One key to her success so far has been to apply for scholarships.

"They are out there," Stangler said. "Apply. Some will pay off."

UW-River Falls to add three undergraduate majors

SciTech approved by Board of Regents, heads to State Building Commission in August

June 14, 2022 – The Board of Regents on June 10 approved the addition of three new Bachelor of Science undergraduate majors at University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The three majors – finance, management and marketing – were emphasis options in the existing Bachelor of Science Business Administration program. The new majors will start in the fall semester.



“These new standalone majors in finance, management and marketing will help our students to be more focused on their area of passion within the very broad business field and more prepared for internships and employment in their area of interest,” said College of Business and Economics Acting Dean Dawn Hukai.

A finance major prepares students to understand portfolio management, financial and personal risk management, financial institutions, international financial management and asset valuation.

Finance graduates often secure careers in banking, insurance and risk management, real estate, investments, financial analysis and personal financial planning. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the market for financial analysts is projected to grow 5% from 2019 to 2029, faster than average for all occupations.

The management major prepares students to motivate people, lead a business unit, form and implement a company strategy, and succeed in business, non-profit, government and graduate study. Management graduates often pursue careers in human resources, business analysis, project management, small business management, entrepreneurship, logistics and innovation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the market for management analysts is projected to grow 14% from 2019 to 2029, faster than average for all occupations. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development projects a 5.9% growth rate in the demand for general and operational managers, faster than the average for all occupations.

A marketing major prepares students to assess consumer and business behavior to determine the products and services people and organizations need and want and how to design, promote and distribute them. Marketing graduates often choose careers in advertising, brand management, marketing research analysis, public relations and professional sales. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the market for advertising, promotions and marketing managers is projected to grow 10% from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations.

“This is really what students want,” Hukai said. “Students can still get a general business administration major as well. The changes are part of an ongoing process of review for our majors in demand and to meet the needs of our students and employers.”

Students would also be prepared to go to graduate school after graduating in the new majors, Hukai noted.

Regents grant authority to construct SciTech

The Board of Regents granted the authority for UWRF to construct the \$116.7 million Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech) project.



The project will raze Hagestad Hall and construct the 73,865-square-foot SciTech building that will be home to biology and chemistry, including biomedical and health sciences and biotechnology; physics, including pre-engineering; and psychological sciences, including neuroscience; as well as create a collaboration space for engagement of local and regional business partners in STEM fields and beyond.

UWRF produces the third highest percentage of STEM graduates in the UW System and nearly 60% of UWRF students will take a class in

SciTech, such as students from high demand programs like environmental engineering, agricultural science, international food operations management, animal science, crop and soil science and dairy science. The building will feature flexible undergraduate instructional laboratory suites, active learning studios, undergraduate and faculty research spaces and shared interdisciplinary space. SciTech will have 32 undergraduate research spaces and 12 instructional labs.

It also will enhance and grow partnerships with businesses and industries through collaborative programming, internships and innovative product development through the University Business Collaboration Center (UBC2). The UBC2 will actively engage business and community partners in discovery, innovation and talent development at UWRF, offering students increased internship, research and career opportunities while providing employers facilitated access to student talent, as well as faculty and staff expertise.

“Students will benefit through engagement in active-learning spaces designed for the 21st century,” said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. “Our industry partners are committed to this project because of its unique UBC2 which will increase student learning opportunities and enhance discovery, innovation and talent development by bringing university and business resources together in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and beyond.”

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2023 and be completed in late 2025. Classes are slated to start in the new building in January 2026.

The project is slated for State Building Commission approval in August.

The state of Wisconsin has funded \$111.73 million for the project. UW-River Falls is working with alumni and corporate donors to raise the remaining \$5 million and is already nearly halfway to that goal.

To learn more about the SciTech project and to provide financial support, go to www.uwrf.edu/scitech.



Alan Toussaint, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Pride specialist, places the LGBTQIA+ flag for Pride Month at UWRF's Rodli Hall.

UW-River Falls to celebrate LGBTQIA+ community with Pride flags outside Rodli Hall and 'Sweet as Pride' June 16

June 1, 2022 – Four flags will fly throughout the month of June celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies at Rodli Hall at University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The Pride flag was placed today outside Rodli Hall where the university's Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) Office and Pride Center is located in Rooms 269 and 269A, respectively. The Transgender, Non-Binary and Pansexual flags will be added later this week.

June is Pride Month, honoring the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. The Stonewall Uprising was the tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the U.S. The first Pride march was held in New York City on June 28, 1970, on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising.

"One of the reasons to have flags up outside Rodli Hall and throughout campus is to provide a sense of belonging for students, staff and faculty and build a sense of community for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus folks not only on campus but also from River Falls," said Alan Toussaint, DIB Pride specialist.

"It is also a great time to increase awareness for students to know we are a safe and inviting community," Toussaint added.

On Thursday, June 16, from 3 to 5 p.m. DIB will hold a "Sweet as Pride" event at the Pride Center and DIB space in Rodli

Hall. There will be historical information on the LGBTQIA+ community and information on Pride Month events in the area including Eau Claire on Saturday, June 11, in Phoenix Park and the Twin Cities Pride Festival Saturday-Sunday, June 25-26, in Loring Park.

Campus and community members are invited to tour the DIB space, learn about the resources available and enjoy some refreshments at "Sweet as Pride."

"It's to build more community," Derek Bradley, DIB director, said of the event. "We want to get as many people as possible aware of our resources and to meet the staff."

Resources available include Freddy's Pantry, a food shelf near the DIB Office. Those attending will also learn about the Living and Learning Community that is gender-inclusive, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance and Journey House, which provides a spiritual place for students, including shelter, food and personal items.

Staff members will also explain name change forms available for students to allow for the use of their preferred names. Bias incident and violence reporting forms will also be explained.

Celebrating Pride is about celebrating being able to be oneself and being confident in yourself, Bradley said.

Bradley started working at UWRF in March. Bradley wanted to come to the university to be able to lead the DIB Office and assist students in finding their purpose and improve diversity, equity and inclusion both on campus and in the community.

"I want students to learn how to leave a legacy on campus," Bradley said. "It helps their motivation increase, builds leadership and creates opportunities for the students."

Bradley earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, Calif., a master's degree in higher education leadership from Sacramento State University and is working on a doctorate in educational leadership in pre-K to community college at the same college.

Toussaint started working at UWRF a month ago because of an interest in working with marginalized students and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Toussaint most recently worked as an interim program coordinator for the LGBTQIA+ community at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. Toussaint has a bachelor's degree in English from the University of South Florida and a master's in English from St. Cloud State.

UW-River Falls to hold Juneteenth lunch and learn

June 20 event open to campus, community

June 13, 2022 – The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will commemorate Juneteenth with a lunch and learn from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Monday, June 20.

The learning session is free and open to all in the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Office, 269 Rodli Hall.



At the interactive event, a game of Kahoot will be played with trivia about Juneteenth and a brief discussion of the history of the day and Black history, said Derek Bradley, UWRF director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. A light lunch will also be available.

Juneteenth commemorates African American Emancipation Day, celebrates freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement of Union Army Gen. Gordon Granger proclaiming freedom for enslaved people in Texas, which was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery. Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

General Order No. 3, which Granger read to the people of Texas, began with:

"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer."

Juneteenth today celebrates African American freedom and achievement while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures.

"It is a day we need to acknowledge as Americans, just like we acknowledge July 4, 1776," Bradley said. "I just feel there is so much history we don't know about in our nation that we need to know about."

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Pride Specialist Alan Toussaint agreed.

"It's important for anyone to learn history to help understand the past in order to understand the present and to change things for the future," Toussaint said. "Part of the goal of having special events like Juneteenth is to help students expand their education beyond the classrooms and relate that experience back to their classrooms."



UW-River Falls to relaunch three semester-length education abroad programs

Dr. Robert B. Bailey III Office of International Education dedicated

June 20, 2022 – Three semester-length study abroad programs will return next year to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The Semester Abroad, Wisconsin in Scotland and the International Traveling Classroom will all be back after a hiatus during the pandemic, said Wes Chapin, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and graduate studies.

"Planning is underway for short-term, faculty-led programs taking students to five continents and more than 16 countries, involving at least two dozen faculty and staff," Chapin said during the dedication of the Dr. Robert B. Bailey III Office of International Education on June 16.

"I am also happy to share that we will have more programs available to students in 2022-23 than before COVID," Chapin said. "Our faculty estimates that we will have at least 250 students enrolled in credit-bearing education abroad experiences in the upcoming year. These include several new programs to locations such as Ecuador, the Netherlands, Ghana and Puerto Rico."

The dedication event also celebrated the creation of an endowed scholarship, the Dr. Robert B. Bailey III Legacy Scholarship, named for UWRF's founder of the Quarter Abroad program and the first African American faculty member. To learn more about Bailey and the endowed scholarship, go [here](#).

Bailey, who many referred to as “Doc,” started at UWRF in 1957 as a sociology professor and initiated what is now known as the Semester Abroad: Europe program in 1963.

Chapin noted one of Bailey’s goals was to provide life-enhancing and transformational international experiences for students.

Recent UWRF elementary education graduate Graze Zimmer, who was one of the first students to receive one of the scholarships, noted she had recently returned from Spain where she was completing her student teaching and lived with a host family.

It was a scary adventure, but helped her leap and become a global citizen, according to Zimmer.

“It’s broadened my world perspective. I am grateful for the opportunity this scholarship has provided me,” Zimmer said.

Chancellor Maria Gallo noted five \$1,000 scholarships are slated to be awarded during fall semester.

Doc Baily was committed to students and giving them a global perspective, Gallo said.

“I thank him for his vision and student-centered approach to Semester Abroad and for ensuring our students have the opportunity to be ready for what’s next in their lives,” Gallo said.

David Olson, a longtime friend of Bailey, said Bailey was the greatest influence in his life and opened the world of travel to him.

“He was simply the greatest professor, the greatest adviser and clearly the greatest of my friends,” said Olson, of Spring Valley and a UWRF alum. “I have traveled the world. I hope to continue to travel the world. Wherever I go, I think of him. His spirit is here. His spirit is in us. It will continue.”



Chemistry and biotechnology Professor Stacey Stoffregen, left, with research students Lilianna Rolands, Makayla Mobeck and Trinity Olguin.

National Science Foundation-funded research project to study pinene impact on atmosphere

July 25, 2022 – Three University of Wisconsin-River Falls students are honing their research skills this summer as part of a National Science Foundation grant to study the effect of pinenes, molecules released by conifer trees and other vegetation into the atmosphere.

The \$459,686 three-year grant was received by chemistry and biotechnology Professor Stacey Stoffregen, in collaboration with Macalester College chemistry Professor Keith Kuwata.

UWRF biotechnology seniors Makayla Mobeck, of Forest Lake, Minn.; Lilianna Rolands, of Stevens Point; and senior chemistry major Trinity Olguin, of Webster, are engaged in the research project this summer.

Pinenes are oxidized by other molecules in the atmosphere and during the process produce an important molecule that acts as a detergent for the atmosphere. The NSF-funded study is titled “Research in Undergraduate Institutions: The Tropospheric Oxidation of Biogenic Hydrocarbons: Probing Temperature Dependence and Autoxidation.”

“We hope to gain an understanding of the atmospheric conditions that best promote the formation of the detergent and learn

more about the impact of pinene oxidation on global warming,” Stoffregen said.

Mobeck said she wanted to gain experience in undergraduate research.

“You feel like a professional and you are getting hands-on experience outside your classes,” Mobeck said. “For me, especially because I plan to go into the workforce right after graduation, having this experience can help me get into higher levels of employment.”

It also helps her resume stand out to employers, Mobeck noted.

Rolands, who plans to go to graduate school, said having research experience is going to set her apart from other graduate school applicants.

Olguin, who is part of the McNair program that helps students who are first-generation low-income students or from historically underrepresented groups develop skills to apply for graduate school, plans to study organic chemistry in graduate school.

“I am interested in working in green chemistry,” she said. “I like the thought of chemistry done in an environmentally-friendly way.”

Stoffregen said the classroom experience and dedicated research projects are quite different for students.

“There is an aspect of research that allows students to become much more independent and to work on their troubleshooting skills,” Stoffregen said. “It broadens their understanding of chemistry and increases their flexibility as scientists working in a group and communicating their ideas. Research allows them to investigate something new.”

For students interested in furthering their education in graduate school, undergraduate research helps them determine if graduate school, where they would devote most of their time to research projects, will be a good fit, Stoffregen said.

The students are about halfway through their 10-week full-time research project with Stoffregen. They will present their research findings at the Midwest Undergraduate Computational Chemistry Consortium Conference at UW-Madison August 1-2.

Mobeck said she was thrilled to have the opportunity to be involved in an NSF-funded research project this summer.

“I like research versus being in the classroom,” she said. “I feel I can take time to learn, rather than just trying to get a good grade. When there is no pressure of a grade, you can delve deeper into what you are doing, the meaning and what you are learning.”

Olguin agreed that with a research project there is more quality time spent learning about the subject.

Both Rolands and Mobeck started at UWRF in their first year of college and then transferred to UW-Stevens Point. They returned to UWRF because of the undergraduate research opportunities.

“Here at UW-River Falls I have had a lot of opportunities to work in research,” Rolands said.

After this year, additional students will continue the research project for the next two summers. Their contributions will supplement the growing understanding of atmospheric processes, Stoffregen said.



The Santa Maria Regional Landfill from the cover of Brett Kallusky's book "Landfill: Elegy for the Santa Maria Valley." Photos courtesy Brett Kallusky.

Professor publishes book dedicated to photos from California landfill

Kallusky captures reflections of production, consumption and waste cycles

July 20, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls Associate Professor Brett Kallusky started photographing the Santa Maria Valley in central California in 2013.

As a landscape photographer, Kallusky wanted to capture the acres of vegetables and fruits that help feed the nation as one of the major breadbaskets. He also wanted to raise awareness about the trash created by the industrial farms and the landfill filled with that waste.



"Landfill: Elegy for the Santa Maria Valley," published in May, has 48 black and white photos on 96 pages depicting Kallusky's photographs taken in the Santa Maria Valley



from 2013 to 2019.

“This historic place, with its strong roots in Indigenous and Spanish-American cultures, is a reflection of a much larger cycle of production, consumption and waste,” Kallusky wrote in the book.

“Plastic winds its way through this engineered landscape like a dark, opaque river,” he wrote. “Sheets of it are used above the soil as an exoskeleton, warming the raised ground and protecting the strawberry plants whose roots are wrapped in, and watered by, an engineered cocoon. The plastic tubing that is used for irrigation, once it is retired from the fields, is formed into bales of several hundred pounds each, leaving immense but temporary ramparts and parapets in the landscape.”

Kallusky, UWRF Art Department chair, started taking photos in the Santa Maria Valley after he was introduced to the area by his former father-in-law who worked at a company that collected soil polluted by oil. A refinery in the area processes 44,500 barrels of crude per day, shipping most of it to a refinery near San Francisco and makes sulfur fertilizer products used locally.

The landfill area looked like a beautiful landscape in places and then like the surface of the moon in others, Kallusky recalled.

“That tension was interesting to me as a photographer,” he noted. “I wanted the book to be like a sketchbook and to cause reflection.”

He used different cameras, primarily a large format camera, to capture the pictures. He opted to use black and white photos to help show the starkness and contrast of the area.

Kallusky published the photographs to show what is going on behind the scenes in the food growing industry and the waste that comes from it. He is not judging the industry but documenting it because he knows he is also a part of the problem with plastic waste like most Americans unaware or choosing to ignore the plastic waste generated in their daily lives.

Plastic sheets used in farming used to be shipped to Korea and made into garbage bags. That is no longer happening because of formaldehyde used in the strawberry growing, which can irritate the skin, eyes, nose and throat and has been shown to cause cancer in elevated levels of exposure, the book noted.



The book contains an essay “Santa Maria’s Ground Truth” by Matthew Coolidge, founder and director of the Center for Land Use Interpretation and a faculty member of the California College of Art.

Coolidge noted the Santa Maria Valley may seem ordinary and Kallusky’s attention may seem arbitrary.

“In ‘Landfill,’ Brett Kallusky shows what happens, locally and globally,” Coolidge wrote. “He vividly describes a landscape that

is mounded and bound, defiled and deflated. Kallusky's book is a compelling depiction of multiples, monotony, dumps, slumps and lumps."

One of Kallusky's favorite pictures in the book is of a hooded hawk. Hawks and falcons are used to abate other birds from the landfill area to prevent the spreading of garbage.

"The hawks become a visual metaphor for how we are creating distress to the planet," said Kallusky, of Minneapolis.



Kallusky is a 1998 UWRF BFA in photography alum and the first person ever to graduate from UWRF with that degree. He has his MFA in photography from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Since 2007, he has taught photography full-time while maintaining an active photographic studio.

Rebecca Senf, Tucson, Arizona-based Center for Creative Photography chief curator, said Kallusky's book is "a meaningful addition to how we understand our way of life in this current moment in the climate crisis."

"Brought together in a gorgeous book, the images reveal an unpleasant reality tucked conveniently out of view," Senf noted. "The photographs in their studied, intentionality and careful elegance, insist on the urgency of the situation and the inevitable doom that awaits if we continue to ignore what is happening all around us."

"Landfill: Elegy for the Santa Maria Valley" is available on Amazon. It was published by George F. Thompson Publishing in association with the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Center for the Study of Place.

Kallusky has also published a book "Journey with Views/Viaggio con Vista" based on photos he took while a Fulbright Fellow in Italy. He is also a two-time finalist for the McKnight Fellowship for Photography and Visual Arts.

Photos courtesy of Brett Kallusky

Brett Kallusky (top)

Baled plastic at the Santa Maria Regional Landfill (center)

Kim and John Golden's Falconry is a program that replaces fireworks or ammunition to scare seagulls and crows away from the landfill. (bottom)

Ruhland named vice chancellor for finance and administration

River Falls, Wis. – David Ruhland, North Dakota State University director of the Agriculture Budget Office, has been named the vice chancellor for finance and administration at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Ruhland's first day on campus will be Monday, Aug. 15.



"I am looking forward to working with Dave," said Chancellor Maria Gallo. "He will provide strong leadership and innovative ideas as we develop a sustainable financial model to serve our mission and support the university's vision and strategic direction."

As the chief financial officer for NDSU Agriculture, Ruhland worked with an annual budget of \$100 million and more than 800 full-time staff. He held the director position for nearly 12 years and was the assistant director for more than three years.

Prior to working at NDSU, Ruhland had an 11-year career in accounting and regulatory affairs at Frontier Communications in Burnsville, Minn.

"I am honored and thrilled to be given the opportunity to join UWRF," Ruhland said. "I was thoroughly impressed with the people, campus and community during my visit to River Falls. I look forward to joining the team."

Ruhland has an MBA from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minn.

Schlies elected as Student Government Association president

River Falls, Wis. – University of Wisconsin-River Falls student Joe Schlies believes in service.

Schlies, who is the 2022-23 president of the Student Government Association and recently was one of eight students who received a Chancellor's Award for Students, was a Wisconsin Association of FFA state officer for two years. He was the FFA state parliamentarian from 2019-20 and the president from 2020-21.



"It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Schlies said of being state FFA president. "The members you meet and the stories you hear from members and their experiences in agriculture changes your life."

Schlies also has an American FFA Degree, which less than 1% of FFA members achieve. It shows dedication and the highest standards for career-ready skills.

He also is a nationally accredited parliamentarian obtaining a high level on a written exam for his proficiency in "Roberts Rules of Order."

Schlies, of Denmark, Wis., is a UW-River Falls agricultural business major with a minor in finance.

Growing up on a crop farm with show animals, he knew he wanted a career in agriculture and after joining FFA it solidified, even more, he wanted to work in the agricultural industry.

Schlies first visited UWRF because he knew it was a strong agricultural college.

"When I came to UWRF, I never did another college visit. It was my first and only one," Schlies said. "It felt like home. You walk into classrooms and the professors know everyone's names and they care about you. They want to have a conversation with you."

This summer Schlies is taking part in an internship at Rabo Agri Financial in Madison as a financial analyst.

He is a natural leader, according to Amy Lloyd, associate director of Student Involvement at UWRF.

"Joe is drawn to being a leader, reading about leadership and developing his own leadership competencies," wrote Lloyd in a letter supporting Schlies for the Chancellor's Award for Students.

Schlies is a member of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Safety Student Advisory Council, where he serves on the executive team as a liaison between students and the CAFES leadership, advocating for students within CAFES.

In his role as a first-year resident assistant, Schlies takes the time to learn about each resident and their specific needs for a successful first-year experience living away from home for the first time, noted Jordan Cantele, Crabtree Hall director.

“Joe’s perseverance, initiative and dedication to not only himself but his campus community speaks volumes,” Cantele stated in a letter of recommendation for the Chancellor’s Award.

Schlies is a graduate of the UWRF Agricultural Business Leadership Program and serves as vice president of the UWRF Agricultural Business and Marketing Society.



At

left, Mary Field, owner of Simply Sourdough; Angie Larson, owner of Mindful Fork; Sheri Marnell, St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center director; and Ed Rosheim, owner of Workplace Languages, meet at the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center. The center was a finalist for an international rural entrepreneurial award.

St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center finalist for international rural entrepreneurial award

July 18, 2022 – The St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center was recently a finalist for the International Business Innovation Association Entrepreneur Support Organization rural category.

“We had a really great year at the Innovation Center,” Director Sheri Marnell said. “We grew 400% in the last 12 months. We are nearing full capacity with programs. In the last four years, we have helped retain 100 jobs and created an additional 200 jobs in the area. One hundred percent of our members recommend us. About \$33 million has been invested in capital to the economy.”

The center first opened in January 2018. It is a collaborative effort of four founding partners including the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the city of River Falls, Chippewa Valley Technical College and the River Falls Economic Development Corp.

“Our incubator is unique because we have four partners. I am so proud of our four founding members,” Marnell said. “Our members continuously share that they would not be the success that they are without us, our center and the ecosystem we have built here. We are a multi-use facility, and our core values are to innovate, support, be flexible, collaborate and believe. We attribute our members’ success to staying true to these values. Innovation is inspired by our members and the roadblocks they have and our flexibility in innovating to support and believe in them.”

The business incubator provides management guidance and technical assistance to new business owners, as well as a variety of workspaces available for rent from cubicles and private offices to co-working rooms and industrial space. The incubator has 10,000 square feet of industrial space.

This past spring the center added a 3,000-square-foot Food Ready Space to help entrepreneurs grow or launch their food product businesses. At the center, members rent a 225-square-foot space for their own personal/business use, have a 1,500-square-foot of shared space including a mop station, three compartment handwashing and food prep sinks, and can choose to rent four-foot sections underneath a kitchen hood with fire suppression equipment to install equipment such as stovetops and ovens. Members bring in the equipment they need at the Food Ready Space.

Marnell is available to the incubator tenants as a coach and adviser to talk about what is working with their businesses and to help them establish goals to grow their businesses.

The center provides UWRF the opportunity to work with businesses and the community and connect students with business and faculty research with businesses, Marnell said. There are student internship opportunities with the center as well.

Marnell presented about the center on June 26 in Atlanta.

Even though the Innovation Center did not win the award, it was an honor to present, Marnell said, adding Ohio University won the award.

Bill Lamb, who is part of the center’s Management Committee and a River Falls Economic Development Corp. board of directors, said it was a tremendous honor for the Innovation Center to be selected as a finalist for the prestigious award.

“The work of innovation centers all over the world is vitally important to their respective local communities as a place to encourage and foster entrepreneurship and innovation,” Lamb said. “To be recognized on an international level is a tremendous honor for the Innovation Center and the hard work of Dr. Sheri Marnell and her staff. Since its opening, the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center has assisted the fulfillment of entrepreneurs’ visions and hopes for their businesses. And the recent completion of a Food Ready Space has been particularly exciting.”

At the InBIA conference there were representatives from Europe, Africa, Australia, Canada and throughout the U.S., Marnell said.

“It was important to tell the story of what we are doing in western Wisconsin,” Marnell said. “Nationally, I feel Wisconsin is somewhat a forgotten state, particularly the west side of Wisconsin. It was an honor and we at the center were excited to be a finalist.”

For more information on the resources available at the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center, visit <https://www.stcroixinnovation.org/>.



Erin Tetter won a \$16,000 Wallin Education Scholars scholarship to help pay for her four-year education. Photo courtesy of Wallin Education Scholars.

Student excited about first year at UWRF, becoming a teacher

Tetter named a Wallin Education Scholar

July 21, 2022 – Erin Tetter was working her after-school job at Davanni's Pizza and Hot Hoagies in the Twin Cities when a man came in wearing a University of Wisconsin-River Falls shirt.

Turns out the man was an alum of UWRF and an English teacher.

"He sold me on the school in five minutes," Tetter recalled. "He was talking about the education program at UWRF and how they help set you up with a job after you graduate."

Being a teacher is what Tetter dreams of doing once she graduates from college. She is majoring in elementary education with a minor in Spanish at UWRF.

"When I was younger, I always had this imagery of me being a teacher," Tetter said. "I really like to help people and want to help them learn things. I've always wanted to be the teachers I see in my schools. I want to help others and be there for them like my teachers have been for me. I want to be a teacher for kids who look like me and need a role model in their lives."

While at Harding High School in St. Paul, Minn., Tetter had a choir teacher, Natalia Romero Arbeláez, who inspired Tetter to succeed.

"If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be where I am," Tetter said. Tetter graduated from Harding in June.

College was always part of Tetter's plans. After meeting the UWRF alum, and being accepted at UWRF, Tetter did not apply to any other schools.

"It seems homelike, and it will be a good fit for me," Tetter said of UWRF.

Even though she is thrilled to attend UWRF, after getting her acceptance letter, Tetter's next thought was how to pay for college.

She began searching for scholarships. Her high school guidance counselor encouraged her to apply for a scholarship with Wallin Education Scholars, a Twin Cities nonprofit.

An online video created by Wallin shows Tetter and other students as they sat down to make a video about their plans after graduation. At one point, Tetter is handed a card telling her she was awarded a scholarship of \$16,000.

Tetter broke into tears after reading the card.

"I have struggled my whole life with money," Tetter said in the video. "I haven't been able to do a lot of things that other people are able to. Being able to receive this scholarship just means the absolute world to me. I get to go do what I want," she added, wiping tears from her eyes.

Wallin helped 316 students, the most in the organization's 30-year history, with \$16,000 scholarships for four-year programs and nearly 100 received \$8,000 scholarships for two-year programs.

Potential scholars are decided based on many factors, but not just those in the typical scholarship application, said Wallin Manager of Marketing and Alumni Relations Jean Carlos Diaz in an interview with Minnesota Public Radio. It is an accumulation of not just what students were involved in but what was important to them.

"We take into account the whole student, not just activities but if they had a job or had to take care of their family," Diaz said. "We want students who are engaged in their world, not just academics, to help us build more equitable communities."

In addition to the scholarship, each scholar is assigned an adviser through Wallin that meets with them regularly and monitors their academic progress.

Wallin's mission is "to ensure college and career success for high potential students from low-income backgrounds, and through our efforts help build diverse, equitable and vibrant communities."

Tetter has toured UWRF twice and just knows it is the right fit for her. She is slated to attend orientation on campus August 17 and will move into Crabtree Hall, a residential hall, to start with the Aspire Program on August 28. Aspire is designed for first-year students and new transfer students to get paired with a student mentor who helps support them through their first year of college to help them connect to the community and resources. Classes start at UWRF on Wednesday, Sept. 7.

"I am looking forward to getting moved in on campus, finding my classes, getting through the first-week jitters and make friends," Tetter said.





Members of the first class of UWRF doctoral candidates in Montessori studies meet to work on a class project at the University Center.

Students laud university's first doctoral program

July 6, 2022 – Bridgette Williams owns a private Montessori school in Fayette County, Georgia.

For the past two weeks, Williams, who is the head of the school and lead elementary guide, has been at University of Wisconsin-River Falls as part of a residency component for her Doctor of Education degree, the university's first doctoral program.

The Ed.D. program in Montessori Studies at UWRF is a hybrid program - online and summer residencies. It is one of the first such programs in Montessori studies in the United States.

"It's been amazing," Williams said of the residency. "It has been much more than I expected in terms of the collegial relationships and the friendships I have developed with my fellow classmates. I didn't understand this was the first doctoral

program for the campus. It just added another level. We are here to bring our A-game. It is a new endeavor for Montessori. We are not only here to learn more and to share Montessori's words and dictates. We hope to do what a doctorate is all about. We're here to create."

Although the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy have been around for over 100 years, there have been very few doctoral programs in the world that have focused on the Montessori method of education. The method emphasizes the importance of dignity and respect for the individual and the potential for students to become the best people they can be and contribute to the world.

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator and innovator. She opened the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. She graduated from medical school in 1896, one of the first female physicians in Italy. She opened a full-day childcare center in a poor inner-city district of Rome, the first of its kind. Using scientific observation and experience, Montessori designed learning materials and a classroom environment that fostered the children's natural desire to learn and provided them the freedom to choose their educational materials.

Fourteen students from across the nation have enrolled in the UWRF inaugural doctoral class. They started their two-week residency on June 18, classes started on June 20.

UWRF started the Master Montessori Program in 2012. There are fewer than 10 university-based such programs in the nation. The program is accredited through the Montessori Accreditation Council of Teacher Education (MACTE). The university is one of only two public universities in the U.S. that offer Montessori teacher education programs.

Stephanie Van Fleet, of Superior, Colo., is also participating in the three-year doctoral program.

When she first heard about the program three years ago, she immediately signed up to get updates so she could be part of the first cohort.

Part of her reason for wanting to earn her doctorate was to help share about Montessori education.

Montessori education does not compartmentalize education but builds on it.

"I've learned so much being a teacher," Van Fleet said, who is taking a sabbatical from a private Montessori school to earn her doctorate. "I teach all subject matters. I have been with some of my students for three to six years. We have become a community. It just works beautifully."

India French-Adams, of Charlotte, N.C., head of school at the Phoenix Montessori School in Huntsville, N.C., said she had been searching for a way to continue her education and was delighted to learn UWRF was starting a doctoral program.

"This allows me to learn more," she said. "It's exciting to be in a cohort of people who are on the creative edge. The content is very intellectual, rich and thought-provoking."

Retired UWRF chair of the Health and Human Performance Department Connie Foster team-taught a course on Montessori organization, structure, leadership and change with Charis Sharp, executive director of the Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School in Washington D.C.

"It's been a great experience," Foster said. "We are co-creating as we go along. It's about making positive change."

Sharp agreed, noting they shared similar interests and articles on the class they were teaching together.

"This has been so much fun," Sharp said, noting she believes the doctoral program will help set the standard in Montessori education.

UW-River Falls Night set for Fighting Fish game July 23

July 14, 2022 - The River Falls Fighting Fish baseball club and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls have designated the Fish's Saturday, July 23, home game as UW-River Falls Night.

Sponsored by the UWRF Alumni Association and Career Services, the game provides an opportunity for alumni, faculty, staff and supporters to gather at one of the region's premier sports facilities, First National Bank of River Falls Field.

The event features a 6 p.m. pre-game social at Hoffman Park's Octagon, adjacent to the stadium. Game time is 7 p.m. when the Fighting Fish take on the Osceola Braves. The ceremonial first pitch will be thrown by UWRF Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs David Travis.

The Fighting Fish are a collection of current and former college ballplayers representing the community of River Falls. The Fish are a part of the St. Croix Valley Baseball League and the Wisconsin Baseball Association.

"We're delighted to partner with the Fighting Fish and look forward to a great UWRF Night," said Pedro Renta, UWRF Alumni Relations director. "It's an ideal opportunity for the UWRF family to gather at an amazing stadium to cheer on the hometown team. It just doesn't get any better."

The game is free. Attendees interested in the UWRF pre-game social can register at <https://tinyurl.com/uwrffish>. For more information, contact Pedro Renta at 715-425-3505 or alumni@uwrf.edu.



Jack Schindler Van Hoof

Student newspaper wins seven awards in collegiate contest

July 11, 2022 – The Student Voice, the campus newspaper of University of Wisconsin-River Falls, won seven awards in the 2021 Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest sponsored by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation.

Results were announced at a June 24 ceremony in Madison.

The newspaper swept the public affairs reporting category in its division. Jack Schindler Van Hoof, of Hudson, won first place for his November 2021 story, “Food shelf prepares for holiday season.”

Isabella Forliti, a 2022 graduate in communication studies who was editor during the spring semester, took second with her October 2021 story “Governor visits campus for vaccine discussion” and third place for “UWRF adjusts COVID policies,” which was published in September 2021. On the latter story, a contest judge commented, “Solid work on the topic of the day.”

Brooke Shepherd, a December 2021 journalism and animal science graduate and a former editor of the Student Voice, won first place in the special coronavirus coverage category for “Pandemic increases bias toward Asian Americans,” which was published in April 2021.

“Very professionally written coverage of an aspect of the pandemic we hear so much about, but don’t hear many speak out on,” a contest judge commented. “Listening to a college student’s fears about discrimination and hate crimes was eye-

opening.”

Shepherd also earned an honorable mention in the feature story category for “Team presents research on teaching about race relations.” The story was published in October 2021.

The Student Voice also earned two awards in its division for the newspaper’s staff-written editorials. The October 2021 editorial “Further recognition from UWRF needed for Indigenous communities” won second place. “It’s safe to return to campus, but students should have options,” published in April 2021, received an honorable mention.

Andris Straumanis, Student Voice faculty adviser and program director for the journalism program, said he was pleased with the students’ achievements.

“I’m pleased that we have a good group of students who remain committed to producing a campus newspaper,” said Straumanis, an associate professor in the Communication and Media Studies Department. “These awards are a testament to that dedication.”

Schindler Van Hoof, a sophomore majoring in English with a creative writing emphasis, said he was pleased to garner a first-place award.

“I never expected it because I was new to journalism in general,” he said. “It was very exciting to hear the news.”

Schindler Van Hoof will co-edit the newspaper in the fall with Lexi Janzer, a junior journalism and criminology major from Mayville. Schindler Van Hoof expects the Student Voice will continue on its same path.

“Everyone at the Student Voice has a lot of freedom in how they approach an article,” he said. “I’m looking to keep that same style.”

Judges evaluated a total of 262 entries from 11 campus newspapers across 20 categories.

The WNAF Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest recognizes excellence in student journalism across the state. It is open to all active campus newspapers covering Wisconsin public and private college and university campuses.

Entries are judged by leaders in the newspaper industry and receive personalized, detailed feedback and suggestions from the judges.

The Student Voice is a student-run campus media organization supported primarily by student fees. Founded in 1916, it produces a monthly print edition and maintains a website, uwrfvoice.com.

Fostering Success

UW-River Falls receives grant to support vulnerable student population

Aug. 9, 2022 - Critical resources have been made available to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in support of its [Falcon Links/Fostering Success](#) program.

The university's Social Work Department received a \$70,000 grant from the UW System to formalize informal services it had been offering previously. The program guides and provides assistance to students who have been in foster care, homeless or otherwise involved in the child welfare system and who have an interest in pursuing higher education.

According to the National Foster Youth Institute, less than 3% of youth who grew up in the foster care system graduate from college, many lack family support while in college which makes it difficult to thrive outside the classroom. The Falcon Links/Fostering Success program will provide essential support to ensure students' academic success. Another aspect of the program is outreach to current foster youth who may not see higher education as an option in their future.

For more information about the Falcon Links program, email tamara.kincaid@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3376.

Kincaid named 2022 Adviser of the Year

Aug. 30, 2022 – Social Work Associate Professor Tamara (Tammy) Kincaid has been named Adviser of the Year at the University Wisconsin-River Falls.

Established in 2000, the annual award recognizes excellence in advising undergraduates. Nominations are made by current students and alumni and reviewed by the Faculty Senate Advising Committee, which makes the final selection.

Kincaid, who also serves as chair of the Social Work Department, was formally presented with the award by UWRF Provost David Travis on August 29 during the university's fall Opening Day.



"I am very proud of this award," said Kincaid. "It's a good indication that I am helping students find their way, both academically and professionally."

Prior to joining the UWRF faculty in 2012, Kincaid worked in social services – primarily in child protection – for over 25 years. From 2007-12, she was director of Pierce County Human Services.

It's that lived experience that makes Kincaid a good teacher and adviser according to Stacy Furness, associate dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies.

"Students like to hear about real experiences in the classroom, and they know that she knows what she's talking about," Furness said.

As an adviser, Furness said that Kincaid's experiences "allow her to go above and beyond the academic side of things. She asks students: 'What other tools do you need to succeed?'"

Social Work Assistant Professor Courtney Wells, a colleague and former classmate of Kincaids, agrees.

"Tammy spends countless hours meeting with students and setting them up for success in our program and in the field," Wells said.

"Tammy really took the time to get to know me," wrote a recent graduate. "She took a genuine interest in drawing out my skills and strengths and guiding me in putting them to use. ... I can honestly say I would not be where I am today if not for her."

Kincaid advises 70-75 students each year, some of whom "do not fit the mold of a traditional student," she said, including former foster youth who have aged out of the system.

"While college life can be complicated, it can be even more complicated for students who have not received the same support and resources as students from intact families," she said.

“Tammy was always there for me,” said a recent program graduate and former foster youth. “Without judgement, she provided messages of encouragement and validation for my experiences. She continues to make space for me to this day.”

Kincaid’s passion for student service led her to apply for, and recently receive, a \$70,000 grant from the UW System for the Falcon Links/Fostering Success program which supports students who have been in foster care, homeless, or otherwise involved in the child welfare system.

“A core principle of social work practice is that everyone has dignity, worth, and self-determination,” said Kincaid. “I hope students feel like I’m treating them as who they are and not who the rest of the world thinks they should be.”

As part of the Fostering Success program, Kincaid is working to create an advisory committee representing departments from across campus who support student success.

“I want students to know that there is no wrong door to get the individualized help and support they need as college students,” she said.

Currently residing in Stillwater, Minn., Kincaid was born in California and raised in New Ulm, Minn. She received her bachelor’s degree in social work from Minnesota State University Moorhead, and master’s degrees in public affairs and social work, as well as her Ph.D. in social work from University of Minnesota–Twin Cities.

Kincaid is active in the community and on campus, where she currently serves as a member of the Faculty Senate, Academic Programs and Policies Committee, and Institutional Review Board, among others.

Petree named Distinguished Teacher of the Year

Aug. 30, 2022 -- Rhonda Petree was recently named 2022 Distinguished Teacher of the Year at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Established in 1965, the award is the highest honor a faculty member can receive on campus. Awardees are nominated by current seniors and recent graduates and selected by the Distinguished Teacher Award Committee.

Petree is an instructor in the UWRF English Department and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Program, a position she has held since 2019.

"She is my role model and I look up to her every day," wrote one nominator about Petree. "She has truly impacted the last three years of my education here on campus, and I look forward to completing my education under her instruction."



Others wrote that Petree is "the best professor I have ever had" and "the reason I have remained in my major."

Doug Margolis, UWRF English professor and TESOL program colleague, said that Petree's ability to connect with students is one of her greatest strengths.

"Teachers can tell a good story and see themselves as successful but, if they never connect with their students, they won't be," Margolis said. "First and foremost, you have to care – and Rhonda does that in spades."

In addition to her success in the classroom, Margolis said that Petree is constantly communicating with students about jobs in the field, seminars and workshops, and other resources they might find beneficial.

"Whatever she finds, she shares, and our students greatly appreciate it," Margolis said.

In addition, Petree's active engagement in professional associations and organizations allows her access to knowledgeable people in the field that she can connect to students. In short, Margolis said, "She uses her connections to get people connected."

"I am so proud of this award," said Petree. "It is an absolute career highlight and means that a lot of what I do is right."

She said that she works hard to make students comfortable enough to take risks and be open to feedback and evaluation.

"I try to take them from wherever they are and move them to a newer, deeper level," Petree said.

Petree was hired by UWRF in 2011 to develop the English Language Transition Program to provide academic English

language classes to international students who had not yet met the university's English language proficiency requirements.

"I've never seen such a well-run program," said Margolis. "Her organizational skills created a real community and an effective team. People were happy to participate because of the atmosphere she created."

During the 2018-19 academic year, Petree received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar award and was a visiting lecturer in Narva, Estonia.

"When Rhonda returned from Estonia, she began to infuse that experience into her classrooms," said Mialisa Moline, professor and department chair of English, TESOL, and Modern Languages. "It changed her outlook on teaching and her understanding of the importance of her work. That passion, combined with professionalism that she applied to her teaching, was quite a beautiful thing to behold."

Petree grew up in Spearfish, S.D., and Goodhue, Minn., and received her bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After graduation, she was among some of the first groups of Peace Corps volunteers in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic. She received her master's degree in English as a second language from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 2010.

In addition to presenting regularly at professional conferences around the state and nation, Petree has also led workshops and training sessions in Singapore, Canada, Serbia, Lithuania, Slovenia, England, and Ireland.

Petree will be honored August 31 during a reception on campus. A plaque of her likeness will be added to the wall of Distinguished Teachers in the Wyman Education Building. As the recipient of the Distinguished Teacher Award, she will deliver an address at fall commencement in December.

Professor wins WiSys Innovator of the Year Award

Kehoe developed applicator for calf disbudding, improves animal welfare, enhances safety for handlers

August 11, 2022 – University of Wisconsin-River Falls Dairy Science Professor Sylvia Kehoe always wanted to help animals.

"I had an idea my research could help a lot of animals around the world," Kehoe said.

On Monday, Kehoe received the Carl E. Gulbrandsen Innovator of the Year Award during the WiSys SPARK Symposium held at UW-La Crosse. The symposium brought faculty, staff and students together from across the UW System to network, collaborate and celebrate research and innovation.



The award is presented to a UW System faculty/staff member or student making exemplary contributions as an innovator. The award was created to honor the former managing director of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation who supported WiSys throughout his 16-year tenure.

"It was a total surprise, and I am so pleased," Kehoe said of receiving the award.

WiSys is a nonprofit organization that works with faculty, staff, students and alumni of the UW System to facilitate cutting-edge research programs, develop and commercialize discoveries, and foster a spirit of innovative and entrepreneurial thinking across the state.

Kehoe most recently has been working on an adhesive patch technology for disbudding the cells that cause horns to grow on calves.

"I am so excited about this applicator," Kehoe said. "I am hoping the award will make it possible to get some recognition for it and that farmers would hear about it. It is such a wonderful tool for the dairy industry."

The applicator license has been bought by a private company that will decide how to commercialize it, Kehoe said.

Traditionally, caustic paste or a hot iron is used to singe off the cells that cause horns to grow in calves. Paste has grown in popularity in recent years with little to no research on how much of the product to use, Kehoe said.

Around 2017, Kehoe and one of her students put caustic paste on a calf.

"We watched the calf walk away and it was shaking its head and trying to get it off," Kehoe recalled. "It's painful."

Kehoe realized there had to be a better way to disbud calves. After receiving a small stipend from WiSys and funding from the Dairy Innovation Hub, she worked with UW-Platteville's John Obielodan to 3D print prototypes of potential applicators.

"It provides a self-contained, consistent application for the paste," Kehoe said. "It provides safer handling for the workers. It's safer for the calf, preventing chemical burns from run off or contact from other calves. It's convenient."

Last year, they received a WiSys Ignite Grant to further develop prototypes of the applicator.

The applicator allows for the effective disbudding of calves within the first seven days of their lives.

With the use of the applicator, handlers would still give pain relief to the animals through lidocaine block.

"It's exciting that a product like this could have huge benefits for humans and animals," Kehoe said. "I love the idea my research could help many animals around the world."

Steve Kelm, chair of the Animal and Food Science Department, said he was thrilled to see Kehoe recognized for her work.

"Dr. Kehoe has a true passion for the health and welfare of dairy calves, and this comes through in her teaching, her research and her interaction with students," Kelm said. "She has mentored many students in undergraduate research projects and has been a very positive influence on these students as they look into future careers."

Kelm said he loves the applicator idea.

"To me, ideas such as this that solve problems in a simple and cost-effective manner are so valuable to the dairy industry," he said. "I am not surprised at all that someone saw the value in her ideas and is taking the applicator to market. It is a great idea, a win-win solution for the calf, the dairy manager and all entities involved."

Kehoe has taught at UWRF since 2006 in dairy science, animal science and calf nutrition.

"I love teaching," Kehoe, of Hudson, said. "I love our students. Our students are the best. They are down to earth. They are engaged and curious. They are just real."

Kehoe studied animal science at the University of California-Davis for her undergraduate degree, her master's degree at Iowa State University and her Ph. D. at Pennsylvania State University.

Photo: Dairy Science Professor Sylvia Kehoe at the WiSys SPARK Symposium where she received the WiSys Innovator of the Year Award.

State Building Commission gives UW-River Falls authority to construct SciTech

Approval moves science project dream another step closer to reality

August 9, 2022 -The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech) project received a critical green light Tuesday when the Wisconsin State Building Commission (SBC) voted to authorize construction. The unanimous vote moves the \$116.7 million project one step closer to reality.



“This project will be transformational, not only for our campus but for our region,” said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo, who spoke to the Higher Education Subcommittee of the SBC. “SciTech will give our students access to amazing opportunities while also enhancing collaboration with business and industry in a way that will directly contribute to the economic development of western Wisconsin.”

The SciTech building will house departments including biology, chemistry, physics, and psychological sciences and their related academic programs, including pre-engineering, biotechnology and neuroscience. The project will also create space to support meaningful collaborations with local and regional business partners in STEM fields and beyond.

UWRF produces the third highest percentage of STEM graduates in the UW System and nearly 60% of UWRF students will take a class in SciTech, including students from in-demand programs like environmental engineering, agricultural science, international food operations management, animal science, crop and soil science and dairy science. The building will feature flexible undergraduate instructional laboratory suites, active learning studios, undergraduate and faculty research spaces and shared interdisciplinary space. SciTech will have 32 undergraduate research spaces and 12 instructional labs.

The project will also enhance and grow partnerships with businesses and industries through collaborative programming, internships and innovative product development via the University Business Collaboration Center (UBC2). The UBC2 will actively engage business and community partners in discovery, innovation and talent development at UWRF, offering students increased internship, research and career opportunities while providing employers facilitated access to student talent and faculty and staff expertise.

“Students will benefit through engagement in active-learning spaces designed for the 21st century,” explained Gallo. “Our industry partners are committed to this project because of its unique UBC2 which will increase student learning opportunities and enhance discovery, innovation and talent development by bringing university and business resources together in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and beyond.”

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2023 and be completed by late 2025. Classes are slated to start in the new building beginning January 2026.

The state of Wisconsin has funded \$111.73 million for the project. The university is working with alumni and corporate donors

to raise the remaining \$5 million and is already nearly halfway to that goal.

To learn more about SciTech or provide financial support, visit www.uwrf.edu/scitech.

UW System President Jay Rothman announces Wisconsin Tuition Promise with UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout, and UW-Superior

MADISON, Wis. – University of Wisconsin System President Jay Rothman today announced the creation of the Wisconsin Tuition Promise, a new initiative starting in fall 2023 to ensure underserved Wisconsin students can attend any UW System university without paying tuition or fees. President Rothman is announcing the Tuition Promise this week with chancellors across UW System.

The goal of the program is to increase the number of state residents who graduate with a bachelor's degree – especially first-generation students and those from low-to-moderate income families throughout Wisconsin – thereby improving individual lives and communities and helping meet the state's workforce needs.

"The benefits of a college education are unassailable," Rothman said. "A college degree needs to be within reach for every Wisconsin citizen as a path to a better life, and the Wisconsin Tuition Promise will provide these opportunities. It is also how we can close the skills gap that now limits Wisconsin's potential to thrive in a global economy."

Rothman said an estimated 8,000 students will be supported through the program once it is fully implemented over four years. Eligible students will be awarded an average of \$4,500 over four years. The UW System intends to fund the first year of the program in academic year 2023-24 at \$13.8 million and seek state investment for subsequent years.

"College is a long-term investment in human capacity – the ability to do work that is financially, socially, and emotionally rewarding," said UW-Eau Claire Chancellor Jim Schmidt. "The Wisconsin Tuition Promise provides students the financial support they need to earn a college degree, which improves their lives and improves the communities in which they live."

"This is an exciting program for UW-Superior," said UW-Superior Chancellor Renée Wachter. "Nearly half of UW-Superior students are the first in their families to attend college, and more than a third of our students are eligible for high-need programs like Pell Grants. The Wisconsin Tuition Promise will help these students bridge the financial gap and bring them one step closer to earning their degree."

"Even with an unmatched 98.4 percent employment rate for UW-Stout graduates, our industry and business partners tell us they need more skilled graduates who are ready to help them serve our state and compete globally," said UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank. "The new Tuition Promise will allow us to provide access to more students seeking the distinct, career-focused, applied learning experience that UW-Stout, Wisconsin's Polytechnic University, offers."

"Opportunity and affordability go hand-in-hand," said UW-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo. "We're investing in every facet of student success, from access to academic excellence to advising, tutoring, and mental health support. The Wisconsin Tuition Promise reflects the breadth of our mission and our commitment to students."

Modeled on Bucky's Tuition Promise at UW-Madison, the Wisconsin Tuition Promise would provide up to four years of tuition and fee funding for students coming from families earning less than \$62,000 annually and enrolling at any of the other 12 public universities within the UW System. The program would be structured to provide "last dollar" financial support after federal and state grant aid is accounted for; as a result, Tuition Promise awards will vary.

Eligible students will be Wisconsin residents, first-time enrollees or transfers, and attending full-time. They will need to make sufficient academic progress each year and attest that they were employed at some point during the previous year.

Rothman said the affordability review he sought shows a UW System education is the most affordable in the Midwest and is very affordable nationally compared to peers. However, fewer low-to-moderate-income and first-generation students are attending UW System universities, suggesting that despite a tuition freeze in place since 2013, a state college education is increasingly out of reach for some, he said.

"Education unlocks success in Wisconsin," Rothman said. "By ensuring that every Wisconsin student is given the full opportunity to get a higher education, we will improve those lives directly while building the economic engine and community prosperity that benefit all Wisconsinites."

Students will be automatically considered for the Wisconsin Tuition Promise when they apply for federal financial aid. A full publicity campaign led by the universities will begin later this fall. Current information can be found at: wisconsin.edu/tuition-promise/



UW-River Falls launches revitalized brand

Institution celebrates rich history of turning learners into leaders

August 29, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo announced today a revitalized institutional brand that more authentically reflects the institution's commitment to providing extraordinary opportunities for those they serve. Gallo made the announcement to faculty and staff during their annual fall opening meeting.

"Without a doubt, our Falcons are the next generation of self-starters, team-builders, creative makers, and critical thinkers," said Gallo. "That is why our institution needed a modern brand that exemplifies the ambition and boldness of our students and employees."

Gallo and her team kicked off the strategic planning process to refresh the brand in 2021. The process was designed to capture how Falcons see themselves and UW-River Falls and how the UWRF experience is truly special.

"Gathering direct feedback from people in every corner of our campus was a priority for this project, in much the same way as I strove to listen and learn when I first came on board." said Gallo.

To ensure the brand reflected the diverse experiences and voices of UW-River Falls students, alumni, external partners, faculty, staff, community and business leaders, Gallo explained they engaged over 1,000 stakeholders using surveys, focus groups and interviews.

"Over and over again we heard stories about the courage of our students—individuals who are forward-thinking, practical and fearless in the face of a rapidly changing society and world," said Gallo. "They proudly shared with us how UW-River Falls was pivotal in preparing them to become leaders and in discovering their strengths and talents they possessed."

The insights gained in the months-long process led to the new brand being grounded in authentic stories of how UW-River Falls provides extraordinary opportunities in an inclusive environment, every single day. It also led to the institution's new visual identity, which incorporates the UW-River Falls Falcon and symbolizes the energy and vibrancy of the campus.

“I am proud to build upon the strong traditions and rich history of UW-River Falls,” said Gallo. “This rebrand represents current success, aspirations for the future, and the determination of our Falcons to accept challenges and know they are limitless!”

Over the next year, the new branded look will be incorporated throughout campus and university communications. To learn more about the tremendous opportunities at UW-River Falls and the refreshed brand, visit go.uwrf.edu/ourbrand

UW-River Falls marks 20 years on The Princeton Review's 'Best in the Midwest' List

Named one of the Best Midwestern Colleges for 2023

August 25, 2022 – Falcon pride is strong following the release of [The Princeton Review's Best Midwestern Colleges for 2023](#).

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls was once again named among the schools considered to be “academically outstanding and well worth consideration in a college search.” The list is compiled using data from surveys of administrators from several hundred colleges in each region, information from staff visits to schools over the years and input from college counselors and advisers.

“This news from The Princeton Review is exciting and timely as we prepare to welcome students back for fall semester,” said UW-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo. “We are proud to provide an exceptional education in an inclusive environment at an affordable price. UWRF is an amazing value.”

Surveys of enrolled students are also used to determine the designation each year and Falcons were clear about why they consider UWRF to be one of the top universities.

“From the moment you set foot on campus, it is evident that the school wants to help students achieve success,” said one student. “UW-River Falls does so by offering a myriad of opportunities for internships, student teaching, studying abroad and real work experience.”

Each year, a total of 655 colleges in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, West and International zones are surveyed.

The Princeton Review (www.PrincetonReview.com) is an education services company known for its test-prep courses, tutoring, books and other student resources. Headquartered in New York, NY, it is not affiliated with Princeton University.

Agricultural engineering program receives ABET accreditation

Sept. 6, 2022 — The bachelor's degree program in agricultural engineering at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls has been accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology.

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of the public.

"Attaining ABET accreditation was not an end-goal for our program but represents an important milestone as we continue to build our engineering programming.," said Agricultural Engineering Technology Department Chair Joel Peterson. "ABET accreditation also represents confirmation of the hard work our faculty do on a daily basis in order to provide an outstanding engineering education and the commitment by UWRF administration to engineering on this campus."

Sought worldwide, ABET's voluntary peer-review process is highly respected because it adds critical value to academic programs in the technical disciplines, where quality, precision and safety are of the utmost importance.

Developed by technical professionals from ABET's member societies, ABET criteria focus on what students experience and learn. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities, and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia and government, with expertise in the ABET disciplines.

ABET is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization with ISO 9001:2015 certification. It currently accredits 4,361 programs at 850 colleges and universities in 41 countries and areas.

More information about ABET, its member societies and the accreditation criteria used to evaluate programs can be found at www.abet.org.

"I appreciate the hard work of Dr. Peterson and his colleagues in developing the agricultural engineering program and completing the process of ABET accreditation, said Dale Gallenberg, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. "Launching the first engineering program at UWRF further demonstrates our firm commitment to providing excellent opportunities for students and responding to the needs of employers and industry."

The agricultural engineering program at UW-River Falls has six faculty and offers options in machinery systems, natural resources and environmental systems, and food and process systems. Graduates have started successful engineering careers in companies like Polaris Inc., The Toro Company, WSB Consulting Engineers, Symbiont and many more.

"Graduating from an ABET-accredited program will better position our students to get an excellent job to jump-start their career," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "Our students will be sought after globally."

For more information about UW-River Falls and their bachelor's degree program in agricultural engineering, visit <https://www.uwrf.edu/programs/agricultural-engineering>.



File photo: Dance Team in 2019 Homecoming parade.

Join us for a week of Homecoming activities at UW-River Falls

Sept. 19, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls invites the public to share in the exciting and social media worthy experiences of Homecoming.

Throughout the week of September 26 to October 2, both traditional and new Homecoming festivities will bring together students, families, alums and the River Falls community for a week of fun and celebration of all things UWRF.

"Homecoming is a wonderful weekend for the UWRF community to reconnect with the university and their lifelong friends," said Pedro Renta, director of Alumni Relations. "It is a chance to reminisce, share their professional and personal successes and be a part of the Falcon family. We look forward to welcoming our Falcons back home!"

Featured events include:

Homecooked Homecoming Meal, Monday, Sept. 26, 5:30-7 p.m., Pete's Creek patio, University Center. Professor Jake's Bean Soup is a Homecoming tradition. Free and open to the public to kick off Homecoming Week. Hosted by UWRF Greek Life.

Homecoming Volleyball Game, Friday, Sept. 30, 7 p.m., Page Arena at Falcon Center. Falcons vs. UW-Whitewater.

SciTech Update, Saturday, Oct. 1, 9-9:45 a.m., 120 South Hall. Learn about the newest building coming to UWRF and how you can support innovation on campus and in the community.

Homecoming Parade, Saturday, Oct. 1, 11 a.m., downtown River Falls. See UWRF's Falcon spirit come alive! Don't forget to bring a bucket or bag to hold all your candy!

Homecoming Football Game, Saturday, Oct. 1, 1 p.m., David Smith Stadium at Ramer Field. Falcons vs. UW-Stevens Point.

Homecoming 2022 Concert, Sunday, Oct. 2, 2 p.m., Abbott Concert Hall, Kleinpell Fine Arts building. Featuring symphony band, choir and alumni choir members. Admission is \$8/adult, \$5/seniors and \$2/students.

A complete listing of events can be found at <https://bit.ly/UWRFhomecoming>. For more information, call Alumni Relations at 715-425-3505.

New student enrollment grows at UW-River Falls

Growth tied to UWRF's distinction as a regional public university

Sept. 22, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is encouraged by its early fall enrollment numbers which show an increase in the number of new students in the university's classrooms.

UWRF is one of the campuses in the University of Wisconsin System seeing increases in new student enrollment. Systemwide enrollment estimates show 26,442 first-year students, including freshmen and first-year transfers, enrolled this fall compared to 25,869 in fall 2021 and 25,602 in fall 2018.

Overall enrollment at UWRF is slightly down from last year, as is the case at most of the UW System comprehensive campuses which show an average drop of three percent, attributable to the unfortunate impacts of the pandemic on student persistence. In response, UWRF has enhanced student support efforts including advising, counseling and adding a Dean of Students position.

Additionally, UWRF is developing new programs for students to help their transition from high school to college.

"We are dedicated to the success of new students with programs such as our nearly completed First-Year Experience Program," said UWRF Provost David Travis. "UWRF wants students to feel confident as they navigate uncharted waters."

UW-River Falls also is introducing several new opportunities for students as it keeps its eye on enrollment growth, including eSports and Marching Band.

"We are listening to students and responding with programs and opportunities that will meet both academic and co-curricular interests," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo.

UW-River Falls was recently recognized by both U.S. News and World Report and Princeton Review for its academic excellence.

University Theatre to present 'Censored on Final Approach'

Sept. 21, 2022 - University Theatre at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls will present "Censored on Final Approach" by Phyllis Ravel as a staged reading September 30 and October 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Blanche Davis Theatre in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building.

Between 1942 and 1944, at the height of World War II, more than a thousand women left their homes and jobs for the opportunity of a lifetime -- to become the first in history to fly for the U.S. military. They volunteered as civilian pilots in an experimental Army Air Corps program to see if women could serve as pilots and relieve men for overseas duty. These women became the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as the WASPs. Under the determined leadership of Jacqueline Cochran, Nancy Harkness Love, and General Henry "Hap" Arnold, the WASPs exceeded beyond all expectations. "Censored on Final Approach," by the late Wisconsin playwright Ravel, retells their challenging and heroic story.

UWRF Stage and Screen Arts program alumna Becca Donley will be directing. Cast members include Olivia Denninger, Ella Guse, Meredith Bowermaster, Mary Rother, Saga Jakupcak, Billy Chester, Luke Dovenmuehler, Madison Miller, Sydney Traynor, and Sophie Hilo.

Admission is free, and no tickets are required. Doors open at 7 p.m.

UW-River Falls lands grant to research robotic milking

Falcon faculty to lead feasibility study by five U.S. universities

Sept. 15, 2022 -- A research project led by a pair of University of Wisconsin-River Falls faculty members has the potential to change the face of the signature industry in America's Dairyland.

Assistant professors Luis Peña-Lévano and Shaheer Burney from UWRF's Agricultural Economics Department were recently awarded a \$250,000 grant to study the financial, environmental and social impacts of adopting robotic milking on dairy farms.

While UW-River Falls is the home institution for the grant, the project is a collaboration with the University of Minnesota, University of Georgia, North Carolina State University and Texas A&M University.

Peña-Lévano and Burney hope the results of their research will guide dairy farmers in Wisconsin and Minnesota as they consider whether to make the significant investment necessary to transition to an automatic milking system (AMS).



"Our goal is to evaluate the feasibility of AMS from the financial, environmental and labor demand perspective," said Burney, director of the UWRF's Survey Research Center. "Ultimately, we are trying to answer the question: 'Do the long-term benefits of adopting AMS exceed the high up-front cost of installing such systems?'"

The conclusions could guide farmers in a struggling industry in making a major decision with the potential to improve their profitability and possibly even their lifestyle.

Peña-Lévano said the seed for the grant proposal was planted by dairy farmers, many of whom have told UWRF faculty they are wrestling with the decision about whether to invest in robotic milking systems that can cost more than \$200,000.

The UWRF team developed a preliminary grant proposal in consultation with farmers, lenders and others before submitting it in September 2021 to the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program's North Central Region.

SARE is a producer-driven, decentralized competitive grants and education program that is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute for Food and Agriculture. The organization's website indicates its mission is to advance agricultural innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.

UWRF learned in January that its proposal was one of 36 finalists out of 107 proposals. The university submitted its final application in March and was notified in July that its proposal would be one of 14 nationally to receive funding.

“As a first-year professor, it was a huge deal, not just for me but for all of those on my team that we got this grant on the first try,” said Peña-Lévano, a native of Peru who joined UWRF’s faculty in July 2021.

Likewise, Burney said he was “ecstatic” to learn UWRF was awarded what he referred to as a highly competitive grant that receives applications from researchers in many different disciplines.

The grant provides amazing opportunities for UWRF and highlights the research that faculty from the university’s College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) are performing, said Brenda Boetel, chair of the Agricultural Economics Department.

“Luis and Shaheer have done a great job of leading this collaborative effort to provide research and educational opportunities for Wisconsin dairy producers,” Boetel said.

CAFES Dean Dale Gallenberg also expressed pride in the grant and what it says about UWRF.

“This project represents work fundamental to the mission and goals of the Dairy Innovation Hub in supporting the Wisconsin dairy industry, as well as leverages and extends DIH funds to include support from other sources,” Gallenberg said. “The partnership with other larger land-grant institutions is especially noteworthy and demonstrates the quality and capacity of our faculty and their research here at UWRF.”

Peña-Lévano and Burney said the significant contribution of their teammates from the partner institutions -- Cesar Escalante (University of Georgia), Grace Melo (Texas A&M University), Alejandro Gutierrez-Li (North Carolina State University) and James Salfer (University of Minnesota) -- were key to developing the successful grant proposal.

The project will use data collected from a large-scale survey of dairy farmers in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Plans call for paper questionnaires to be sent in January to 2,000 randomly selected farms by UWRF’s Survey Research Center, which performs surveys for researchers and local governments across the country.

Three UWRF agricultural economics students will help develop the questionnaires and analyze the data.

“The students will be involved in every aspect of the project,” Burney said, giving them a rare opportunity to get in on the ground floor of what their faculty mentors hope will be groundbreaking research with practical applications for farmers.

As a university with a well-regarded Survey Research Center and robust agricultural programs that has students hailing from rural areas across Wisconsin, many of whom are seeking to go back to the farm after graduation, UW-River Falls offers an ideal home base for the robotic milking analysis, Burney said.

“We have the perfect cocktail for this kind of research,” he said.



The study, which Burney said already is creating a buzz in the dairy community, also will involve farmer interviews, focus groups and economic modeling with the support of an advisory committee, composed mostly of dairy farmers, that will meet regularly to evaluate the progress of the project.

A key objective for the researchers is to generate a guideline for farmers as to how long it typically takes for the investment in AMS to pay off.

While technology has changed farming dramatically over the past few decades, robotic milking has yet to become widely adopted even though it offers the potential promise of giving dairy farmers more flexible schedules and reducing their reliance on hard-to-find labor.

Studying those impacts is one of the exciting aspects of the research for Peña-Lévano, the project coordinator who also is chair-elect of the International Section of the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association and recipient of the 2022-23 Paul B. and Robert Dykstra Faculty Excellence Award from UWRF. Agriculture also is not immune from the labor shortage afflicting almost every industry, so using robots in place of traditional, labor-intensive milking production has the potential to alleviate that challenge and make dairy farms more resilient in the face of what economists predict will be a persistent issue, Peña-Lévano said.

The project also will explore the implications of milking robots on the environment and animal welfare.

While AMS offers a potential solution to many factors contributing to an exodus from the industry, that doesn't mean robotic milking will prove feasible for all dairy farms. Indeed, one of the project's goals is to determine the minimum herd size necessary for AMS to pay off.

"I do not have expectations because I like surprises," Peña-Lévano said. "Personally, I really want to know the answers, too."

Peña-Lévano said the plan is to complete the project by Oct. 31, 2024.

One thing the UWRF researchers know for sure is that they will share their findings with Wisconsin and Minnesota dairy farmers in hopes of helping them make informed decisions and improving the health of the industry.

"Our goal, first and foremost, is to provide that information for Midwest farmers, but it will absolutely be applicable for dairy farmers across the country," Burney said.

"That is one of the beautiful things about research," Peña-Lévano added. "It can be shared with others around the world."

Photos: Top left, assistant professor Luis Peña-Lévano; Bottom right, assistant professor Shaheer Burney

UW-River Falls recognized for excellence by U.S. News & World Report

Named a Best Regional University

Sept. 12, 2022 – U.S. News & World Report has again named the University of Wisconsin-River Falls a Best Regional University, a Top Public University and a Top Performer on Social Mobility.

The newest rankings appear in the U.S. News & World Report's 2023 edition of Best Colleges. Schools are ranked according to their performance across a set of widely accepted indicators of excellence.

"To be recognized nationally for UWRF's excellence in teaching and learning is something to be celebrated," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "Our faculty, instructors, advisers and employees are dedicated to the success of our students - the recognition by U.S. News & World Report is a reflection of that commitment."

UW-River Falls was recognized for its focus on social mobility in the survey which demonstrates the university's commitment to supporting economically disadvantaged students who are less likely than others to finish college.

"A college degree transforms lives, it ends the cycle of poverty for so many students," said Assistant Chancellor for Student Success Jamie Zamjahn. "The fact that UWRF has been recognized for social mobility of our students shows that we live our core values of student success, excellent teaching and learning, and a community of inclusion and caring. All Falcons should be extremely proud of this recognition."

Student-to-faculty ratios and smaller class sizes were also acknowledged, both of which provide better access to instructors and support a student-centered learning environment.

U.S. News publishes the Best Colleges rankings each year to provide prospective students and their families with helpful data and information on factors such as graduation rates, social mobility, and graduate indebtedness.

The U.S. News & World Report rankings evaluate more than 1,400 colleges and universities on up to 17 measures of academic quality. The 2023 rankings can be found online at usnews.com/best-colleges.



UWRF Sustainability Office joins others to offer Powered by Electricity free event

Sept. 13, 2022 -- The Sustainability Office at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is joining forces with St. Croix Electric Co-Op, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services and nonprofit Hope for Creation to host a Powered by Electricity event on Saturday, Sept. 24, for the River Falls community.

Powered by Electricity is a free community event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the auditorium and parking lot of North Hall on the UWRF campus. There will be talks from subject matter experts in the solar and electricity fields, test drives of electric vehicles and bikes, electric tools and equipment demonstrations and vendors, electric cooperative information stations, a chance to win electric lawn care, and brat and hot dogs sales supporting St. Croix Valley Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

"This is a great opportunity for key sustainable programs in the area to come together and inform the community how we can individually and collectively work together to make our daily activities more earth-friendly," said UWRF Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias.

In April, Chancellor Maria Gallo and other educational and community leaders came together to sign a Sustainability Commitment. This event is just one of many planned by UWRF to reaffirm the university's commitment to sustainability for its students and the local community.

Visit scenet.net/go-electric for a full event schedule.

UWRF to host City and Sustainability Sampler event

Sept. 21, 2022 -- In honor of October being Sustainability Month, the Sustainability Office at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is hosting the City and Sustainability Sampler on Wednesday, Oct. 5, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center.

This event serves as a chance for UWRF students to meet local businesses and organizations. These institutions have the opportunity to talk to the campus community about their products, services and volunteer opportunities.

"The goal of the event is to educate students on what kind of organizations exist locally," says Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias. "It helps us build a more sustainable and healthy community."

Klapatch-Mathias, whose department spearheads the event, hopes to have around 40 businesses and organizations participating.

"Currently, we have 31 organizations signed up," Klapatch-Mathias explained. "This is a great opportunity for local businesses or nonprofits looking to get the word out about their services, volunteer opportunities, or potential jobs or internships to a large, captivated audience."

Those organizations interested in setting up a booth at the event may contact the UWRF Sustainability Office at 715-425-4333 or sustainability@uwrf.edu.

This event is one of many that the Sustainability Office is planning for the year that will connect the campus and local community through sustainability education and resources. The office is working closely with Chancellor Maria Gallo to have a sustainability element for her upcoming inauguration in October.

Stay up to date on all sustainability efforts and events at UWRF by visiting uwrf.edu/sustainability.



UW-River Falls custodial staff to receive UW System award for excellence

Sept. 26, 2022 -- The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents today announced that the UW-River Falls Custodial Services Department will receive the 2022 Regents University Staff Excellence Program Award.

This award is part of the Regents University Staff Excellence Awards Program, now in its second year. The awards recognize the dedicated work, vital services, initiative, and outstanding contributions of UW System's university staff.

Three recipients, including the UWRF Custodial Services Department, will be honored at the next Regents meeting on Sept. 30 in Eau Claire. Each recipient will also be awarded \$7,500 to support professional development or program enhancements.

Along with professional supervisors and custodians, the UWRF Custodial Services Department employs more than 50 students including a student hiring coordinator and student trainers.

"The professional staff go above and beyond to mentor the student employees, not just on how to perform the custodial work, but also in qualities like leadership, professionalism and how to live out our campus values," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo.

Gallo also praised the department's ability to adapt job responsibilities and increase cleaning procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding new ways to meet the expanded workload – even when understaffed. To recognize its work during the pandemic, the department earned the first Chancellor's Recognition Award for University Staff.

Gallo noted that campus visitors consistently compliment the cleanliness of the university buildings and their positive interactions with custodial staff.

Students also benefit from these interactions, said Michelle Sponholz, UWRF's associate director of Residence Life - Business Operations and Facilities, and one of the award nominators.

"Custodial staff working in the residence halls are dedicated not only to providing a clean living environment, but also in creating relationships with the students in their individual buildings," she said. "Custodians have received lots of positive feedback and stories about how they have helped students and made a difference in their campus experience."

Creation of Bee Hotel supports sustainability at UW-River Falls

Oct. 12, 2022 - Sustainability is essential to the vision and mission of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chancellor Maria Gallo has been a significant supporter of the sustainability efforts on campus.

It is no surprise then that the topic is front and center for her inauguration events set for Wednesday-Thursday, Oct. 19-20. During the Day of Engagement on October 19, the campus community is invited to come together and talk about what sustainability priorities are important to them. Following a presentation focused on the university's sustainability plan and model, a campus sustainability tour will be offered. The tour will showcase the Grounds Department's extensive sustainability efforts and the Bee Hotel's official dedication.



"Sustainability is an integral part of UWRF's mission, vision and core values. I felt my inauguration was a perfect time to continue talking about and promoting sustainability efforts on campus," Gallo said. "I am honored to be able to work for an institution that puts such a strong emphasis on making our community more sustainable."

The unveiling of the Bee Hotel and ribbon cutting is set for October 19 at 3:15 p.m. The hotel will be installed across from the Melvin Wall Amphitheatre, outside the fence where the Horticulture Department houses its research plots.

"This is a great location for the Bee Hotel because there are about 10 to 15 feet of other landscaping so we can set the hotel back by the fence, and then we can do a larger sign out by the landscaping so people can read and learn more about the hotel but not have to walk directly up to it," said Sustainability Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias.

The Bee Hotel came to fruition thanks to the university's Bee Club, a student organization aimed at raising awareness of pollinator habitat conservation and benefits.

"It was one of the students in Bee Club that suggested we create just one large bee hotel on campus," explained Klapatch-Mathias.

The Bee Club submitted its proposal for the hotel last year and received approval in the spring. The Green Fund fully funded the project. The Green Fund is an allocable segregated university fee created to support sustainability initiatives and projects at UW-River Falls. The funds generated through the Green Fund support both the UWRF Sustainability Office and act to provide funding for projects that improve sustainability.

The Bee Hotel is explicitly created for solitary bees. Solitary bees are less aggressive than other types of bees. They do not swarm or need a hive. These bees use the hotel space for nesting, laying their eggs to keep them out of the elements and returning when they hatch in the spring.

In July 2021, UW-River Falls became an affiliate of Bee Campus USA. The program is designed to marshal the strengths of educational campuses for the benefit of pollinators. More information on Bee Campus USA can be found at <https://www.uwrf.edu/Sustainability/Bee-Club-Bee-Campus-USA.cfm>

Photo: The bee hotel frame was recently installed across from the Wall Amphitheatre on campus. The Bee Club still has some additions yet to make the hotel functional for solitary bees.

Media personality Cathy Wurzer to emcee chancellor inauguration events at UW-River Falls

Oct. 3, 2022 -- Cathy Wurzer, University of Wisconsin-River Falls alum and longtime Minnesota Public Radio and Twin Cities PBS news host, will emcee two events during Chancellor Maria Gallo's [inauguration celebration](#) October 19-20 on the UWRF campus.

"UWRF played a pivotal role in my life and participating in events like the inauguration are my way of giving back and thanking the institution for what it gave me," said Wurzer.

[Wurzer](#) will interview acclaimed author Annie Murphy Paul as part of UWRF's [Day of Engagement](#) on Wednesday, Oct. 19, at 7 p.m. in Falcon's Nest in the [University Center](#), 501 Wild Rose Ave., River Falls.

She will also introduce [Gallo](#) at the chancellor's official inauguration ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 20, at 1 p.m. in the Riverside Ballroom, University Center. A reception will follow in Pete's Creek, also in the University Center.

Both events are free and open to the public.



Wurzer is the longtime host of "Morning Edition" on the Minnesota Public Radio network and also hosts MPR's noontime program "Minnesota Now." Since 1994, she has cohosted "Almanac," a weekly public affairs program produced by Twin Cities Public Television (TPT), for which she has earned four regional Emmy awards.

She has also been a reporter/anchor for KSTP-AM radio and WCCO radio and TV. In 2009, she created and produced the award-winning documentary "Tales of the Road: Highway 61" for TPT, which was a companion production to the Minnesota Historical Society book by the same name.

To honor her extensive body of work, Wurzer was inducted into the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame on September 17 at the [Pavek Museum](#), St. Louis Park, Minn.

Wurzer, '92, who holds a degree in broadcast journalism and urban studies from UWRF, received the UWRF Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2018. She is also a past member of the UWRF Foundation Board.

Wurzer said she was interested in pursuing print journalism when she enrolled at UWRF but switched majors after doing a newscast at the university's radio station, WRFW.

"I simply fell in love with radio," she said.

Wurzer said her greatest influences at UWRF were Professor Mike Norman and WRFW Chief Engineer Al Murray.

“Mike taught me how to be a journalist and both taught me the art of radio broadcasting. You couldn’t have asked for a better education,” she said.

Wurzer said she looks forward to introducing Gallo as the 20th chancellor of UWRF.

“I was very impressed with Chancellor Gallo,” she said. “She was warm and open and what struck me most was her interest in the exploration of new ways of teaching and learning.”

Wurzer said she will explore that interest in her conversation with Murphy Paul during UWRF’s Day of Engagement.

“Murphy Paul’s book takes a deeper dive into how the brain works outside what she calls ‘the vat.’ I think audience members will leave with a truly more ‘open mind,’ appreciating how our bodies, the people we meet, and our physical world work with our brains to think, learn, and ‘do’ more creatively,” said Wurzer.

Ukraine/Russia history is focus of Nov. 8 lecture

Free public talk is Edward N. Peterson Lecture Series event

Oct. 18, 2022 -- Thomas Wolfe, an associate professor in the University of Minnesota's History Department, will present a lecture on Tuesday, Nov. 8, at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls on the timely topic of the "Crisis in Ukraine: War and Russia's Deformed Transition."

The lecture, part of the Edward N. Peterson Lecture Series, is free and open to the public at 4:30 p.m. in Room 320 of the University Center. A reception begins at 4 p.m., and a Q&A session will follow the talk.



Wolfe, who is affiliated faculty with the U of M's Department of Anthropology, the Institute for Global Studies, and the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, said one of the themes of his presentation will be Ukraine's defense of its sovereign state status.

"Ukraine's history has indeed been marked by the difficulty of achieving this (independent) status, but there is nothing in Ukraine's history that meant it is an artificial or 'fake' state," Wolfe said in a summation of his presentation.

Wolfe's presentation will also examine how Russia "became Putin's regime," referring to the transformation of Russia into full-fledged authoritarian state, as well as a "reflection about the continuity of Russian political culture."

The Peterson Lecture Series honors Edward N. Peterson, a history professor at UW-River Falls from 1954 until his death in 2005. To honor his memory and his achievement in teaching and research, the UWRF History and Philosophy Department established the Peterson Lecture Series as an annual forum for leading scholars to present their scholarship on war and peace, abuses and limits of power, and the struggle for democracy in the 20th century, issues that Peterson taught about and wrote about during his long career as a historian. The series is funded by an endowment made possible by donations from students, alumni, faculty and other supporters.

More on Wolfe's presentation and the lecture series is available at <https://www.uwrf.edu/HIST/Events/PetersonLectureSeries/Index.cfm>.



UW-River Falls introduces new, first-of-its-kind Humane Handling Institute at joint news conference with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. From left: UWRF Livestock Welfare and Behavior Associate Professor Kurt Vogel; President and COO of American Foods Group Steve Van Lannen; DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski; UW-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo; Chair of the UWRF Animal and Food Science Department Steve Kelm; Interim Dean of the UWRF College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Dean Olson.

UWRF and DATCP launch Humane Handling Institute

Oct. 21, 2022 - A first-of-its-kind program, the Humane Handling Institute (HHI), will provide comprehensive hands-on training for current meat industry workers in humane pre-slaughter handling, transport, stunning, and equipment maintenance. The formation of the HHI was announced by the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) on October 20. HHI is expected to help improve the long-term viability of Wisconsin's \$34 billion livestock and meat industries.

The project is funded by the [Meat Talent Development Program](#), a \$5 million program created by Governor Tony Evers to strengthen the state's meat processing supply chain and workforce. DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski joined UWRF administrators and faculty and meat industry representatives on campus to make the announcement.

"Governor Evers' strategic investments continue to create opportunities for growth and resiliency in Wisconsin's meat and livestock industry," said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. "The HHI will provide one-of-a-kind training to the industry and lead the way for humane handling education across the state and nation. This partnership will support workforce training,

create product marketing opportunities, and provide education on regulatory issues for meat processing establishments.”

“I want to thank Governor Evers for establishing this program to aid the meat industry,” said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. “The involvement of our quality faculty in developing the content for this effort will ensure it contains the latest best practices and will be delivered effectively.”

“The objective of the HHI is to develop humane handlers, stunner operators, and maintenance personnel that have a deeper understanding of the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of humane handling, stunning, and slaughter,” said Kurt Vogel, UWRF associate professor of animal science and director of the HHI. “Since 2014, the UW- River Falls Animal Welfare Lab has tracked humane handling enforcement actions by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and consistently identified pre-slaughter stunning as a critical area of need for additional training and development. Effective stunning is important for animal and worker welfare and there are additional downstream benefits to efficiency of production and meat product quality that add support to a well-justified cause.”

The program consists of a series of 2.5-day-long workshops. Interested participants can select the workshops that meet their needs or complete the entire series of workshops and an additional project for comprehensive certification. Trainees that complete the series and project will receive a certificate in humane handling and stunning and the limited rights to utilize the program logo in marketing and promotional materials.

Tuition reimbursement will be offered to 120 trainees from small slaughter establishments across the state for the two workshops that address critical regulatory challenges for these plants, but any current or aspiring staff may enroll in any of the five workshops.

Steve Van Lannen, incoming chair of the North American Meat Institute and COO of American Foods Group, was on hand for the event.

“I want to thank Governor Evers, DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls for supporting animal and worker welfare within the meat industry,” Van Lannen said. “This program will be invaluable as we continue to operate in Wisconsin. As an industry and through our work with the Protein PACT, we understand that wholesome meat, poultry, and dairy start with providing the most humane care and raising healthy animals. The Humane Handling Institute will help support us in our initiatives.”

“The HHI is going to provide an avenue for meat industry workers to gain invaluable hands-on training. UW-River Falls is meeting an industry need that spans across large and small meat plants,” said Dr. Miriam Martin, director of Animal Health and Welfare at the North American Meat Institute, who could not be present for the announcement. “The North American Meat Institute commends the staff at UW-River Falls for meeting an important need in the meat industry that will have a positive and immediate impact on improving animal welfare.”

UWRF's Caroline Baker recognized for leadership

Oct. 31, 2022. -- Caroline Baker, University of Wisconsin-River Falls professor and program director of the Counseling Program, was recently awarded the 2023 Wisconsin School Counselor Association's Mary Gehrke-McAllister Leadership Award. The award recognizes professionals who have provided outstanding leadership within the school counseling profession in Wisconsin.

Baker will be officially recognized at the Wisconsin School Counselor Association's Annual Conference in November in Wisconsin Dells.



Baker started at UWRF in 2010, becoming the program director of the Counseling Program in 2017. She has continued the tradition of purposeful leadership to maintain a best practice training program. Baker models the skills of listening, support, engagement and collaboration that her students are expected to use in their professional roles. If asked about their success, alums of the program pinpoint their time in the classroom with professors like Baker. Many even named her specifically as having a profound impact on them while in the program.

Baker has served two years on the Wisconsin School Counselor Association (WSCA) board of directors as the post-secondary vice president under a previous leadership system. She currently serves on national committees focused on social justice and works closely with the Department of Public Instruction. She has authored two book chapters

Each year, the WSCA recognizes professionals within the school counseling and educational fields who demonstrate a profound impact on the school counseling profession and the lives of their students. Nominations are rated by a committee of active and retired school counselors. One individual is selected based on their contributions to school counseling programs, leadership and service to their community.

About the Wisconsin School Counselor Association

School Counselors are essential to the lifelong learning and success of all students. Our vision is for Wisconsin to be the model for excellence in equitable school counseling practice, exemplified by the advocacy, leadership, and expertise of the members of the WSCA. Focused on providing quality professional development opportunities, supporting comprehensive school counseling programs, and giving one voice to professional school counselors, WSCA is dedicated to empowering school counselors throughout the state. For additional information about WSCA, visit www.wscaweb.org.

Chancellor Maria Gallo's inauguration ceremony is Oct. 20

'Social Mobility' is theme of inaugural address

Oct. 11, 2022-- Maria Gallo, Ph.D., will be inaugurated as the 20th chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in a ceremony at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 20, in Riverview Ballroom (second floor) of the University Center on campus.



A reception will follow at 2:30 p.m. in Pete's Creek, located in the lower level of the University Center. Both events are free and open to the public, however, RSVPs are requested. Visit www.uwrf.edu/inauguration for complete event information, parking options, and campus maps/directions.

The inauguration ceremony will be emceed by Cathy Wurzer, UWRF alum and media personality, and will feature music by the UWRF Symphony Band and remarks by Gallo and distinguished alumni and guests.

Gallo's remarks will focus on the importance of helping students achieve "social mobility" or the ability to succeed in life despite economic disadvantages that might make them less likely than others to finish college.

"As a first-generation college student herself, Chancellor Gallo understands the struggles many UWRF students face," said Beth Schommer, Inauguration Committee co-chair and Gallo's chief of staff. "Forty percent of UW-River Falls students report being the first in their families to attend college. Having a chancellor who understands what that means ultimately translates to better support and resources for all of our students."

Schommer noted that Gallo's commitment to social mobility is already evident in UWRF's newly-adopted values as well as new scholarship and resource programs, including the Falcons Soar Award and Falcon Links/Fostering Success. She also noted that UWRF has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Top Performer in Social Mobility for the past two years.

Inauguration event highlights:

- Special guests including current chancellors from across UW System campuses, and past UWRF chancellors
- Remarks by Randy Romanski, UWRF alum and Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
- Video remarks by UW System President Jay Rothman
- Remarks by UW System Regent President Karen Walsh
- Musical selections from UWRF Symphony Band directed by Kristin Tjornehoj, UWRF professor of music
- Faculty processional led by Faculty Marshal Hossein Eftekari, economics professor
- Faculty/staff participants in formal regalia representing their alma maters

Inauguration Day is preceded by a "Day of Engagement" on Wednesday, Oct. 19, which focuses on themes of sustainability, innovation, and creativity. Visit www.uwrf.edu/inauguration for a complete list of events.

About Maria Gallo

Gallo started as the 20th chancellor at UWRF in July 2021 after serving five years as president of Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Penn. She was dean and director of Research and Cooperative Extension at the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii-Manoa from 2012-16. Her research interests included plant molecular biology, plant genetics and plant-microbe interactions.

Before that, Gallo, a Fulbright Scholar, was a professor and chair of the University of Florida Agronomy Department where she specialized in crop improvement. She also taught three genetics courses.

In the mid-1990s, Gallo conducted research at the University of Minnesota Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, and the Plant Molecular Genetics Institute.

She earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and Ph.D. in genetics from North Carolina State University.

See [here](#) for full bio.



UW-River Falls inaugurates 20th chancellor

Gallo pledges to foster opportunities for student social mobility

Oct. 20, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will continue and expand its mission to offer students the education they need so they and their families can improve their lives through social mobility, as well as work on the critical issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, Maria Gallo pledged Thursday as she was inaugurated as UWRF's 20th chancellor.

"I promise that UW-River Falls will continue to foster educational access that provides opportunities for socioeconomic mobility for all students," Gallo said before nearly 300 attendees during her inauguration speech in the University Center.

The UW System wants to help with that effort, she said, by creating the Wisconsin Tuition Promise to increase access for Wisconsin students from low income and moderate-income families, adding, "I thank UW System President Jay Rothman and the Regents for their commitment to close the opportunity gap."

Gallo also described new educational programs and spaces that the university is creating to provide even more opportunities for students, from the new doctoral program in Montessori Studies, to the renovated state-of-the-art Dairy Pilot Plant, to the forthcoming Science and Technology Innovation Center.

Gallo began her tenure at UWRF in July 2021 after serving as president of Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Penn., in a career that includes other administrative and faculty positions. She earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and doctorate in genetics from North Carolina State University.

Besides increasing access, Gallo said, it's important for UW-River Falls to work hard on diversity, equity and inclusion, "making sure all students feel welcome and at home here and are given the guidance they need to shape their own lives to be productive, engaged citizens and leaders."

That effort will extend to all employees as well, Gallo said, and in particular "faculty and staff who identify as female and females of color to move into leadership roles in higher education."

While more women than men are achieving the degrees that entitle them to move in high education administration, Gallo said, "They continue to comprise only a small percentage of leadership positions, and women of color even less."

Citing the work of the Women's Network Executive Council which Gallo chairs, she said, "I will bring best practices and network partners from that role to UW-River Falls, as well as collaborate with our sister schools across the UW System to advance our women leaders. I value the doors that education opened for me and the ones it will continue to open, not just for women, but for all our students, employees and alumni."

Gallo lauded the campus' hard-working, creative and dedicated employees, UWRF's supportive alumni and friends and defined current UWRF students as a "generation of self-starters [and] team builders, undaunted by difficulties, rooted in your community that supports your dreams, and helps you climb any ladder you choose to the top."

Rothman gave remarks via video, saying that during a visit to campus this summer, "I saw her passion in delivering that experience for students that will change the trajectory of their lives."

"She is steady, she is calm, she is thoughtful, and she is decisive in her decision-making," he added.

It's clear, Rothman said, that Gallo is the right leader at the right time for the campus.

Karen Walsh, president of the UW System Board of Regents, said choosing the right chancellor for UW-River Falls was important because the campus "is in one of the most vibrant areas of the state and has a crucial role to play in both economic development and producing the graduates needed by Wisconsin businesses and industry."

Walsh added: "Maria is a remarkable talent, has relentless energy and passion, is thoughtful, and is a values-centered person. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Gallo as our leader at UW-River Falls."

Ava Baden, vice president of the Student Government Association, said, "Chancellor Gallo has made an incredible commitment to connect with the campus community" during her time on campus, adding that Gallo's "passion for student success stands out."

"Students are at the center of her role as chancellor at UW-River Falls," Baden added.

Other speakers included Randy Romanski, a UW-River Falls graduate who is secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Paul Dykstra, the 2022 Distinguished Alum; UWRF Provost David Travis and UWRF Alum and Media Personality Cathy Wurzer, who emceed the ceremony.

UWRF Economics Professor Hossein Eftekari was the faculty marshal who led the procession of delegates and the platform party. The UW-River Falls Symphony Band provided processional and recessional music.

Former chancellors in attendance included Dean Van Galen, chancellor from 2009-20; Virgil Nylander, an interim chancellor; and Gary Thibodeau, chancellor from 1985-2000.

The inauguration events were paid for by donations from the UW-River Falls Foundation. No taxpayer or tuition dollars were used.

At the conclusion of her remarks, Gallo mentioned Pamela Powers, a public relations specialist for UW-River Falls, who died in July. Powers “left this world much too soon but left her mark on so many places including UW-River Falls,” Gallo said, adding “it’s goodbye for now until we meet again.” Gallo then ended with the -30- sign that journalists – Powers was a former reporter for the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram – use to signify the end of their story.

UW-River Falls pre-inauguration Day of Engagement on Oct. 19 to focus on sustainability

Oct. 12, 2022-- Chancellor Maria Gallo's inauguration committee has organized a Day of Engagement on Wednesday, Oct. 19, prior to [Gallo's inauguration ceremony](#) on Thursday, Oct. 20. Engagement events are free and open to the public. For complete event information, campus maps, and parking options, visit www.uwrf.edu/inauguration.

The Day of Engagement offers multiple opportunities for participants to experience the campus community's creativity and innovation, while also focusing on the UWRF core value of sustainability. Gallo has made sustainability a leadership priority, with the goal of incorporating sustainable practices into every aspect of the institution.

One of Gallo's earliest sustainability initiatives was to create a full-time sustainability coordinator position on campus. Mark Klapatch-Mathias, a 13-year UWRF employee who had been guiding a growing sustainability effort on top of other managerial duties, assumed that role in January.

"The chancellor was clear that she wanted sustainability to be a prominent part of her legacy from the get-go," said Klapatch-Mathias. "Even in her first campus interview, she talked about sustainability being a priority. And that hasn't changed."



The Day of Engagement will begin at 9 a.m. in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center with a presentation on innovative rural broadband solutions by [Nate Boettcher](#), president and CEO of Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services and SwiftCurrent Connect, and board chair of CHARGE EV, a network of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging sites.



Boettcher's talk is hosted by UWRF's College of Business and Economics and is part of that college's [Innovator in Residence speaker's series](#).

"Nate was selected as the fall 2022 Innovator in Residence based on his commitment to making the local region more sustainable in numerous inspiring ways," said Dawn Hukai, the college's acting dean.

Hukai said the focus of the presentation will be the Pierce-Pepin Cooperative Services SwiftCurrent Connect broadband initiative that is bringing high-speed fiber-optic internet to relatively rural areas, making it possible for people to work from home with reliable connectivity and vastly reducing the need for commuting.

Following a noontime edition of the [Frances Cohler Coffee Concert Series](#) and faculty art show in the Kleinpell Fine Arts building, Klapatch-Mathias will present the newly approved Sustainable Campus Community Plan.

Prior to the presentation, student employees in the Sustainability Office, along with other



faculty and staff, will facilitate an interactive session to collect ideas from participants around the plan's priorities and encourage them to get involved in areas that interest them the most.

Following the presentation, participants are invited to join walking tours at 2:50 p.m. that showcase UWRF Grounds Department's extensive sustainability efforts. The tour will end near the Wall Amphitheatre at the new Bee Hotel for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 3:15 p.m.

The Bee Hotel is sponsored by the UWRF Bee Club, a student organization formed to raise awareness of pollinator habitat conservation and benefits. UWRF has been designated a Bee Campus USA, one of only a few in the state.



The sustainability focus continues with a tree dedication at 3:45 p.m. near Rodli Hall in honor of Gallo's inauguration. The Bur Oak was a gift from the City of River Falls "chosen because it represents strength, resilience, and longevity," said Mike Noreen, the city's forester and conservation and efficiency coordinator, "and because the tree's silhouette will bring beauty to the campus year-round."

The day will end with a conversation at 7 p.m. in the Falcon's Nest between acclaimed author Annie Murphy Paul and Cathy Wurzer, media personality and UWRF alum.

Murphy Paul is the author of "The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain." Published in June 2021, the book was selected as Amazon Editors' Pick for Best Nonfiction; one of 50 Notable Works of Nonfiction by the Washington Post; and one of 100 Notable Books by the New York Times.



Day of Engagement events

Wednesday, Oct. 19

9-10 a.m.: Innovator in Residence Presentation: "Innovative Rural Broadband Solutions"

Location: Riverview Ballroom, University Center

Presenter: Nate Boettcher, president and CEO of Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services and SwiftCurrent Connect

Host: College of Business and Economics

Noon-1 p.m.: Inauguration Showcase Coffee Concert Celebration

Location: Abbott Concert Hall, Kleinpell Fine Arts building

The concert will feature the UWRF Symphony Band and include faculty soloists and alums Gary Bird, '68, and Richard Gaynor, '84.

1-1:30 p.m.*: Art Department Faculty Exhibition Meet and Greet

Location: Gallery 101, Kleinpell Fine Arts building

Faculty members who have artwork on display will be present to visit with guests from 1-1:30 p.m. The artwork represents faculty members' diverse areas of studio practices and artistic interests.

*The gallery will be open to visitors from 11 a.m. to noon and 1-2 p.m. on Oct. 19.

1:30-2:50 p.m.: Our Sustainable Campus Community: Vision and Values

Location: Riverview Ballroom, University Center

- **1:30-2 p.m.:** Participants are invited to share their sustainability ideas and priorities during this fun, informal interactive activity.
- **2-2:50 p.m.:** UWRF sustainability staff will share an overview of their recent efforts including the new Sustainable Campus Community Plan and a sustainability model. Q&A will follow.

2:50-3:30 p.m.: Campus Sustainability Highlights Tour

Location: The tour will begin outside the Riverview Ballroom, University Center

This guided tour will highlight the sustainability efforts of the UWRF Grounds Department. The tour will end at the site of the Bee Hotel near the Melvin Wall Amphitheatre, where there will be a short dedication at 3:15 p.m. The tour is wheelchair accessible.

3:45 p.m.: Gallo Tree Dedication

Location: West side of Rodli Hall near the Falcon sculpture

The City of River Falls has generously donated a Bur Oak tree in honor of Chancellor Gallo's inauguration.

7 p.m.: Interview with Annie Murphy Paul

Location: Falcon's Nest, University Center

Cathy Wurzer, UWRF alum and media personality, will emcee this event.

Editor's note: See full Day of Engagement schedule above. To request an interview or inquire about photo opportunities, please email dina.fassino@uwrf.edu.

Photos: (Top right, Boettcher; middle left, Bee Hotel; middle right, Murphy Paul; bottom right, Wurzer)



Left to right: Maria Gallo, UWRF chancellor; Paul Bauer, general manager, Ellsworth Creamery; John Freyholtz, director of operations, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery; and Michelle Farner, UWRF Dairy Pilot Plant manager, gathered as Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery added to its ongoing investment in the UWRF Dairy Pilot Plant renovation with an additional \$30K donation.

UW-River Falls receives milestone gift toward Dairy Pilot Plant Renovation

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery adds to its ongoing investment with additional \$30K donation

Oct. 11, 2022 – Rest assured cheese curds will be on the production line when the University of Wisconsin-River Falls re-opens its Dairy Pilot Plant in 2023.

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, a lead partner in the project and renowned for its popular cheese curds product, has demonstrated its ongoing financial commitment this week with an additional \$30K investment in the UWRF Dairy Pilot Plant's renovation. The company has donated a total of \$150K to the project, earning a naming opportunity in the Dairy Pilot Plant. In addition to financial support, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery supports students by providing scholarships, internships and employment opportunities.

"We have always valued our relationship with UWRF and from the initial planning stages of the dairy plant renovation, we have considered our support as a solid investment in the university, its students and our industry," said Paul Bauer, CEO and general manager of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. "The newly renovated and state-of-the-art plant will provide students with the hands-on experience they need for a successful career, immediately."

"I don't see Ellsworth Creamery as a donor, rather a partner that appreciates the value of our programs and in educating our students," said Michelle Farner, director of the UWRF Dairy Pilot Plant. "The company is clearly aligned with UW-River Falls in supporting the future of the dairy industry."

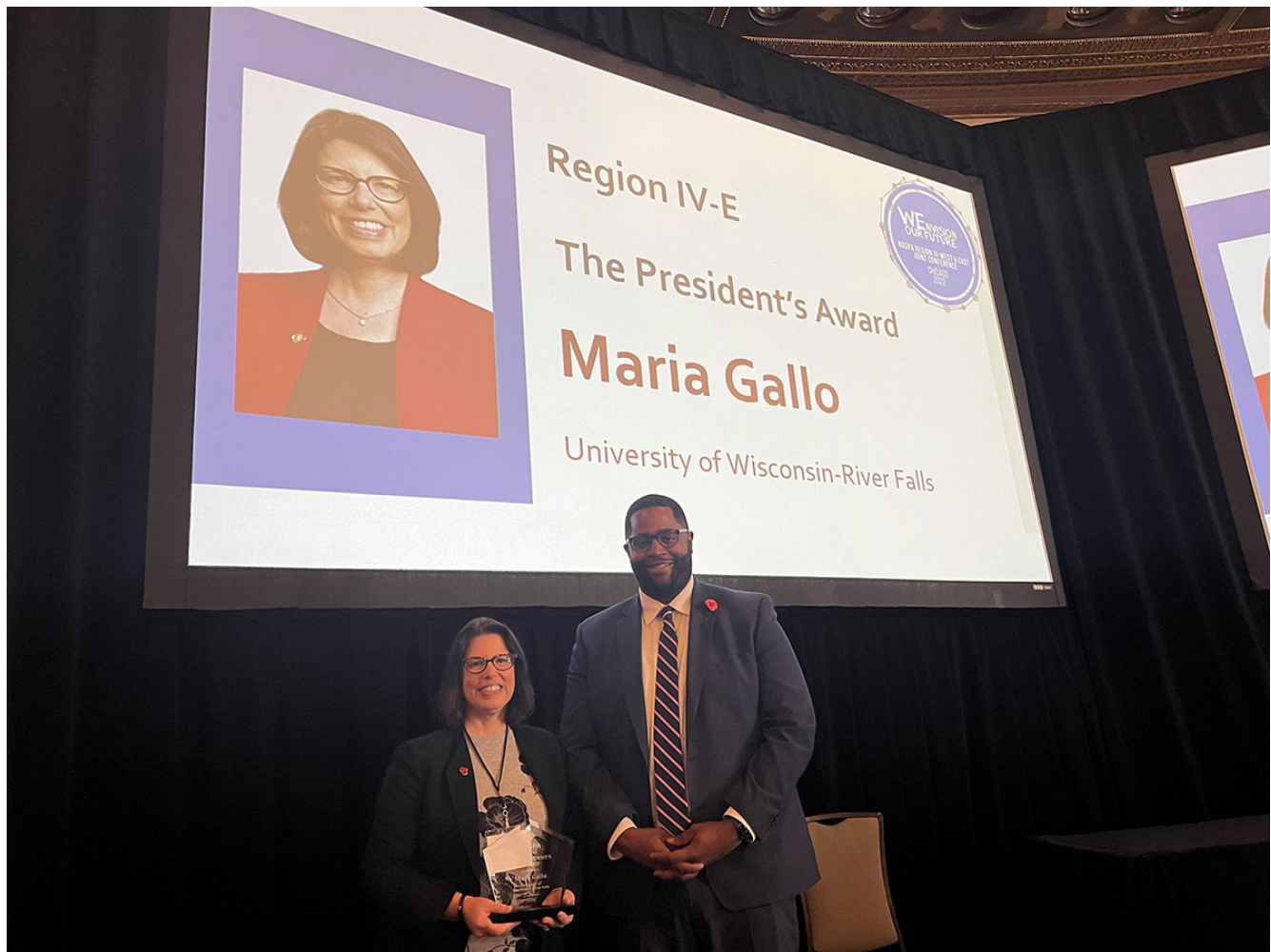
UWRF embarked on its \$8 million renovation project ten years ago. When it opens next spring, the 6,500 square foot facility will be considered one of the most sophisticated in the country.

"The completed Dairy Pilot Plant will be an amazing teaching, training, and research facility with great impact," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "The generous support from industry partners shows the value of the Dairy Pilot Plant, our people and our students."

"Investment across the nation in dairy-related education – degrees in business, engineering, food science, production, quality control and more – is vital to dairy's future," said John Umhoefer, president of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association. "Investment in production facilities on campuses, such as the Dairy Pilot Plant at UW-River Falls serve as an essential foundation for student success."

In addition to the dairy plant, UW-River Falls is home to a food science and technology program with a dairy foods management track and engineering programs with tracks in food and process systems and food and bioprocessing technology. In addition, many majors include dairy production classes and students across campus can work for pay and internships in the dairy processing plant.

It is not too late to support the UW-River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant. Email [Julie Stucky \(julie.stucky@uwrf.edu\)](mailto:julie.stucky@uwrf.edu) in University Advancement or call 715-425-4647 to learn more and discuss giving opportunities.



Chancellor Maria Gallo accepts the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Region IV-East President's Award from Bernard Little, regional director for NASPA Region IV-E.

Chancellor Gallo honored with regional NASPA Higher Education Award

Gallo's student-centered approach celebrated

Nov. 28, 2022 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo was recently awarded the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Region IV-East President's Award. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) is a member-centered association supporting a diverse and passionate network of 15,000 professionals and 1,200 institutions across the globe.

"Having been a first-generation college student myself, I know firsthand how high-quality student affairs staff and authentically student-centered support initiatives can truly make or break a student's success," said Gallo. "That's why it was my number one priority within the first six months of my UWRF chancellorship to hear directly from our students on what they experience

and need from our institution.”

The President’s Award is given to a chancellor or president in Region IV-East who has advanced the quality of student life on campus by supporting student affairs staff and initiatives. Recipients must show evidence of direct involvement in enhancing student life, active efforts to involve students and student life staff in governing the institution and demonstrating contributions to student affairs beyond just an individual campus.

“Time and time again, in public and in private, Chancellor Gallo has lived and worked to make the goal of putting students at the center of the university a reality,” said Tess Barker, NASPA Region IV-E Awards and Innovation coordinator. “Her nominators were unwavering and effusive in their praise of Chancellor Gallo’s support for staff in student affairs and across the institution.”

“Our chancellor is the embodiment of what it means to have a university leader truly focused on the diverse needs and experiences of all students,” said Jamie Zamjahn, assistant chancellor for student success. “But it’s not just our students who feel supported, it’s our student affairs staff too! We know we have a true champion in Chancellor Gallo.”

Gallo’s development of UWRF’s Dean of Students Office and position is just one example of her commitment to turning student feedback into tangible and accountable supports. The office was created following her fall 2021 Listening and Learning Tour where she engaged students and other stakeholders on what makes UW-River Falls great and how to make it even better.

“During the tour, I clearly heard that all learners, not only our traditional residential undergraduates, should be supported and communicated to on a more regular basis,” said Gallo. “The creation of our Dean of Students Office was a natural first step in making sure students receive the support, resources, and tools they need for their unique needs.”

In addition to Gallo’s award, UWRF Senior Bridgette Ledford was awarded the Undergraduate Student Rising Star Award. As one of just two undergraduates awarded the prestigious honor, Ledford was celebrated for her inclusive and positive student leadership on mental health issues, DEI work, and academic advising.

“I am incredibly proud to have the honor of working alongside UWRF’s incredibly talented staff and faculty,” said Gallo. “This award today is truly a reflection of the dedication of the whole UWRF community to help all of our UWRF Falcons to be successful not only in college but in their future pursuits.”



UWRF senior Bridgette Ledferd accepts the Undergraduate Student Rising Star Award from Bernard Little, regional director for NASPA Region IV-E.

King named vice chancellor for strategic enrollment

Nov. 7th, 2022 - Laura King has been named vice chancellor for strategic enrollment at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls following a national search.

King, of New Richmond, comes to UW-River Falls from UW-Stout where she has been working as the vice chancellor for enrollment and strategic initiatives. Prior to UW-Stout, King worked for Saint Paul College in St. Paul, Minn., as vice president of student affairs and as dean of institutional research, planning, and grants. She also brings experience from her service at regional technical and community colleges including CVTC and Century College.



"I look forward to working with Laura and leveraging her experience as we continue to grow enrollment," said UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo. "Laura understands the value of building on UWRF's strengths and reputation for providing students an exceptional, affordable education in a supportive learning environment. Here, our students are limitless!"

King, a UWRF alum, has a Ph.D. in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota, a M.S.Ed. in college student development and administration from UW-La Crosse. She completed her UWRF bachelor's degree in music performance.

"I am beyond excited to join the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. As a Falcon, I am fortunate to have seen firsthand the value, opportunity, and social impact UWRF has afforded its graduates and the greater region," King said. "I look forward to working with a dynamic team to advance the strategic vision for the institution and make a difference in the community we serve."

King will begin at UWRF on Jan. 3, 2023.

Orth selected as dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

November 14, 2022—Michael Orth has been selected as the next dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Orth will begin his tenure as dean on June 1, 2023, succeeding Dale Gallenberg, who retired last month. Dean Olson, interim CAFES dean, will continue to provide leadership to the college through the end of May.



In his role as dean, Orth will provide leadership to a college which has maintained an outstanding reputation for excellence and service since 1912. Ranked as one of the top undergraduate agricultural programs in the nation, CAFES offers high-demand programs like the ABET-accredited agricultural engineering and environmental engineering and is home to one of the largest dairy science programs in the nation. Other popular programs in the college span from agricultural education to conservation, horticulture and agricultural business.

"Dr. Orth has the ideal skillset and experience for this position," said David Travis, provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs at UW-River Falls.

Orth has been a faculty member at Texas Tech University in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences, where he also served as department chair for eight years. Prior to that, he was a faculty member at Michigan State University. Throughout his career he has been active as a researcher on livestock species and has been a dedicated service-provider to his profession, including serving as an officer for the National Block & Bridle organization for 11 years with the last three as president.

"I am beyond excited to serve as the next dean of CAFES," said Orth. "The focus of the college on experiential learning, community outreach, and applied research align with the values I believe are critical for this generation of students."

Orth's experience developing new curriculum and co-curricular programming for his students is well-aligned with CAFES areas of excellence and the needs of the greater community. His emphasis on experiential learning makes him an excellent choice for UW-River Falls, where CAFES already exemplifies the institutional ideal of being student-centered. Numerous hands-on learning opportunities are offered on two laboratory farms, through the Ecological Restoration Institute and a renovated Dairy Pilot Plant, as well as through engagement in research with faculty in the Wisconsin Dairy Innovation Hub. Most CAFES students complete internships with employers in the region and are active in dozens of student organizations, clubs and championship judging teams. The college continuously innovates to respond to community and employer needs, with faculty engaged in Extension programs and spearheading unique outreach initiatives, such as the recent development of the Humane Handling Institute, supported by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Meat Talent Development Program.

"I am looking forward to getting to know faculty, staff, students, alumni and stakeholders and working with all to continue to

build on the great reputation this college and university earned and enjoy. It is also fitting for me that my academic journey which began in Madison finds its way back to Wisconsin," said Orth, who holds a Ph.D. in nutrition sciences from UW-Madison and a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the University of Iowa.



Chancellor Maria Gallo shares applause with Trevor Wuethrich, Grassland Dairy Products, Inc. president, during a special gathering Thursday morning in the UWRF Dairy Pilot Plant.

Transformational gift to UW-River Falls for dairy plant renovation establishes Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence

Contribution brings total Wuethrich-Grassland commitment to \$1 million

Nov. 17, 2022 - Following a transformational gift, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant will now be known as the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence.

The Wuethrich Family Foundation and Grassland Dairy Products, Inc., of Greenwood, dairy industry leaders and longtime UWRF strategic partners, announced today an additional \$475,000 commitment toward UWRF's Dairy Pilot Plant Renovation Project, bringing their cumulative support to \$1 million, earning naming rights for the facility.

"For the future of dairy processing in Wisconsin to advance, innovation and modernization are essential," said Trevor Wuethrich, president of Grassland Dairy Products, Inc. "We regard our donation as an investment in UWRF – and the future of our industry – by providing students with real life experiences. We are honored to have our names associated with this

facility, which has earned its status as a dairy center of excellence.”

Combined with the support of state and university resources and many other dairy industry partners, the latest Wuethrich-Grassland contribution allows UWRF to complete the four-year, \$8 million renovation and provide its students with state-of-the-art, hands-on learning experiences in the development, production and marketing of cheeses, ice cream and other dairy products.

“The Wuethrich family and Grassland Dairy have been committed partners since we initiated plans for the dairy plant renovation more than 10 years ago,” said Michelle Farner, director of dairy production at UWRF. “Throughout the process, they have been there for us, leading the way with their generous support and industry expertise. We cannot adequately thank them for the transformational gift which ensures not only the completion of the project but the creation of the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence, the first in northwestern Wisconsin. Students and industry professionals alike will benefit from the educational investments made by our industry partners.”

“We are grateful for the remarkable support of the Wuethrich family, Grassland Dairy and all of our industry partners,” said Maria Gallo, UW-River Falls chancellor. “Thanks to their commitment, we will provide our students with amazing interactive experiences with the cutting-edge technology they need to become the next generation of dairy industry leaders.”

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association Executive Director John Umhoefer has been an active advocate for the dairy plant renovation project and led his membership’s strong and generous commitment to the facility.

“Our members understand and appreciate the value of the renovated dairy plant and cheer the establishment of the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence,” Umhoefer said. “This is an investment in our industry’s future, and UWRF has earned industry support through focused leadership in the chancellor’s and dean’s offices, tireless execution by Director of Dairy Production Michelle Farner, and creative collaboration from Julie Stucky and the University Advancement and Foundation teams. UW-Rivers Falls is a place where things get done.”

UWRF’s Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence is scheduled to launch operations in spring 2023.

It is not too late to support the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence. Email Stucky at julie.stucky@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-4647 to learn more and to discuss giving opportunities.

UW-River Falls student, alum honored with UW System awards

November 10, 2022 - A University of Wisconsin-River Falls student and an alum were recognized today in Madison with special honors by the University of Wisconsin System.

Elementary education major Dionna Berzat, of Maplewood, Minn., was one of 13 people to receive the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award and Natalie Rodgers, of Sun Prairie, a 2022 communication studies graduate, was one of 12 recipients of the Dr. P. B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People.

Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award

In its 27th year, the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award honors faculty, staff, students, and residents for their work in fostering social justice and organizational change and advancing the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

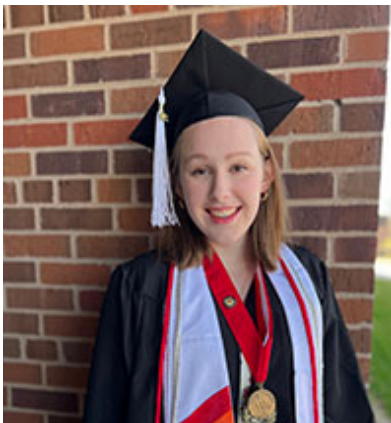


Berzat is an elementary education major with a communication studies minor and the vice president and public relations officer of the Black Student Union at UW-River Falls. Through this leadership role, she works with the other board members to put on events and seminars to provide space for students to embrace cultural awareness.

After graduation, Berzat plans to continue her work in the education system and eventually initiate her own program in schools which would teach staff how to best conduct classroom management practices as well as provide one-on-one support to the students who need it. She plans to get her master's degree in special education as well as her ABS (Academic Behavioral Strategist) License.

Dr. P. B. Poorman Award

This year marks the 14th anniversary of the Dr. P. B. Poorman Award, given annually to people who have helped create a safer and more inclusive climate for LGBTQ+ people. The award honors the memory of UW-Whitewater faculty member Dr. Paula B. Poorman who played an instrumental role in the foundation and development of the LGBTQ+ inclusivity initiatives.



Rodgers majored in communications studies, with a minor in women, gender and sexualities studies at UWRF. Rodgers took advantage of multiple internships and leadership positions around campus including the Student Involvement Office; the Women, Gender and Sexualities Studies Program; and the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Office.

Currently, Rodgers is a first-year graduate student at Illinois State University studying college student personnel administration. Rodgers continues to advocate for the importance of having advisers, mentors, and members of the campus community



devoted to diversity, equity, and inclusion work as well as creating and fostering inclusive communities.

UW System institutions submit nominations for the awards.



The upper level of UWRF's Falcon Center, through which nearly all Falcon fans pass to attend home basketball and hockey games, will now be known as the James and Margery Belisle Concourse, following the 1954 graduates' \$250,000 gift to the UW-River Falls Foundation. The couple wasn't able to attend the dedication ceremony but the Belisles' nephews and niece represented the family. From left: UWRF Assistant Chancellor for University Advancement Rick Foy and family members Craig, Jean, Lynn, Keith and Rich Geurkink.

Alum couple's gift provides lasting impact, establishes James and Margery Belisle Concourse at Falcon Center

\$250,000 donation supports endowed academic scholarships, men's basketball program

Dec. 6, 2022 – From the time they arrived on the campus of then Wisconsin State College-River Falls in the early 1950s, James and Margery (Deans) Belisle made names for themselves as popular student leaders. More than 70 years later, their names take on new prominence at their alma mater.

As a result of the Belisles' \$250,000 gift to the UW-River Falls Foundation, the upper level of the Falcon Center, through which nearly all Falcon fans pass to attend home basketball and hockey games, will now be known as the James and Margery Belisle Concourse. The dedication came during a Saturday afternoon reception and brief halftime ceremony at the UWRF men's basketball team's game against UW-Whitewater on December 3, which was also Jim Belisle's 90th birthday.



"We had such a wonderful experience at River Falls and are forever thankful for the opportunities the university provided," Jim said. "Both Marge and I have been reflecting on many special college memories. We really felt it was time to give back to a place that changed our lives and meant so much to us."

Jim and Marge, both 1954 graduates, started dating as sophomores and made an impact on campus. Marge, who grew up in Hammond, was the first female elected as president of the student senate. Jim, originally from Menomonie, was a sparkplug guard on the Falcon basketball team led by the legendary Roger Kuss which qualified for the 1953 NAIA national tournament in Kansas City. They were chosen king and queen of the college's Winter Carnival celebration and Jim was honored as outstanding senior athlete.

Marge earned a bachelor's degree in English and history education and taught high school students in Minneapolis, Fort Hays, Kan., and Bloomington, Ind., before influencing the lives of hundreds of student athletes as a long-time academic advisor at Indiana University.

Jim earned his degree in social sciences. After serving in the U.S. Army, Jim went on to earn his master's degree and Ph.D. at Indiana University's School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER), the first school of its kind in the country. For several years, he served on the faculty of Fort Hays State University before returning to Indiana University to serve as a long-time HPER professor and assistant dean. He is now associate professor emeritus in IU's School of Public Health.

"We thank the Belisles for their extraordinary gift in support of academics and athletics," said Rick Foy, UWRF assistant chancellor for University Advancement. "Jim and Marge are remarkable Falcons, and it is truly fitting their names will live on at UWRF in a place of such prominence. Their impact, which was first felt here more than 70 years ago, will live on."

"We hope our support helps provide students the same meaningful opportunities we experienced during our years at River Falls," Marge said.



For more information or to explore other naming opportunities, contact Foy at richard.foy@uwrf.edu or 715-425-4291.

Middle photo: Jim and Marge Belisle were named king and queen of the campus Winter Carnival in 1953.

Bottom photo: Current photo of Jim and Marge Belisle, Bloomington, Ind.



UWRF student-athlete Kameri Meredith is all smiles as she is introduced before a UW-River Falls women's basketball game in the WIAC tournament on Feb. 21 at UW-Eau Claire. Sam Silver photo.

Kameri Meredith: Rising to the challenge

Falcon student-athlete balances college, two sports, Type 1 diabetes

Dec. 12, 2022 - For most college students, studying for classes is a full-time job. That job becomes tougher for those who attempt to participate in a college sport.

Now imagine taking a full load of classes and playing two sports, all while managing a serious chronic disease. University of Wisconsin-River Falls dual sport athlete Kameri Meredith willingly tackles that challenge head-on, seemingly always with a smile on her face.

Meredith, a junior exercise and sport science major who excels in volleyball and women's basketball for the Falcons, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes on April 13, 2020 – about four weeks after her senior year at Colfax High School was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That left her only a few months to learn how to manage Type 1 diabetes before heading to UWRF and launching her college volleyball career.

“It’s definitely been a big learning curve,” Meredith said, “but my family and teammates and coaches have helped out a lot.”

When a patient has Type 1 diabetes, it means the person’s pancreas doesn’t make insulin or makes very little insulin. Insulin helps blood sugar enter the body’s cells for use as energy. Without insulin, blood sugar can’t get into cells and builds up in the bloodstream. High blood sugar is damaging to the body and causes many of the symptoms and complications of diabetes, according to the U.S. Centers on Disease Control and Prevention.

Meredith’s diagnosis meant learning a whole new language – one she won’t get credit for in school but will help her to enjoy an active, healthy life.

Her vocabulary now regularly includes acronyms such as CGM (continuous glucose monitor), ICR (insulin to carb ratio) and IOB (insulin on board). She wears a CGM patch on her arm around the clock that sends her glucose numbers to her cellphone and smart watch every five minutes and is constantly assessing the ICR of food she eats to ensure she maintains an appropriate IOB level.

If that all sounds complicated, that’s because it is, but Meredith said she is getting better at understanding her disease all the time.

“It constantly affects your life,” she said, noting that Type 1 diabetes makes it harder to join friends for spontaneous activities such as sharing a midnight pizza or visiting an ice cream shop because unplanned eating could throw her blood sugar levels out of whack.

To maintain her health, she must estimate the amount of carbohydrates she plans to ingest and then take the proper amount of insulin – 10 to 20 minutes before eating or drinking – to keep her blood sugar in balance.

“I’ve got random carb facts in my head,” Meredith said with a chuckle. “Someone names a food and I can tell them the exact number of carbs it has.”

Unexpected diagnosis

Her journey with Type 1 diabetes began in spring 2020 with a trip to the doctor after the normally energetic Meredith lost more than 20 pounds in three weeks and found herself feeling lethargic, extremely thirsty and in constant need of trips to the bathroom.

Tests showed her blood sugar level was sky high, a telltale sign of Type 1 diabetes.

The newly diagnosed patient later confided to her parents, Rich and Pam Meredith, that she had occasionally dealt with blurry vision and bouts of vomiting during her final high school basketball season but had brushed them off as no big deal.

Though the symptoms were similar to those of a former basketball teammate with Type 1 diabetes, the diagnosis still came as a shock to Meredith after a healthy, athletic childhood.

"I was not too accepting of it at first," she acknowledged.

Over the past 2½ years, however, Meredith has gotten better and better at managing her blood sugar levels. Still, there are bumps in the road.

This summer, for instance, Meredith passed out while doing beverage cart duty at an Eau Claire golf course. Her boss found her unresponsive and lying on the ground next to the cart. The boss called 911 and Meredith's mother, who told him where to find her life-saving medication and how to administer it.

Meredith had known her blood sugar level was low but thought she could finish one last task before addressing it. Unfortunately, she learned the hard way that she can't put off corrective action when her levels are askew.

"She does the best she can," Pam Meredith said of her daughter. "She does not want to go low, but it does happen. Overall, I think she does a great job of regulating her blood sugar while still living her life like she always has, participating in sports and going to college."

Rich Meredith echoed his wife's pride in how their daughter has dealt with the many challenges posed by Type 1 diabetes.

"There are hiccups along the way," he said, "but Kameron always bounces back, dusts herself off and just keeps going."

It's particularly gratifying to see the smile that brightens Kameron's face as she competes and supports her teammates, Rich Meredith said, adding, "She just loves representing UW-River Falls."

As Meredith has learned to live with the disease, she has grown to take its ups and downs in stride.

"At times I do get down about it or frustrated because sometimes it seems like a lot, but I just keep going," Meredith said. "I take it a day at a time and, if I have a bad day, I just think tomorrow will be better."

An 'inspiration'

Her coaches are impressed with the strides Meredith has made, both on and off the court.

"Kameron is a highly respected individual within our Falcon volleyball program," said UWRF volleyball coach Dipen Patel. "She has an impeccable work ethic and commitment to our Falcon family and represents volleyball, women's basketball, the Athletic Department and the university with great pride."

Though only 5-foot-7, Meredith uses her 28-inch vertical jump to sky for rebounds in basketball and to hit thunderous kills in volleyball. As of mid-October, she ranked second in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference in points per set and led the Falcons in kills with 365 through 27 matches. She was the Falcons' second-leading rebounder in the 2021-22 season, her first in the basketball program.

“The kid’s an incredible athlete,” women’s basketball coach Shelby Lyman said of Meredith, a standout four-sport athlete in high school who initially was going to play just volleyball in college but as a freshman emailed Lyman about the possibility of taking a shot at basketball too. “She can guard (positions) one through five, she loves to rebound and she’s turned herself into a great shooter.”

Outside of the sensor on her upper arm, spectators would never know the always-hustling Meredith lives with a serious disease.

At practices, Meredith wears an Apple watch that displays the blood sugar levels tracked by her CGM patch. She also keeps a supply of snacks on hand in case her blood sugar gets too low and, if needed, can give herself a dose of insulin to ensure her blood sugar doesn’t rise into a danger zone.

An athletic trainer helps monitor her levels during home basketball games, while teammates have gladly taken on that task when the Falcons are on the road. In volleyball, an assistant coach or injured teammate tracks Meredith’s blood sugar levels during matches.

“I have a lot of help from my coaches and teammates,” Meredith said. “There’s always someone on the bench watching my phone and checking my numbers.”

On occasion, that means pulling Meredith off the floor to be safe – an action she doesn’t like but understands.

“You can’t argue with the numbers,” Lyman said, adding that Meredith is the first athlete she has coached with Type 1 diabetes. “We tell Kam we have to get your numbers up or down before we can put you back in.”

Patel said the volleyball coaching staff stands ready to respond if Meredith needs to correct her numbers.

“We always have snacks and glucose tablets with us on the bench, and we always have personnel that are prepared to step up and enter the game and execute the game plan,” Patel said. “It is a great team and supportive effort.”

Thanks to the resources at UWRF, supportive teammates and Meredith’s responsible nature, the arrangements have worked well.

“There have been some learning lessons along the way, but I give her a ton of credit for how she deals with it all,” Lyman said. “She’s an absolute joy to be around.”

The Meredith family is incredibly thankful for how the university has stepped up to help Meredith on her health journey, from arranging her schedule to accommodate sports and appropriate meal times to allowing her to keep an extra refrigerator in her dorm room for insulin.

“UW-River Falls has been unbelievably supportive and accommodating. They’ve really gone above and beyond,” Pam Meredith said.

The family is especially appreciative of the people closest to Meredith on campus.

“Her roommates, teammates and coaches are just phenomenal,” Pam Meredith said.

The strong support network makes it possible for Meredith to keep doing the things she loves.

“I love volleyball and basketball. They’re the two best sports ever,” said Meredith, who has never been able to choose a favorite and thus was thrilled to get the opportunity to continue both in college even after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

During the fall crossover period when the two sports overlap, Meredith completes volleyball practice and then heads straight to the locker room, where she changes into basketball gear and returns to the court for hoops, possibly drinking a Gatorade or slamming a low-carb protein bar if her blood sugar needs a boost.

Patel said Meredith sets the tone by presenting to the entire squad and staff at the volleyball team’s first team meeting of the season to educate them about her condition.

“I think Kameron is an inspiration to many young children or athletes dealing with Type 1 diabetes,” Patel said, recalling a message to that effect from the mother of a girl with Type 1 in response to a viral UWRF volleyball TikTok video of Meredith soaring for a kill. “She carries herself well to prepare those around her versus those in her circle not knowing. There seems to be a stronger bond when teammates have her back in areas outside of volleyball too.”

When asked about serving as a role model for others living with Type 1 diabetes or other chronic illnesses, Meredith said she hadn’t thought about that possibility but would be honored if her example helped anyone else.

“It would be cool if I could inspire younger kids or other college students who want to play sports not to let Type 1 diabetes stop them,” Meredith said. “Hopefully, they might see me and think, ‘If she can do it, anyone can do it.’”

Regents approve realignment of two colleges

Dec. 9, 2022 - The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents gave final approval Dec. 8 to a realignment at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls that will reduce the number of colleges from four to three, saving significant administrative costs while increasing support for employees and students.

The action by the board means that after more than a year of campus discussion among administrators, shared governance representatives and faculty, staff and students, the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS) will be merged effective July 1, 2023, according to UWRF Chancellor Maria Gallo.

The name of the merged college will be the College of Education, Business and Allied Health (CEBAH).

“This reorganization is the product of much hard work and discussion on the part of many people on campus,” Gallo said. “It shows what we can accomplish when we focus on the goal of giving our students the best opportunity possible to succeed while being mindful of the need to be efficient and effective with taxpayer and tuition resources.”

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs David Travis said more than 50 presentations, meetings and group discussions took place to move the reorganization forward, adding the reduction from four colleges to three will accomplish several goals, including:

- Achieving greater balance among the remaining colleges in terms of the size – number of faculty, staff and students – as well as size of the budget and representation on governing groups.
- Removing barriers for collaboration across the academic programs in the current two colleges.
- Strengthening the argument for accreditation by giving programs in the newly merged college more support.

Travis said most of the immediate savings will come from reduced administrative costs: one fewer dean, for example.

“The rest will come as we recognize efficiencies within the new college through economies of scale and eliminating redundancies,” Travis said. “All of the savings will be re-invested into the new college to support new and current academic programs.”

The current two colleges share one interim dean and a national search will be conducted for a permanent dean of the new college, according to Travis.

CEBAH will have 1,900 students and will become the largest college on campus based on that metric, Travis said, adding that none of the current program accreditations – including the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business – will be affected.

The new college will also be home to three schools: Education; Business and Economics; and Allied Health and Social Work.

UW System President Jay Rothman complimented UW-River Falls faculty, staff and students for coming together to propose this reorganization.

"I'm pleased by the collaborative spirit I have seen at UW-River Falls which resulted in this important reorganization," Rothman said. "It's a testament to the value UW-River Falls places on continuously trying to improve the student experience."

Dawn Hukai is the current interim dean of the two colleges. She said her experience since taking the post last July shows that the merger will have numerous benefits for the campus.

"I thought going into the position that the year of running the two colleges under one dean would allow for aligning of policies, procedures and exploring new academic program offerings," Hukai said. "I now see many areas in the two colleges that will benefit from bringing all the programs under one administrative structure."

Gallo said she has been impressed by how the entire campus community contributed to the process that resulted in this major campus reorganization.

"A lot of people put aside their personal preferences and goals to accomplish the greater good," Gallo said. "That degree of collaboration and cooperation is what makes UW-River Falls special."

Severe Weather Update: Dec. 21, 2022

The following communication was issued to the UW-River Falls community from Chancellor Maria Gallo on Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022.

Dear UWRF Students and Employees,

The upcoming severe weather has the potential to put our students and employees at too great of a risk, so I am writing with an update to earlier campus guidance.

Provost David Travis has just communicated to all instructors that no in-person final exams are to be held after 6 p.m. Wednesday, including all of Thursday. I appreciate the work of instructors who have already rescheduled exams or are making it possible to offer them in an alternative format. Students in classes that require in-person exams may request an incomplete for the course and work with their instructors to take the final after the break.

I am also encouraging all non-essential employees to continue to monitor the weather and consider making arrangements to work remotely and cancel any in-person activities on Thursday and Friday. My heartfelt thanks to the many employees in University Police, Facilities, Grounds, and on the lab farms, and others who will continue to serve our campus.

The University Center and Residence Life have already issued updates regarding their operations. Residence Life will communicate with residents later this morning regarding any adjustments to hall closing and residence hall services. DoTS will be available via phone, email, and chat but working remotely from 6 p.m. Wednesday through Friday. While no varsity practices are scheduled, the Falcon Center may modify operations of the fitness center, Knowles Field House and Hunt Arena, so watch for updates from them as well. The CHILD Center will be closed Thursday and Friday. Davee Library plans to be open Wednesday and Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Snow is expected to start in River Falls mid-day today, becoming heavier over the afternoon and into the evening. The most dangerous conditions, with strong winds gusting as high as 50 mph, causing whiteout conditions and dangerously cold temperatures, are expected Thursday into Friday. Before you travel, it is recommended that you continue to consult the [National Weather Service](#) and online road conditions updates ([511wi](#) for Wisconsin and [511mn](#) for Minnesota).

Travel safely and happy holidays, Falcons. I look forward to our return to campus in the new year!

Sincerely,

Maria