

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN STUDENT VOICE RIVER FALLS

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Dairy Pilot Plant renovation prepares for grand reopening this spring

Jack Van Hoof

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The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will make a return to dairy production on campus with the renovation of its Dairy Plant, which is projected to open in spring of 2023. When operational, the Plant will be able to produce around a thousand pounds of cheese curds and around six hundred to eight hundred gallons of ice cream per day.

Michelle Farner, the Dairy Pilot Plant Manager, said “[The Dairy Plant] will be a licensed production facility, so [students] will be able to come in just like if they were to work for Ellsworth Creamery or Eau Galle Cheese. They’ll be able to gain that experience on campus.” UW-River Falls is one of two universities in Wisconsin to have a dairy plant.

The renovation will include an expand-



Michelle Farner in the Dairy Pilot Plant. (Photo by Jack Van Hoof)

ed facility, modernized equipment, and updated product security. “With the newer equipment, we’ll be able to train students and teach students on what they would see when they go into the industry,” Farner said. “They’ll be able to hit the ground running when they start employment.”

The old Dairy Plant was a one-room facility, which meant that it processed raw product alongside finished product. The new Plant will be two rooms; this separation of space will allow for a more secure and safe production environment. The renovation will also introduce new technology, such as automation to some of the produc-

tion processes.

While students who are in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences can especially benefit from the plant, Farner said that “anyone can participate.” She mentioned how many of the plant managers are business students. “This is like a little entrepreneurship here,” she said. “We have a small business.”

The cost of the renovation is around \$8.5 million. The Wisconsin State Building Commission has approved \$1.9 million for the project, and the university has pledged \$525,000. The renovation has also received support from industry partners, who have pledged \$2.1 million in gifts and \$900,000 in equipment donations. Farner said that the project is about 52% privately funded. One such partner is Ellsworth Creamery, which has donated \$150,000 to the Plant.

The first piece of new equipment was installed in the plant in January, 2020. Farner said that she hopes to have all of new equipment, as well as the electrical and piping systems, installed by January, 2023. From there, equipment commissioning will take place in February, 2023 and testing, as well as licensing, will take place in March, 2023.

As such, the plant is expected to open in mid to late spring 2023. April, 2023 is the anticipated month, but Farner said this is a tentative date at best, and the launch could take place in May, 2023 or even later.

The Dairy Plant will send its product to Chartwells, UWRF’s contracted food service provider, as well as the Freddy Falcon Dairy Bar that is located in the Agricultural Sciences Building. “The focus is to teach students and the focus has to remain around

gaining hands on experience, not volume,” Farner said.

“We were working on equipment that was no longer serviceable and there were a few broken pieces that were going to take a lot of funds to improve,” Farner said. Much of this equipment was around thirty years old. Before the renovation, the plant was able to produce three hundred pounds of cheese curds and two hundred gallons of ice cream per day. The last time it was operational was in 2017.

The renovation means that, not only will production be expanded, but student employment opportunities at the plant will be expanded as well. When the project is completed, the plant, which currently has 20 student employees, will be able to double the number of employees. “If we’re going to be in production four to five days a week, that will take a lot of staff,” Farner said. Not only will the plant offer employment opportunities and hands-on experience, but students will be able to use the facility for research projects.

In addition, the plant will offer industry courses and other training courses in a new training room that is part of the renovation. “We’re only going to be expanding those [courses] and students [will be] able to partake in those as well,” Farner said. “So that’s another opportunity for students that we offer here.”

The Dairy Pilot Plant is located in the Food Science Addition in the Agricultural Sciences building at UW-River Falls.



One of two rooms of the Dairy Pilot Plant. (Photo by Jack Van Hoof)

Free haircut event seeks to improve student community

Joshua Brauer

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The Diversity Inclusion and Belonging (DIB), a university office at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, held a haircut event at the campus University Center on Oct. 11. The event, called Free Mental Health Haircuts, was a first for the organization and provided free haircuts to UW-River Falls students in the University Center's Falcon Nest.

Derek Bradley, the interim director of DIB, helped coordinate the event. "It's about providing these services for students that they didn't necessarily recognize that they needed," said Bradley in an interview. "This service is open to all students."

"I was very excited about it," Mayala Keita, DIB senator and the president of Black Student Union, said. "I would see students that I barely know come on campus and sit there and wait for their haircut."

"You ask, who is going to cut my hair when you go off to college?" Bradley said. "It is totally different cutting hair with people who look like myself compared to other individuals, so finding barbers who can do that is important."

Students were able to sign up for haircut slots or walk in. "For the first event, we

had 17 students get an official haircut; however, there were more than 25 who signed up for it," he said. According to Bradley, the November event has 26 students signed up, with slots available.

Free Mental Health Haircuts will become a monthly event, Bradley said, and expansions to the program are in the works. "I want to expand it as well with a couple of local barbers in town, to see how we can add that community aspect," he said.

"I'm excited for the next event [in November] because we'll be having a women's stylist, and we're working on the menu of styles that she's going to do," said Keita.

To make the haircuts free for students, funding for the event comes out of the DIB budget, Bradley said. Free haircuts are not the only thing that the event looks to provide.

"I remember one student who could not keep a smile off his face after he got his haircut," Bradley said. "All I wanted was to have that sensation for students, to feel better about yourself."



Milton Massaquoi gets his hair cut Tuesday in the Falcon's Nest by barber Gil Jordan. (Photo by Falcon Daily)

"I remember one student who could not keep a smile off his face after he got his haircut. All I wanted was to have that sensation for students, to feel better about yourself."

—Derek Bradley,

Interim Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

DIB partnered with the company ClipDart to make the event possible. ClipDart also sends barbers to sponsored haircut events at other UW System schools, such as Eau Claire and Platteville, according to the company's website.

Future Free Mental Health Haircut events are scheduled monthly and the next two events are scheduled for Nov. 9 and Dec. 6 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Falcon's Nest.

Residential development leading growth of River Falls

Dawson Flaherty

Falcon News Service

River Falls has been expanding for years and isn't planning to stop anytime soon. This includes developments in the areas of industry, commerce, recreation and, of course, residential.

Visiting the City of River Falls website and navigating to the community development section will return a page full of links. The page includes development maps that help paint a picture of a possible future River Falls.

Emily Shively, River Falls city planner, says that residential is most needed out of all the current development.

"Right now, there is strong market feasibility, financial feasibility," she said. "We have areas in the city that we have designated that are appropriate for residential growth, and the city council has also recognized that we have a need for this in the community. So it was one of our goals

to accommodate more housing development in the city because there is a significant need for housing."

The city conducted a housing study in 2017 and found that River Falls was in desperate need of more residences to help house its growing population. With 13 of the 28 current development sites being designated for housing in one way or another, the city plans to add hundreds of new homes to the market over the next 10 to 20 years. These new homes will range from apartments to townhomes and even senior living, with some of them, such as The Sycamore of River Falls senior living facility, already nearing completion.

Affordability of housing is a concern, according to Shively.

"So it's significantly driven by market forces, whether it's material cost, labor cost, land cost, and those are things that the city doesn't control, any one of those things," she said. "So, what we can do is make sure that our regulations

support things like number of units for housing and lot sizes that can accommodate."

Other than housing, the River Falls is open to more retail development. The main issue with retail development is the unique location of River Falls in comparison with nearby Hudson and the Twin Cities suburb of Woodbury. With such large metro retail developments nearby, it is unlikely that many large retailers will be looking to invest in River Falls, at least for the foreseeable future.

Some other notable city developments include the construction of a BOH Electronics office and manufacturing building on Whitetail Boulevard in northern River Falls; a greenhouse and mobile laboratory on Highland Drive for Eurofins BioDiagnostics; and, on Cemetery Road, the Renaissance Academy, which is part of the River Falls School District.

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Wisconsin 2022 midterm elections results

Midterm election results as of Nov. 11:

Governor race:

(D) Tony Evers wins with 51.2% of the vote
(R) Tim Michels loses with 47.8% of the vote

Lieutenant governor race:

(D) Sara Rodriguez wins with 51.5% of the vote
(R) Roger Roth loses with 48.5% of the vote

Senate race:

(R) Ron Johnson wins with 50.50% of the vote
(D) Mandela Barnes loses with 49.50% of the vote

Attorney general race:

(D) Josh Kaul wins with 50.7% of the vote
(R) Eric Toney loses with 49.3% of the vote

The Nov. 8 midterm elections resulted in Democrat Tony Evers being re-elected governor of Wisconsin and Republican Ron Johnson being re-elected as one of two U.S. senators from Wisconsin. Evers secured 1,358,659, or 51.2%, of the votes, while Republican challenger Tim Michels took 1,268,174, or 47.8%, of the votes. Independent Joan Ellis Beglinger took the remaining 1% of the vote.

The U.S. Senate race was close. Incumbent Ron Johnson secured 1,336,869, or 50.50%, of the votes, while Democrat challenger Mandela Barnes took 1,310,412, or

49.50%, of the votes.

Democrat Sara Rodriguez was elected as lieutenant governor, with 1,331,253, or 51.5%, of the votes. Her opponent, Roger Roth, took 1,253,025, or 48.5%, of the votes.

In U.S. House of Representatives races, Republicans took 6 out of 8 seats, with Republicans Bryan Steil, Derrick Van Orden, Scott Fitzgerald, Glenn Grothman, Tom Tiffany, and Mike Gallagher winning in their respective districts. Democrats Mark Pocan and Gwen Moore won two House seats.

In the Wisconsin State Senate, Republicans secured 22 seats, while Democrats took 10. One seat remains contested, and 6 Republicans and 10 Democrats were not up for election.

In the Wisconsin Assembly, Republicans secured 63 seats, while Democrats took 35. One seat remains contested.

Democrat Josh Kaul won the race for attorney general, securing 50.7% of the vote, while his opponent, Republican Eric Toney, took 49.3% of the vote.

As of Nov. 11, the Secretary of State race was too close to call, with Democrat Doug La Follette holding 48.32% of the vote and Republican Amy Loudenbeck holding 48.03% of the vote.

Republican Josh Leiber won the race for treasurer, securing 49.6% of the vote, while his opponent, Democrat Aaron Richardson, took 48.2% of the vote.



ADEPT service dog-in training Charlotte with an "I Voted" sticker. (Photo by Lexi Janzer)

English department hosts banned book reading event

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The University of Wisconsin-River Falls held its annual Banned Book Reading on Nov. 1; this year, volunteers read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood out loud in 20-minute slots in the Art Gallery of UW-River Falls' Kleinpell Fine Arts building. Readers were given a complimentary copy of the novel.

"We had gone something like fifteen years without a banned book reading event," said Mialisa Moline, the Chair for English, TESOL, and Modern Languages at UW-River Falls. "Last year we started it back up with *Fahrenheit 451*."

More students attended this year's event than last year's, and a few more participated in reading the book. There was a little improvement on turnout over last year," Moline said. The event was free, and open for community members to come and listen."

"I like building awareness about book banning," said Moline. "It's really important that people understand the dangers that are presented by censorship and college is

a place for learning and expanding knowledge rather than limiting it."

The Handmaid's Tale is set in the near future and takes place in the fictional Republic of Gilead, a regime that took over the United States government in response to a fertility crisis. The book has been accused of being anti-Christian and anti-Islamic, which is how it ended up being removed from the public school systems of several U.S. states, as well as several countries. The book has also been widely criticized for its depictions of sex and violence.

"Just this spring, the author [Margaret Atwood] went into a joint project with Penguin Random House, and they produced and auctioned off an unburnable copy of the book," Moline said. "[Atwood] said she wanted it to stand as a powerful symbol against censorship... It went for over \$130,000."

This year's Banned Book Reading was sponsored by the English, TESOL, & Modern Languages departments at UW-River Falls. Students can learn more about banned books at the banned book display on the second floor of Kleinpell Fine Arts.



Professor Michelle Parkinson reads at the banned book event. (Photo by Mialisa Moline)

"It's really important that people understand the dangers that are presented by censorship, and college is a place for learning and expanding knowledge rather than limiting it."

— Mialisa Moline,

Chair for English, TESOL, and Modern Languages at UWRF

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Despite being unranked, the Augsburg women's hockey team defeated the fifth-ranked Falcons. (Photos by UWRF Athletics)

Women's hockey opens season with 3-4 loss

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UW-River Falls' women's hockey team took to the ice at Hunt Arena on Oct. 29 to open up the 2022-2023 season. The Falcons, ranked fifth in the USCHO DIII Pre-season Poll, took on Augsburg for their first game.

This season follows a stellar 2021-2022 season for the Falcons, which included a record 27-win season, a WIAC regular season title, and an O'Brien Cup Championship.

The River Falls women's team opened up the season similar to how the River Falls men's hockey team kicked off their season

the night before. At 1:17 in the first period, Emma Schmitz found freshman Kailey Niccum to score the first Falcon goal of the game, giving UWRF a 1-0 lead. It was also Niccum's first collegiate goal of her career.

At 5:54, the Falcons had a power play opportunity, and Bailey Olson, with another assist from Emma Schmitz, scored the second goal of the game, giving the Falcons a 2-0 lead. With 1:49 left in the first period, Augsburg got on the board to make the score 2-1, thanks to a goal by Auggies forward Katie Flynn.

The second period was all Augsburg. Augsburg had a power play at the 13:34 mark, thanks to a roughing by Madison

This season follows a stellar 2021-2022 season for the Falcons, which included a record 27-win season, a WIAC regular season title, and an O'Brien Cup Championship.

Lavergne, and was able to take advantage and tie the game. Then, a few minutes later, as the second period was close to ending, Augsburg took the lead 3-2 thanks to an unassisted goal by Auggies defender Nora Stepan.

Twenty-two seconds into the third period, Augsburg scored their fourth goal and extended their lead to 4-2 thanks to a Ken-

nedy Stein goal assisted by Nora Stepan. Late in the third period, Falcon forward Emma Schmitz was able to score a goal to cut the deficit to 4-3.

It was too little too late for the Falcons, as Augsburg was able to hold on to win 4-3 and win an upset victory over the fifth-ranked Falcons.

Third annual Dairy Summit set Nov. 16 at UWRF

Lexi Janzer

Falcon News Service

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is hosting the third annual Dairy Summit for the first time in person on Nov. 16.

The goal of the Dairy Summit is to highlight the newest research by the Dairy Innovation Hub. UW campuses in Madison, Platteville and River Falls support the event.

A total of \$7.8 million in state funding is designated each year for new dairy initiatives through the Dairy Innovation Hub.

The Dairy Summit rotates every year across the three different campuses and it is River Falls' turn to host this year. The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences has a steering committee that makes decisions on involvement in the Dairy Innovation Hub. The steering committee also helps plan for the Dairy Summit and helps research.

"It is very broad dairy research, so it's not just about cows, although we do plenty of that," said the Dairy Sum-

mit Manager Maria Woldt. "It is also much about sustainability, land and water stewardship, community development, human and animal health, and nutrition."

Any area that could be considered dairy is studied by the Dairy Innovation Hub and will be discussed by participants during the Dairy Summit.

"I can tell you that people across the country and even internationally have registered for the event and are planning on taking in the live feed," Woldt said. "The majority of people who will come in person are regionally located, such as students, staff, faculty, and members of the community."

The event will be held in the University Center's River-view Ballroom and also will be recorded and found online for those who cannot attend. It is expected that more than 100 people will attend in person and well over 300 online. The summit is free to any person who signs up.

For more information contact Maria Woldt via email at maria.woldt@wisc.edu or visit the summit's website at dairyinnovationhub.wisc.edu/dairy-summit/.



DAIRY

INNOVATION HUB

The Dairy Summit is sponsored by the Dairy Innovation Hub, a joint project of UW campuses in Madison, Platteville and River Falls.

UWRF one of 14 schools to offer sustainable justice minor

Jack Van Hoof

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The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is one of only 14 universities in the United States to offer a sustainable justice, or SUSJ, minor. As of the fall of 2022, 12 students have enrolled in UW-River Falls' SUSJ program.

According to its course description page, "sustainable justice combines sustainability's three-pronged approach (environment, society, and economics) with the environmental justice perspective that issues of race, class, gender, and species are integral to our work with the environment and economics."

"We have a lot of approaches to sustainability that focus on the environment and, how can we conserve and keep the planet healthy," Grace Coggio, associate professor for Communication Studies and Sustainable Justice Minor.

"We sometimes lose sight of the more holistic understanding of sustainability, which includes the, social element as part of it, This minor, in addition to looking at the social justice angle of sustainability, and the impact on human beings, it also is about bringing different disciplines together around the issue of sustainability."

The SUSJ program was founded in 2017 by Greta Gaard, Professor of English and former Founder Coordinator of the Sustainability Faculty Fellows. "[The program] is starting to accelerate," Coggio said. "We're seeing a greater and greater demand for it."

Of the 12 students enrolled in the sustainable justice minor, eight are currently in the program, and four have graduated from it.

The SUSJ minor offers an introductory course, Sustainable Justice Foundations, which Coggio teaches, as well as three core courses. For these courses, students can choose Environmental Sustainability, Defining Sustainability Through Documentary Film, Global Water Resources, Sustainability from the Perspective or the Arts, Foundations of Outdoor Leadership, and Literature of Environmental Justice.

"[The minor] offers students fresh approaches to understanding, environmental,

"We sometimes lose sight of the more holistic understanding of sustainability, which includes the, social element as part of it, This minor, in addition to looking at the social justice angle of sustainability, and the impact on human beings, it also is about bringing different disciplines together around the issue of sustainability."

—Grace Coggio, associate professor

health, ecological, economic, social and environmental justice," Coggio said.

Students will then complete their studies with a Sustainable Justice Internship, Practicum, and Collaborative Community-based Research course. Students will then plan a research project that centers around sustainability in their local community.

"The project that we have students do is to identify a sustainable justice issue and come up with, a project that will address the issue," Coggio said. An example that Coggio mentioned was addressing food insecurity in a community.

"[Students] could do a capstone class or an internship where they put [their plan] into action, where they actually go out into the community," Coggio said. "[They will] go into the community and enact some kind of positive change around the issues of sustainability and social justice." She mentioned how the project should also be collaborative; students work with businesses or nonprofit groups or people from the affected community.

One student, Coggio said, looked at the issue of low compost rates in their home-



Greta Gaard, founder of UWRF's Sustainable Justice Minor. (Photo by Animals & Society Institute)

town, developed a plan to address it, and raised awareness for this plan by reaching out to community groups and getting involved in Earth Fest 2021.

The students that are enrolled in the SUSJ program are studying not only sustainability, but a variety of subjects as well, including Business Administration, Communication Studies, TESOL, German, and Conservation and Environmental Planning.

"I've had students who are Communications Studies majors, but want to do communications work [centered] around sus-

tainability," Coggio said. "[The program] definitely is diverse; it can enhance another minor and give you an area of expertise."

"It's so important that we have opportunities for students to explore these issues, to think critically about them, and then to develop ways to do something about it in whatever path their life takes," Coggio said.

She hopes the sustainable justice minor will continue to grow in the coming years, and prepare more students for the sustainability issues of the future.

River Falls ranks high for green power participation

Joshua Brauer

Falcon News Service

River Falls Municipal Utilities ranks second in the nation for green power participation and seventh in the nation for green power sales rate in 2021, according to the federal government's National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

"This is each individual customer that wants to do this voluntarily, that's what's really powerful," said River Falls Utility Director Kevin Westhuis.

According to the report for 2021, RFMU had 14.6% of its customers participating in the city's green energy programs, falling second only to Oregon's Portland General Electric.

The green power sales rate, for which River Falls ranked seventh, is the percentage of green power sales out of the

total electric sales that municipal utilities earn in a single year. RFMU had a green power sales rate of 6.3%, according to the report.

The NREL report, which includes more than 2,000 municipal companies from across the United States, has River Falls consistently achieving a Top 10 ranking since 2004, according to the city's website.

To achieve this consistency, the City of River Falls offers a green block program for residents. In the program a resident purchases a "block," which is a \$2 addition to their monthly utility bill from the city, according to Westhuis. Residents can add subsequent blocks to their bill if they so choose, and can cancel at any time, Westhuis said.

The money collected from the green block program in the city gets sent to Focus on Energy, based in Madison, to work on other environmentally safe programs, according

to Westhuis.

"That money goes towards promoting renewable energy programs within the state," he said.

Westhuis had a simple answer to how the city achieves its numbers for the green block program: "It's the good old-fashioned way of the ask, You can't get the sale unless you ask for the sale."

Numbers for RFMU continue to grow this year. According to a report from the city's Conservation and Efficiency coordinator, customer participation in green power stands at 16.9% as of September, an increase of 2.3 percentage points from 2021.

"These are powerful choices," Westhuis said. "It's very inexpensive, and everyone does their own little part."

Institute to teach humane handling in meat industry

Lexi Janzer

Falcon News Service

A new program at UW-River Falls will teach meat industry workers in Wisconsin about the humane handling of livestock.

The Humane Handling Institute will offer two-and-a-half-day long workshops that will hopefully have a soft launch this spring and a full launch next fall. The HHI created the program to provide a place where meat industry workers can go to gain hands-on training in the effective handling and stunning of animals before and at the point of slaughter, according to UWRF Associate Professor Kurt Vogel, who also is the director of the HHI.

Vogel received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to create the institute.

UWRF staff and students will also be invited to participate.

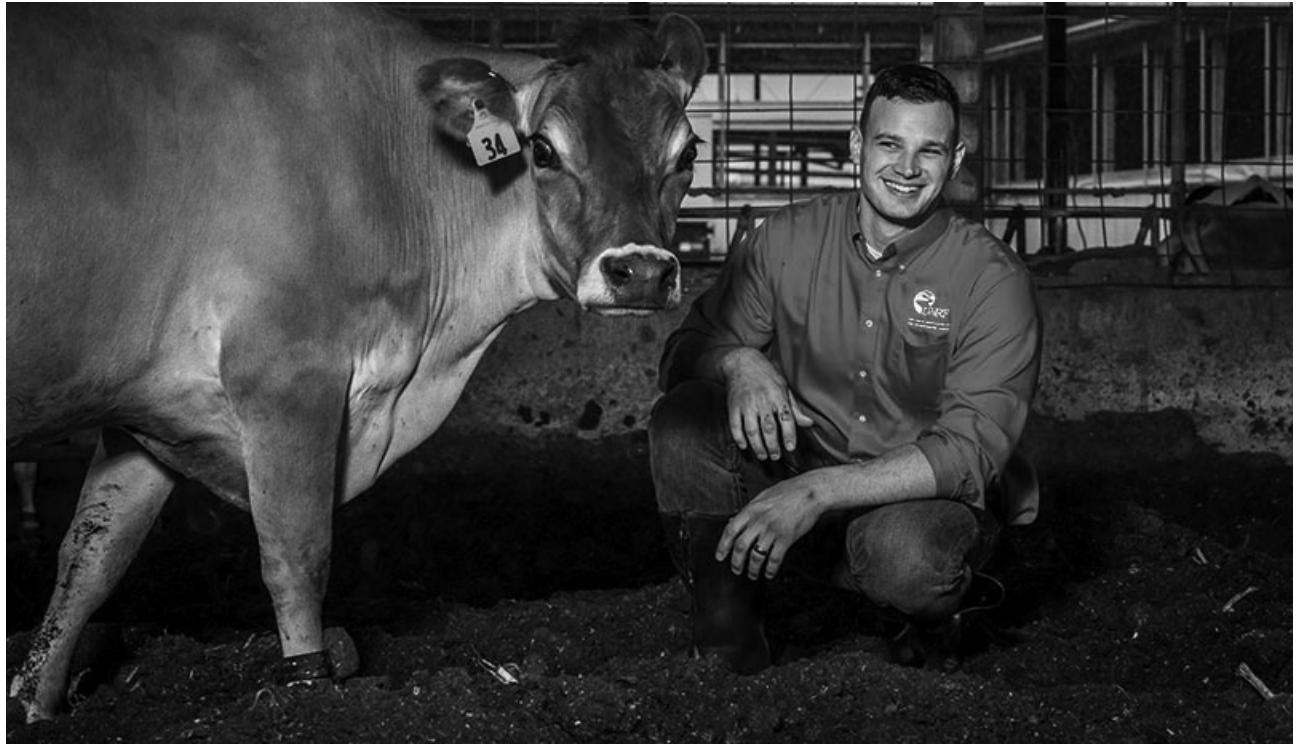
“One of the things that I have tried really hard to do is help students to get a view of what the world looks like outside of our campus, and this is one of the ways that we can do that,” said Vogel.

Vogel described the purpose of the program: “We set out to develop a series of courses that would help industry personnel to shore up their skills and to learn some new things.”

The HHI was created to help people who work in the state’s meat industry maintain compliance with humane handling laws. According to Vogel, the HHI tracked the occurrence of noncompliance with the humane handling law within the industry since 2014. The research showed that humane stunning is a consistent challenge that is fixable.

One unique thing about the program is that it will not be relying on live animals for the hands-on learning aspect of the workshops.

“We’re using models and dummies and tissues of animals that have already been slaughtered,” Vogel said, “so that these people can learn without feeling that pressure



Kurt Vogel, director of the Humane Handling Institute. (Photo by UW-River Falls)

“One of the things that I have tried really hard to do is help students to get a view of what the world looks like outside of our campus, and this is one of the ways that we can do that.”

— Kurt Vogel, associate professor

of not messing up and causing harm and they can develop the skills they need so that when they start do the job their skilled enough to do it well.”

The program also received funding from the state to provide seats for one person from each of Wisconsin’s 120 slaughter establishments to attend two of the courses that are most critical for compliance of the Humane Slaughter Act, according to Vogel.

“Animal welfare is a major part of the sustainability for the industry,” Vogel said. “If the suffering of animals is a consistent part of raising them for food then it is not a sustainable system and so from my perspective the HHI will help to make sure that we ensure the sustainability of the industry and that we’re making the transition from a live animal to meat in a way that is ethically justifiable.”

UW System disputes proposed Title IX regulations

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New Title IX regulations proposed by the Biden Administration have received major pushback from the general public. On Sept. 9, 2022, The UW System published a letter expressing their concerns about the lack of clarity on many topics, such as mandatory reporters and different credibility standards in investigations.

The new Title IX regulations would require almost every employee to be a mandatory reporter to students and staff experiencing discrimination. The UW System President, Jay Rothman, wrote, “Institutions should be free to determine which employees will be designated as mandatory reporters in a way that is consistent with that institution’s structure and student preferences.”

In addition, the new proposed rules would require a different way of reporting which would be “incredibly difficult to implement,” according to the UW System’s letter.

UW-River Falls currently requires all staff to be mandatory reporters with the exception of confidential employees, such as the Violence Prevention Coordinator, the on-campus Victim Advocate, and those who work in Student Health and Counseling Services.

The new regulations propose the idea of adding confidential employees to all campuses nationwide, which UW-River Falls is already prepared for. It will also be up to each institution to determine which employees will be considered confidential or mandatory.

As for the reporting process at UW-River Falls, staff or students can report to any of the three Deputy Title IX Coordinators on campus. These Coordinators are located in Athletics, HR, and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

This report will be escalated to the Title IX Coordinator and Compliance Director, and then escalated to the Dean of Students. If the investigation needs to be moved further along, it will be taken to a hearing led by an Administrative Judge who has no ties to the university.

With the possible rise of reports due to the increase of mandatory reporters, Title IX Coordinator and Compliance Director Jennifer Larimore said, “I don’t know that we will see an impact here.” She added, “During my time here the reports have increased.”

In order to hold an investigation, many people have to judge a victim’s credibility throughout the investigation process. The new Title IX regulation will change the standard of credibility that administrators will have to abide by throughout this process.

The new regulations describe this process by saying “credibility is both in dispute and relevant to evaluating.” The UW System letter requested clarification as to which part of the investigation these changes are applying to. They also asked for general, flexible guidance for credibility determination to be left up to trained investigators and hearing decision-makers.

Larimore expressed a similar sentiment, saying, “I would say with regard to the regulations that there is so much am-

biguity and lack of clarity. I would guess in the final rule that there is going to be some clarification there.”

This is not the first time new regulations of this sort have been implemented. According to Larimore, in May of 2020, the Trump Administration made many changes around due process laws and “really opened the door for informal resolutions in the university setting.”

The official regulations were published in May of 2020, so the department only had three months to put everything in motion. The Department of Education said they were not going to put people through that again.

According to Larimore, 2020 was the first time any administration had placed regulations around the area of sexual assault and schools’ responses under Title IX law. Before 2020, the only guidance suggested to institutions was through Dear Colleague Letters, which were used by the Bush administration in 2011 and continued with the Obama administration.

Currently, the Title IX changes are proposed regulations that were open to public comment, so there is still a long way to go in the lawmaking process. Next, the administration will have to take all public feedback into consideration and amend the regulations or remove parts completely. After that, there are many other things the administration will have to do before officially publishing the new regulations. Larimore predicts that they will be officially published in spring of 2023.

UWRF needs more support for students with disabilities

Recently, concern around students with physical disabilities and service dogs has led to more discussion of accessibility issues on campus. With winter right around the corner, these issues are more relevant than ever as the weather makes campus more difficult to navigate.

UWRF has one main stop for students with disabilities: the Disability Resource Center. Kaye Anderson, a Disability Resource Center peer mentor, said the most common use of the center is for extended test-taking time. The Disability Resource Center can also connect students with housing and professors to get the accommodation they need.

More recently, UWRF has experienced an increase in students with emotional support animals (ESAs) and service dogs around campus. The Disability Resource Center connects these students to Residence Life to get the accommodations that they need. Students with service dogs have also noticed many issues regarding the placement of wheelchair buttons next to fire alarms. Service dogs will have to jump up to touch these buttons. With the buttons next to fire alarms, there is an increased risk for the dog to accidentally set off the alarms. This increase of animals around campus has also prompted the university to work on a new policy centered around accessibility and information.

The university also has a “Report It” page that

has many uses around campus. Students with disabilities can use this page to report any instance of unfair or discriminatory behavior by students, professors, and university staff.

Students at UWRF brought DREAM to campus as part of an initiative to bring awareness about the needs of students with disabilities. DREAM stands for disability, rights, education, activism, and mentorship. This is a student-run organization with around 25 members, according to club co-president Kathryn Kinneberg.

DREAM puts on many events centered around education, such as hosting speakers or discussing winter prep in the style of Jeopardy. DREAM has also done what they call an “ability walk” around campus. Members walked through four academic buildings around campus and wrote down everything that was not ADA-compliant. Some of the most common issues were the lack of braille on placards in front of rooms on campus, bathroom stalls not being wide enough to fit a wheelchair, bathrooms having two doors to enter which could lead to students in wheelchairs being stuck between them with no way out, and elevators being too tight to house mobility devices without the device getting damaged.

When asked what the campus is doing well, Kinneberg said that the facilities management does a great job at keeping the wheelchair push buttons active at all times around campus. Kin-

neberg also spoke on what the university could improve, saying, “the university needs more universal design, which means it’s fit for all people.” Kinneberg gave some examples like having more curb cutouts and more cemented paths. As for the results of the DREAM ability walk, the students took their findings to the Disability Advisory Committee around May 2022. Kinneberg said she has not noticed any changes around campus since.

From the Student Voice’s own observations, the university has fallen short of meeting student needs around campus. Most of the things that Kinneberg mentioned that can be improved are small, inexpensive changes that, if implemented, could drastically enhance disabled students’ everyday life. Making campus more accessible would be beneficial for everyone. Currently, it seems the university is focused on recruitment when they should also be investing in already-existing buildings on campus to show the student body that they are listening to their feedback.

The Student Voice recognizes that the student body has the power to help make changes on campus and around the community. We hope the university will make these small changes around campus and take into account more universal and accessible design in upcoming projects while continuing to further educate themselves when making new policies.



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The Student Voice is a great way to connect with other students and grow your skills in the areas of writing, designing a newspaper, photography, interviewing, and more! No experience needed to join.

The Student Voice is a student-written and managed newspaper for UW-River Falls, and is published monthly during the regular school year.
All editorial content in the Student Voice is determined by the newspaper’s Editorial Board.
The opinions expressed in editorials and columns do not represent those of the newspaper’s advisor, student population, administration, faculty or staff.
Letters to the editor must be 300 words or less, and include a first and last name and phone number. They can be submitted at 304 North Hall, River Falls, WI 54022 or to editor@uwrvoice.com.
The Student Voice reserves the right to

edit any material for content, libel or space. It also reserves the right to withhold letters. All letters, news releases, briefs, display ads and classified ads must be able to be submitted no later than Wednesday at noon during the week of publishing. Information on publishing schedule can be obtained by contacting the editor.
Because of high production costs, UW-River Falls community members are permitted to collect one copy of the Student Voice per issue. A single copy of the Student Voice is valued at \$1, and additional copies may be requested from the editorial staff via email. Newspaper theft is a crime. Those who violate the single copy rule may be subject to civil and criminal prosecution.

Visit the Student Voice website
uwrvoice.com

ADEPT service dogs-in-training celebrate Halloween

In addition to dressing the dogs up for Halloween, PawPADs on the UWRF campus also spread awareness on how to keep your dog safe during Halloween. Tips included giving your dog a safe space to relax from trick-or-treaters, making sure your dog has some form of identification in case they run out the door, and keeping candy out of your dog’s reach.

Top left to right: Charlotte, Clyde
Middle left to right: Lenny, Piper, Smudge
Bottom left to right: Oscar, Peanut
All photos courtesy of PawPADS Facebook.

