

# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS STUDENT VOICE

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## UWRF cadets take on 26-mile Bataan March

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Walking is not something that many people consider a notable activity. It is a means to reach a destination, a way for the students at UWRF to move from one class to another, but, for three cadets from UWRF's ROTC program, walking would come to symbolize much more.

The three cadets, including myself, senior Johann Carstensen, and freshman Chris Lorsung, took a trip with Assistant Professor of Military Science Captain Stephen Trotter to White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to partake in the 34th annual Bataan Death March on March 19.

The 26.2-mile-long foot march takes participants through White Sands, where the world's first atomic bomb was detonated on July 16, 1945. The winding paths take the marchers on the journey of a lifetime, complete with beautiful views of the mountains and desert landscapes that encompass the area. Although the sights of the march are ones to behold, the origins of it are far bleaker.

The actual Bataan Death March occurred in the Philippines on April 9, 1942, when an estimated 76,000 Filipinos and American troops embarked on a 66-mile forced march by the Japanese in World War Two. Along the way many of the prisoners were beaten or killed, with an estimated 54,000 surviving the march, before others died of disease or starvation upon arrival.

To commemorate the fallen and survivors of the march, 103-year-old Valdemar de Herrera, one of the oldest living marchers of the original Bataan, was present for the opening ceremony. After the ceremony, roughly 5,000 marchers departed at 6:30 a.m.

The marchers were separated into different categories. We participated in the civilian heavy division, which required us to each carry a pack weighing at least 35 pounds during the entire duration of the event. The march began in freezing temperatures, which made us Wisconsin residents right at home.

We met with another cadet from UW-Stevens Point ROTC, Nathan Murphy, making our group an even four as we set off onto the route.

Morale was high at the beginning, with music and conversation bubbling amongst everyone and jokes about potentially running the remainder of the course were echoed.



Left to right: Johann Carstensen, Christopher Lorsung, Nathan Murphy, Joshua Brauer, Captain Stephen Trotter. (Photo by Joshua Brauer)

Every two miles on the course were water and bathroom breaks, where volunteers handed out Gatorade, bananas, and oranges to marchers passing through. This was the first time that UWRF ROTC cadets passed through these points.

Founded in 2007, the ROTC program at UW-River Falls currently has 24 students, also referred to as cadets, enrolled. This Bataan March would be the first that the program has undertaken, with hopes of making it an annual event available for daring cadets.

And what an event it was. Mile 8 through 13 of the march was a constant uphill climb, testing our mettle as we creaked along. Jokes quickly rolled away at the face of the incline, and the tone of the event shifted to one of quiet struggle.

Mile thirteen breathed new life into all of us, where we stopped at the apex of the incline which had us at a 5,500-foot elevation. We stopped for a quick 20-minute rest and assessed our feet. At this point I was already sporting two raw blisters on my heels and had to dig into my bag for a remedy.

Our packs were filled with a plethora of supplies we would need to get through the march. Extra socks, band-aids, water, energy chews and granola bars became our lifelines. Attached to cadet Carstensen's pack was a UW-River Falls flag waving in the New Mexico air, the only effortlessly moving object of the entire affair.

The sun had reared its head and was in full effect by this time of the march, however the weather was mild, stabilizing in the mid-50s.

Random conversations occurred throughout the day; many I hate to admit I have forgotten for they became one of the few

means to drown out the pain in my feet and hips during the ordeal. We had conversations with Vietnam veterans, current active military personnel, and other ROTC programs from around the nation. Captain Trotter even said hello to some cadets from Texas A&M University, where he graduated in 2013.

As the miles and hours passed, we slowly began unraveling as some of us succumbed to pain and exhaustion. My springy step at the beginning devolved into a painful shuffle around mile 21 and I found myself marching on my own for the final five miles.

Those final miles were the most mentally exhausting of the day. The last four were nothing but a rocky road that was akin to walking on nails with my already-tender feet.

Walking those final miles, and the totality of the march, brought a new perspective to all of us. The original marchers of the Bataan were not allowed to have breaks, nor did they have people giving them water and food along their very different route over 80 years ago. It was not 26 miles, but nearly triple that which they had to endure. This realization became a source of motivation for all of us, and one that kept me tethered to the course in those final steps.

I finished the 26.2-mile march in 9 hours and 12 minutes, cadets Carstensen, Lorsung, and Murphy all finished in just over 9 hours, and Captain Trotter brought it home at 9 hours and 50 minutes.

The rest of the day, and the one following, was spent painfully waddling to our rental car, our hotel rooms, and through the airport on our way back to River Falls.

The trip was financed through the university, with support from Acting Dean of the College of Business and Economics Dawn Hukai and former College of Business and Economics Assistant Brandon Meyer, who allowed all of us to experience this grueling yet rewarding event.

The Bataan Death March is one of those experiences that challenges and enlightens those who choose to take it on. I was extremely fortunate to take part in this event, and it is one that hopefully continues for future members of UWRF ROTC.



White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Joshua Brauer)



# UW System and UWRF to raise tuition

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The University of Wisconsin System is preparing to raise tuition across all of its campuses, including UW-River Falls. This will be an average increase of about five percent across several colleges, and will be going into effect this fall for the 2023-2024 school year.

In addition, UW-River Falls has proposed an increase in resident undergraduate tuition of \$283.42 per year. There are two areas, or differentials, that are pushing these tuition increases, and those are the Falcon Promise, which will result in an increase of \$30 per year and the Matrix Advising and First-Year Experience, which are new differentials that will result in an increase of an additional \$95 per year.

“The Falcon Promise has been around for well over a decade,” said Beth Schommer, the Chief of Staff in the Chancellor’s Office. “When the original increase was approved by the Board of Regents, it was supposed to be phased in, and the last thirty dollars was supposed to be in effect around ten years ago. Then, when they froze tuition, we never got it. So this thirty dollars is basically just making good on a promise for this Falcon Promise program from a while ago.”

UWRF is also going to implement program-specific differential tuition. This includes an increase of \$63 in additional tuition for students in Agriculture and Environmental Engineering, as well as an increase of \$360 dollars in additional tuition for juniors and seniors in Biomedical and Health Science. This increase would help to pay for equipment and specialized laboratories.

UWRF’s segregated fees will also be increasing, by \$60.04 per year. Segregated fees support UWRF’s various services, programs, and facilities. “Segregated fees are managed in consultation with the students, so the student government has a very important role in deciding what they’re used for,” said Schommer. There is a full breakdown of what segregated fees are and what they are used for on the UWRF website.

“The [Board of] Regents sets our tuition rates as a system, and that’s your base tuition. Then if a campus wants to do anything else on top of that, then they have two other



**The UW-River Falls Student Billing office in Rodli Hall. (Photo by Jack Schindler Van Hoof)**

options. One is differential tuition, which is extra tuition tied to a specific initiative or program. [Another is] segregated fees, which are managed in collaboration with the students themselves,” said Schommer.

Residence halls will experience an increase of \$224 per year, and meal plans will have an increase of \$130. In addition, there will also be a \$2.14 increase for textbook rentals, and increases for nonresident undergraduates, resident and nonresident graduates, and master’s degree students in Communicative Disorders.

Even though UWRF will be experiencing one of the UW System’s higher proposed tuition increases, with a 5.4% increase, or about \$822 more for the entire year, it will remain one of the lower-cost universities in the UW System, with only UW-Parkside and UW-Whitewater costing less than UWRF per year.

## UWRF Finals Fest set for end of April, to feature NUR-D

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As the semester nears an end and summer approaches, so does UW-River Falls’ Finals Fest. The event is set for April 28, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and will feature a pre-party on the University Center lawn, as well as a performance by hip-hop artist NUR-D. Both the pre-party and performance will be free and open to the public.

Elise Peters, the Events and Activities Coordinator for the Office of Student Involvement, provided additional information on what students and visitors can expect from the event. The pre-party will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the University Center mall, and, in the instance of

rain, will be held in the University Center.

The pre-party will include a number of activities, such as caricatures and live illustrations, a t-shirt tie-dye booth, a camper photo booth, and student organization pop-up performances. There will also be yard games, which Peters said will “most likely” be bean bags and large versions of chess and Jenga, as well as an inflatable human foosball game and a mini arcade with a claw machine, the Dance Dance Revolution game, and ski ball.

Food options will be two food trucks: Holy Donuts and Powl, which serves smoothie bowls, as well as a hot dog and tocho bar.

The NUR-D show will start at 7:30 and take place in the University Center Falcon’s Nest. UW-River Falls students

who attend the performance will have the chance to win a gift card for a flight to a destination of their choice. The winner will be drawn after the show.

Matt Allen, also known as NUR-D, is a hip-hop artist, who, according to the biography on his website, is “one of the fastest rising stars in Minnesota’s music scene.” He has performed “alongside national acts like Ludacris, Migos, Logic, Tyler The Creator, and The Wu-Tang Clan,” and was voted “Best New Minnesota Artist in 2019,” “Best Live Concert 2021,” and “Best Minnesota Artist 2020.”

For more information on Finals Fest, contact Student Involvement at [studentinvolvement@uwrf.edu](mailto:studentinvolvement@uwrf.edu).

Visit the Student Voice at  
[uwrfvoice.com](http://uwrfvoice.com)



# Women's lacrosse returns home, wins 3 straight

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UW-River Falls Women's Lacrosse returned to Ramer Field on March 20, hosting their first home game of the season. Following their 15-2 regular season last year, the Falcons opened their 2023 campaign 1-3 before returning to the nest for three straight home matchups.

The College of Saint Benedict visited Ramer Field for the inaugural game of their women's lacrosse program. Experience quickly outmatched them, as the Falcons grabbed the lead and locked it for all four quarters. Midfielder Bailey O'Donovan climbed to double-digit goals on the year, scoring twice in the first quarter. Emily Herdine and Grace Hannula were equally busy, each putting in three goals to finish the night. River Falls emerged from below-freezing temperatures and finished the Bennies 16-5.

The Hamline Pipers were the next bounty on the Falcon's list. Both teams fought early, and with two seconds left in the first quarter, the Pipers put in a goal cutting their deficit to one. This frustrating miscue ignited an offensive blitz from the Falcons, who went on a 7-0 run in the second quarter. Josie Johnson had four goals in the first half, followed by Sydney Chance-Farley with three. The Falcon's defense left few windows open in the second half, and Hamline only managed three goals. River Falls latched a final score of 20-6, bringing them to .500 on the year. Josie Johnson had the highest-scoring game of any Falcon this season, grabbing an unfair seven goals against a Hamline team without answers.

The University of Northwestern Eagles were the final visitors on the Falcon's home tour, riding an impressive 4-2 record. Following a tight first quarter, River Falls overpowered the Eagle resistance and led 11-4 to end the first half.



**The Falcons defeated the College of Saint Benedict Bennies 16-5. (Photo courtesy of Pat Deninger)**

Kyla Palo and Grace Hannula directed the offense, recording three goals a piece at the half. The Eagles came in averaging over fifteen points a game but were diminished by the Falcon defense. Goalie Abby Hammond gave up only two goals in the second half and planted the Falcons in a triumphant 17-6 victory.

A slow start dulled the Falcon's season, but three straight home victories set them back on track for 2023. River Falls

blew each game wide open in the second quarter with a combined run of 22-4 against their opponents. These dominant runs gave the Falcons a cushion on defense, and they only allowed a combined eight goals in the second half. River Falls will be taking their talents on the road for their next three matchups, hoping to produce the same blowouts as at Ramer Field.

# UW System bans TikTok from campus-owned devices

Joshua Brauer

Falcon News Service

Reacting to concerns of lawmakers, the University of Wisconsin is restricting the social media application TikTok on system-owned devices at its campuses, including UW-River Falls.

"The UW system will be restricting the TikTok application on System-owned devices," Media Relations Director Mark Pitsch stated in an email last month.

The ban comes off the heels of an executive order in January from Gov. Tony Evers that banned TikTok, along with other applications, on all state government-owned devices.

The ban stems from concerns over cybersecurity with the app, according to the order. The order notes that "under China's 2017 National Intelligence Law, all businesses registered or that have operations in China are required to assist the government of China in intelligence work, including data sharing and data collecting." TikTok is owned by the Beijing-based ByteDance Ltd.

"The State of Wisconsin reaffirms its commitment to regular, ongoing review of such technologies to protect the interests of the State and of the people of Wisconsin," the order reads.

Procedures for how the ban will be enacted at UW-River Falls are being handled by a task force, according to Joseph Kmiec, executive director of the Division of Technology Services.

According to Kmiec, UWRF has more than 2,000 campus-owned devices, including staff computers, lab computers, phones and tablets.

"Only 10 campus owned mobile devices had the TikTok application installed, only in areas that are using them for marketing events for students," he stated in an email.

While procedures are still in the works with how the UW System will prohibit the application, other entities on

campus which use TikTok are finding alternative ways to utilize the platform's content style.

"I hope we can find a way to utilize 'TikTok style' content through other measures, such as Instagram reels," Elise Peters, the events and activities director of Student Involvement, said in an email.

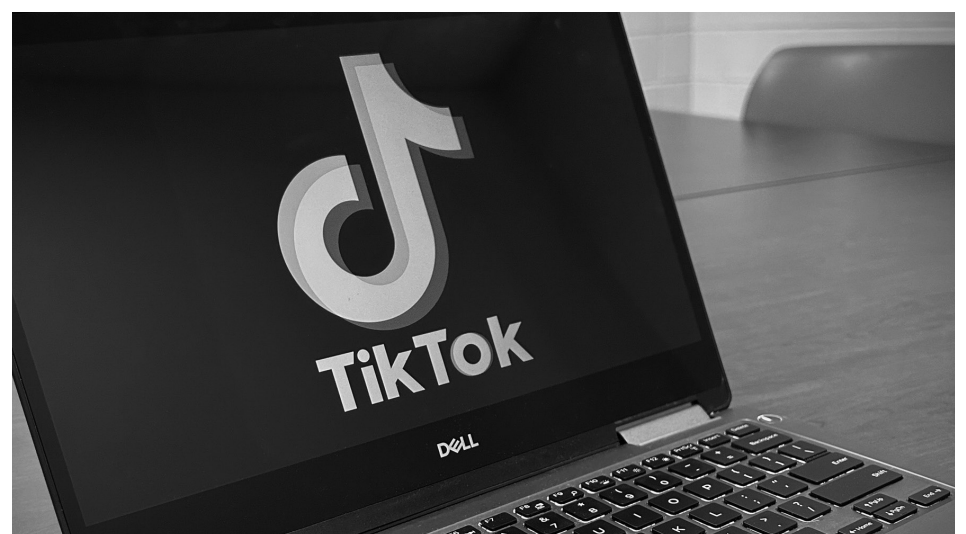
"We know that students are on TikTok, and it is a great way to communicate with our student body," she said. "I am confident we will still be able to utilize other avenues to get our message across."

Amber Mitchell, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Media Studies who teaches a course about social media marketing communications, agreed.

"I am monitoring how it is unfolding. We still teach about it, in terms of understanding the content that's being shared, but at the same time being mindful of the regulations that are in place," she said. "It highlights the importance of having a diversified marketing strategy where you can't be reliant on one platform."

In a letter sent to the Wisconsin System President Jay Rothman on Jan. 23, several congressmen, including U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden, urged the UW System to extend the governor's government ban to universities. Van Orden, a Republican, represents Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Pierce and Pepin counties.

"Given the widespread recognition that TikTok poses a



**TikTok will no longer be allowed on UW devices. (Photo by Joshua Brauer)**

national security threat, we urge you to ban TikTok from UW System devices and block it from UW System Wi-Fi and wired networks," the letter said.

Similar bans at other universities across the country were cited in the latter. One such university is the University of Texas at Austin. In a statement posted on Jan. 17, that university banned the use of TikTok on any device that is connected to the university's wired, or wireless network.

"The university is taking these important steps to eliminate risks to information contained in the university's network and to our critical infrastructure," according to the statement.

The social media app TikTok launched in 2017. With more than 1 billion total active monthly users globally, TikTok ranked sixth in the world among social networks, according to the business data platform Statista.



# Local editors deny newspaper war in River Falls

Riley Budge  
Falcon News Service

While hundreds of small-town newspapers around the country have closed in recent years, the River Falls area now has two weekly papers in apparent competition for readers: the Pierce County Journal and the Star-Observer.

But the editors, John McLoone of the Pierce County Journal and Jim Johnson of the Star-Observer, deny that their publications are in a newspaper war. A newspaper war is when two or more papers battle for coverage, and for readers, in the same area.

"I don't really see it as a war of any kind," McLoone said. "I mean we do our stuff, they do their stuff."

Johnson agreed. "As far as like a newspaper war, I think that's a little outside of what's actually happening."

For nearly 150 years, River Falls was served by the River Falls Journal. In 2019, owner Forum Communications Co. of Fargo, North Dakota, merged its River Falls, Hudson and New Richmond newspapers into one publication, the Star-Observer. The following year, Forum sold the newspaper and several other operations to Vermont-based O'Rourke Media Group.

Meanwhile, the former Prescott Journal rebranded as the Pierce County Journal, although it continues to be published in Prescott. The publication is owned by McLoone's Thepaperboy.news group, which runs several other operations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Journal traces its heritage back to the first newspaper in Pierce County, the Prescott Paraclete, which appeared in 1855.

The two papers primarily operate in different counties. The Star-Observer, with an office in Hudson, reports mostly on St. Croix County, while the Pierce County Journal sticks to Pierce County. Division Street in River Falls marks the border between the two counties. This seems to have created two distinct audiences for each paper, said Sandy Ellis, UW-River Falls professor emerita of journalism.

"They kind of have a different market. The market for the Journal, it's more rural," Ellis said. The two papers seem to be independent from each other through this physical division, as well as the other areas that the papers cover.

"I don't think that the Star-Observer is going to take away business from the Journal, nor do I think the Journal is going to take away business from the Star-Observer," she said. "I think they have different audiences."

McLoone said, "We're just doing our thing, you know. We work hard to cover local news. The people in the county have appreciated that, and they've subscribed."

Both newspapers have, for now, dropped paywalls to their online content. The Pierce County Journal's website is at piercecounty-journal.news and the paper charges \$45 for an annual subscription to the print edition delivered within the county. The Star-Observer maintains a separate website, riverfallsjournal.com, for River Falls news and charges \$80.08 a year for subscriptions to the printed Star-Observer plus digital content.

"The core market for each newspaper is different," Johnson said. "The Star Observer, the core market is River Falls and Hudson, The Pierce County Journal, they cover all of Pierce County, and their core market is Ellsworth. There will be need going forward for both of the newspapers to continue what they're doing."

The two papers seem to be wanted by the community, McLoone said, A lot of papers going out of business makes people realize that they want local newspapers again.

"Many communities are losing their newspapers," John-



Both the Star-Observer and the Pierce County Journal can be found on the same news rack in the Family Fresh grocery store in River Falls. (Photo by Riley Budge)

son agreed. "For River Falls to have two newspapers, to cover the city, is really a big deal for River Falls."

Each paper seems to hold each other in high regard. Both editors said they have respect for the other newspaper.

"He's a good guy," McLoone said of Johnson. "He's a very skilled and knowledgeable editor. He's been in it a long time, and in a lot of different places they got a good guy in town there."

Johnson added: "There's no animosity between our reporters. They know each other. I think there's respect for the work that all of them do."

## River Falls business making a splash in mocktail market

Joshua Brauer  
Falcon News Service

In the summer of 2019, a River Falls couple began experimenting with crafting alcohol-free cocktails, also called mocktails, while expecting their first child. Fast forward to 2023, and the business Kul Mocks has gotten in the door of more than 1,000 locations around the United States.

The mocktail business, which began in the Wisconsin and Minnesota markets, is now expecting a breakout year, according to Kul Mocks co-founder and CEO Danielle Goss.

"This year is our ramp-up year," she said. "We are working through test market opportunities with retailers, If the product does what we need it to do, we are able to fill a void that we believe to be there."

As a couple, Danielle and her husband Nate began realizing through market research and consultation with beverage industry experts that the market for mocktails far exceeded that of pregnant women like Danielle, according to the business's website.

"Me being a registered dietitian by trade, I have watched in the last 10 to 15 years of people taking ownership of health and wellness," Danielle Goss said. "Kul Mocks is a moderation brand, For us, we said in 2019, there's an option for everything, why is there nothing filling this space?"

The Gosses then created a finished product which they

rolled out in June 2020.

"We started by building our distribution in the Wisconsin and Minnesota markets," Goss said. "We had about six or seven beer distributors that we worked with in the first seven months."

Starting a business during the COVID-19 pandemic came with challenges, according to Goss.

"It hit as we were preparing to launch our product," she said. "To go from the production side and securing supplies to me personally having to build the business with a newborn at home, it was filled with challenges."

Although providing some barriers, the pandemic was just something that Kul Mocks had to work with, according to Goss.

"We didn't know anything different," she said. "We had to do meetings with retailers virtually, we had to get influencers to share taste testings online."

Initially, Kul Mocks included three flavors: the Mock Mule, Strawberry Mock-arita and the Blackberry Mock-jito. Those flavors were then joined by three others: Classic Mock-arita, Mock G&T and Peach Hibiscus Cider.

All six mocktails have won PR%F Awards, a beverage competition where judges from across the United States evaluate and award wines, spirits and other cocktails.

"Beyond us saying that they (mocktails) are good, it means that industry veterans and people that are experts in beverage have said that they have really loved our drinks,"

Goss said.

To get the authentic taste of a traditional cocktail without overloading on sugar, Goss worked with experts.

"Collaborating with flavorists, food scientists and other experts helped us get down to the flavor profile we were looking for," she said.

With zero alcohol in its products, Kul Mocks can reach beyond industry standard alcohol distributors, according to Goss.

"From a legal and regulation perspective we don't have to work with alcohol distributors," she said. "We are working through more of a hybrid distribution model, which involves selling directly to wholesalers."

The reason for this distribution model boils down to accessibility, according to Goss.

"You'll find that any brand in the NA (non-alcoholic) space is trying to break down barriers to improve accessibility as the demand continues to grow," she said.

According to Goss, 2023 is projected to be the company's turning point in making a profit.

"To break profit on the national level takes some time to do," she said. "There is definitely a journey to profitability, We are planning to be profitable by the end of the year, with 2024 being where the rocket ship really takes off."

# UWRF 'The College Tour' episode now on Amazon Prime

Lexi Janzer

Falcon News Service

The episode of the television show "The College Tour" featuring UW-River Falls has now been released on the Amazon Prime streaming service.

The episode follows 10 UWRF students as they tell their story while showcasing many different parts of the campus. While undergraduates who participated in filming of the show spoke positively of the experience, it is still too early to tell whether the show will draw more attention from prospective students.

The show is hosted by Alex Boylan, who is known for winning "The Amazing Race" and has since gone on to be a producer and host of several different shows. Cathy Leaf, UWRF's marketing specialist, said previously that the idea to participate in the college tour was first brought up by Chancellor Maria Gallo. She had participated in the show at a previous institution and thought the different marketing

opportunities created by the show would be beneficial.

The students were directly involved in the production process with each cast member writing their own script.

"They kind of let me lead it (filming), so I got to pick the area we filmed, the horses we used, and kind of what would happen in the scenes," said Greta Weix, a featured UWRF student.

The episode first premiered to students and the community in late January at a university event called Midnight Mayhem. The cast was all invited and received miniature Oscars as a thank you for participating.

Many of the featured students in the show had very positive responses. Isaac Roehrig, another featured student, said, "I think this is going to be really important to our out of state students."

Samuel Peters stated, "I think it does a good job of just getting our name out there and showing all the various cool things going on around campus."

Weix agreed: "I loved it, I think it was really well done

and it was super cool to see everybody in it and how everybody experiences river falls in a different way in a different light and all the different types of students we have here because I'm only in (the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences) so that's all I interact with so it was really cool to see different departments."

When asked about the show's impact on admissions applications, Leaf said, "Well, I had a call with the admissions office and one thing about this project is that it kind of ladders up with a bunch of other projects that we are doing related to branding but admissions has noticed that the work we are doing. Not only this but in combination with the other branding awareness stuff, the billboards, all the other stuff that they can tell there is a difference especially in Minnesota."

The only official number that the school has is from YouTube.

"Right now," Leaf said, "our YouTube has had over 2,000 views of the whole episode."

## Wisconsin considers how to increase online learning

Riley Budge

Falcon News Service

The University of Wisconsin System has begun a process of increasing online education for the future. This includes a possibility for students to attend online courses offered at different campuses.

UW-River Falls Provost David Travis is a member of the system's Online Strategic Growth Task Force that has been studying the issue. The task force in November released a draft report, "Accelerating Online Education."

"The UW system has created a strategic plan where they're trying to come up with some priorities in how we can grow the online program presence throughout the whole state," he said. "As far as the state goes we're pretty far behind. If you look at Michigan, even Minnesota, Illinois, states right around us, they have a lot more programs they offer."

Since 2001, the number of UW students taking online courses has grown steadily, with a spike during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to draft report. During the 2001-2002 academic year, a total of 13,543 students at UW campuses took online courses. Last year, the total was 123,932.

"While (UW System) enrollments have declined about 10 percent in the past decade, enrollments in online courses have doubled," the report states.

There are many benefits if the UW System decides to pursue more online learning, Travis added.

"The advantage is you can get to more people," he said. "They don't have to come to campus. There are a lot of adult learners, people that have never gotten their college degree. They made it to 60 credits and stopped out. They might want to come back and finish their degree online. They

may have families. They may have jobs. So there's a lot of advantages to doing it. It's a matter of finding the resources to kind of do that, and not compromise what we do really well here already."

The increase in online education could make it possible for students enrolled at a UW school to take online courses through any of the campuses in the UW System.

"If you want to take a class on ceramics or something, to figure out which school offers an online version of that course, you'd literally have to go to each campus, look at the course catalog, go through and figure out if it's online," the provost said. "So what other states have done is they've put together an archive of all of that across all of their campuses." That, Travis said, is one of the first things the UW System has to do.

But UW-River Falls is known for its hands-on learning, with many students studying agricultural sciences. This poses a possible problem for the proposed increase in online education.

"So when you're primarily focused on hands-on learning it's hard to have the time to teach online classes at the same time. I mean it's really a different kind of, you know, learning approach," Travis said. "So part of it is, 'Do we have the resources, do we have the people, do we have the time to do it, and if they do, or if we want to prioritize that, what are we willing to give up?'"

During fall semester 2021, according to the report, 67% of UW-River Falls students were enrolled in at least some online courses.

## Geology professor Keen's time at UW-River Falls has been 'quite a ride'

Michelle Stangler

Falcon News Service

Professor Kerry Keen, who has taught environmental science and geology classes for more than 20 years, will end his time at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls at the completion of the spring semester.

"It's been quite a ride," said Keen, who has had notable accomplishments since he started in the Department of Plant and Earth Science in 1997.

Keen's specialties include hydrogeology, hydrology and sedimentary geology with expertise in how the environment coincides with water, rocks and much more. Teaching thousands of students, Keen has been student-focused and said, "our students are so fortunate to have an amazing laboratory right out the back of the Ag Science Building." Keen has taught Introduction to Geology, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Sedimentary Geology courses.

"I try to help them (students) understand more deeply and broadly how this amazing planet, which we share, and that many take for granted, works and relates to individuals and societies," said Keen.

Keen has taught many other courses, and for more than a decade, spent time working in the Semester Abroad Europe program guiding students with projects in another country.

"It was overall a very rewarding and interesting part of my years at UWRF," said Keen and added, "I loved working with students from a wide variety of majors and learning about their interests."

Keen acknowledged that the team he has worked with has helped him learn and grow to be a better and wiser person.

"The wonderful colleagues whom I've

shared moments, days, carpools, and years in this adventure of trying to help our students learn and be successful," said Keen.

Holly Dolliver, chair of the Department of Plant and Earth Science, said the energy Keen brought to the department has been contagious, and will be missed.

"I will miss the energy and enthusiasm that he brings," said Dolliver and added, "He brings that perspective of how can we be making this better and that mindset around continuous growth and improvement."

Additionally, the connections and friendships Keen brought to the department will be missed, especially in the area of water, but Dolliver looks forward to staying connected with Keen in this next journey in his life.

"We know water is a critical resource on planet earth," said Keen. "By no means is our department going to abandon water and, in fact, we have already started that process with a new faculty member in our department already taking over the Hydrology and Water Quality course."

Dolliver is continuing to evaluate how to fill the gap through continued conversations with her team members.

To celebrate Keen, a last lecture event is planned for May 4. A last lecture is a special time to reflect upon the professor's area related to teaching and research contributions to provide closure.

"This is a tradition we do in the geology program when faculty commit to their retirement. We provide this opportunity," said Dolliver.

More information will be released in an upcoming Falcon Daily about the event to celebrate Keen's contributions to UW-River Falls.



# UW-River Falls hires new Title IX coordinator

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The UW-River Falls campus will soon welcome a new Title IX Coordinator, along with a new office for the position, which is opening soon in Rodli Hall. The position of Title IX Coordinator is federally mandated, and the role's main objective is to prevent sexual misconduct on campus, work to prevent it from happening in the future, and provide help and resources to sexual misconduct victims.

"We know, based on research, that students are at the greatest risk for experiencing sexual misconduct in their first six weeks on a college campus," Katie Jackson, the UWRf Dean of Students said, "we refer to that as the 'red zone'."

To help combat this vulnerability, "factor solutions" are provided to students before they arrive on campus to educate them about this issue and lay out expectations. This helps them not only learn about sexual misconduct, but teaches them skills to prevent it.

"Anyone can experience sexual misconduct and anyone can be responsible for committing sexual misconduct," Jackson said. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for working with the Violence Prevention Coordinator to teach students prevention education surrounding sexual misconduct.

The Title IX Coordinator is also a source of support for students who are victims of sexual misconduct. Almost all employees are considered "mandated reporters," meaning they are required to report all sexual misconduct they become aware of to the Title IX office. Those who are not required to report include the campus counselors and the Violence Prevention Coordinator.

When a case of sexual misconduct is reported to the Title IX Coordinator, they will reach out to the victim and provide that person with resources for support. They also make sure that the victim is aware of their right to seek accommodations on campus; this may include assignment flexibility or living arrangement assistance.

The Title IX Coordinator also helps inform the victim of their options for response. Potential response options include a report to the police or a formal complaint to the university. The person filing the complaint, known as the

"complainant," then has the option to go through the process of sharing information about the incident and identifying potential witnesses.

The person responding to the claim of sexual misconduct, known as the "respondent," has the same chance to share their perspective and provide information. An investigative report is put together and the university partners with administrative law judges to hear the case and come to a formal resolution.

The position of Title IX Coordinator was previously held by Jennifer Larimore, who left her position in the spring of this year. As it is required for every campus to have a Title IX Coordinator at all times, Michelle Best was introduced as the interim Title IX Coordinator. Best has had previous experience working in this position at UWRf.

A committee of faculty, staff, and students chaired by Cara Rubis, the Director of the University Center, was created to search for the new Title IX Coordinator. When looking for a candidate, there were certain requirements the committee looked for. A master's degree was required, but a doctorate was preferred. Previous experience working with Title IX in a University setting was also preferred, as well as training in neutral trauma-informed approaches.

This committee also used a tool provided by Human Resources to sift through applicants and find those with required and preferred qualifications. They identified one applicant and had them meet on-campus with several groups, such as the search committee, and participate in an open forum. The applicant also gave a presentation and met with Chancellor Maria Gallo.

The new Title IX Coordinator will begin on April 17, but until the official announcement is made, Best will remain as the active Title IX Coordinator. According to Jackson, the position has been filled, but the new Coordinator is not yet public information.

This new faculty member has previous experience working with Title IX at Texas A&M and is currently relocating to Minnesota to work at UWRf. She has a Juris Doctorate from the University of Mississippi and earned her undergraduate degree at the University of California, Los An-



**Michelle Best, Interim Title IX Coordinator. (Photo courtesy of UW-River Falls)**

geles.

"She comes to us very experienced," Jackson said, "I'm very excited to have her on campus."

One of the first jobs this new hire will have to tackle is educating the campus about recent changes made by the federal government regarding Title IX and implementing them on campus.

## Student Voice wins 9 awards in newspaper contest

The *Student Voice*, the campus newspaper at UW-River Falls, won nine awards in the annual Collegiate Better Newspaper Contest sponsored by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation.

The awards, including three first place honors, were announced Friday, March 24, during the state press association's annual convention in Madison.

The *Voice* won two awards for feature stories. Joshua Brauer won first place for his April 2022 story, "For veterans, American Legion more than just bingo." The story examined what American Legion Post 121 in River Falls means for its members.

"Really good feature," a contest judge wrote. "Very well written. Great quotes!"

Editor Jack Van Hoof won second place for feature for his October 2022 story, "Behind the scenes at Textbook Services."

The *Voice* won three awards in the in-depth reporting category.

Anna Gunderson won first place for "New pantry tackles food insecurity on campus." The story, which reported on Freddy's Food Pantry, was published in February 2022. Gunderson is general manager of the *Student Voice*.

"This is a good piece on a topic that's oftentimes overlooked at the college level," a judge commented. "We don't often think about food insecurity in college students, but

this article definitely brings the issue to light. Good job!"

Van Hoof earned third place for his September 2022 story, "UWRf rebrands to emphasize recruitment." Assistant Editor Lexi Janzer earned honorable mention for her October 2022 story, "Amazon show 'The College Tour' to feature UWRf."

Former Assistant Editor Charlie Swanson won first place in sports writing for his April 2022 feature, "Junior breaks longstanding 1977 track and field record." The story covered Lexi LeFever and the school record she set in the 100-meter dash.

"An enjoyable portrait of an interesting athlete," a judge commented.

Swanson is now a reporter for the online *Hastings Star Gazette* in Minnesota.

Former editor and alumna Isabella Forliti won third place in public affairs reporting for her April 2022 story, "Students, faculty petition against custodian outsourcing."

In column writing, the *Voice* won two awards. Janzer earned second place for her December 2022 opinion piece, "UWRf new animal policy 'lets the dogs out'." Staff member Natalie Riddle earned honorable mention for her February 2022 article, "Question for the culture: Valentine's Day Edition."

The *Student Voice* is published during the academic year, appearing monthly in print as well as online at uwrfvoice.

The paper was founded in 1916.

A total of 205 entries from nine Wisconsin campus newspapers were judged by the Arkansas Press Association.

### Alumni also win

The WNAF also announced winners in the 2022 Better Newspaper Contest for the state's commercial press.

Sam Fristed, a 2021 journalism graduate of UW-River Falls, earned third place in the "Rookie Reporter of the Year" category for non-daily newspapers with circulation of less than 4,500. Until recently, he was a reporter for the *Star-Observer* in Hudson. While at UWRf, Fristed was a staff writer for the *Student Voice*.

Sarah Nigbor, a UWRf alumna and former journalism minor, won a first place in column writing. She is editor of the *Pierce County Journal* in Prescott. Nigbor also earned honorable mention in enterprise and interpretive reporting for a series of news stories that examined broadband internet. She also earned honorable mention for coronavirus coverage.

Reagan Hoverman, another recent UWRf journalism alumnus, earned an honorable mention for spot news photography. He is a sports reporter for the *Pierce County Journal*. At the *Student Voice*, Hoverman also covered sports.

# Conservative student orgs spark controversy

Natalie Riddle

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The student organizations Turning Point USA (TPUSA) and Students for Life have become controversial topics of conversation among students and faculty of the UW-River Falls campus. The arrival of these organizations on campus has sparked a range of reactions, from enthusiasm and support to skepticism and concern.

In an era of extreme political polarization, these groups are raising important questions about free speech, diversity, and inclusion. While some see them as an opportunity for politically conservative students to come together and express their ideas, others worry that they may create a narrow-minded echo chamber that shuts down alternative perspectives.

The TPUSA chapter has been reestablished on campus as of spring 2023 as an organization committed to promoting conservative values in the community. These values include free markets, limited government, and individual liberty. However, the organization has faced criticism and

controversy for some of its tactics and its connections to far-right extremist groups.

There has also been an established chapter of Students for Life, a pro-life organization dedicated to pushing its agenda of limiting women's reproductive rights and promoting a culture of shame and guilt around abortion.

Students for Life says they are a nonpartisan group, "composed of diverse UWRF community members advocating for the rights of human life." The members of this organization hold what can be seen as a narrow-minded view that denies a woman's right to choose what happens to her own body.

Its activities and events are designed to intimidate women who are considering abortion, and to spread biased information about the scientific, ethical, and moral issues surrounding this deeply personal decision.

The UWRF chapter of Students for Life goes beyond mere rhetoric and seeks to impose its beliefs on community members by offering "practical support." One of the ways in which this is done is by 'tabling' in the University Center.

Its methods include connecting women with anti-choice pregnancy resource centers, which often provide misleading information about abortion and pressure women to carry their pregnancies to term, regardless of their circumstances.

With the establishment of these two clubs, it should be considered that there are no other politically affiliated groups for them to compete with. This runs the risk of creating a one-sided opinion corridor that could lead to a lack of critical thinking and narrow-mindedness, and a system where students are exposed to only one set of beliefs without the opportunity to engage with alternative perspectives.

The emergence of these clubs could lead to further division and animosity on campus, as students with different beliefs may feel marginalized and silenced. It's crucial that universities prioritize creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their political affiliations. While these two clubs may seem like an opportunity for some students, they could be seen as having detrimental effects on the campus community's overall well-being.

## UWRF staffing issues: A campus or national issue?

UWRF is currently hiring for many positions after a wave of faculty and staff have either quit or retired. Every college on campus will be getting a new dean. The college of arts and sciences is hiring 8 new professors. Admissions and the Early Childhood Education Center are looking for new directors. Even the lab farms and the building and grounds crew are looking for new staff. Ever since COVID, staffing shortages are not a new experience happening in the workforce but it can be unexpected for many to learn that it is occurring in higher education as well. Many professors and administrators go through years of school just to get a job in higher education. Why is UWRF experiencing a mass exodus of employees?

In an opinion piece published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* titled "Colleges Are Hiring. But Do People Want to Work There? Higher ed used to be insulated from the whims of the labor market. No more." it goes to state many reasons why higher education is experiencing these rapid changes nationally. Issues like budget cuts, lack of childcare options, employees experiencing low morale, professors being "under attack" for teaching certain topics in classrooms, and even suggesting that universities are indifferent to employee concerns.

Many of these nationwide issues like limited childcare or childcare being expensive and budget cuts could definitely apply to UWRF but we think this staffing issue is a more unique problem to UWRF. Rather than budget cuts we think that UWRF is facing a problem with having low

starting salaries when other competing institutions close by have better offers. The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire is about an hour away and just 30 minutes away you have Minnesota universities. The U of M is also unionized which can help professors get better offers, though River Falls has a lower cost of living. The fact that there is so much competition close by, in and out of state, is something unique to the staffing shortage that UWRF is facing. Another possible issue that UWRF is facing is the campus size. Some of the reasons why students attend UWRF is for the small class sizes and a campus community that gives off that small town feeling while being close to the Twin Cities. This could lead to an issue with workload. With the limited amount of faculty and staff on campus they are taking on many different roles. The workload for employees has increased significantly without the pay increase.

Concerns like censorship in the classroom and low morale are national issues that we believe UWRF does not need to worry about. Academic freedom is a concern but we do not think it is a reason for people leaving. We believe that low morale could have been an issue in 2021 or 2020 but generally the campus seems to be getting back into the swing of things. Employee morale can change by the day making this point easily be up for interpretation. UWRF's staffing problem is something that higher education is experiencing nationally but the reasons why people are leaving UWRF is unique to the campus size and location.

## STUDENT VOICE

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The Student Voice is a student-written and managed newspaper for UW-River Falls, and is published monthly during the regular school year.

All editorial content in the Student Voice is determined by the newspaper's Editorial Board.

The opinions expressed in editorials and columns do not represent those of the newspaper's advisor, student population, administration, faculty or staff.

Letters to the editor must be 300 words or less, and include a first and last name and phone number. They can be submitted at 304 North Hall, River Falls, WI 54022 or to editor@uwrfvoice.com.

The Student Voice reserves the right to edit any material for content, libel or space. It also reserves the right to withhold letters. All letters, news releases, briefs, display ads and classified ads must be able to be submitted no later than Wednesday at noon during the week of publishing. Information on publishing schedule can be obtained by contacting the editor.

Because of high production costs, UW-River Falls community members are permitted to collect one copy of the Student Voice per issue. A single copy of the Student Voice is valued at \$1, and additional copies may be requested from the editorial staff via email. Newspaper theft is a crime. Those who violate the single copy rule may be subject to civil and criminal prosecution.



# Stage and Screen Arts performs 'Alice in Wonderland'

Jack Van Hoof

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UW-River Falls' Stage and Screen Arts Productions presented an original adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland" in UW-River Falls' Blanche Davis Theatre from March 30 to April 2. The play, as stated on its promotional website, follows Alice down a "mysterious rabbit hole," where she discovers a "marvelous land of unforgettable characters such as an inquisitive caterpillar, the infamous Queen of Hearts and, of course, the aptly named Mad Hatter." The play was also held at the Old Gem Theater in New Richmond, WI.

The adaptation did not utilize a large set to tell Lewis Carol's classic story, and, instead, relied on "movement and imagination," to create the world of Wonderland. Kathy Welch, who directed and adapted "Alice in Wonderland," said that the production team lacked a technical staff member who would have directed the development of a set.

"We decided to use actors and costumes and lights to create the effect and not rely on the set," Welch said. "This particular adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland" works very well for that. It's very physical; we used the active body to tell the story."

Welch described the process by which Stage and Screen Arts Productions prepares for its performances. "We'll talk to students about what kind of shows they're interested in, and take into consideration what [the faculty] are interested in directing," she said. "[We choose] shows that will show off our strengths and give students the best opportunity to perform."

After a performance has been chosen, Welch or another faculty member will work on an adaptation. "I've done ["Alice in Wonderland"] and adapted in myself a couple of different times, but each time I've adapted it for the actors I had," Welch said. "I worked with the book and sketched out the plot and chose the dialogue but still kept a lot of things open until we knew what the cast was going to be."

The director will also meet with the design team, who are involved in costume design, lighting, and sound design. "We talk about the concept.. and the sort of collaborative approach we're going to take," Welch said. "Then the design team and I will meet every week until opening night." This takes place several weeks before auditions.

After auditions, the director will hold rehearsals with the actors. In addition, Welch worked with the actors to further adapt the play. She described it as "ensemble creative work," and said that "Our very earliest rehearsals were very much getting together and playing together and figuring things out. So the actors had the opportunity to, use their own imaginations."



Left to right: Adrienne Quinlan and Corinna Brose, who starred as Alice 1 and Alice 2, respectively. (Photo by Jack Schindler Van Hoof)

From there, the production moves into technical rehearsals, and then, dress rehearsals. The technical rehearsals add props, lights, and sound to the rehearsals, while leaving out costumes and makeup. This takes place the weekend before opening night. Finally, dress rehearsals add costumes and makeup, and take place a few days before opening night.

Rehearsals take, according to Welch, "[around] seven weeks, and we rehearse four or five nights a week for three

hours." In addition, "Alice in Wonderland" is an audience participation play, and the actors had to become familiar with interacting with the audience.

While "Alice in Wonderland" has completed its run, Stage and Screen Arts Productions is already planning next year's productions. "In the fall, one of my colleagues will be directing a staged reading, so it won't be a fully-produced script, of Columbine, which is a play about Columbine and school shootings," Welch said.

"My production is going to, [be] an immersive version of "Night of the Living Dead," Welch said. "The audience is going to enter through a kind of haunted house-like immersive experience before they [enter the theatre]." She also said that Stage and Screen Arts is planning on performing a play that deals with First Nations issues, as well as the musical "Urine Town."

"["Urine Town"] is about sustainability, and about water rights. It's about greed and corruption," Welch said. "But it's funny, and the music is great."

Welch said that anyone, not just Stage and Screen Arts majors, can audition to perform.

"All of the jobs on stage and on the production give students really valuable tools: the confidence you build by going on stage, [and] the collaborative nature of it, where you work with other artists who have different ideas, and have to come together for opening night.

Welch said that, if students are interested in auditioning, audition information is posted on the campus information monitors, and that they can reach out to the director of the play and let them know that they're interested. In addition, Stage and Screen Arts has classes that are open and available to students across the university.



A scene from "Alice in Wonderland." (Photo by Jack Schindler Van Hoof)