

University Center  
to open in January

Veteran columnist offers  
final words of wisdom

Goalie gives Falcons  
an edge on the ice



# STUDENT VOICE

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## Student Senate votes to change future class times

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After much debate, Student Senate backed the decision made by the Calendar Committee to reduce class sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays by five minutes. Tuesday and Thursday classes will also be adjusted to 75 minute class periods.

Karl Peterson, chemistry professor and chair of the Calendar Committee, addressed questions from senators as they discussed the positives and negatives of the change.

These changes allow each class to start on the hour or on the half hour, Peterson said.

There are no dates set for when the new class times will occur. When Faculty Senate votes on the proposal Dec. 20, the Registrar's office will decide when class changes should be implemented.

If Faculty Senate approves the change, Registrar Dan Vande Yacht said staff will have the new class schedules available for the 2007-08 academic year.

"If it gets approved, we will be ready to go in the fall," he said. "It's not set in stone, but it is what we're aiming for."

Senator Ashley Olson, Diversity Issues Committee director, said the most important aspect of the change must be an assessment of any effects it has on students, faculty and staff after it is implemented.

"The Calendar Committee is very open to suggestions," Peterson said. "We don't want to look back at this four or five years down the road and say, 'What should we have been looking at?'"

With retention rates on the forefront, Peterson said the committee will look at any changes in the percentage of students leaving after their first or second year at UW-River Falls to see if any correlations can be made with the change in class time.

In a close 10-9 vote, senators made distinct points about how the campus will benefit from the decreased time of class sessions.

With less time in classes, faculty have the opportunity to schedule convenient office hours for students to utilize, said Natalie Hagberg, Leadership Development and Programming Board chair.

"This can encourage students to utilize the office hours designed for them by professors," she said. "It gives them a one-on-one setting."

Olson said the new time for classes will cause professors to assess their teaching style, making sure students are getting the most important information for the course.

"There's something to be said about getting the quality within the time we have," she said. "It also takes an initiative to work outside of a class."

Students who already struggle with the amount of time given for their courses warranted concern for Senator Jim Vierling, who pointed out a negative aspect the change may have on students' ability to learn in the shorter time period.

"For a struggling student, that five minutes can be a huge amount of time that could have been spent talking to the professor," he said. "Imagine how valuable that time is to them."

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## Profs not at fault for late work

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As the semester comes to an end and finals quickly approach, many professors are finding themselves grading piles of exams and assignments that have accumulated over the past several weeks. But students are growing impatient waiting for their coursework to be returned to them.

"This is one of the most common complaints against professors," said Brad Caskey, psychology professor and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Political science professor Wes Chapin said the reason professors struggle with returning assignments is because of their workloads.

"The state has reduced the University's financial budget and has also cut hundreds of positions from the UW System," Chapin said. "That means, on average, every advisor has a few more advisees, many classes have a few more students, and there are many other tasks that were formerly handled by individuals whose positions have been cut, resulting in their work being spread out among the remaining staff."

While online gradebooks like

See **Assignments**, page 3

## As one journey ends, another begins

Beckie De Neu

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Another semester is winding down at UW-River Falls. While some students are cramming for finals, others are too excited for Christmas and J-term to care about their grades, and still others are getting ready to take the next step in their lives: graduate.

Now is a time for reflection, self-discovery and new beginnings.

"Every day, without fail, I would be surprised by something," graduating senior Kelly Aherns said, reflecting on what she will miss most at UWRF. "Yes, this occurred in the classroom, but more importantly in the halls, in the library and on the way out of buildings."

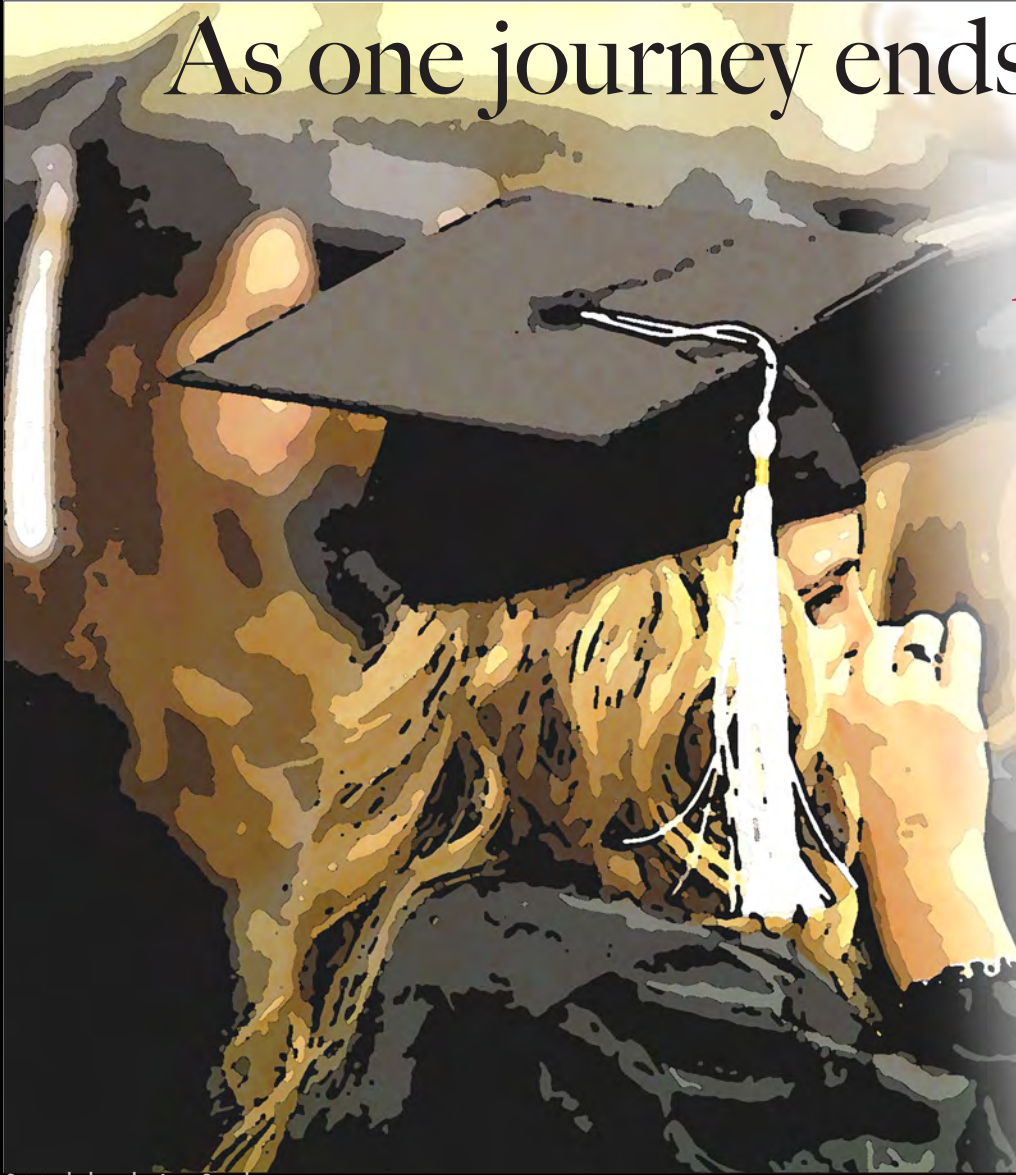
On Saturday, 230 UWRF seniors will put on their caps, gowns and tassels to walk across the stage and start a new chapter in the book of life. Commencement begins at 2 p.m. and is expected to last about two hours.

"I'm not leaving and might stay here next year to work year round, but I am going to miss all of my friends that aren't going to be here anymore," graduating senior Anna Banti said.

While graduates may be ready to give up attending classes and doing homework, many find it difficult to imagine life without the friends they've made while here at UWRF.

"I'm going to miss my job at Luigi's Pizza and all of the good times that I had with the people on campus," graduating senior Dan Lynum said. "I really enjoyed the nights out on the town. I've been to other college bars, but nothing beats a \$4 long island at Zero on a Wednesday night."

See **Graduation**, page 3



Original photo by Jens Gunelson

## Multidisciplinary, capstone courses lacking

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The effects of UW-River Falls' switch from the old general education program to the new one were felt by many students during spring registration.

While some students were able to get into senior capstone and multidisciplinary courses with no problem, others found there to be little or no courses available when they were registering.

Sophomore Abby Hazard had no problem registering for a multidisciplinary course because she was able to register early.

"If I would have registered a few days later, I wouldn't have gotten into the course I needed or the course that fit for me," she said.



**Mike Bremer searches his eSIS Web site in the Green Lab of Davee Library for course openings and availabilities.**

Kenny Yoo

Junior Sarah Foster had a different experience.

"It was really hard because a lot of classes I wanted were at the same time as other classes," sophomore Sarah Foster said. "I had to pick and choose classes that I didn't necessarily want to take."

Provost Charlie Hurt, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and General Education Committee Chair Ian Williams met to discuss the issue shortly after it arose.

The group added more seats to senior capstone courses and created temporary multidisciplinary courses to meet student demand.

"We underestimated how many students were on the old general education program," said Brad Caskey, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Within one day, 100-150 senior capstone seats were added to courses.

"For the most part, that problem took care of itself," Caskey said. "There are several senior capstone courses offered next summer and next fall."

More multidisciplinary courses are also being offered next fall than necessary, however, the bigger problem now is trying to find permanent ones.

"We are trying to get as many courses out there to fulfill students' needs and options," Hurt said, adding that he hopes the now temporary multidisciplinary courses become permanent.

Yet because the new general education program is so new, many multidisciplinary courses have not been approved or developed for this category.

"The difficulty is there are very few classes approved for this category," Caskey said.

Williams agrees.

"We need to either have people invent classes to fit or find existing classes," Williams said. "Then we need to get them through the pipeline and make them [multidisciplinary] courses."

After the courses are approved, Caskey said the University needs to make sure these courses are offered to students.

"Not all multidisciplinary courses were offered this semester," he said. "We need to be better at tracking these courses and make sure

See **Multidisciplinary**, page 3

## Accreditation ensures quality of education

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Imagine if students at UW-River Falls couldn't get financial aid or earn money through work study programs, or if credits earned weren't perceived as legitimate and were not transferable to other universities.

This unlikely scenario would take place if UWRF is not reaccredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC/NCA).

All public schools in the Midwest are accredited, though that hasn't stopped UWRF administration from taking the reaccreditation process very seriously.

"There is probably no more significant issue in the long-term viability of a college or university than its accreditation," Chancellor Don Betz said. "Every institution of higher education must pass the scrutiny of an independent review whose purpose is to verify for the public that the institution is doing what it claims."

Accreditation is the verification

that a learning institution provides a quality education and services. It entails a detailed university self-study, as well as a visit from a five- to 10-person review team.

The HLC/NCA review team will not arrive at UWRF until April 2008, but faculty and staff have been preparing for the visit since 2005 when Betz appointed professor of theatre Gorden Hedahl as self-study coordinator. "One of the recommendations [of HLC/NCA] is that there is a single style and voice," Hedahl said. "So I'm the editor."

The findings of the HLC/NCA team will be of major importance, but another major factor will be a University self-study that UWRF is currently undertaking. The self-study final report is required by HLC/NCA and is due three months before its visit to campus. The self-study must touch on every area UWRF has a potential influence on.

"We have to prove that we know what our mission is," Hedahl said, "that we have a clear plan of what we're doing,

See **Accreditation**, page 3



VOICE SHORTS

**Parking rules enforced at finals, graduation**  
Parking lots will be patrolled during finals week. Staff members and students pay for the privilege to park in the parking lot that they are assigned, and when lots are used for the convenience of book returns and other tasks at the end of the semester, permit holders are displaced.  
There will be six spaces in upper B Lot (on the west side of South Hall) reserved for 20-minute textbook drop off. This area will be indicated with a sign at the entrance. The 20-minute time limit will be strictly enforced in order to accommodate as many people as possible. The lower portion of B Lot on the south side of South Hall will NOT be open for textbook drop off parking.  
To accommodate for graduation visitors, vehicles must be removed from the Ramer Field parking lot by 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15. Ramer permit-holders can park their vehicles in any alternative student lot until 6 p.m. Dec. 17, though the Ramer lot will reopen to students at 8 p.m. Dec. 16. Vehicles in violation of these rules may be towed at the owner's expense. Please contact the Parking Department at 715-425-3333 if you have any questions.

WIS students participate in Santa Run

Thirty Wisconsin in Scotland (WIS) students spent their last Sunday in Scotland participating in the Great Scottish Santa Run, which took place in Edinburgh's East Princes Street Gardens Sunday. The run was one of the largest gatherings of Santas in the United Kingdom.  
A total of 2,257 Father Christmases completed the 1.5 km circuit. The event was held to raise funds for the children's charity, "When You Wish Upon a Star," which supports children with serious or life-threatening illnesses. At a time when students were running short of funds, each participant made a nearly \$20 donation to the Scottish charity. UWRF WIS students return to the United States Dec. 15.

Tickets available for Murder Mystery Dinner

Tickets for the Murder Mystery Dinner are now on sale. The show and three-course meal is scheduled for 7 p.m. Jan. 27 in the Riverview Ballroom of the University Center. Tickets are \$10 for students and \$20 for faculty and staff, and are on sale through Dec. 22, at the Information Desk in the Student Center.  
A limited number of tickets are available. For more information, call 715-425-4444. The event is sponsored by the Student Entertainment and Arts Committee and the FYE Office.

Diversity conference to be held at UW-Madison

UW-Madison will host the second annual Creating Institutional Change Conference March 23-25, 2007. The three-day event is composed of sessions and activities focusing on future initiatives regarding diversity on campuses. Its overall theme is to increase awareness, encourage leadership and foster partnerships.  
For more information, including the call for presentations, visit [www.uwrf.edu/dos/CIC.doc](http://www.uwrf.edu/dos/CIC.doc). Dean for Student Development and Campus Diversity Blake Fry can be contacted for information regarding financial support for registration, travel and lodging expenses.

Woman's body found near Prescott

The body of a woman was found the afternoon of Dec. 7 at a vacant farm about five miles east of Prescott. Her death may have been a suicide. The Sheriff's Department identified the victim as Christine Reuter, 45, of Fort Myers, Fla. Pierce County authorities said a preliminary investigation indicated the death was self-inflicted. Investigators said evidence at the scene indicated a sharp instrument was used.  
According to Pierce County Sheriff Everett Muhlhausen, Reuter had recently arrived in Eden Prairie, Minn., on business. Family members in Florida became concerned when they received phone calls and messages from the woman indicating she may be suicidal. Reuter was pronounced dead at the scene.

Animal shelter fails to comply with order

The Pierce County Public Health Department has given five \$501 fines against Jen Kamish, owner of Cats Meow Dogs Bark Animal Welfare Society, for failing to comply with an abatement order to clean and restore the River Falls animal shelter. According to Pierce County Corporation Counsel Brad Lawrence, the fines against Kamish have come weekly since Nov. 6, the latest being Monday.  
"Our position is that she is continuing to do some work, however, she is obviously not in compliance and is beyond the deadlines for compliance," Lawrence said. "Until full compliance is made, she will continue to receive citations on a weekly basis."  
The animal shelter was forcibly closed by county health officials and sheriff's deputies in October. The nearly 200 cats and dogs were sold off, taken away to other shelters or euthanized if too sick. Lawrence said the county's abatement order for the shelter covered many points, but the key ones were eliminating the rat infestation and fixing the septic, well, heating and air conditioning systems. Kamish has made one court appearance to plead not guilty.

Wisconsin is no longer No. 1 cheese maker

Wisconsin will not give up its title of America's Dairyland, even after California replaced the state as the nation's No. 1 cheese maker. Wisconsin's industry says raw numbers don't begin to tell the story. After all, Wisconsin makes 600 varieties of cheese, to only 250 for California.  
At the World Championship Cheese Contest this year, the Badger State trounced the up and comer in total prizes, 57-7. The Milk Marketing Board said Wisconsin will not take a back seat to anybody. Jerry Huffman of the State Tourism Department said Wisconsin's cheddar tastes better, and that's what it's all about. Gov. Jim Doyle recently asked his commerce and agriculture secretaries to look for ways to help boost cheese production and go after new markets like those for organic cheese.

Briefs compiled by Leah Danley

SENATE

Senate asks that new fees benefit entire student body

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Student Senate sent a message to administration that certain requirements must be met if students are required to pay for differential tuition.  
"We [Senate] have the final say in what students should pay for," President Joe Eggers said. "No matter what administration or policies say, we can stop it."  
Differential tuition's structure can be used in two ways, he said. First, it can be treated like segregated fees in the way it ties into students' money. The second way of utilizing the payment is to give administration very limited involvement.  
Senator Jim Vierling said having student segregated fees allows students to voice an opinion as to whether they want to pay the increasing price every school year.  
"Last year the fees increased by 4.7 percent," he said. "The [UW] System requires a certain percentage increase, and if the campus goes above like we did last year, administration has to explain the huge increase."  
With differential tuition, administration does not have to explain what the costs will be for, Vierling said.  
"It can increase by whatever it wants," he said. "But administration has to request these increases, which is not required within

seg fees."  
The reason for the motion is to give Senate and its members some language for the future if administration wants students to pay the differential tuition, Eggers said.  
"This will give them an idea of what we are addressing now," he said. "Every student should have access to what they are paying for, and that is what we want to consider for this."  
Senate's stance is if administration does implement the tuition, it must be beneficial to the entire student body. The tuition also must not be pay for something that seg fees already fund.  
If in fact differential tuition is required by administration and Senate approves the cost, a final requirement within Senate's proposal enables students from the lowest income bracket to continue to afford the cost of attending UW-River Falls.  
"This is just saying that if they [administration] come forth, it's to go meet these requirements," Eggers said. "Then we will debate it."

Other Senate News

• After Senate conducted a safety walk with Public Safety, the Women's Initiatives Committee highlighted security concerns found on campus, urging changes to be

made for the safety of students at UWRF.  
Senate recommended the grounds crew trim back the overgrowth along the back path from O Lot to campus; create a better way to identify the crosswalks within campus streets, not including Cascade Avenue; and increase the amount of lighting on the back path.  
The recommendations were forwarded to Public Safety, Chancellor Don Betz and River Falls Mayor Don Richards.  
• After investigating a grip line complaint, Senator Ashley Olson said she found a need for UWRF to provide a service for tutoring and note-taking for students who speak English as a second language.  
"Students are struggling because they do not understand a lecture or text," she said. "There is no specific way for these students to get the information they need for classes."  
A motion was forwarded to the administration to assess the situation and find an efficient way to implement the services and provide funding, which is not to be charged to the students.

Student Senate meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the Student Center Regents Room.

Technology costs hinder program's ability to aid students

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As technology continues to improve, the price tags on items such as computers, software and devices grow, forcing services at UW-River Falls to slowly become dated.  
One campus department that often feels the brunt of innovation is Disabilities Services, which accommodates students with proper housing, parking and classroom assistance —

like books on compact disc — for those who have proper documentation proving they qualify for the service, said Disability Services Coordinator Mark Johnson.  
The department has now been forced to find ways to efficiently keep up with the world.  
"We work with students and their classes," he said. "Technology has really changed; it is hard to keep up with everything."  
He said the largest and continuously growing part of the

department textbooks recorded onto CDs. In the past, a student would read the text into a tape recorder, but the equipment previously used has not been able to stand the test of time. Now, students use digital recorders, which are much smaller in size and have computer-download capabilities, making the process require less time and effort.  
The new equipment, however, has not alleviated stress from the cost of the amounting equipment needed for the entire process to work, Johnson said.

When a student requests a book or reading material on CD, Disability Services staff contact a non-profit company, Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic, to see if a copy is available for the department to purchase.  
"If they have it, it is normally an encrypted CD for copyright reasons," Johnson said. "It doesn't work in any car stereo, stereo or computer. You need a special player that costs about \$200."

See Disabilities, page 8

Dining options to change during finals week

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As UW-River Falls students buckle down and prepare to study for finals, food may be the last thing on their minds.  
However, the closing of a popular student eatery, as well as changes in dining venues and hours of service next week, will affect the more than 2,300 students with campus meal plans.  
Cascade Café in Rodli Commons is serving its final entrée Friday, Dec. 15.  
Rodli will then temporarily close for the weekend as power and plumbing in the café is disassembled and kitchen equipment is moved over to the new University Center.  
Freddy's Underground on the lower level of the Student Center will be the main dining establishment on campus Dec. 16 and 17.  
The food choices offered at Freddy's will be comparable to Cascade Café's menu.  
Jennifer Conde, Chartwells director of Dining Services, said scheduled weekend meal times are not affected.  
"Hours of operation will be exactly the same [as in Cascade]," she said.  
With a seating capacity "twice" the size of the café, room in Freddy's shouldn't be an issue for hungry students, said Jerry Waller, director of Dining Services.  
"We'll have no problem," he said.  
UWRF freshman Nick Niewinski, who lives in the West Area of campus in Johnson Hall, said he likes the idea of his final weekend



Heidi Anderson, left, Kelsey Schonning, center, and Cynthia Hertog eat a lunch meal in Rodli Tuesday. The building will close over the weekend to disassemble power and plumbing in Cascade Café. Freddy's Underground will be open for dining in its place.

meals of the semester being served closer to home.  
"Being in Johnson, I think it's a little bit more convenient," he said. "I don't have to go freeze to death walking to Rodli."  
Rodli's Food Court re-opens Monday, just in time to meet the finals rush. Hours of service will remain the same.  
Extended meal plan hours will also be offered next week, as well

See Dining, page 8

RIVER FALLS POLICE/PUBLIC SAFETY

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**Dec. 4**  
• Cory M. Somsen, 23, was cited \$716 for first-offense operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated.  
According to reports, Somsen was seen speeding and swerving down North Main Street at 11:38 p.m. After being stopped by River Falls Police, Somsen began "fumbling for his wallet" and "appeared extremely lethargic and seemed unable to comprehend" the officer's requests. He then began "fumbling with his radio," which was not on, according to reports.  
Of three field sobriety tests, Somsen failed two. He was taken to the police department and consented to a breath test. He "was attempting to cheat the machine by not giving sustained breaths and blowing saliva into the tube." His blood alcohol content was finally measured at .08.  
**Dec. 5**  
• Sometime after 2:30 p.m., words and symbols, including a swastika, were spray

painted on the outer south wall of Stratton Hall and outside the southeast door. Spray paint vandalism was also found in the basement of Stratton on the walls and sheet rock.  
**Dec. 7**  
• Andrew J. Sevcik, 22, was cited \$716 at 2 a.m. for first-offense operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated.  
According to reports, Sevcik was spotted by a River Falls Police officer driving south on South Main Street with a broken tail light. After RFPD reported a strong odor of intoxicants, Sevcik appeared lethargic and drowsy while performing field sobriety tests.  
His blood alcohol content was measured at .14.  
• Benjamin J. Damm, 19, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Hathorn Hall.  
**Dec. 8**  
• Jared R. Hammer, 19, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.  
• Christian R. Munger, 19, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.

• Jorden T. Rickard, 18, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.  
• Ryan J. Duda, 18, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.  
• Breton J. Nysten, 18, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.  
• Allen D. Eli, 18, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Johnson Hall.  
**Dec. 9**  
• Colin R. O'Neill, 19, was fined \$249 for underage consumption in Parker Hall. His blood alcohol content was measured at .22. O'Neill was also accused of trespassing into a room at Parker Hall. According to Public Safety reports, he entered a room wearing a hooded sweatshirt and hat, and was "flicking his lighter" before leaving the building. He was later found slumped over sitting on the south exterior steps of Parker Hall.  
**Dec. 10**  
• Brenna A. Quinn, 19, was fined \$375 for second-offense underage consumption in Prucha Hall.



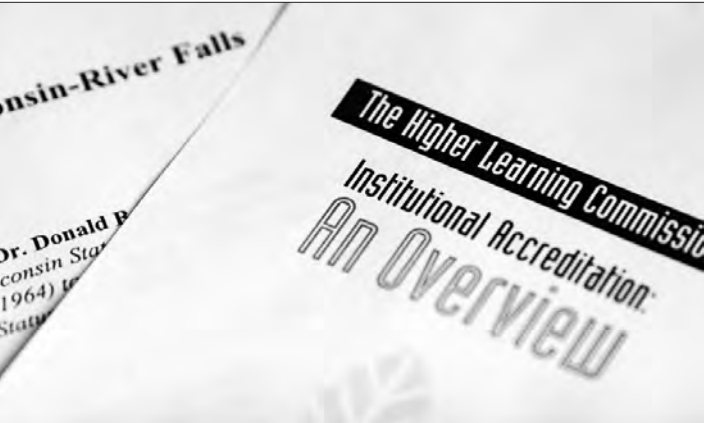
Accreditation: Draft of self-study available on UWRF Web site

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that our students are learning and that we’re having an impact beyond the campus.” Hedahl plans to complete three drafts before the final self-study report is due. The first draft, which was posted on the UWRF Web site in late November, was the culmination of research by a 50-person self-study team and several specialized task forces. The team includes more than 40 University faculty and employees, five students and River Falls Mayor Don Richards. This document is nearly 180

pages and is broken down into five specific criteria that all universities must explore according to HLC/NCA rules: mission and integrity; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching; acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge; and engagement and service. Despite its length, the first draft is very rough, Hedahl said. Certain sections of the first draft are color coded to represent areas that need to be expanded upon by University faculty, staff and students. Input from any possible source on campus regarding the self-

study is encouraged, Hedahl said. He also would like to see more students involved in the self-study editorial process. “They should also be looking at these drafts,” Hedahl said. “That’s part of making sure we do a thorough job.” But Hedahl is having difficulties getting more students involved. “I’m doing a regular e-mail for faculty and staff, but that’s not really effective for students,” he said. Hedahl is also working with student government in an attempt to add more student input into the self-study. If the HLC/NCA finds any discrepancies in the self-study, or if it is not done properly, it could cause unwelcome headaches for administration and faculty. “The whole goal is to do a thorough job,” Hedahl said. “Those that don’t often end up having to do things over.” One positive aspect of the self-study process, beyond accreditation, is that it gives everyone a chance to step back and look at the University as a whole. “We need to know what’s happening,” Hedahl said. “Sometimes you’re so busy doing stuff you don’t realize how much is really going on.”



Zach Nagle

**As part of the accreditation process, University officials have been putting together a self-study report in preparation for a visit from the HLC/NCA review team.**

Graduation: UW-River Falls gets students ready for future

from page 1

Graduating senior Laura Aamodt said her entire freshman year at UWRF stands out as her favorite memory. “There is one class in particular that I will never forget,” she said. “There were only seven of us, and one of the best professors ever.” Distinguished teacher Nate Splett of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences will deliver the commencement address during Saturday’s graduation ceremony, and Regent Vice President Mark Bradley will congratulate the graduates on behalf of the Board of Regents. A couple hours before graduation, students and their friends and family have the option of attending a senior brunch at Brandy’s in the Student Center. The brunch goes from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and tickets are \$13.50 for adults, while a meal for kids 10 and younger costs \$7. The brunch includes omelets, desserts, drinks and casseroles, among others. After graduation, students who partake in fall commencement can expect to receive their diplomas by mid-March or early April. By then, many

of the graduates will have already started new careers, while others will be taking it easy. Whatever road they choose to take, UWRF alum and psychology professor Richard Seefeldt said he believes the University does a good job of preparing students for what lies ahead of them. “I feel like River Falls prepared me for grad school and whatever endeavors that I wanted to take on academically,” Seefeldt said. “I never felt like I got cheated out of any education.” He also said he believes UWRF does a much better job of teaching students about diversity than it did when he was a student, and students today have a wide variety of options to study abroad, learn about diversity and think

**“I feel like River Falls prepared me for grad school ...”**  
Richard Seefeldt, psychology professor

critically about the world. Aherns agrees. “I feel like I’ve been taught to think differently,” she said. “As we can often see, all the knowledge in the world is nothing without the ability to think for oneself.” Graduation is arguably the biggest day in a college student’s career, and it takes a lot of effort, determination and work to stay motivated and be able to walk across the stage.

Assignments: Competence can be rated on evaluation forms

from page 1

Desire2Learn have helped professors address the long-standing issue of keeping students informed about their grades in classes, grading coursework in a short amount of time remains a problem for some professors. “I often find myself in a position where there is insufficient time to complete the grading during the work-week,” Chapin said. “I often spend much of my time on weekends catching up on grading.” But what is a reasonable amount of time for professors to return coursework to students? Chapin and Caskey said an ideal timeframe is either by the next class period or within a week. “My rule is I give papers back the next class period, always,” Caskey said. “Part of giving a grade is to provide feedback to students so they can improve, and if professors aren’t giving feedback in time to students, then they can’t make improvements.” Caskey said he is able to return assignments to students quickly because of his style. “I read fast and put fairly minimal comments on students’ papers,” he said. “If I put detailed comments on them however, it would take longer to hand back.” Caskey said it is important for professors to hand back assignments to students soon after they turn them in. “If professors aren’t giving feedback in time to students, then they can’t make improvements,” he said. “The longer [professors] wait to give feedback, the more useless it is.” Senior Julie Thompson agrees.

“I don’t know how I can improve my grades if I don’t know what they are,” Thompson said. “I think it is very important for professors to get assignments graded efficiently so students can improve [their grades] over the semes-”

**“I think it is very important for professors to get assignments graded efficiently so students can improve [their grades] ...”**  
Julie Thompson, senior

offered during the summer. “I usually spend 30 to 40 minutes talking about teaching and encouraging faculty to get work back to students in a timely manner,” Williams said. While this has always seemed to be an issue for professors, he said increasing class sizes contribute to the problem. “If you double the number of students in class, it will take more time,” he said. Though professors may feel overwhelmed, there are strategies they can pursue to alleviate some of the pressures. Wiegrefe said she has contemplated using multiple choice questions in the future. “I am hoping to develop better skills to create multiple choice questions that are challenging,” she said. While professors can use multiple choice exams to help speed up the process of returning assignments to students, Caskey said removing some assignments would also help significantly. “If the workload issue is what is causing problems, then professors should change what they are assigning to students,” he said. Give students less assignments, but give faster and better feedback, he said. At this point, students can evaluate professors on their promptness and feedback on the student evaluations distributed in classes at the end of the semester. “There is an option on evaluations for students to rate professors,” Caskey said. “At least in the psychology department, if we saw any areas that were low [in the evaluations] such as professors’ feedback, we would meet with faculty members and discuss strategies.”

Change: New times will decrease in-class instructional time

from page 1

Vierling also said the five minutes, to him, is a big change. “Classes don’t get easier as they get higher up [in course number],” he said. “We also need to consider the tougher classes — the material is different and harder.” The five-minute decrease will also eliminate 3.8 classes per semester, Peterson said. “If you think about that, for a Monday, Wednesday and Friday class, it is a week of classes a student will be losing,” he said. For Senator Jason Schultz, the number of classes deducted in a semester was a huge difference that could reflect on an incoming student as they start their education at UWRF. “3.8 is a lot of days,” he said. “As an incoming student, this can make it a little harder for them.” Schultz said he has become accustomed to the way the classes are scheduled now because he has been a student her for four years. “It’s been this way for the four years I’ve been here,” Schultz said. “I guess I might be against it because it is a change.”

**“If you think about that, for a Monday, Wednesday and Friday class, it is a week of classes a student will be losing.”**  
Jim Vierling, student senator

A time to change

The idea to decrease Monday, Wednesday and Friday class periods by five minutes was an easy one to make, but executing it took time and much deliberation from the campus community. At the beginning of the semester, Peterson began discussing the concept with Provost Charlie Hurt and Chancellor Don Betz. Listening sessions were also held Dec. 7 and 8 for faculty, staff and students to learn and debate the change, as well as fill out an exit survey to express their opinions. Peterson presented positive and negative aspects of the subject. Only one major weakness was addressed — the amount of in-class instructional time for faculty and students will decrease. “We don’t have less to teach,” said Dave Trechter, chair of agricultural economics. “We actually have more.” Yet the idea of having shorter class times should not affect the commitment of students, Peterson said. “Students should be looking at the educational experience, not the face time,” he said. Less work conducted in class means more work required by students outside of classes, Peterson said about losing the five minutes. Student Senate Parliamentarian and Ethics Chair Jenifer Biss spoke up to say she is opposed to the change. “If it did change, someone needs to look if there is a loss of education,” she said. Yet studies have found that the amount of time a student spends with a professor in class does not increase or decrease the outcome of their learning, Peterson said. “I certainly value my time with students,” he said. “I have to believe my contact with students is valuable. Most students are willing to succeed with contact with me, and most can without contact.” Student Dan Scott said he understands the Calendar Committee’s emphasis on academics, but students are not going to see the decrease of five minutes as the same. “They are going to look at the convenience over the academics,” said Scott, the Student Senate stu-

dent affairs and academic services director. “For those paying for it, it is not justifiable.” Positive aspects the Calendar Committee mentioned when examining the change were: increased use of technology, such as Desire 2 Learn and the electronic library reserve, and implementation of more alternative academic strategies — like field experience — into classroom requirements. “With all the money being spent on technologies, what a better time than with a possible change to start using what is offered to faculty,” Peterson said. “But, unfortunately, there is a general resistance to want to change.” If the change is finalized, administration, faculty, staff and students would have more convenience in scheduling meetings and classes, Peterson said. “Classes later in the day are less appealing to students because of how late it becomes by the time there are done,” he said. “The new 2 p.m. class looks much more attractive; it is freeing up more time.” Terry Ferriss, chair of plant and earth science, said she is very much in favor of the change because students learn the most within the first 20 minutes of a class and in the Monday, Wednesday and Friday sessions versus those on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “Quantity doesn’t equal quality,” she said. She also said she believes scheduling would be more convenient. “The world works on the hour,” Ferriss said. “We can’t expect the world to change to us.”



**Karl Peterson**

When scheduling her own meetings, Ferriss said she finds it very difficult to make time when classes end at random points in the hour. “It’s the off-campus people who normally request the meetings,” she said. About two years ago, UWRF had 50-minute class times, but changed to 55 minutes when the Calendar Committee changed the entire calendar for both the fall and spring semesters, Peterson said. It was to balance the calendar as evenly as possible because a state statute requires all classes to begin after Sept. 1. Ferriss said since the change, she has noticed an increase in faculty stress, burning out and complaints of being tired from the longer hours. Most faculty members begin their days at UWRF well before 7 a.m., she said, forcing many to leave around 6 p.m. because the last class session ends at 5:35 p.m. “This stretches the day out for faculty, especially the younger faculty, who have families and commute,” Ferriss said. This also means most student organizations can’t start until after 5:45 p.m. “Students aren’t out early enough to get decent hours in at their jobs,” she said. “Then they still need time to do homework, extending their day even further.” But Peterson said the time a student has outside the classroom should be devoted for studying, not necessarily working, and the change to 50-minute classes would help that. “This gives them more educational work and more time for studying in the time you are losing,” he said. “Students need to make up for the time they are missing.”

Multidisciplinary: Demand calls for more class offerings

from page 1

they are offered.” Multidisciplinary courses are being promoted to faculty members via financial incentives. “There was no real incentive to teach multidisciplinary courses prior to this because they were not in high demand,” Caskey said. If faculty members are given an incentive to teach these courses, students will have more multidisciplinary courses to choose from, he said. Though students may be worried they will not be

able to graduate in time as a result of this issue, Caskey said it won’t be a problem. “There is no one who will not graduate on time because of a multidisciplinary course,” he said. “We will work it out if there is a problem.” While not being able to register for senior capstone and multidisciplinary courses surprised many students, Caskey said he saw it coming. “I am not surprised that we are caught in this bind,” he said. “Courses take a while to be developed.”



Screen shot

**A screen shot of the eSIS site shows the page where students go to register for courses for the upcoming semester. Here, students select the term for which they are enrolling in courses and from there determine what classes they need to fill requirements.**

No matter what your plans are for J-term, log on to [uwrfvoice.com](http://uwrfvoice.com) for all the latest campus news and information.



EDITORIAL

Plus/minus system needs consistency

One year after the plus/minus grading system was implemented into UW-River Falls students’ transcripts, it is now that we can begin to understand the positives and negatives of the change.

The shift to the new grading system was initially ill-received — a spring 2005 survey conducted through D2L found only 42 percent of students, faculty and staff supported the change.

We were told last fall that there would be a campus wide follow-up on the success of the plus/minus system. Though there has been no mention of a review as of yet, we’ve got something to say.

If the plus/minus system is to be successful, administration needs to place its focus on consistency. Not only can faculty decide whether or not to use the scale, but also how to weight the grades.

As professors differ in grading scales — for one, a 90 percent is equivalent to an A, while others set the mark at 93 - official grades lose their validity.

With this type of flexibility and an optional plus/minus grading system, students’ final grades end up quite different for the same amount of work (or lack thereof).

And those who are close to graduation now realize how important a GPA can be. Academic honors and graduate school acceptance can depend on it, among others. But what does a GPA really mean if it isn’t a consistent representation of a student’s body of work?

When this year’s graduating seniors check out their final completed transcripts, many will see at least two years of flat letter grades followed by a year and a half of pluses and minuses. It’s a shame to know some would have graduated with higher honors had the new system not been picked up halfway through their college career.

Though the negatives seem to outweigh the positives for many students at this point, at least one benefit can’t be ignored. Those who often find themselves on the high end of a flat letter grade may see a small boost in their GPA.

But most of us - students and teachers alike — are at this University because we value education.

Students diligently work through homework and exams, all the while accommodating prerequisites and other requirements for courses, credits and majors. At the same time, faculty design courses around the framework of departmental and accreditation obligations.

And why do we do this? Because we understand a vital aspect of education: standards.

We are all expected to meet the same standards to obtain the same degrees and earn the same respect.

This is all achieved through consistency — a fundamental element that was obviously omitted when the plus/minus scale was implemented.

Editorials represent the opinion of the Student Voice Editorial Board and are prepared by the editorial staff.

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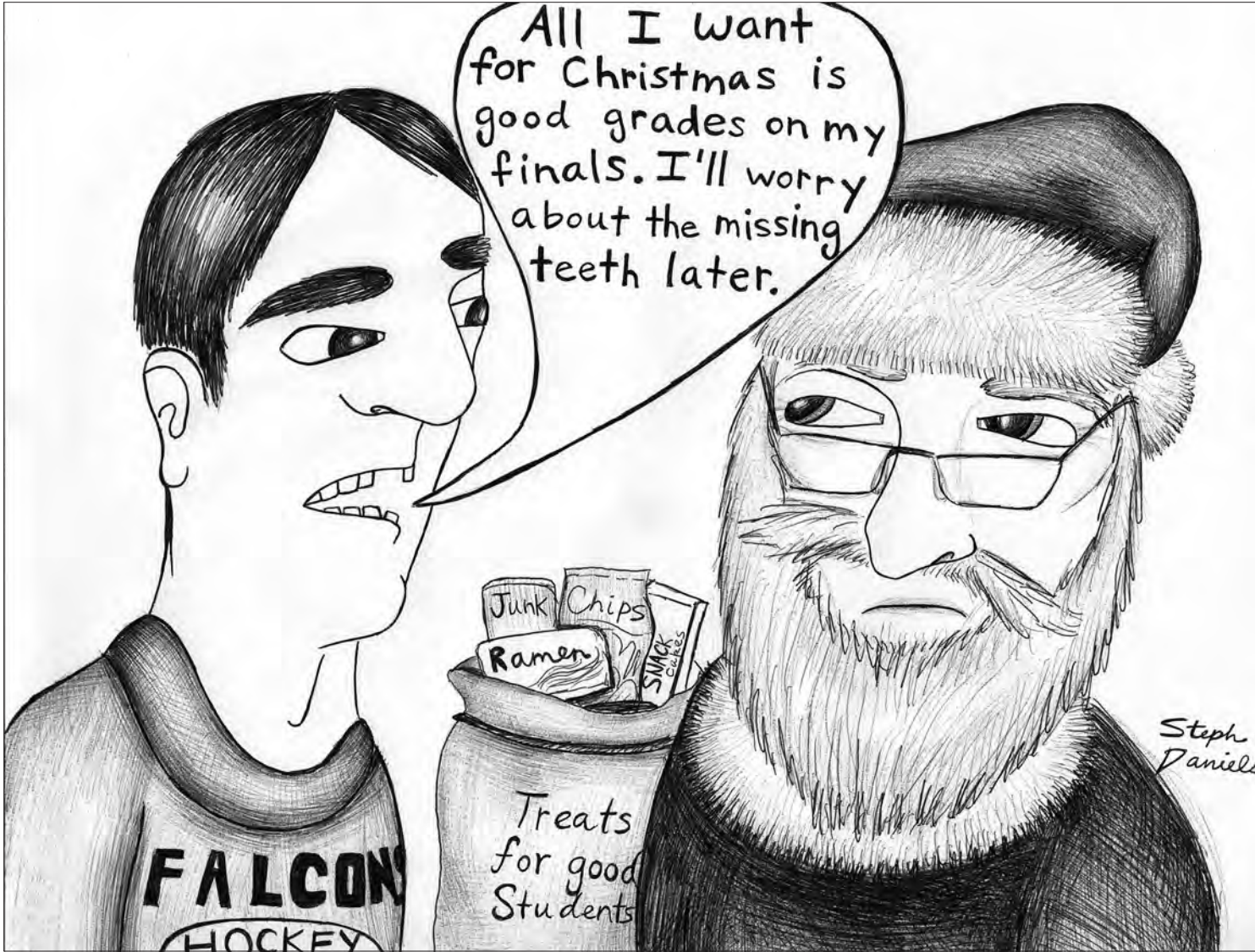
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Letters to the editor must be 300 words or less, and include a first and last name and phone number. They can be submitted at 304 North Hall or to [student.voice@uwrf.edu](mailto:student.voice@uwrf.edu).

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 also be submitted no later than Wednesday at noon.

Single copies of the *Student Voice* are free. Printing is paid for through student fees.



Normal people absent from the real world

Have you ever met someone or repeatedly run into someone who makes you instantly want to tear off screaming in the other direction instead of engaging in conversation?

Have you ever been forced to talk to a person whose intelligence makes you cringe and actually makes you question whether or not your own IQ just dropped because of what they had to say?



Believe it or not, people of this nature do exist, and I run into them on a daily basis. The unfortunate thing is, if you are ignorant enough to believe that blatantly dumb people are a figment of my imagination, then you are most likely in fact one of those people I want to pat on the head like I would a puppy and suggest you think much harder before you speak.

I don’t want to feel stupider — yes, stupider — after talking to you.

I would like to believe after speaking to every person I come across in a day that my life will feel a little more fulfilled, or my mind will be enlightened. But in reality, this will never, ever happen.

However, when I think about all of the dumb conversations I initiate or take part in, I have to believe that I am also a blatantly stupid person. The difference between me and you is that I know I have moments in my day when I act less than intelligent, but

when it comes to talking to people other than the handful who indulge in my stupidity, I turn up the IQ and come down from La La Land. That way, you won’t leave after a conversation with me thinking, “Wow, she is one dumb woman.”

I used to go to work — a liquor store in Woodbury, Minn. — with a positive attitude, ready to face every waiting customer. But after answering the question, “What do you sell?” on more than one occasion, I decided it is not always better to give people the benefit of the doubt, and the old adage, “The customer is always right,” is very

untrue.

I have a hard time actually believing everyone is stupid, so maybe it’s just that the world is void of normal human beings and we are all just a little bit crazy.

For example, as I sit here writing this, my editor is across the room spinning wildly in her chair for no particular reason. Upon stopping, she attempts to reach her feet to the ground and says, “You have to try this.”

What could I do with a demand like that? I had to give it a shot, and I did.

It was anti-climactic.

Given we are both going insane from the stupidity and childish antics of the entire human race, not excluding ourselves or fellow members of the Student Voice, we took our lunacy to a whole new level — hallway

chair racing.

So, for those faculty members in the journalism department who may or may not have heard several thuds on the wall dividing the office from the hallway Tuesday afternoon, I would like to personally apologize for any distraction it may have caused.

According to Helen, who won while viciously cheating, she is not that good at chair racing — I just happen to be really bad at it. Maybe next time we should try it with our chairs raised up high and our feet barely touching the ground.

Even with chair racing, engaging in childish conversations and responding to a nickname like “Blow,” I still remember from time to time that everyone else around me does not enjoy my ignorance, and speaking coherently with an educated air is not only necessary, but a requirement for living.

So the next time you walk into a liquor store, don’t ask if they sell vodka — it’s a standard for liquor stores. If you go to Dairy Queen and ask if they sell ice cream, expect the looks from the employees to be blank stares or those of awe followed by an eruption of laughter. They are not being rude, they are not even out of line in any way — you just aren’t that bright.

“There is no such thing as stupid question.”

Not true — there are stupid questions. But more so, there are stupid people.

I don’t want to feel stupider — yes, stupider — after talking to you.

Final days in RF require big plans

Cue the groans — here comes another tearjerker from a graduate-to-be.

Ms. Clarke’s column in last week’s *Student Voice* helped me realize it would be best to end my journalistic career with a column that fits the occasion and provides a sense of finality. Instead of retrospectively evaluating my college career, however, I thought I’d indulge my audience on what I plan to do before I leave River Falls.

I will go to Bo’s and drink vodka tonics until I can’t stand straight ...

For everyone who couldn’t give a rat’s ass about my plans or my writing — the politically conservative, humorless, let’s-not-take-life-lightly faction of UWRF — don’t bother reading. You’ll get bored. And while you’re at it, go to hell.

Before I leave, I will glance over a few random columns I’ve written for the *Voice*, and I’ll see how the subject matter didn’t stray much from politics, substance abuse and sex. I’ll reassure myself that’s what college students like to read about recreationally. That’ll make me chuckle, and I’ll chuckle, too, at how I never mastered the Associated Press style of writing because I’ve become accustomed to the Modern Language Association’s style. Then I’ll laugh at myself for being nerdy enough to come about that realization.

That will remind me of my fellow English major nerds with whom I shared most of my classes, and how I’ll have to wish them a poignant farewell

sometime soon. We are nerds only because we fit the stereotypical mold of a nerd: we speak and write in clear, grammatically-sound sentences, and we find ourselves in a computer chair, the library, the English department or a book day after day (after day).

But this has made us smart — so smart, in fact, that if I wasn’t leaving this campus, I would challenge any other department in a Jeopardy match. Not only would we win, but we could also whip out a 10-page essay analyzing the overall theme of competition. And that’s why I love those nerds.

I will go to Bo’s and drink vodka tonics until I can’t stand straight, and eat extra-salty popcorn and pretend be a seasoned billiards veteran.

I will attend the commencement ceremony Saturday, but not in a diploma-receiving capacity. I’ll be there reporting on the pomp and circumstance for a University news release. Getting paid to listen to the “This is the first day of the rest of your life” speech isn’t such a bad gig, considering most of my friends will be there sporting the silly cap-and-gown attire. Surely, though, it’ll be dull.

That reminds me: I’ll have to remember my book of cross-words. And maybe a flask.

At some point I will wander past the River Falls Police Department and consider pissing on the door handle of a squad car. Better yet, I might remove the P and O from the

“POLICE” lettering on the face of the building because, like lice, law enforcement departments have a parasitic nature. They rely on others’ follies in order to thrive.

When I get there, though, I’ll be afraid of getting caught, so I’ll have to settle for tastelessly sticking up my middle finger at that cream-colored piranha hole on my way out of town.

Protect and serve, right? Sure. I’ll believe that when my shit turns purple and smells like rainbow sherbet.

I will bid adieu to the bad-asses at the Grounds Maintenance department — my former coworkers and surrogate patriarchs (“younger brothers” would be more fitting, actually). When I show up during their lunch break, they’ll ask how many times I’ve been arrested or how many chicks I’ve slept with in the last two weeks, and I’ll hunker down in my old napping chair and plead the Fifth. Then they’ll tell me to come back when I am willing to share my dubious accomplishments over some coffee and raised-and-glazed doughnuts, which they’ll tell me to supply. I’ll playfully refuse because they’ve taught me a thing or two about submitting to authority.

I will cross paths with a few pretty girls I never had the balls to ask out on a date or even

speak to, and I’ll kick myself in the ass for it.

I will thank the professors I’ve had for passing along their knowledge — but only the brilliant, well-informed ones who could easily teach at Harvard and understand that students have lives outside the classroom that need attention too. I’ll give a half-hearted nod goodbye to the ones I didn’t like — the moronic ones who shouldn’t even be teaching entry-level courses at a technical school or see students only as students, not as people.

I’ll walk past that repulsive clock outside the library and spit on it. It cost too much, it’s ugly, its placement is impractical and it protrudes into the meaty section of campus like a giant anal probe.

There, I came out and said it.

Then, when my lease is up in late January, I’ll pack my trusty silver Escort with my tangible belongings — like my ladybug costume and Bob Dylan poster — while the intangibles — like my education and student loan debt — will find storage space in the back of my head, and I’ll begin the long drive away from this fair city down the road toward possible success or, more likely, an ill-fated future.

Well, that about does it — wraps it all up. I’m off to grow out my beard, get buff and see if any successful actresses want to be my sugar momma. Catch ya later on down the trail.



Ben Jipson



# Small annoyances cause strife

With finals right around the corner and stress at an utterly unbearable level, I have decided this column is the perfect opportunity to vent some frustrations. There is no rhyme or reason to any of this, other than they are all things that irritate me to my very core, so bear with me.

As much as I despise writing about the monstrosity that is Facebook, there are just some things I find to be a bit disturbing about the communication tool.

I really don't understand why people use this as a way to inform the world of their relationship status.

First of all, I don't care who is dating whom or whether it's "complicated" or whatnot. I actually find it troubling that people believe it's necessary to display this status at all.

Even worse are those who, immediately after breaking up with their significant other, feel the urge to log onto the site and formally end their Facebook relationship. Give me a break ... and have some dignity.

Another thing that irks me about Facebook is the number of people who have created "If this group reaches 100,000 ..." groups. This is just a perverse form of peer pressure. If you need thousands of people to join a group so your girlfriend will have a threesome, what you really need to do is get a life — and a new girlfriend.

Another form of communication that can be a pain in the ass is the cell phone. So many different carriers are available, yet it seems that all of them lack the most important feature - decent reception.

Maybe some people find no problem with holding their phone out in mid-air to get one or two bars, but I can't stand it. No matter what cell phone company you have, it seems that at some point in time, you will find yourself standing in one spot

where you get no reception whatsoever. By moving a little to the left (to the left) — or into a cellular portal, if you will — you get full reception. What the hell is up with that?

As much as they can be a hindrance, cell phones are a great source of immediate interaction, especially since most people carry them wherever they go nowadays. Some people will even go as far as getting up and leaving class to answer what I'm sure is an important call that cannot wait.

But even the positives bring about negatives. I like the concept of sending and receiving text messages (outside of class, of course), but it seems there are a few people out there who just don't get it.

I have a friend who constantly sends text messages and has a cell phone plan that allows her to send hundreds a day. Whoever allowed her this privilege should be shot. I cannot tell you how many times I have

received chain letters from this person via cell phone. No, I will not send your stupid message to five people in the next two minutes. And how do you suppose my not forwarding this message will have any affect on my sex life?

If you have attended UWRF for even a day, you know that no rant would ever be complete without mentioning the incessant annoyance of parking.

This year, I decided it would be in my best interest to forgo the cost of obtaining a parking permit in one of the campus lots. I figured I could save myself \$192 and get a little exercise by parking on the street and walking to and from my vehicle.

Now, those of you who are familiar with River Falls are already aware of the odd-even parking rule. After Nov. 1, all people who leave their vehicles parked on the streets after 1 a.m. must be sure they park on the side of the street that corresponds with the date. The reason for this is not to play musical cars and see who has to park their vehicle the farthest away, but to allow for proper snow removal.

I think this ordinance could be amended, or at least not enforced until the city can actually deem it necessary.

Don't get me wrong — I have no problem with this general concept. However, I do find it ridiculous that I am moving my car every day so snowplows can remove the massive amounts of invisible snow.

Well, I hope you enjoyed this tirade, but I must stop now to move my car to the other side of the street.



Jennie Oemig

# Holiday season lacks spirit, time

It's nearing the middle of December, and there is still so much that needs to be done before Christmas. College has left little time for pre-holiday festivities.

While many people are out and about going from store to store doing their Christmas shopping, I am cooped up in my room working on numerous papers and projects that need to be done before the end of the semester. It doesn't feel like the Christmas season this year.

This lack of Christmas spirit is undoubtedly shared by many across campus. It's not that I don't enjoy Christmas — it has just snuck up on me so quickly this year that I've had hardly any time to think about it.

For years this part of December was filled with anxious anticipation — I just couldn't wait for Christmas Eve so I could get together with my family

and tear the brightly colored wrapping off numerous presents. Afterward, I would eat as much as humanly possible and subsequently end up in a near comatose state for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I'm sure this will happen again this year and I will enjoy every moment of it, but the anticipation for this gathering and celebration just isn't what it used to be.

The reasons for my lack of Christmastime enthusiasm go beyond my hectic schedule. It certainly doesn't help that most major retail chains start advertising their Christmas sales before Halloween. Having Santa Claus right next to the Grim Reaper just isn't right. Christmas is the most profitable holiday for retailers and they more than recognize

this. Pretty soon the stores are going to start marketing "beach volleyball Santa" because the retail season for Christmas is going to start in July.

I know this sounds pretty cliché, but the commercialization of Christmas has led us astray from what Christmas really means. Sure, it is a time to give and receive presents, eat far too much and sleep in, but there is more to the season than that. Christmas is a time to reflect and be thankful for what we have.

I've gotten to the point in my life where I really don't care that much about the number of presents I get — I would rather just be around the people I care about. The people make Christmas, not the presents nor the food.

I'm hoping after this semester is over the Christmas spirit will be alive and well in me again. The bombardment of advertising by retailers trying to sell their products has almost jaded me this year, but not quite. Writing this column this week got me thinking about the important people in my life and a little Christmas spirit was ignited in me once more.

Writing can be a sort of therapy at times because it allows one to reflect on their thoughts. For this reason I would like to thank the *Student Voice* for providing me a forum in which to voice my thoughts and opinions this semester. Writing for the paper every week seemed like a daunting task, but every time I sat down to write a column I truly enjoyed doing it. This space has allowed me to explore diverse subjects.

I'm not really sure how to end my last column of this semester, so I guess this will have to suffice: Happy holidays!



Derrick Knutson

# Freshman finds college overwhelming, yet fun

As the first semester of my first year at college comes to an end, I find myself scrambling to get those last projects completed, final papers written and time to study for finals. This semester has brought so many things — both good and bad. I can't recall a time that I have been so busy, but also had so much fun.

It seems like just yesterday that I set foot on this beautiful campus. I can remember thinking, "Here is the beginning of my new life. What the heck am I going to do?" It was so overwhelming. Now, I can't understand why.

This campus is small enough that anyone can find anything with simple directions. Most rooms are placed in a logical order. And everything that I

was worried about was really nothing to worry about at all.

I came in not knowing what to expect in my classes, but in most cases these courses are either less than or equal to the difficulty of the classes I took in high school. It just seems so weird that we sometimes work ourselves up so much about things that are so minimal.

Yet no matter how much we would like a perfect world or a perfect freshman year, the likelihood of the perfect place is next to none. Coming to this school left me with some not-so-great memories as well.

The first weekend after move in, I heard about an argument on the third floor of Hathorn. At the same time, some drunken guy was sitting outside below my window while his friends tried to find a way to get him back to his room before he was caught with underage consumption, and before they were caught with distributing alcohol to a minor.

As I sat in my room, I couldn't help but to ask myself why I chose to come here. But after a few weeks, the extreme partying and chaos died off. Now it is nice to be able to sleep

through most nights without hearing the drunks until Wednesday or Thursday night.

The first semester of college will not only be memorable, but enjoyable as well.

As I walk around campus, I find that it isn't so weird anymore. Just as I was told on my first tour around this time last year, I feel welcome and like I fit in. Teachers care about their students and most students care about others. This campus is very personable, but still large enough so not everyone knows each other.

UWRF is a place for that person who wants a cozy school, nice students, friendly professors, pleasant service workers, and a campus with numerous scholastic and social opportunities.



Sara Hauer

# International peace lessons learned from Rocky

War sucks.

Regardless of their opinions on past, current or future events, all sane people would agree that war sucks. The results of war can be good — for the winners. But there are always losers, and for them especially, war sucks.

Both sides have to deal with incredible losses of life, money, resources, and for generations there will be lingering thoughts of guilt, regret and doubt. I think the world is ready for an

alternative to war, and I think Sylvester Stallone has the answer.

That's probably not the first name that comes to mind when trying to find an alternate path toward peace, but that's just because you probably haven't seen "Rocky IV" recently. If you haven't seen the movie at all, that's the one where the very American boxer Rocky Balboa, wearing a silky American flag as shorts, battles the massive, juiced-up communist Russian Ivan Drago.

Released in 1985, before the fall of the Berlin wall, the message of this movie seems obvious: Americans are

great and communism turns people into machines.

Stallone, who wrote, directed and starred in the film, apparently wanted to make the movie more than democracy vs. communism. When Rocky comes into the arena, he is greeted by boos from the Russian spectators. As the fight progresses, the booing slowly turns into cheers and chants of "Rocky!" A bit fanciful perhaps, but certainly a positive portrayal of Russians as appreciative of obvious passion and tenacity. Rocky then does a fine job representing Americans and proclaiming, between gasps of air and with trademark borderline intelligibility, that it was possible for each side to change and accept the other.

Throughout the movie, the boxers are

stressed as being sportsmen, not soldiers. Sportsmen are fair minded, in control and civilized, apparently unlike soldiers. Perhaps we should have sportsmen fighting for our country instead of soldiers. Maybe we should use athletics as a way of settling international disputes and put an end to the massive destruction caused by soldiers.

I don't quite agree with the insinuation that soldiers are uncivilized, but I do believe that an exercise of brawn, intelligence and desire would be better measured in the sporting arena.

But what sport? Boxing is a great demonstration of determination and resilience, but that's a lot of pressure for one person to experience. Soccer is the international sport, but there are

such discrepancies from country to country that it just doesn't seem fair.

I believe a new sport should be invented specifically for the purpose of settling international disputes. A country's wealth will have a similar impact on a sports team as it does an army, so limited resources is not an excuse. And because the country with the most resources will probably win most of the time, the match-up will be limited to one meeting, because in war, upsets count (such as, say, Vietnam?).

I don't know about you, but I feel good about this solution to war. Now if the rest of the world would just put their hands in as well, we'd be on the fast track to world peace.



Bryan Woitas, junior

"For it to snow — I'm a skier, ice fisher and snowboarder."

## STUDENT VOICES



Xiao Lee, freshman

"I'd like to eat out with my family — to go out and get sushi."



Andres Moreno-Richey, junior

"That I get to see my whole family over Christmas instead of only some of them."

## What is your holiday wish?



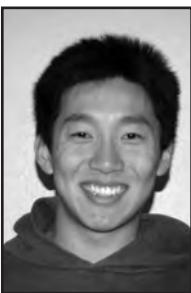
Matt Bahr, junior

"I wish people would stop being so damn politically correct and focus on the real issues facing our country."



Sarah Zavodny, junior

"Just to spend some good, quality time with my family. That'd be a good deal."



Kurt Blomberg, senior

"For people to relax and enjoy the simple things in life. I also want snowball fights and snow forts."



# Experience in sports will help further journalism career



**Sarah Packingham**

I write this column while sitting on my couch listening to the lull of the TV in the background and reminiscing about my last year and a half at the *Student Voice*.

Although I’ve been a part of the Voice since the fall of 2004, I learned so much more in the last year and a half than I ever thought possible.

Near the end of my freshman year, I was excited to find out that I would be the Sports

Editor for the next semester, and I ended up holding the position for the entire year.

I learned the ins and outs of page design and the importance of meeting a deadline. I wrote three or four articles a week right off the bat and that improved my time management. As the year went on, my articles improved and I didn’t get as stressed out over the small things I couldn’t control.

Last spring, I was asked if I would be willing to continue my role as Sports Editor for the current semester and see what the paper would have in store for me. I had an internship in sports reporting over the summer and I was happy to come back and improve on the year before.

I came back to school able to write the way I wanted and to

layout the pages with an ease and confidence I didn’t have before. It’s amazing what time and experience can do for you.

And I know that my experience as Sports Editor will help me in the future. In fact, it already has. After one year holding the position, I was able to obtain a summer job that I had wanted working in sports journalism, and working to improve myself.

I knew that had I not had clips to send off in a portfolio, I wouldn’t have been able to get the job and write for the newspaper that I had always wanted.

This column is my last with the title of Sports Editor attached to my name. It’s so strange to think that when I come back to school at the end of January, I will be doing a different job on the staff. I will be working as the Offbeat Editor, but I will

still have some input on sports. I will be helping out with writing articles when needed and doing my new job with just as much effort as I used in sports. I know that it is necessary to break out of the sports mold to become a better reporter.

**In writing so many articles in the past three semesters, I also had the opportunity to meet so many people.**

I knew when I came here that I had a passion for journalism and also a passion for sports. In high school I wrote a lot of feature and news pieces, but a majority of my articles were sports. River Falls has helped

me to realize how much I really do love sports reporting.

While working here, I had the opportunity to write about a variety of different sports. I wrote about sports that I had no idea about, so I had to try.

Last fall, I wrote a column about the women’s rugby team. I knew nothing about rugby besides the fact that a few of my friends played it. I attended a practice for a day and realized how hard and how much dedication the sport required. I couldn’t move for about three days afterwards and was covered with bruises, but it was worth it to experience something new.

I have also written about sports I didn’t really like until I got to know more about them. I also got to write about sports that I used to enjoy playing and

knew a lot about.

I have a lot of favorite memories from the last year and a half that I will carry with me out of this job.

In writing so many articles in the past three semesters, I also had the opportunity to meet so many people I otherwise wouldn’t have met.

Though there were difficulties along the way, in the form of others not making deadlines on time, people not giving their full respect to me because I’m not a man in the sports field and just overall stress, it was worth it.

This job has given me an opportunity to continue to move up in the Student Voice ranks and I am excited to see where I can go from here and what I need to do to improve myself as a journalist.

# Aggressive goaltender aids in Falcon victories



*Jens Gunelson/Photo Services*

**UW-River Falls junior goaltender AJ Buccino stands ready against Lake Forest Dec. 1. The Falcons beat the the visiting Forresters 3-1. Buccino made 29 saves in the win. Buccino, a native of Bow, N.H., played two years in the U.S. Hockey League and spent one year playing Div. I hockey at the University of New Hampshire.**

**Buccino plays in net across the country**

**Sarah Packingham**  
[sarah.packingham@uwrf.edu](mailto:sarah.packingham@uwrf.edu)

“Usually goalies are a lot more conservative,” junior AJ Buccino said. “I’m not a very conservative person. I get caught up in the moment. I just like to get into the action and if I have the opportunity to play the puck, I will.”

Buccino’s aggressive style of play has helped lead the Falcons to an 11-2 record going into the winter break.

The native of Bow, N.H., has been skating since he was three and played in his first game when he was six.

Buccino was also a three sport athlete in prep school, also playing soccer and baseball. But he always wanted to be a hockey goalie.

“What I love is the pressure situation,” Buccino said of his position. “Making a save is a good feeling.”

While some players may feel uncomfortable with an aggressive goaltender, his teammates at River Falls said they do not.

“I love to play with AJ...” teammate TJ Dahl said. “He’s one of my best friends. I love the fact that we can sit around and BS with each other and just talk about hockey or life.”

Prior to his time at River Falls, Buccino said he has paid his dues to be where he is now. He played one year at Div. I University of New Hampshire and spent two years in the United States Hockey League

where he played for Des Moines.

“It wasn’t the greatest time. I didn’t get to play,” Buccino said of his Div. I experience.

However, since arriving at UWRF last fall, Buccino has made an impact on the hockey team and has enjoyed his time here. He gives a lot of credit to the coaching staff for helping him improve as a hockey player.

“He’s been unbelievable [this year],” Dahl said. “He’s literally

**“Usually goalies are a lot more conservative. I’m not a very conservative person.”**

**AJ Buccino,**  
**junior hockey player**

kept us in games.”

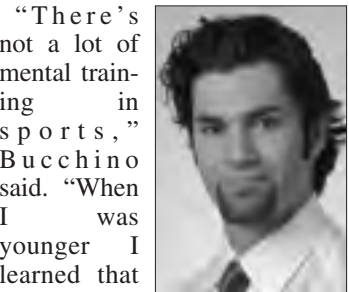
Buccino is an assistant captain this season and fills the leadership position very well.

“On and off the ice, you always here his voice,” Dahl said. “He’s been a huge part about the team. I’m happy we were able to bring him to River Falls.”

Buccino is a psychology major and expects to graduate in May of 2008. After graduation, he’s still unsure of what he’s going to do, but he would love to continue to play hockey.

“I want to play hockey as long as I can,” Buccino said. “I’m not ready to stop yet. I want to pursue the next level.”

Buccino said he has also thought of going on in school and getting a master’s degree in psychology. He wants to study the mental aspect of sports.



**AJ Buccino**

“There’s not a lot of mental training in sports,” Buccino said. “When I was younger I learned that all sports are all mental.

You just have to keep it in perspective and not get too high or too low.”

In his spare time Buccino said he enjoys hanging out with his teammates and watching hockey.

He also spends a lot of time doing homework and working. During the off-season Buccino said he likes to spend time at the beach and play baseball.

The Falcons played St. Mary’s on Tuesday night, winning the game in a dominating 10-2 fashion. The home win was a quick bounce back after a rough weekend at St. Scholastica and UW-Superior. While the team beat Scholastica, it was a struggle.

**“Just knowing he wants to be better shows how big of a competitor he is...”**

**Cory Baldwin,**  
**freshman hockey player**

“It wasn’t a very good weekend. I wish we could have won both the games,” Buccino said. “People were frustrated, but we did come home with two points.”

# Women’s hockey sweeps Finlandia

**Sarah Packingham**  
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The UW-River Falls women’s hockey team had a very successful conference series with Finlandia Dec. 9 and 10.

The Falcons outscored their opponent 7-2 and 6-0, respectively.

Junior Kelly Snedeker was named Player of the Week for her efforts over the weekend.

“We won both of our games against Finlandia this weekend which was huge,” Jenna Scanlon said. “It took a lot of team effort to put the puck away like we did and our goalie Amber Lindner got her third shutout of the season.”

Scanlon had nothing but good things to say about her team’s efforts over the weekend.

“I think we won both of our games this weekend because every player on our team got a chance to see the ice, and everyone played their role in our 2-0 weekend,” Scanlon said. “I think everyone played really well this weekend but Kelly Snedeker really stepped it up and had no problem putting the puck in the net with the help of her linemates.”

The Falcons played their final game before the break Wednesday night at Gustavus.

The women’s hockey team lost their final game of the first half, 1-0 on the road against Gustavus.

Overall, the season has been going well for the Falcons as their record sits well above .500.

**“Everyone is excited to play every game and come to practice every single day...”**

**Mandi Mohwinkel,**  
**junior hockey player**

“I think the season is going fantastic,” Mandi Mohwinkel said. “Everyone is excited to play every game and to come to practice every single day to try and work for a conference championship, and possibly a chance to get to the Frozen Four.”

When asked what advantage the Falcons had over their weekend opponent, Mohwinkel had a lot to say.

“Our pride and confidence ... We were very confident going into the weekend,” she said. “We are a team that truly enjoys to play the game itself rather than trying to beat the other team to a pulp so, in fact, having more focus on where

See Hockey, page 7

# Basketball team loses three in a row

**After strong start, women’s team falters**

**Sarah Packingham**  
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After starting off the season on a hot streak, winning five in a row, the UW-River Falls women’s basketball team cooled off a little bit, dropping their last two games which brings their record to 5-2.

Though they lost, the Falcons are nowhere near ready to give up hope for a strong second half of the season.

The Falcons fell to Platteville at home 54-52. Kim Sorenson scored a career-high 16 points and teammate Traci Reimann grabbed 14 rebounds, including 12 on the defensive side of the ball.

Prior to the loss to Platteville, the Falcons were on the road in Eau Claire where they lost their first game of the season.

“We have come into these two games not as mentally prepared as we should have been and the outcome was not in our favor for both,” Sorenson said. “We fought hard and have learned from our mistakes and can only move forward from them. Wednesday will be a different story.”

On Wednesday night the Falcons took on Macalester and lost their third consecutive game.

The Falcons fell to Macalester by a final score of 52-46. Chantele Melgaard lead the

Falcons with 19 points.

Melgaard said she has been disappointed with the efforts as of late, but thinks that there’s nothing the Falcons can’t improve from.

“We know we are a better team than what we showed against Eau Claire and Platteville,” she said. “We haven’t been coming out strong in the first half like we normally would ... we’ll be alright though.”

While the Falcons were a strong team last year, this year they seemed to improve all-around. Team chemistry is a part of any successful program.

“Everyone on the team gets along very well,” Melgaard said. “We spend so much time together it’s hard not to be good friends. We do a lot of stuff together outside of basketball as well ... On the court we need to play better together.”

Following Friday night’s game with Northwestern, the Falcons will have a short break before returning to play.

“I think we need this break and it will help us get back on track. This week we have two non-conference games that are very important and we should win them both and then finals week we have off,” Melgaard said. “After that we go to Arizona for a trip. That’s always fun to travel and to play against some different teams.”

Sorenson agrees with Melgaard, but she said she thinks that after being away



*Kenny Yoo*

**Megan Lindman goes up for a shot against Stevens Point Dec. 2. The Falcons won the game 67-60. The Falcons currently have a record of 5-2 and play at Northwestern Friday.**

See Basketball, page 7







# Grant improves virtual learning opportunities at UWRF

Rachel Ogrodnik  
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UWRF and Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) students will soon be able to take online courses.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded a \$2.5 million grant Sept. 29 to make virtual learning possible through the Title III program, “Stronger Together: An Educational Partnership for the Changing Economy.”

“UWRF and CVTC proposed the program because both institutions face the same problem: growing populations and needs for our programs and limited resources to deliver them,” said Director of Grants and Research Bill Campbell, who wrote the proposal with Director of Outreach Katrina Larsen and CVTC Grants Director Jane Tafel. “By expanding our capabilities to deliver courses in non-traditional ways, we can deliver instruction to populations that we cannot now serve.”

Following the U.S. Department of Education’s outline, Campbell, Tafel and Larsen wrote a 70-page proposal.

“I’ve served as a reader for this

Department of Education competition many times,” Campbell said. “I know what readers are looking for: a burning need, a well thought-out plan for addressing that need and commitment from the institutions to carry out that plan.”

The new courses will be beneficial to UWRF students.

“They will benefit primarily students who cannot now spend their days on campus, when most classes are offered,” Campbell said. “This will benefit students who work full time, who are place-bound, who prefer intensive short bursts of instruction to semester-long courses, or who simply prefer the traditional three days per week hour-long course structure.”

Through the year 2011, UWRF and CVTC will train faculty in delivering courses via Web-based education, instructional TV and compact learning; develop and offer courses using the same methods; achieve student retention for alternative delivery programs equal to the retention on campus by providing online and evening access to services, advising and counseling; and explore new bachelor’s degree programs providing ease of credit transfer.

Because the grant was awarded so recently, there are still a few unknown factors.

“I suspect that it’s far too early to say what courses will be offered and when the courses begin,” Campbell said. “We’ve just started year one of a five-year project.”

Title III awards funds for developing academic programs to meet regional workforce needs and is the third grant provided to UWRF in the past 15 years.

The first was awarded in 1991 and funded the pre-major advising program, degree audit system and the first campus-wide efforts for assessment of academic programs. In 1999, UWRF was awarded another Title III grant, which funded 10 new Outreach programs.

September’s grant will bring in \$500,000 per year for five years, but approximately half of those funds will go to the University’s partner, CVTC.

“This Title III grant is among the largest we’ve ever received,” Campbell said.

The University submits about 80 grant proposals per year.



Kenny Yoo

Trent Gabler, left, and Jake Anderson edit video footage for a technology class at Chippewa Valley Technical College. A \$2.5 million grant was awarded to CVTC and UWRF to improve virtual learning.

# University Center lacks definite location for student advertising

Jennie Oemig  
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While the new University Center boasts a vastly different design from the current Student Center, even small-scale aesthetic changes will be evident when the facility opens in January.

For many years, student organizations have been reliant on banners, posters and table tents to promote events and recruit members. Yet while many students know right where to look for that information in the Student Center, those advertisements are without a home in the new facility.

“With the Student Center being a common place for different types of students to congregate, it is an excellent place for advertisements on current activities or for recruitment for different organizations,” Alpha Gamma Rho President Adam Spierings said.

Though these things will not be restricted altogether in the new facility, Student Life Facilities Director Mike Stifter said he, with input from students, will be looking to improve upon these tactics in the first few months of spring semester.

Because the building is new and most students have not yet had a chance to see what lies inside, Stifter said that it cannot be determined where the hanging of posters will be most effective.

“Once you let people in, that’s where the dynamic begins,” he said.

Stifter said it is pointless to set aside certain spaces for such advertising without a better sense of where students will congregate.

“We could sit and guess where everyone’s going to go,” he said. “Instead, we’d like to wait and find out.”

By observing students in the new building to determine where to devote space for organizations to advertise, Stifter said the University Center will be more effective than the Student Center.

“They don’t serve a purpose where they’re at,” Stifter said of the posters hanging in front of the windows on the west side of the Student Center.

Those posters are placed in a hallway that sees a lot of student traffic, which is precisely why advertisements were located there in the first



Zach Nagle

Lights in the new University Center illuminate the south side of the building. When the facility opens, student traffic will determine where advertisements should be placed.

place.

“The inability to hang signs in the new University Center would hinder many organizations on campus from recruiting people to attend their events,” former Alpha Sigma Alpha President Lindsay Woychek said. “The use of this

PR tactic allows many students to let the rest of the student body know about events and other things that are going on with their organization.”

But Stifter said this form of promotion is ineffective. Just because many students walk by these posters doesn’t mean they pay attention to them.

“When people are sitting, they take more in,” Stifter said.

It was this logic that was used when determining how to use the benefits of technology to improve promotional efforts for organizations.

“We will have the opportunity to roll out some new technology like Axis TV, which will serve as a more high-tech way of advertising for events,” Stifter said. “The coverage is much greater than currently in either Rodli or Hagestad.”

Most of the spaces for advertisement in the University Center will be set aside strictly for organizations and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. There will be places for students to post other information, such as the sale of pets and the availability of apartments for sublease.

“There will be bulletin boards by the convenience store, which would be one place for students to get information on what cars are for sale,” Stifter said.

Stifter also said there are many options being considered to replace the current lackluster forms of promotion used by organizations.

One of the things being considered is the improvement of table tents. Stifter said the current table tents result in a lot of waste and crumpled paper. He has been working with Dining Services Director Jerry Waller to come up with solutions to alleviate that problem.

Having three-sided kiosks that would sit atop a napkin and salt and pepper holder was one idea.

The structure of the new University Center also allows for some other possibilities.

“We could utilize the space around the exposed columns,” Stifter said, adding that DePaul University has developed a four-sided kiosk around support columns.

And the possibilities don’t stop there.

In following with restaurant advertising, Stifter said students may see promotion in the bathrooms of the University Center as well.

Whatever may develop in the form of promotion, Stifter said students will have the run of the building. Once the University Center opens and students begin to utilize the space, he will have a better idea of what opportunities will be available.

## Disabilities: Increasing costs deter program's technological potential

from page 2

Yet the department doesn’t have the budget to pay for these players, he said.

On top of the \$200, another cost of \$85 is needed for special software to play the actual CD on a computer.

“I need at least two dozen for all my staff,” Johnson said. “But what is nice about these players — it gives you eight hours of crystal clear sound.”

So the department now works with simple digital recorders that student employees record texts into. When a student is finished, they drop off the recorder and another staff member works with computer programs to edit and burn the audio to a CD, Johnson said.

“The entire process is very cumbersome,” Johnson said. “The software we have now doesn’t allow much editing at all.”

Student Sarah Michaelson, who has

worked in Disability Services since September, said she does all the editing, burning and converting of the audio and other office tasks, like copying lecture notes and filing requests forms.

“We’re trying to get everything switched over so [students] can easily play [CDs] on their computers or stereos,” she said. “It’s been a learning experience.”

The process to get students textbooks on CDs has been trial and error.

“We’re always changing the way we do things to make it the best we can for the students,” Johnson said. “Some CDs turn out really good, but others don’t, causing more problems to occur.”

Getting students to effectively communicate with professors about their required reading material for a class is another problem the department faces when it comes to making CDs

available in a timely manner, Johnson said.

“Sometimes professors aren’t proactive with a good timeline when material is required to be read in a class,” he said. “We put the student in the middle - we like to hold them responsible for any changes. We know professors are very busy people.”

Students are responsible for filling out the paperwork for Disability Services in a timeframe that works for everyone in the process.

Johnson said five days is the minimum amount of time his staff needs to get the process finished.

“We can’t foresee a problem until it occurs, so we try to plan out long in advance,” Johnson said. “If we get ahead, it is fine, but if we get behind, we can’t do it. We can’t tell on our own if something not going right.”

## Dining: Hours change to accommodate students

from page 2

not had before,” Conde said.

Waller said despite the changes, students should be able to eat at their normal meal times.

“The standard times [students are] used to eating will not be adjusted,” he said.

UWRF freshman Ashley Maddix said with the extended meal plan hours, she’ll have more opportunities to gain some much-needed stamina for schoolwork.

“[It will] give me more energy to focus on studying, if I do study,” she said.

Finals week dining schedules are available at cash registers in all campus dining establishments.

Waller said students should pick up a copy to lessen confusion.

“It will require a little bit of watching the schedule,” he said. “We’re doing our best to provide as much information ahead of time.”

Waller said Dining Services in the new University Center should be “up and operational” Jan. 16, the week before students return to campus for spring semester.

Employment

Positions Available on Campus! Technology Leadership Cadre (TLC). Student helping students with technology. Job description at [http://www.uwrf.edu/tlc/member/tlc\\_pos.pdf](http://www.uwrf.edu/tlc/member/tlc_pos.pdf). Application deadline December 18.

Spring Break

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CLASSIFIEDS

To learn more about classified or display ad rates, contact the business office at 425-3624. You can also view them online at [www.uwrfvoice.com](http://www.uwrfvoice.com)

Student Voice Business Office  
410 S. Third Street, 304 North Hall  
River Falls, WI 54022  
Phone: 425-3624 Fax: 425-0684

Employment

Need a break in your day? Come work for the YMCA! The New Richmond Area YMCA has a variety of fun jobs available: SAC (School Age Child Care) Program Staff, Teen Center Team members, Lifeguards, Swim Instructors, Water Exercise Instructors. Days/Hours vary for above positions. Cal 715.246.2252 with questions. Applications and complete job descriptions available at the branch or online. New Richmond Area YMCA, 428 S. Starr Ave., New Richmond, WI 54017 [www.YMCATwinCities.org](http://www.YMCATwinCities.org) AA/EOE/M/F/D/V

Employment

Have a Heart Inc. We are looking for Care Givers and Personal Care Assistants to work with children and young adults with developmental disabilities. Flexible hours on weekends and during the week available. Training and support provided. Call Amber: 715-425-7754



# Student Voice Staff Holiday Wishes



**"I wish to eat chocolate-covered cherries and cuddle with one of my three crushes: Helen, Doug or Reese."**  
Ben Jipson, Columnist



**"I wish for discretionary intoxication. And no, you cannot get a 'one, two.'"**  
Keighla "Keigh" Schmidt, Etcetera Page Editor



**"I wish for the Subaru to survive the big move to Colorado."**  
AJ "Adge" Oscarson, Viewpoints Editor

**"I wish for some frickin' snow so I don't have to keep making grass angels. And, of course, for whirled peas."**  
Sarah Packingham, Sports Editor



**"I wish for the ability to hibernate. Pulling frequent all-nighters has finally taken its toll."**  
Jennie Oemig, Front Page Editor



**"I wish to be Johann Santana."**  
Ben Brewster, Assistant Sports Editor

**"I wish for lower gas prices so I can visit Helen in Manitowoc."**  
Shalena "Shale" Janis, Assistant Editor



**"I wish for a ski-in bar with \$4 liter Amarettos during AJ-Vail vacations."**  
Helen "Boss" Clarke, Editor

**"I wish to not get run over during hallway chair racing."**  
Kenny Yoo, Photographer



**"I wish for the journalism students to stop putting my boots in the ceiling where I can't reach. I need them for agriculture-related activities."**  
Addie Carlson, Chief Copy Editor

**"I wish to become the champion of hallway chair racing ... Victory will be mine!"**  
Beth "Blow" Dickman, Photo Editor



## 'Apocalypto' a typical gruesome Gibson film



Jenna Lee

When I told my friends I had chosen "Apocalypto" as my final film review, many of them were outraged. They begged me not to put one more dime into Mel Gibson's crazy hands. Who knows what he could do with my hard earned money! Maybe buy more Nazi paraphernalia, or even worse — more booze.

But there was something haunting and bizarre about the trailers that drew me in. Perhaps there was a curious part of me that wanted to see if Gibson had finally lost it.

Whatever it was, "Apocalypto" grabbed my attention from the very beginning and never let go.

The life of the average Mayan villager who lived 500 years ago may not seem very interesting to the average American who has access to TV and video games, so the beginning of the film seems slow.

But while I watched the townspeople go about their everyday activities, it helped me connect with the characters.

Even though I could not understand the language (the entire film is spoken in an ancient Mayan dialect), I could still understand love, family and community.

Yet that community is quickly shattered when a neighboring tribe attacks and captures the men for their human sacrifices.

Amid the chaos a young warrior, Jaguar Paw (Rudy Youngblood), hides his equally young, pregnant wife and son down a well, hoping he will be able to rescue them later.

The captives are brought to a huge Mayan metropolis that looks like the Temple of Doom on acid.

Tripped-out priests chant while men get their hearts ripped out. The crowd cheers as their heads go rolling down the temple's steps.

From here on out, Gibson spills as much blood and guts as he can get away with. Jaguar Paw, with help from his spirit guide (the Jaguar — big surprise), escapes and leads his blood-thirsty pursuers back into the jungle.

Only this time it is he who is blood thirsty. Nothing Jaguar Paw does to kill the attacking warriors is unique, and it was usually obvious what was coming next. He lures them over a waterfall, spits poisoned tree frog darts and disembowels them with traps set for wild game.

If only one of the men had been eaten alive by piranhas, the movie would have had everything. And at times the weaponry was so simple, I found it brilliant.

Like "The Passion of the Christ," this film is only as historically and factually accurate as you want it to be.

What people seem to forget when they watch movies directed or written by Gibson is that they are just figments of his imagination that he came up with while eating his breakfast or taking a dump.

If he's trying to send me some sort of subliminal, religious message through his movies, great. Good for him.

But I thought "Apocalypto" was just an amazing piece of fiction that took a lot of great pointers from the History Channel.

Forget the quasi-horror film "Turistas" — the jungle in Gibson's mind is way more fucked up.

*Jenna is a junior studying journalism and music history. She enjoys watching dark comedy movies.*



Nick Welsh

made a name for himself in the past by creating pieces that have been particularly gruesome, and he doesn't seem to slow down. "Apocalypto" is brutal, but not as extreme as "The Passion."

In this story we go back centuries ago to the Mayan civilization, at a time when the culture was crumbling in on itself. With the introduction of a mysterious infectious disease and crop failure, the panicking masses turn toward their religious leaders for guidance, who in turn demand human sacrifice.

As a result, raiding parties stretch outward into the jungle, capturing adults from nearby scattered villages.

This is how the hunter, Jaguar Paw, becomes involved. Living in a hospitable community filled with game, he lives happily. People are lighthearted here without worry and are instead preoccupied with playing pranks on each other.

But early one morning a party surrounds the village capturing and killing many. Hiding his wife during the assault, Jaguar Paw vows to return to her and his son.

There were aspects to this film I liked, such as the authenticity of story comes. People are wearing indigenous dress with numerous piercings, and even the hairstyles are exotic. Tools and weapons are simple, consisting of wooden clubs and stone knives.

Like "The Passion," the characters speak an

indigenous language. Using a culture's native language in film has become more common in recent years instead of English, and I've developed an appreciation for this. It sets the atmosphere, making the characters more realistic. Gibson even hired all Native American actors.

Huts and lush jungle vegetation spot the landscape, contrasting well with the strange urban dwelling the captives are brought to.

There were also parts to the film I didn't like. For one thing, we aren't given a clear explanation for why things happen in the city. Like or what is that white stuff that's being ground up? Is it salt, or possibly limestone? We never know.

Some parts were just too unrealistic for me, like when Jaguar Paw is able to outrun a chasing panther for an extended period of time. Or when he was capable of running nonstop well into the following morning, despite the fact that a spear had just pierced through his gut.

I also had a big problem with the ending. You see Spanish conquistadors arriving on shore, but that would've never happened in real life, considering the Mayan civilization had already died out more than 500 years before Spanish arrival.

In the end, "Apocalypto" had a unique plot, but questions went unanswered. The film editing helped the two hours go by quickly, but sometimes the camera shook too much, creating a sense of disorientation and confusion.

Authenticity was made, but you don't know why things are happening, random acts are occurring without a clear understanding.

If anything, I thought it was mediocre — a movie that was just OK. It's been said that it's too violent, of which I disagree. This consisted of mostly beating, not gore. For in the end, the violence is really what kept the film going.

*Nick is a senior studying history. He enjoys watching comic book superhero movies.*



Ratings for movies are based on a scale from one to five. A film that scores five stars is worth seeing at least once. A film that scores one star is horribly acted or directed, with no substance.





# University Center ready for students' return

Blair Bengs  
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The Student Center is soon to be obsolete. And with the new University Center's imminent opening, the buzz around campus is not limited to students.

While Dale Braun was done with his work on the University Center two years ago, his enthusiasm for the project has not stopped.

The UW-River Falls campus planner said the bigger and better building will do more than provide students a place to eat, hang out and study.

"It is really going to do what a student center should do," Braun said, adding the University Center will provide a place where "students can be students, faculty can be faculty and people can be people."

By offering spaces such as a cyber café, entertainment complex, involvement center, lounge areas and meeting rooms, the buzz about the University Center has UWRF students such as Cassie Beck, Kaylyn Hum and Jordan Thomas eagerly anticipating the day the building opens its doors for everyone.

"I can't wait," said Beck, who regularly meets Hum and Thomas in the Student Center so they can get away from small dorm rooms. "We come here a lot," she said. "It is a lot less cramped."

Though the current Student Center is Beck's escape from her dorm room, Braun said the University Center, which is "five times bigger," will provide students with more to do.

"Right now, the Student Center is fine," he said. "But this building is really going to hold you. The entertainment complex will have an area where bands can perform — it will be like Brandy's, but larger. There will be a two-level game room with ping pong and pool."

While Beck walks across campus to spend time in the Student

Center, the 20-year-old sophomore and Hathorn Hall resident said she is excited about having the University Center centrally located on campus.

"It is going to be a shorter walk for me," she said. As director of Student Life Facilities, Mike Stifter said he thinks the location of the University Center is a benefit for UWRF students and faculty.

"Its location is ideal," Stifter said. "From its location, programs and services, to the dedicated student and professional staff in the building, I believe it will be an absolute positive addition to the campus and surrounding community."

With his optimistic view on the University Center, it seems Stifter shares the opinions of Braun and Chancellor Don Betz.

The campus planner said the new location will bridge the divide on the UWRF campus.

"There will no longer be an east campus versus west campus feel anymore," Braun said. "It is truly the crossroads of the campus."

As head of the University, Betz also has high hopes for the building that will unite the campus.

"The University Center will be the center of our university community as we reach out to serve the people of our city, our region, state and beyond," Betz said. "My sense is that the new University Center will add to the vitality of the campus and community, and will be the site of a full spectrum of events, activities, speakers and performances that are associated with vibrant universities."

With all the hype and promise of invigorated campus life surrounding the building,

Betz said it stands up to the excitement.

"Already more than 200 events are scheduled in the first few weeks in the new University Center," he said.

At least one of those events is being worked on by Stifter, who said a blueprint for welcoming students to the building is in the making.

"We are currently preparing plans for the week of Jan. 22 when students return for spring semester," he said. "Details will be coming out soon."

Stifter's planning days do not stop there, as spring semester may also have other University Center happenings for UWRF students.



**Couches wind around lounge areas in the new student-oriented building.**

Zach Nagle



**A bridge in the new facility shows off the building's unique architectural design.**

Zach Nagle



Zach Nagle

**The University Center illuminates the campus at night. The facility is set to open Jan. 22 — the same day classes resume for spring semester.**

"We also hope to do some additional events throughout the spring semester," he said.

With preparations in the works for spring activities in the new building, UWRF senior Kristen Johnson is feeling green with envy, as she will graduate before the University Center opens.

"I was just thinking about it," the 23-year-old said, admitting she is "a little bit jealous" about not getting to use the new University Center.

Johnson said her twinge of jealousy stems from the increased food choices and one hot item in particular — "a cozy fireplace" — which will be included in the new building.

"People want to hang out instead of sitting at a table," she said.

While Johnson may have to come back to UWRF to enjoy the University Center, Braun said he is ready to see all the hard work that was put into constructing the building pay off.

"It really is very different," he said. "I am really looking forward to seeing students in there being who you are."

# Thank you!

We've been proud to serve the UW-River Falls community for the past 12 years from our office in the Hagestad Student Center. We are grateful for the members and friends we've made while serving the students, faculty and staff at UW-RF.

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