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UWRF Plans \$303 Million Ag Science Project as Centennial Science Hall Enters Transition

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As confusion grows among UW-River Falls students with the temporary closure of Centennial Science Hall, university leaders say the change is part of a long-term plan to make room for a proposed \$303 million Agricultural Science building, which may not be completed until the mid-2030s.

The closure has left many UWRF students questioning where classes, labs and study spaces will be relocated in the coming years, especially as construction is expected to reshape large portions of campus.

Interim Chancellor John Chenoweth said the closure is largely tied to the recent opening of the SciTech building, which has absorbed most of Centennial's former functions. He described the sequence of events as a multi-step transition.

"SciTech opened and then all of the units from Centennial [moved to] SciTech," Chenoweth said. "Centennial is not fit for [the high growth of scientific research and demands for talent] anymore, so Centennial will need something done at some point to make it appropriate for whatever's next. Then that leads to our next major project on the campus that we would hope gets approved in this [upcoming] capital budgeting process, the Ag Sci building, which we will know more exactly what's going to happen to Ag Sci once the project gets approved."

Most of Centennial Science Hall will remain vacant, with only the observatory staying accessible. Still, university officials say the building will play a key role in future construction plans.

"Everyone from Ag Sci will get distributed in other places across campus," Chenoweth said. He added that the Agricultural Science building is expected to be the next major construction project. With approval still pending, the university's immediate goal is to prepare Centennial for the transition. "In theory, if it got approved in this capital budget, we're still about four years away to six before it's completed."

According to the UW System website, a 2011 "Master Plan" presentation titled Living the Promise: Academic Planning at UWRF outlined future campus projects, including the SciTech building and other proposed facilities and renovations. The plan anticipated long-term updates to aging academic buildings.

The current Agricultural Science proposal carries an estimated cost of \$303 million and includes a new facility, updated greenhouse space and renovations to existing infrastructure.

The Chief of Facilities at UW-River Falls, Alan Symicek, oversees campus infrastructure, capital planning and engineering. He is responsible for building and ground maintenance, as well as utility operations and was involved in recent major UWRF projects, including the SciTech building.



Overview of the 2011 UW-River Falls Campus Master Plan. (Graphic courtesy of UWRF Board of Regents)

"In 2017 we did a campus wide feasibility study at all of our science facilities and science buildings," Symicek said. "The recommendation of that study suggested that we build a new STEM building- so that's SciTech - and then we need to do significant improvements or replace the Ag Science Building."

Built in 1966, the current Agricultural Science building no longer meets the needs of modern science instruction. Symicek said the building's labs are outdated and cannot support the demands of contemporary agricultural science education.

"Those labs are not capable of everything we need to do for modern science education," Symicek said. With further mentions that Centennial Hall, he added, is expected to serve as a temporary relocation space during construction, housing classes and programs displaced by the project.

The estimated timeline for a project of this size can take up to multiple years to complete, facing the reality that Ag Sci building would likely need to be demolished and rebuilt.

"Construction could be in the early 2030s... maybe completed by 2033 or 2035. It's quite a ways out, and it'll be

long," Symicek said.

When asked about how this new project would affect regular campus life, it was made clear that although the project would involve large blockages around Ag Sci, it would not affect students' ability to reach the main buildings on campus as it had done for SciTech.

However, construction is still expected to significantly impact campus layout during construction. With large portions of the area potentially fenced off, classes will be temporarily relocated across campus.

Still, university leaders say the long-term goal is to strengthen academic programs and research opportunities, allowing students, particularly undergraduates, to pursue more complex outlets of research and studies alike.

When asked to describe the future of UWRF in one sentence, Symicek said, "I think this project would elevate our agricultural science education research, just kind of taking what we got to the next level in agriculture."

For now, Centennial Hall remains in transition, serving not as a closed space, but as a placeholder for what university officials describe as the next major phase of campus development.

UWRF spring commencement scheduled for May 9

A total of 679 UW-River Falls students are expected to graduate this spring, according to the registrar’s office. For further information about commeneceement, visit uwrf.edu/commencement.

Nicholas Aanenson	Elijah Boe	Anthony Cox	Alysse Gehrke	Garret Honstrom
Bailey Ahlers	Samuel Boe	Andrew Craft	JoHannah Gehrke	Sydney Hooppaw
Goodness Ajao	Cassidy Boeckermann	Karleigh Creasey	Alyssa Gelandner	Joshua Hoover
Lane Aleson	Elaina Bohlig	Jenna Crick	Joshua Gibbs	Linda Hout
Luke Alme	Natalie Bohlsen	Hailey Crider	Gemma Gilbert	Tessa Hovland
Greta Anderson	Ali Bolssen	Emily Crowe	Emily Gilmore	Kayla Howell
Andrew Anderson	Colten Bond	Lucy Curtis	Lilah Gilyard	Karen Howell
Spencer Anderson	Christopher Bonde	Alexis Curtis	Kinsey Giordano	Erica Hoyt
Simon Anderson	Emma Borchardt	Gabriel Dahl	Courtney Glenna	Adam Huber
Samuel Anderson	Reagan Borchardt	Alexis Danielson	Brooke Glumack	Savannah Huberty
Kellen Andler	Trina Bores	Allison Dart	Lynn-Ashley Gobina	Quinn Huhnke
Zachary Andress	Robert Boss	Zachary Datt	Bennett Goddard	Gabrielle Huitema
Reganne Androli	Ryan Bostrom	Ty Davis	Noah Goodhue	Catherine Hurlburt
Riley Anfinson	Ryan Bottema	Alyssa De La Rosa	Megan Goodreau	Abdulkarim Hussein
Meghan Anson	Kathryn Boudewyns	Tyler Dean	Ashley Goodrich	Maxwell Illetschko
Ellie Archer	Madeline Bourgard	Audrey DeMers	Matthew Greeder	John Incha
Nolan Arechigo	Evan Bowen	Olivia Denninger	Ashley Greengard	Benjamin Iseminger
Melissa Arndt	Brennan Boynton	Onalie Dennis	Thomas Grega	Cole Jacobs
William Aschenbrenner	Christina Boyum	Maleighney Deschamp	Kaitlyn Grenz	Nicholas Jacobs
Riley Ashburn	Delaney Brabec	Connor Develice	Joseph Grim	Laura James
MaKenna Aure	Kaili Bradway	Tiara Diamond	Benjamin Groff	Brayden Jansen
Samantha Aust	Rachael Braun	Brittany Diepenbrock	Emily Grzadzieski	Henry Jansen
Jose Ayon	Peytton Bridges	Donniejo Dittrich	Emma Gudahl	Danialle Janutolo
Sarah Baker	Jessica Bright	Madeline Dodd	Zoe Gustafson	Kylee Jaquish
Devin Baldridge	Madeline Brock	Theodore Donna	Arwen Gustafson	Michele Jarosch
Cara Balfany	Emma Brooks	Luke Dovenmuehler	Justin Haag	Elena Jarvey
Hayden Banks	Jake Brosig	Cameron Draughn	Patrick Haas	Amanda Jaszczenski
Hope Bartlette	Emma Brost	Alexis Dubiel	Jackson Hall	Angel Jauregui
Isabella Bates	Claire Brown	Connor Ducklow	Michell Hall	Ian Jeffrey
Julisa Bearhart	Briahnna Brown	Morgan Duden	Tori Halverson	Annabelle Jensen
Amanda Beck	Cecilia Bruce	Taylor DuMond	Abigail Hammond	Amy Jentges
Nicole Beck	Adisen Brueck	Ellie Duncan	Merideth Hansen	Ryan Jinks
Bradyn Bednarek	Zoey Buchan	Alexia Durocher	Maxwell Hansen	Leah Johnson
Braelyn Beiler	McKenna Burger	Madeline Ebert	Lindsey Hanson	Emmi Johnson
Kylie Beilke	MaKenna Burkeland	Maya Ehlen	Vanessa Hanson	Hannah Johnson
Kallie Beissel	Sarah Burken	Carter Ehlers	Chandler Hanthorn	Cassandra Johnson
Owen Belisle	Ryan Burmeister	Remi Elbert	Piper Harrington	Claire Johnson
Katherine Bell	Daniel Burns	Joseph Endrizzi	Kennedy Harty	Blake Johnson
Tyler Bell	Lydia Bush	Ben Engelstad	Johan Harworth	Chassity Johnson
Beth Ann Belvedere	Carter Busta	Delaney Erb	Heather Hatfull	Bryce Johnsrud
Eli Belz	Emily Butzlaff	Allison Erdmann	Elizabeth Hau	Kyle Junker
Brent Benaszkeski	MacKenzie Byl	Lacey Erickson	Derek Haubenschild	Julia Juszczak Jr
Sasha Bengtson	Lucy Cahn	Ashley Erickson	Josephine Haugen	Shelby Justman
Emily Bengtson	Linnea Campbell	Isabella Fallos	Nicole Hauschildt	Marcus Kajer
Sydneya Berg	Ari Carlile	Cody Fallstrom	Jacqueline Hayden	Jennifer Kallas
Benjamin Berge	Holly Carlson	Manha Fathima	Samantha Hayek	Andrew Karls
Emilie Berner	Ian Carpenter	Ethan Fedie	Arianne Heckendorf	Jon Karna
Tammy Bertelsen	Luke Carr	Elizabeth Felty	Dylan Heiderscheidt	Haley Karnick
Lauren Best	Lily Case	Nicholas Fischer	Tyler Heidtke	Jonathan Katzmark
Jennifer Bethke	Jayce Cast	Emmanuel Flicek	Meredith Hemauer	Jace Katzung
Natalie Beyerl	Andrew Castillo	Jameson Folden	Hanna Hendrickson	Melissa Keegan
Whittney Beying	Madison Castner	Autumn Frederick	Sophia Heran	Drew Kenworthy
Ella Biege	Natalie Celeste	Brooke Frederick	Taylynn Herber	Michael Kerr
Mariah Bigelow	Caitlin Li Shyuen Chan	Hannah Fredericks	Natasha Hermanek	Chrissa Kersten
Anthony Biniaris	Hung-Chi Chen	Isabelle Fretty	Gabriella Hernandez	Duncan Keuning
Ryan Binion	Hao-Chih Chen	Megan Friemann	Juan Pablo Herrera Muñoz	Chelsea Kilmer
Austin Biwer	Beau Christensen	Ava Fruetel	Ellie Hershfield	Kalli Kimmes
Thayne Bjelland	Emily Clancy	Natalie Fuhrman	Allyson Herzog	Jericka Kirkendall
Kaleb Blaha	Tyler Clark	Patricia Funk	Kaylee Hessler	Jonas Klatt
Allie Blaschko	Tamajaih Clay	Grace Gabriel	Emma Hill	Laura Klein
Barron Blom	Alyssa Clemens	Emily Gabrielson	Devani Hinkelmann	Jessica Klettke
Brielle Blome	Morgan Coen	Carson Galla	Claudia Hinrichs	Courtney Knaus
Brooke Blomgren	Maxime Collette	Kailin Gannaway	Olivia Hoerl	Eyan Knecht
Isaac Blomquist	Wesley Converse	Grace Gardner	Rory Hoff	Ashley Knefelkamp
Luthien Bloom	Nicole Conyers	Justin Gasparas	Ella Holden	Elizabeth Koch
Austin Blumer	Anna Cottington	Julia Gawryleski	Noah Holthaus	Sophie Koehler

UWRF spring commencement scheduled for May 9

Julie Koeppel	Kortney Mayer	Kole Paulsen	Nathan Seitz	Nolan Thronndset
Reese Koning	Ethan McClure	Nash Paulson	Kora Seleski	Kassim Tilmo
Laura Koontz	Connor Mckenzie	Gavin Paulson	Lillian Sellen	Ruby Tix
Allison Kosel	Emily McNally	Stephano Pereyra	Noelle Senour	Ty Tollefsbol
Ruth Kosterman	Katie Meck	Sonia Peterson	Alida Sexton	Behnaz Torabi
Rachel Kotalik	Brynn Menke	Kinsey Peterson	Kate Seymour	Aidan Torres
Jakob Kramer	Madeline Micke	Alexa Peterson	Lauren Shamla	Judd Totman
Isabella Kranz	Callie Miller	Dana Petrie	Makenna Shannon	Taylor Trecek
KayLee Krogstad	McKenna Miska	Adison Pipal	Dayna Shavlik	Lucas Trochllil
Sarah Krook	Mary Miske	Thalia Pliego	Grace Sieber	Faylene Troemner
Alexander Krueger	Madysen Moericke	Hailey Poepping	Samuel Silver	Gwen Truesdale
Michael Krueger	Nicholas Mohrhauser	Ellie Pomrening	Natalie Simpson	Kayli Turner
Kathryn Kruse	Sophak Neary Ratana Mong	Jennifer Ponczoch	Burke Simpson	Tyler Ulrich
Emma Kuball	Rose Montoya	Thomas Poplawski	Ashlyn Skinner	Suzuna Umemoto
Riley Kuehl	Logan Moore	Karly Porter	Lauren Skov	Rex Unzicker
Emily Kulstad	Sherlyn Morales-Rojas	Makayla Potter	Jacob Slagle	Joel Upham
Emily Kupka	Jade Moreno-Valdez	Aaron Powers	Dylan Smith	Hunter Urbaniak
Aaliyah Kurrelmeyer	Erin Morgan	Kira Prochnow	Avalon Smith	Madison Van De Hei
MacKenna Kusilek	Madison Morrissey	Emily Puga-Lopez	Gina Sokup	Braden Van Roosenbeek
Edward Kuster	Autumn Morrow	Scot Putnam	Simon Soldner	Bekkah VanEperen
Shannon Kustrich	Grace Morse	Cam Quinlan	Natalie Sorenson	Devon Vang
Michael LaCore	Noah Moss	Sydney Radke	Ella Soucy	Jazlynn Vang
Mya Lagerstrom	Yang Toua Elijah Moua	Mackenzie Rak	Kevin Spahn	Nicholas Versluis
Suzette Lain	Andrew Mumm	Gavin Ralph	Paul Sparstad	Devin Veselenak
Sadie Laing	Logan Munson	Roderick Reardon	Malaina Spiekermeier	Cassondra Vesey
Vincent Lamantia	Alexander Murphy	Jaylen Reed	Jaelyn Spiess	Anthony Vidrick
Alicia Langbehn	Emily Murray	Jacob Regan	Emily Squadroni	Payton Vorpahl
David Langenohl	Lila Musser	Kaitlyn Regel	Michelle St Germain	Gabriela Vujovich
Austin Lanier	Samantha Myhervold	Kayley Reimers	Morgan Stadler	Tyler Waram
Esther Lankow	Jordan Nauber	Hailey Reuvers	Adrian Starks	Mackenzie Warner
Hadley Larson	Nathaniel Neff	Kellen Richardson	Avery Starzecki	Amy Waters
Gabriel Larson	Samantha Neff	Lauryn Ridge	Rebekah Stebbing	Brianna Weber
Sophia Latourelle	Kristina Nelson	Anna Riebe	Trevor Steberg	Abigail Webster
Madison Lavergne	Olivia Nelson	Ella Rieken	Katrina Steele	Kollin Weikel
Seoan Lee	Taylor Nelson	Miranda Ries	Chase Steele	Luke Welke
Kamalia Lee	Afton Nelson	Kassidy Riesgraf	Sarah Steele	Devon Werlein
Kira Lee	Katelyn Nenovich	Molly Rigg	Austyn Steinhaus	Peter Werner
Jack Leifker	Elizabeth Neuens	Isabel Riles	Samantha Stephens	Ashley Wert
Emma Leighton	Jillian Newby	Angel Riley	Emily Stewart	Krissa Westberg
Kayci Lemieux	Kailey Niccum	Kathryn Ripple	Camille Stich	Reese Weyers-Fruth
Flynn Lenzen	Cora Niebeling	Catherine Ritchie	Elijah Stifter	Rachel Weyland
Mary Leslie	Taylor Nielson	Caroline Robbins	Maxwell Stocco	Tjaden Whisenhunt
Carter Lessman	Benjamin Nietfeld	Calista Robinson	Daniel Stokes	Mattie Wilk
Ellie Letourneau	Allie Nordskog	Samantha Rodewald	Brianna Stone	Jessica Willette
Brooke Liebenstein	Caine Novak	Payton Rohl	Cora Storkson	Elizabeth Wilson
Myles Ligtenberg	Braeden O’Brien	Blake Rohrer	Ruby Straub	Erik Winberg
Jaidon Lilly	Brianna O’Connor	Noelle Rollins	Dylan Stryhn	Cadence Wipperfurth
Jackson Limberg	Jordan O’Kane	Kaitlyn Ronn	Maddie Stubson	Megan Wittwer
Tatiana Lindsay	Rheanna Oberg	Mary Rosen	Madison Suckow	Hannah Woelfel
Zoe Logan	Edward Okeefe	Mari Ryberg	Brett Sullivan	Autumn Wood
Caleb Lokker	Cassandra Okey	Tylee Rydberg	Danny Sullivan	Kayla Worden
Keegan Lorentson	Niklas Olafson	Ian Sachse	Kalee Sullivan	Morgan Wurst
Maria Luther	Sadie Olson	Kentaro Saito	Molly Sullivan	Pang Dong Yang
Marni Lynch	Cori Olson	Samantha Salmi	Alec Sullivan	Jonathan Yang
Mercedes Madison	Jeffrey Olson	Kari Sanders	Mekelsy Sundby	Sydni Yarrington
Cassandra Mallon	Kennedy Olson	Bailey Sauve	Skyler Sutherland	Brenna Yeadon
Macy Marik	Skylar Onsager	Bella Saxton-Jenson	Abigail Sutliff	Elizabeth Zelles
Dorothea Marsh	Peyton Opsahl	Tony Scarpone	Paige Sweatt	Chengxin Zhang
Rebecca Marshall	Kendrick Otto	Jesse Schefers	Erin Syverson	Monet Zientara
Christian Martin	Barbara Ovalle	Samantha Scheppman	Rebekah Taepke	Maria Zillges
Jordyn Maslowski	Ronald Owen	Evelyn Scheunemann	Jacob Tatley	Stella Zinchini
Lillian Mason	Marguerite Pagnotta	Cordelia Schlonsky	Delany Terry	Macy Zins
Isabella Massa	Preston Palmer	Isaac Schmutzer	Elizabeth Thao	Lauren Zitzloff
Colin Mastel	Casey Paprocki	Hailey Schoeberl	Austin Thiel	Lucy Zollar
Alyssa Mathison	Gabrielle Pardoe	Nora Schuh	Dylan Thompson	
Mackenzie Mattke	Emma Passe	Pyper Schultz	Eleanor Thompson-Witt	
Josephine Maurer	Breanna Patz	Emily Schwinghammer	Hailey Thomson	

VOICE SHORTS

UWRF Spring Commencement May 9

The University of Wisconsin–River Falls will hold spring commencement Saturday, May 9, at Page Arena in the Falcon Center.

A total of 679 students are expected to graduate, and each student may invite six guests to attend the ceremony.

Commencement will be split into three ceremonies by college. The College of Education, Business and Allied Health (CEBAH) and Graduate Studies will begin at 9 a.m. At 12:30 p.m., the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) will hold its ceremony, followed by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at 3 p.m.

UWRF's commitment to sustainability has also been incorporated into commencement. Graduation programs will be available only in digital form and can be viewed by scanning a QR code posted in the Falcon Center.

UW-River Falls Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

The Division of Technology Services (DoTS) at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls sent emails to students on April 20 regarding course evaluations for spring semester classes.

"The purpose of this evaluation is to provide information on the instructor's teaching effectiveness. Please be as honest and fair in your evaluation as possible. This information can be used in personnel decisions such as retention, promotion, tenure and merit pay. The instructor will not see the results of this evaluation until after final grades are submitted. Your responses are anonymous and never associated with your name," DoTS wrote in the email.

DoTS sends this message to all UWRF students enrolled in at least one course during the semester. Students receive a separate email for each class requiring an evaluation.

A follow-up email was sent April 27 reminding students who had not yet completed their evaluations on Canvas.

DoTS provided the following instructions:

To complete this evaluation, log in to Canvas at <https://go.uwrf.edu/learn>. From the Dashboard, click on the course being evaluated, then select the "Course Evaluation Available" link in the course navigation to complete the evaluation.

Stay up to date and get involved

Events open to the UW–River Falls campus community are posted daily on FalconsConnect. Additionally, the UWRF Get Involved Instagram page, run by the Office of Student Involvement, shares updates on the latest happenings on campus. Follow them on Instagram at [uwrfgetinvolved](https://www.instagram.com/uwrfgetinvolved).

Voice Shorts compiled by
Alison Keeler

Falcon Flashbacks: Student Voice Archives Celebrate 110 Years of Student Publication

Kristy Moore
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The *Student Voice* published its first issue in April 1916, marking 110 years of continuous student journalism.

1916:

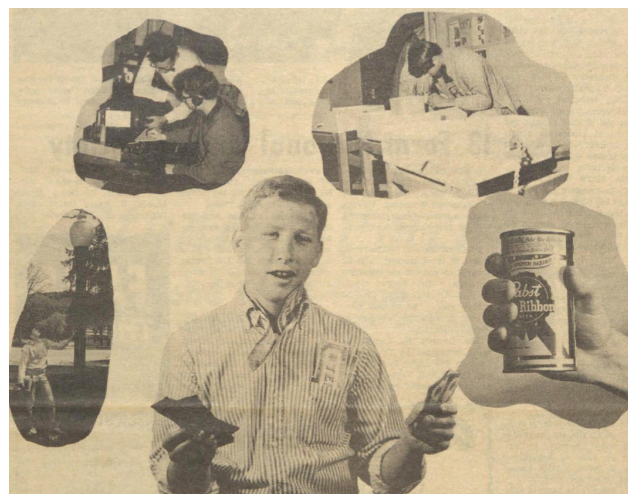
At the Agrifallian meeting last Tuesday evening, members delivered extemporaneous speeches on "The Organization of a Cow Testing Association."

1946:

J. H. Ames, president of River Falls State Teachers College for the past twenty nine years, will retire from his official position on July 1 of this year.

1966:

The Student Senate is facing a major problem: it has about \$3,800 in its treasury and no definite purpose for it. One suggestion—spending \$750 on a beer party at the Lamplight Inn—was ruled out by the Senate last Wednesday.



Keith Rodli, SENATE TREASURER, contemplates the \$3,800 surplus of the Senate budget. Among the possible uses for the money are, from left to right. Walkway lights for campus sidewalks, a radio station, the Art Department, and an all-school beer picnic which was recently vetoed. (no photo/graphic

1986:

Distribution of the 1986 Prologue magazine this week marks the largest circulation in its 29 year history. Considering the publication's past challenges, ranging from censorship to frozen funds, its contin-

uation "testifies to the attitude of the students toward the magazine and toward each other," faculty advisor Ronald Neuhaus said.



UWRF Faculty Senate voted Wednesday, May 4, to pass a resolution of no confidence in UW System President Ray Cross and the Board of Regents. (Photo by Tori Schneider, Student Voice)

2016:

The UW–River Falls Faculty Senate passed a resolution of no confidence in UW System President Ray Cross and the Board of Regents at its meeting on Wednesday, May 4. The resolution, which passed with no objections and one abstention, followed the same action taken by UW–Madison's Faculty Senate on May 2.

2026:

UW-River Falls will present an Irish C  l   Dancing event from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27. This event will take place in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center.

Want something to be included in
our next issue? Email us at:
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Frats All, Folks: UWRF Greek Week '26 Wraps Up

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In the spirit of friendly competition and community bonding at large, Greek Week returned to UW–River Falls this year, bringing four days of friendly competition and community-building from April 21–24.

Throughout the week, the six campus fraternities and sororities participated in kickball, volleyball, tug-of-war, chariot racing and a showing of Monsters University. Chapters earned points by meeting attendance thresholds and by winning events. By the end of the week, Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) finished first with 35 points and will have a plaque displayed in the University Center.

Greek Week, however, was about more than competition.

“I’m really enjoying [Greek Week],” said Samantha, a freshman member of Phi Mu. “It’s a great way to bond with [my sorority] and the other Greek life as well.”



Members of the Theta Chi fraternity huddle before competing in Greek Week volleyball against the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority. (Photo by Alison Keeler)

Amelia Kelly, a sophomore in Alpha Omicron Pi and one of the event’s organizers, shared that sentiment.

“[Greek Week] brings inclusion,” Kelly said. “[It’s] a chance for everyone to get together and have fun.” She added that she was proud of the turnout and the enthusiasm shown by chapter members.

At a university where opportunities can sometimes feel limited compared with larger campuses, Greek life offers students a network for connection and involvement.

“When you have smaller chapters,” said Cole, a freshman in Theta Chi, “it leads to close connections with all the members.”

Those connections were on full display during Greek Week 2026. As the semester winds down, members say they continue to support one another across organizations, strengthening the sense of community that the week is designed to celebrate.

Stage and Screen Arts Pivot to *The Drowsy Chaperone*

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Between April 9 and 12, the UW–River Falls Music and Stage and Screen Arts Department staged its production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, featuring Mary Rother as Janet, Emerson Fahey as Drowsy, Jack Sonnek as George and Ryan S. Bartley as Man in Chair. The musical centers on a fictional 1920s show that the Man in Chair plays for the audience, pausing throughout to offer commentary on the story and its imagined performers.

The department had originally planned to produce *The Music Man* but changed course shortly before production began. The shift did not appear to affect the final result. Audience members responded enthusiastically, with punchlines drawing frequent laughter and musical numbers receiving strong applause.

Typically, the department announces the following year’s production after the current show closes, but no announcement has been made this year.

UWRF Bee Club Hosts Year-Round Events

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The UWRF Bee Club offers unique opportunities for students of all backgrounds and skill levels. The club hosts a variety of events throughout the year — from service projects to arts and crafts — all aimed at supporting native pollinators. The group remains active even during the winter months, when bees retreat into hibernation.

“In the winter, there isn’t a lot of service work to do, so we do craft projects to get more community involvement and more engagement across campus. I’ve noticed that people really love to come to craft events,” said Autumn Frederick, the current president of the Bee Club. Frederick, a senior conservation major, has served as president for two years and has overseen most of the club’s responsibilities.

“As of recently, I’ve finally recruited some new board members that are going to take over, and they’re doing a great job of continuing the legacy,” she said.

With native bee populations facing increasing threats, the club’s activities — such as building pollinator houses, educating students about pollinator species and planting pollinator-friendly plants — take on added importance.

“We have such an amazing campus that has so many opportunities to go out in nature and learn from it,” Frederick said.

Students can stay updated on upcoming events by following the UWRF Bee Club on Instagram or joining through FalconsConnect.



Autumn Frederick (left) and Willow Olker (right) of the UWRF Bee Club attend Earth Fest. (Photo by Landon Zientara)

Follow the Student Voice on Instagram:
@uwrfstudentvoice

UWRF Boomwhackers Ensemble Holds Spring Concert

Kristy Moore

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The UWRF Boomwhackers Ensemble held its spring concert April 17 in Abbott Concert Hall. The group is a percussion ensemble that performs using boomwhackers, colorful plastic tubes tuned to specific pitches.

This year's concert featured a video game theme, with music from titles including Skyrim, Animal Crossing and Super Mario Galaxy.

Several pieces included audience participation. Ensemble members handed out boomwhackers to attendees, who played alongside the group during select songs.

The Boomwhackers Ensemble was founded four years ago and is one of the few collegiate groups of its kind in the United States. President Robin Anderson said the ensemble began as a lighthearted idea but quickly grew into a serious musical outlet.

"We started it out as just like a funny thing, but it's also like we're taking it seriously," Anderson said. "This is a real ensemble. I think of it as a really good way for people who aren't as involved in music to get involved with music."



The members of UWRF Boomwhackers Ensemble at their concert on April 17 in Abbot Concert Hall. (Photos by Jordan Lawrence)

AGEC Department Hosts First Brown Bag Seminar

Michaleen Lovett

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The Agricultural Economics Department held its first Brown Bag Seminar on April 22, giving on campus researchers an opportunity to share their work with the University of Wisconsin–River Falls community.

Assistant professors Mohammad Hasan Mobarok and Md Azhar Uddin discussed how an initial idea can be developed into what they described as a "workable, multi method research program."

Students and community members were served

pizza and encouraged to engage with the speakers, including by challenging their findings.

When a student questioned the credibility of his research model, Mobarok acknowledged that, as with most research, many elements rely on assumptions. He told the audience they did not need to "trust [his] numbers, but trust [his] direction."

The seminar was organized by Shaheer Burney, an assistant professor in the department and director of the UWRF Survey Research Center. Burney said he hopes to make the seminars a monthly event beginning next fall, likely on the first Wednesday of each

month.

Burney said the series benefits both faculty and students by connecting classroom concepts with real world applications.

"We talk about a lot of these topics in class on a theoretical basis," Burney said. "Here's an excellent application of what that looks like."

He also hopes to eventually invite researchers from other UW campuses and broaden participation across academic disciplines.

Relish-ing in Tradition: Pickle Party Returns for Year Three

Michaleen Lovett

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Student Involvement hosted its third annual Pickle Party on April 20 in the Falcon's Nest, marking the final Maker's Monday event of the 2025–26 academic year.

The Pickle Party began in spring 2024 after a social media intern suggested a pickle themed gathering. The idea quickly became a hit, and attendance has grown each year. This year's event drew about 230 students, the highest turnout to date.

Upon arrival, students checked in and selected a mason jar from an assembly line before choosing a flavor—dill, spicy or bread and butter—to make their own pickles. Supplies and instructions were available at designated stations, and students filled their jars before moving on to other activities.

The event also offered a variety of pickle themed foods, including fried pickles, pickle salsa, pickle pico de gallo and pickle lemonade. A photo area was set up for students

to document their creations.

Although attendance tapered off later in the evening, the Falcon's Nest remained lively with conversation and plenty of sliced cucumbers.

Not all feedback was positive. On the anonymous social media app YikYak, attendees were asked to rate the event. Of the 71 responses, 59% expressed disappointment. Many students said they hoped for more activities, noting that once they filled their jars and plates, there was little else to do. Compared with other Maker's Monday events, such as March's vinyl painting session, the engagement time felt limited.

Student Involvement encouraged students to share their thoughts through its official satisfaction survey, available on Instagram. Events and Activities Coordinator Sylvia Kass said student input directly shapes future programming.

"I love getting ideas from students because they can tell me what they want to see, and we can try to make it hap-

pen," Kass said.

She added that events like the Pickle Party naturally evolve over time. "Every year we get a little better at it. There are things that go well and things that could change and improve."

Kass said she welcomes feedback and is excited about the possibility of expanding next year's Pickle Party with additional activities.

While event planning shifts from year to year, Kass emphasized that Student Involvement's mission remains consistent: events are created by students, for students.

"When I see students come to an event and smile and have fun with their friends, it makes what I do worthwhile," she said.

Maker's Mondays are one of several programs designed to help students connect with peers, explore interests and take a break from academic pressures. Kass encourages students to participate in events next fall and hopes to see strong turnout at Finals Fest in May.

Campus Blood Drive Makes *A-Positive* Impact

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Much of Greek life centers on service and collaboration among its members and the broader community. As part of its longstanding effort to make a positive impact in River Falls and beyond, the College Panhellenic Council (CPH) organized an American Red Cross blood drive April 14–16 in the Falcon’s Nest.

Blood drives have been a Greek life initiative at UW–River Falls for several years, with fraternities hosting one in the fall and sororities hosting in the spring.

Sororities Alpha Omicron Pi (AOII), Phi Mu and Sigma Alpha helped run this semester’s event. Volunteers checked in donors, distributed refreshments and provided support as needed.

Several members described the experience as rewarding.

“Being there to volunteer made the whole experience easier on the people involved, which made it less stressful for everyone,” said Megan Lautenbach, a freshman member of AOII.

The event was coordinated by CPH President Taylah Manners, who viewed the blood drive as “an opportunity to bring different chapters together for [an effort that] promot[ed] service, leadership and community engagement on campus.”

Manners worked to ensure Red Cross staff had an organized, supportive environment and kept volunteers on track throughout the event.

“[The event] helped me build stronger relationships within my sorority,” Manners said, “as well as gain a deeper sense of purpose and responsibility through service.”

This year’s blood drive collected 98 pints of blood from 117 donors, including 23 first-time participants. With the addition of 17 Power Red donors, the contributions have the potential to assist up to 294 patients in the coming weeks.

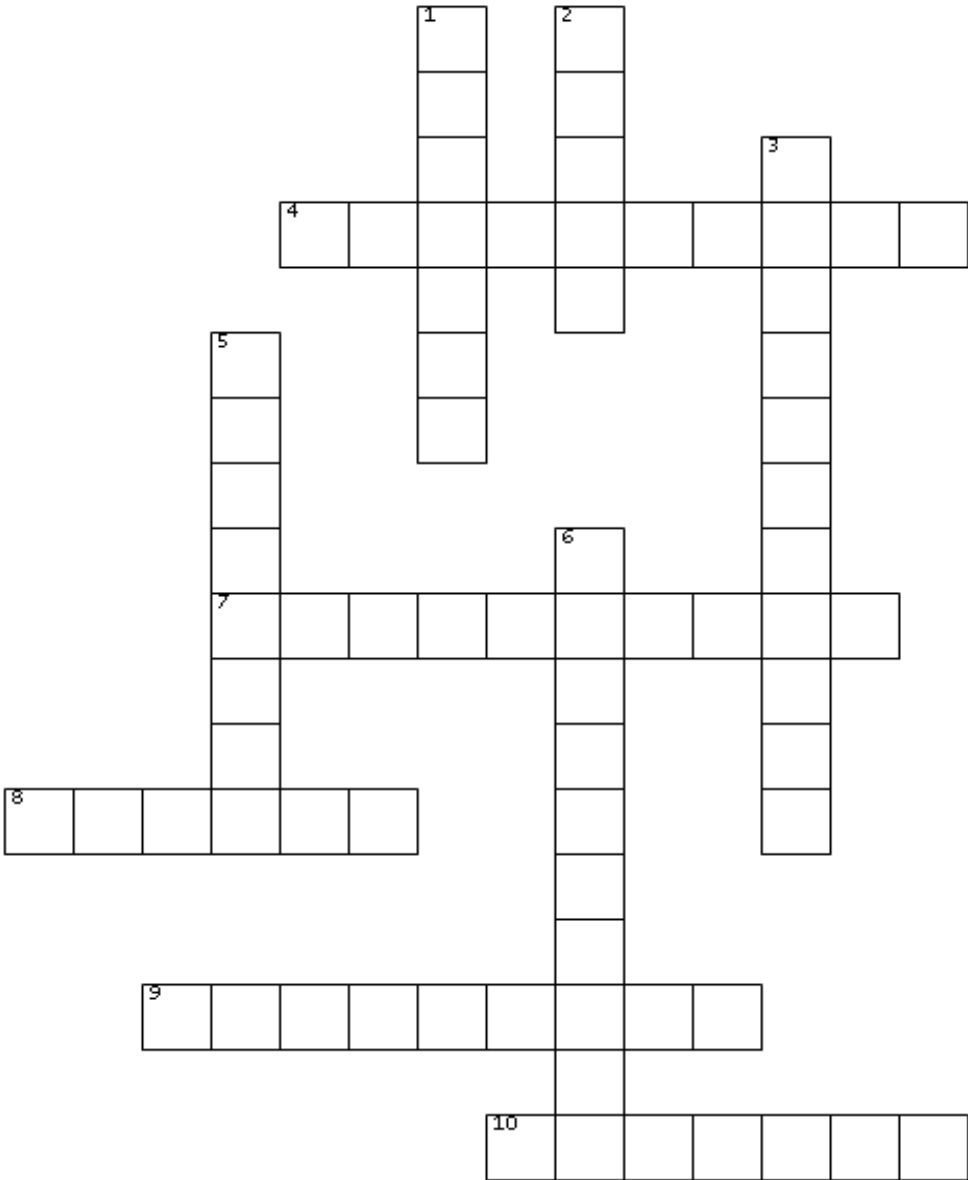
Manners said she hopes UWRF sororities continue to strengthen their community, expand outreach and increase member involvement.

“Volunteering helps develop a wide range of important skills,” she said. “Working with a team and staying organized can make the experience both manageable and rewarding.”

Fall recruitment for sororities will take place Sept. 14, 15, 17 and 18.

Regardless of membership, organizers emphasized that “service is a valuable experience that can benefit anyone.”

Mental Health Awareness Month Crossword



- ACROSS
- 4. Feelings of sadness and loss of interest
 - 7. Service that can help mental health symptoms
 - 8. Natural reaction causing the body to release hormones like cortisol and adrenaline
 - 9. These exercises can help calm anxiety symptoms
 - 10. Feelings of worry and stress

- DOWN
- 1. Being there for others
 - 2. 7 or more hours of ____ is recommended
 - 3. The psychological process of bringing awareness to present-moment experiences
 - 5. Speaking up for others or yourself
 - 6. May need to be taken if symptoms become worse

Student Composers Bring Hollywood-Style Recording to UW–River Falls

Emma McNulty

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Student composers at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls are gaining hands-on experience in film and video game scoring through the university’s annual Screen Scoring Recording Session, a program designed to replicate the demands of the professional industry.

Directed by music faculty member Dr. Casey Palbicki, the event allows composition students to have their original scores performed live by a full orchestra while synchronized to visual media. The initiative is part of UWRF’s Screen Scoring program and aims to bridge the gap between academic study and professional practice.

“This recording session has been carefully designed to mimic a Hollywood film or game recording session,” Palbicki said. “The goal is to give the students a real-world opportunity and experience to prepare them for a career in the field.”

The process spans about a year. Students select film or video game clips during the summer and begin composing in the fall, working closely with faculty through weekly lessons. Completed scores are due to performers by early February, giving musicians time to prepare independently.

In keeping with industry standards, the session does not include a traditional rehearsal period. Performers are expected to arrive fully prepared and sight-read the music.

“The musicians are given the music and prep materials three months in advance to prepare on their own,” Palbicki said. “This is how it typically happens in Hollywood—professional musicians are brought into the studio and expected to be prepared and sight-read the music perfectly. It is a high-pressure situation.”

Participating composers this year included Wyatt Hanson, Landon Zientara, Brady O’Brien, Jack Esselman and alumnus Ben Garcia. While most participants are upper-level students, the program is open to composers at all stages of their academic careers.

The orchestra, known as the UWRF Cinema Symphony, includes selected musicians from across the St. Croix Valley and Twin Cities region, including educators, alumni, faculty and students.

For student composer Jack Esselman, the experience highlighted both the challenges and rewards of professional-level work.

“I was horribly terrified,” Esselman said of conducting the string session. “I’m timid and afraid of large groups. I wanted the strings to go well—it did. It set the stage for the rest. I felt better during choir and brass. Not as nervous, but always terrified.”

He described the session as emotionally intense.

“I’m one of those guys who are terrified of heights, spiders and being in front of people,” he said. “No matter how scared I am, I will always force myself to do it. I made myself confident today.”

Despite the nerves, Esselman pushed through the challenges of conducting under pressure.

“I’d be lying if I said there were no challenges today,” he said. “I had to rush through the brass section. I got everything that was really great.”

Each composer received 43 minutes with each ensemble—strings, choir and winds. Each section spent about four hours on warmups and recordings, leaving limited time for revisions.



UWRf student composers pose for a photo. Back row: Landon Zientara, Ben Garcia and Wyatt Hanson. Front row: Brady O’Brien and Jack Esselman. (Photo by Emma McNulty)



Audio engineer Sam Nesbit works behind the scenes during the recording session. (Photo by Emma McNulty)



Ben Garcia conducts the wind ensemble. (Photo by Emma McNulty)

ble—strings, choir and winds. Each section spent about four hours on warmups and recordings, leaving limited time for revisions.

Students are given considerable creative autonomy, selecting their own visual material and composing primarily for full orchestra, with the option to incorporate digital instrumentation.

“The students choose their own movie or video game clips and are tasked with scoring for a full orchestra,” Palbicki said. “They are allowed to use MIDI instruments for synthetic sounds and for orchestral instruments not covered in the session, such as harp and organ. They are given full creative freedom.”

Esselman said one project stood out as especially meaningful.

“These are my first three orchestral scores,” he said. “I think my Minecraft rescore was my favorite because I had

the most fun making it. I was able to mess around and create some unique stuff.”

The completed recordings will be published on the UWRF Screen Scoring YouTube channel and used by students in their professional portfolios.

Palbicki said the program’s continuation depends on sustained funding and participation, but interest remains strong.

“We want to continue this event annually,” he said. “As long as we can secure funding, personnel and have enough student composers, we will be able to do it annually.”

For Esselman, the session marked a personal milestone.

“It was a surreal experience,” he said. “Very fortunate.” As the program continues to grow, it offers students a rare opportunity to gain professional-level experience while building portfolios that support future careers in screen scoring.

New UWRF Student Senate Leaders Aim to Boost

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results were announced March 30, 2026, and the newly elected representatives will serve during the 2026–27 academic year. Olivia Clark was elected president, and Zoey Haugen was elected vice president.

Both Clark and Haugen said their primary goal for the 89th Senate is to increase collaboration among all governance groups on campus.

“Something that I have noticed is the lack of collaboration between faculty and students,” Haugen said. “It is really hard for us to make meaningful change on campus when we don’t have the support of our faculty members. And that’s really hard to come by when we already struggle so much to communicate. We see issues from two very different perspectives. So I’d really like to see us band together a little bit more. We all want what is in the best interest of the students and the university.”

Haugen said SGA is looking to partner with Student Involvement to engage students in the upcoming midterm

elections. “We’re looking at collaborating with Elise Peters from Student Involvement and doing the We Vote campaign again,” she said. “Last year that looked like Freddie vs. Colleen T-shirts on campus. And I just think it’s really important to inform students about how they can vote.”

Clark said she hopes to expand the use of Navigate360 among both students and faculty. The platform allows faculty to flag attendance concerns and check in with students, while students can use it to schedule advising appointments.

Clark also wants to encourage faculty to post midterm grades in a timely manner.

“We have learned that a lot of students say they would like midterm grades to be posted around the midterm,” she said. “So they at least know where they’re going and where they’re standing going into the rest of the semester and before drop periods.”

Haugen said she hopes to expand awareness of peer mentoring programs, especially for first-generation students.

“I’m a first-generation student, and it was really hard for me to adjust to campus,” she said. “River Falls as an insti-

tution offers some really great support for first-generation students, but I think coming from another student is a little bit different than coming from a faculty member or your academic advisor. So just pushing the peer success coaches they offer through Student Success and giving first-generation students a bit of a leg up.”

Clark said she is honored to have been elected. “I’m really excited, and a little bit nervous,” she said. “It’s a lot of responsibility, but I think it’s something I’m really prepared to take on, especially after my experience this year. I’m just really looking forward to supporting students to the best of my ability.”

Haugen echoed Clark’s excitement and emphasized that SGA is open to all students.

“It can be a little bit intimidating for students when they hear about student government,” she said. “But I really want to make it a welcoming place and make sure everyone can have their voice heard and that any issues being presented are carried out to the best of my ability.”

STUDENT VOICES

“What song describes your life currently?”



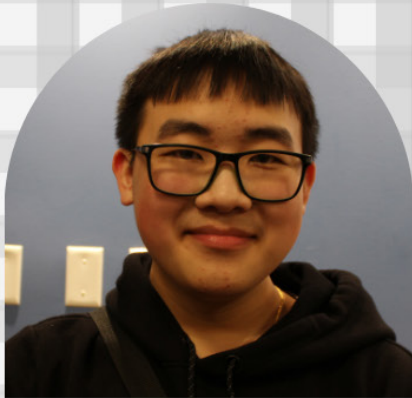
Colin Blair (Sophomore)
Broad Field Social Studies Major

“Old Man’ by Neil Young.”



Josephine Baker (Freshman)
Animal Science Major

“Good Girls Bad Guys’ by Falling in Reverse.”



Robbie Thao (Freshman)
Art Major

“‘Gnarly’ by KATSEYE.”



Zoe Larson (Freshman)
Music ed. Major

“‘Creep’ by Radiohead.”



Nikki Hoffart (Junior)
Animal Science Major

“‘Strange’ by Alicia Creti.”



Joe McCarthy (Junior)
Coms/MarCom Major

“‘Into Yesterday’ by Sugar Bay.”

(Data compiled by Emma McNulty, Graphic by Alison Keeler)

Asian American Student Association Host Culture Fest

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AASA Culture Fest Photo Essay by Angel Riley. The event took place on April 2, in the Riverview Ballroom in the University Center from 5:00-9:00 p.m.

“Culture Fest is more than just a celebration or program. This event is imperative to showcasing the meaningful partnerships that we have built in the last two years alongside other multi-cultural organizations. It provides a way to highlight Asian American Student Association, Black Student Union, Latino Student Organization, and ASI ANI all together in a setting rather than separately in our own communities,”
-AASA Board

Left: Board Members from left to right; Atreyu Her, Arthur Vang, Yang Toua Elijah Moua, Bao Lee, Osheana Lor, Debby Vang, and Gaokia Xiong (Photo courtesy of Peyton Moua)

Below: The AASA featured detail-oriented decorations as well as many hired talents, one being the “baby” Dao Lan Dance Studio (DLDS) team, “Astoria”. A Hmong dance team from St. Paul, MN. (Photo by Angel Riley)



Above: AASA’s “Culture Fest” is one of the highest attended student led events on campus under the SIB department. Housing engagement from students, faculty, and friends and family. (Photo by Angel Riley)



UW–River Falls Hosts Annual Earth Fest on Campus

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The University Center was bustling with activity during the fourth annual Earth Fest. The event, held in Glen Park for its first two years, has since moved to the University of Wisconsin–River Falls campus. This year’s celebration took place Saturday, April 26, and was open to the community.

Visitors explored a wide range of activities and booths. Some offered trivia with prizes for correct answers, while others handed out free items such as plant seeds, trees and small starter plants: no trivia required.

The Involvement Center featured hands-on activities that drew steady participation. Attendees could learn how to compost, fold origami fish or contribute to a large collaborative coloring page.

In the Falcons Nest, speakers presented on environmental topics, and the second annual Trashion Show took place, this year featuring original music composed by Landon Zientara. Outside the venue, locally grown food was served, highlighting sustainability and support for local producers.

Students in the puppetry course also participated, showcasing puppets made from upcycled materials. They performed a short puppet show, and groups were stationed throughout the University Center to display their creations.

The ballroom served as a hub for organizations focused on environmental health. Advocacy groups provided postcards for attendees to send to government officials, encouraging environmental action. Wildlife rehabilitation centers were also present, along with elementary and middle school groups displaying their work. Some shared artwork, while others offered items such as homemade maple syrup.

At Pete’s Creek, the final cluster of activities included items for purchase, shirts, treats and candles, as well as opportunities for sustainable exchange. Two tables displayed free books under a sign reading, “Take me home! I don’t want to be in a landfill!” Nearby, a clothing swap invited visitors to trade unwanted items for something new, though browsing was welcome regardless of whether participants contributed.

UW–River Falls prides itself on its commitment to sustainability. The Sustainability Office hosts a monthly Sustainability Speaker Series in North Hall, organizes student events and supports numerous environmentally focused clubs and organizations.

Earth Fest aims to bring the community together through education and interactive experiences. Each year, the event continues to grow, with the number of exhibitors steadily increasing. Organizers hope to build on this momentum, expanding the event while deepening the community’s understanding of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

(Earth Fest Photos by Emma McNulty)



Congrats to Reporter Angel Riley for Graduating!

Michaleen Lovett

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When Angel Riley first stepped onto the UW-River Falls campus, she didn't expect to stay long. She arrived from Minneapolis with dreams of attending an HBCU, a place where she imagined she would flourish among people who looked like her and shared her cultural background. Instead, she found herself in a predominantly white town, feeling, as she put it, "like a giant sign with neon lights on it wherever I went."

During Jumpstart week, a white peer reached out and touched her hair because her beads were "so fun, and so pretty." The moment left her stunned, isolated and certain she would transfer by the end of the year.

What makes Riley extraordinary is what she chose to do next.

Rather than withdrawing, she began building the community she could not find. She joined the Black Student Union and the Student Inclusion and Belonging office, then called Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, first as a member, then as freshman representative, then as BSU president, and now as the organization's student advisor. The advisory role, created with her input, ensures continuity and mentorship across graduating classes.

Through BSU and SIB, Riley helped create a sense of belonging for Black students and other marginalized groups, determined that no one would feel as alone as she once did.

Her leadership extended far beyond titles. She connected the Latinx Student Organization with an affordable DJ, her father, for their Latin Night. She helped the Asian American Student Association secure funding for their end of year celebration when their previous president had not reapplied for a budget. She maintained relationships with alumni owned businesses like Koja's Cafe and Mama Ti's to support BSU's Africa Night, strengthening ties between students and the broader community.

Her advocacy also shaped university decisions. During the 86th Student Government Association session, when some senators dismissed a proposed sensory room as "a waste of money on bean bags," Riley spoke up. She reminded them that such comments were "not only ignorant but also insensitive to students who struggle with their mental health," noting that the campus had already lost students to mental health challenges. The request passed. That same



year, she was diagnosed with severe anxiety and depression, and still chose to advocate for a resource she herself needed.

Riley's impact is equally visible in her creative work. In the photojournalism course, she learned not only how to use a DSLR camera, but how to see. Her portraits honor people's dignity and complexity, revealing a quiet attentiveness that became the hallmark of her work. What began as an introductory assignment quickly grew into a practice rooted in care, patience and an instinctive understanding of human presence.

That eye for people shaped her work far beyond the classroom. Riley was the driving force behind this year's Black History Month photo exhibition on campus, guiding the project from concept to installation. She created a space where Black students could see themselves reflected with pride, nuance and joy; a space she once longed for as a freshman.

Her photography reached an even wider audience this spring when she showcased her portrait portfolio at the Society for Photographic Education conference in Atlanta, Georgia. For an undergraduate to present work at SPE is rare; for Riley, it was a moment of affirmation that her artistic voice resonates far beyond River Falls.

She uses her reporting to do the same. Whether behind a camera or behind a notebook, Riley approaches people with the same intention: to witness, to honor, to tell the

truth of their experience. That commitment earned state-wide recognition this year when she won first prize for her feature news story at the Wisconsin Newspaper Association convention in Madison, a testament to a voice that insists on being heard.

Though she joined The Student Voice only in fall 2025, she quickly became an essential part of the newsroom. Her reporting is narrative driven, centering marginalized voices and emphasizing the power of stories to build empathy and create change. She also organized study sessions for her journalism classmates, helping many earn 80% or higher on their final exam.

Riley's leadership extends beyond campus as well. She formed a close mentorship with Grace Adofoli, CEO and founder of the Shifting Waters Leadership Institute and a former BSU president. After meeting by chance during a BSU board meeting, the two connected deeply. Adofoli later invited Riley to serve as one of the inaugural writers for SWLI's blog and eventually asked to become her mentor. They have now worked together for nearly a year, a relationship that reflects Riley's potential and the way leaders recognize leaders.

Now a senior double majoring in journalism and communications, Riley is graduating as one of this year's Chancellor's Award recipients, one of the university's highest honors for leadership and service. She describes her years at UWRF as "quite a lot of time, quite a lot of new faces, and just overall great memories."

Her journey, from a student who once planned to leave after one year to someone who now says, "For the first time, I didn't want to leave," is a testament to her resilience and her impact. She has not only found a place for herself here; she has helped create a more just and welcoming campus for those who will come after her.

As she looks toward the future, Riley hopes to work in communications while continuing her photography practice. She plans to attend next year's SPE conference in Minneapolis and explore alternative photographic processes.

Her advice to students is simple: "Take your time to figure out what it is you want to do and who it is you want to be—write it out, cry it out, do what you got to do."

UWRF won't be the same without her, but it will continue to grow because of the foundation she helped build.

"Thank you, River Falls," she said, smiling.

Congrats to Editor Johan Harworth for Graduating!

Kristy Moore

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The Student Voice editor for the past year has been Johan Harworth, who has been part of the publication for six semesters and served as editor for two. He will graduate May 9 with a double major in English and music.

As part of a series profiling graduating Student Voice staff members, I sat down with Harworth to discuss his future plans and the advice he has for current and incoming reporters.

Harworth said his time with the Student Voice helped him develop a wide range of skills.

"I learned how to reach out to people, work alongside others, gather information, leadership, communication and how to be an editor for journalistic writing," he said.

When asked what guidance he would offer to new reporters, Harworth encouraged students to follow their interests.

"Write whatever you feel like," he said. "Write the stories you care about, write about what you feel you do best, and use



this opportunity to get out there and see the campus. If you're ever nervous because there's a lot happening, Student Voice is a great way to get a little taste of everything."

Harworth plans to pursue a master's degree and a career in professional writing. He also hopes to launch his business, 512 Dynamics, a company focused on publication and production projects ranging from freelance business writing to the creation of games, films and books.

His key piece of advice for students is simple: "Check your emails, because if you don't have your back with your academics, no one else will."

Reflecting on his year as editor, Harworth expressed pride in the publication and its staff.

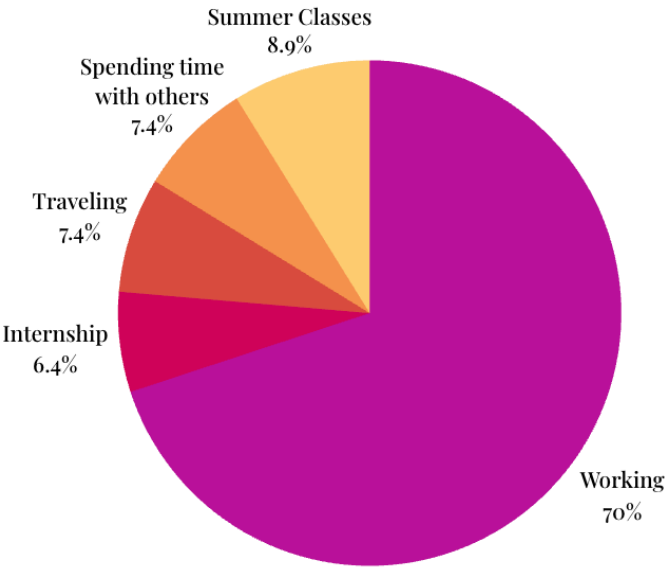
"As the editor of Student Voice, I'm proud of everyone in Student Voice," he said. "I feel like I accomplished the mission I set out to grow the program, and I feel that I'm leaving it in confident, capable hands. I know they're probably going to do much better than me."

ANONYMOUS POLLS

Opinion-based questions posed to UW–River Falls students through the app YikYak. All poll responses are anonymous and voluntary.

Q: What will you be spending the most time doing this summer?

203 students polled on what will keep them busy this summer



Q: How prepared do you feel for finals week (May 11-15)?

253 students polled on feelings of preparedness before finals week



Very Prepared: 11% of students expressed that they are prepared for final exams.



Somewhat Prepared: 26% of students expressed that they are somewhat prepared for final exams.



Not Prepared: 29% of students expressed that they are not prepared for final exams.



I'm Just Trying to Survive: 41% of students expressed that they are just trying to pass their classes.

Anonymous data compiled by Alison Keeler

Staff Editorial: Students Deserve Transparency from the UW System

Student Voice Staff
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If there is any lesson a student should take from their time at a university, it is that communication is essential for success. Students must communicate with professors to understand course material and with advisers to plan their path to graduation or adjust those plans when circumstances change. Communication is just as important when interacting with the broader university system. Although the University of Wisconsin System can feel distant, decisions made at the system level directly affect individual campuses. Those decisions should be communicated clearly. That did not happen with the recent termination of UW System President Jay Rothman.

On April 7, the UW Board of Regents voted unanimously to fire Rothman, ending his tenure as president, a role he had held since 2022. Before the vote, Rothman was asked to step down. In a March 26 letter to Board of Regents President Amy Bogost, he said he had no plans to resign or retire and argued that he had been given no “tangible reasons for the board’s determination.” According to Wisconsin employment law attorney Tamara Packard, the board acted within its authority. Rothman’s contract allowed for termination without cause and did not grant him the right to appeal.

The regents have offered limited explanation for their decision. Two clear statements come from the Associated Press: Bogost said the leadership change was necessary for the future of the UW System, and Regent Timothy Nixon told the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges on April 9 that Rothman lacked urgency on critical issues, including artificial intelligence. Some Republican lawmakers have suggested that political motives may have played a role, pointing to Rothman’s 2023

agreement with GOP leaders that froze hiring for diversity, equity and inclusion positions. No members of the Board of Regents have confirmed that claim.

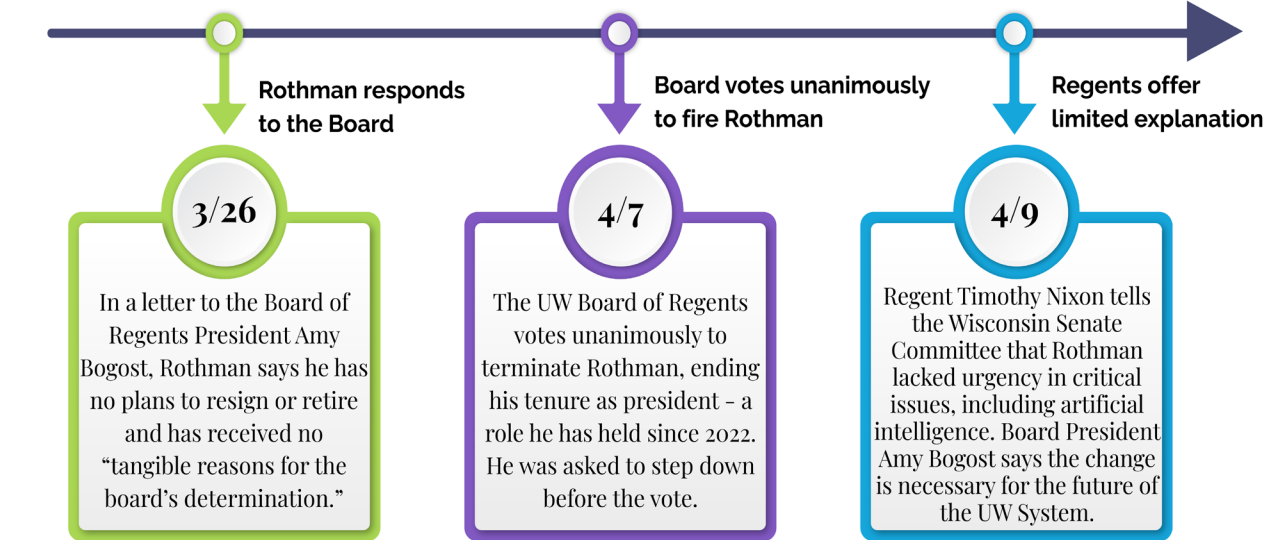
The larger issue highlighted by this situation is the lack of communication with the universities affected by the decision. Most students do not closely follow UW System governance, but it is notable that even campus leadership was not informed. Dr. Karl Peterson, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, confirmed that UWRF administrators were unaware of Rothman’s termination. He explained that while the UW System’s influence on campuses is often indirect, the system and the Board of Regents collaborate on initiatives and mandates that campuses may choose to adopt. The recent general education transferability mandate is one example.

A faculty member in the College of Education, Business and Allied Health, who asked to remain anonymous, noted an increase in coursework related to artificial intelligence and large language models, reflecting employer demand for graduates with AI experience. If a future UW System president prioritizes different initiatives, system, level decisions could influence how much AI, related instruction campuses choose to offer. This scenario is hypothetical, but it illustrates how system priorities can shape campus programs, and how those priorities are influenced by the system president.

This influence is not inherently negative. The UW System president plays an important role in guiding initiatives that support the system’s goals. But universities are the ones most affected by these decisions, and the motivations behind leadership changes should be communicated clearly and directly. Even the smallest voice deserves a place in the broader conversation about what is best for the UW System.

TIMELINE:
How Rothman’s Termination Unfolded

A look at the key events leading up to the firing of UW System President Jay Rothman.



Graphic by: Alison Keeler

American Cancer Society Hosts Relay for Life

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This past September, one of the members of the Student Voice was diagnosed with cancer and had to take the semester off. As the editor, the news was difficult to process, knowing a staff member was facing something so serious and feeling there was little I could do to help. Months later, as his condition improved, he told me about an opportunity to spread awareness so other students undergoing cancer treatment would know they are not alone.

Relay for Life is an annual fundraiser hosted by the American Cancer Society, with the River Falls event beginning in 1998. The event brings together individuals and teams representing cancer survivors, who take turns walking to symbolize the constant, everyday battle survivors face. Throughout the event, participants and visitors donate to teams and individuals, with all proceeds supporting the American Cancer Society’s research efforts. This year, River Falls surpassed its fundraising goal of \$80,000.

The event began April 10 at River Falls High School, with survivors checking in at 4:30 p.m., followed by a community pasta dinner hosted by the River Falls Lions Club at 5 p.m. A vendor market ran at the same time, offering homemade goods from local creators. Survivors then gathered in the hallway outside the gymnasium before walking in for the opening ceremony.

Two guest speakers shared their stories of diagnosis, treatment and recovery.

Stephannie Hubert began chemotherapy at the end of 2024, adopting what she called a “survivor mentality” to push forward. After a dangerous surgery in August 2025, pathology tests showed no signs of cancer in her pancreas. She now supports other survivors on their journeys.

Tommy Helmer, a former radio professional who spent 35 years in broadcasting, had helped with American Cancer Society events throughout his career. Ten years into retirement, he began experiencing symptoms



Dean Mike Orth and his wife, Paula, walk together at Relay for Life in River Falls on April 10. (Photo by Johan Harworth)

and was diagnosed with Stage 3C colon cancer in February 2025. He said patience was essential to getting through treatment, and he is now in a much better place health-wise.

After the opening ceremony, survivors took the first lap around the track, followed by the participating teams. A total of 31 teams joined the relay, including several formed by UWRF students. A silent auction ran throughout the evening, raising \$40,000 through items donated by community members and vendors. The night concluded with a luminaria ceremony, where participants wrote the names of loved ones lost to cancer on paper lanterns. Local pastors Brian Majerus and Steve Dow read the names aloud.

UWRF’s involvement in the event was notable. The CAFES UWRF team raised more than \$6,000, making it the third-highest fundraising team of the event. The UWRF football and softball teams assisted with setup and the silent auction. CAFES Dean Mike Orth and his wife, Paula, both cancer survivors, volunteered and greeted participants.

Seeing the UWRF community come together to support Relay for Life and cancer research was inspiring. My hope is that our campus continues to strengthen its involvement and show support for survivors both at the university and throughout River Falls.

STUDENT VOICE

Editor
Assistant Editor/Designer
Reporter
Reporter
Reporter
Reporter
Reporter
Reporter
Reporter
Faculty Advisor
Faculty Advisor in mem.

Johan Harworth
Alison Keeler
Michaleen Lovett
Kristy Moore
Emma McNulty
Jaxon Fetch
Fionn O’hAodha
Angel Riley
Landon Zientara
Souzeina Mushtaq
Andris Straumanis

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPORTS WRAP

Baseball

The UW-River Falls baseball team has a current record of 18-17 overall as of April 27. The Falcons compete in the WIAC tournament May 7-9.

Women’s Golf

The UWRF women’s golf team has done well overall this spring, winning some events and tying up scores. The Falcons conclude their 2026 season May 3 at the UW-Stout Spring Invite at Tanglewood Golf Course in Menomonie, Wis.

Women’s Lacrosse

The UWRF women’s lacrosse team’s record this season as of April 27 is 14-3 overall, 7-1 in the WIAC. The Falcons compete in the WIAC tournament May 1-3.

Women’s Tennis

The UW-River Falls women’s tennis team’s record this season as of April 27 is 5-5 overall, with five games won and five games lost. The Falcons ended their season on April 21 with a loss in the WIAC Tournament.

Softball

The Falcon softball team has current record of 8-24, 1-8 overall as of April 27. Their 2026 season concludes May 3.

Track and Field

The men and women’s track and field teams compete in the NCAA Outdoor Championships in La Crosse, WI May 21-23. More information about individual athlete results can be found at uwrfsports.com/sports/track-and-field.

Sports Wrap compiled by
Alison Keeler

Data as recent as April 27.

UPCOMING SPORTING
EVENTS AT UWRF

There are no upcoming sporting events at UWRF on the calendar right now, enjoy your summer!

UW-River Falls Football Honored by
Twins; Wissing Throws First Pitch

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The University of Wisconsin-River Falls football team was recognized Sunday, April 19, by the Minnesota Twins for winning the program’s first NCAA Division III national championship.

Head coach Jacob Wissing threw the ceremonial first pitch as part of the pregame festivities at Target Field. The team was also honored on the field, with highlights from its championship season displayed on the scoreboard.

UW-River Falls secured its first national title only months earlier with a 24-14 victory over North Central in the NCAA Division III championship game.

The recognition comes during a period of transition for the program. Former head coach Matt Walker resigned Feb. 22, and Wissing, who had served alongside him for 15 seasons, took over head coaching duties.

Wissing described throwing out the first pitch as a “dream come true” but emphasized the significance of the moment for his players.

“As great as it was for me personally, I was very excited for our team to be recognized in the way they were,” Wissing said.

In addition to the on-field recognition, players lead in the seventh inning stretch and interacted with fans, posing for photos with the championship trophy.

Wissing said the moment reflected how far the program has come in recent years.

“When I first came up here 15 years ago, most people in the Twin Cities did not know about UW-River Falls football,” he said. “Now I believe our brand has become known not only by the local media and professional organizations like the Twins, but also nationwide.”

Falcons Golf Place Sixth at Storm-Shortened Whitewater Invite

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The UW-River Falls Falcons women’s golf competed at the UW-Whitewater Spring Invite, finishing tied for sixth place out of 18 teams with a score of 40-over par.

Lauren Skov and Martha Effertz led the Falcons with rounds of 80, tying for 18th place in a field of 100 golfers.

Megan Bermejo followed with an 81, while Lily Sullivan shot an 87 and Ellie Whitbread recorded a 90.

For individuals on the team, Madison Hanes shot 89, Annika Summerbell a 96, and Kate Krauklis had 100.

Bermejo said consistency played a key role in her performance.

“I feel like not making big numbers was what helped me maintain my round,” Bermejo said. “I could have improved by managing the course a little better and brushing up on my putting.”

UW-Stout Blue Devils won the team title with a score of 13-over par. Stout’s Julia Imai earned medalist honors with an even-par 72.

The tournament was originally scheduled as a two-day, 36-hole event but was shortened due to severe weather. Teams instead played nine holes each day after heavy flooding impacted the course.

Severe thunderstorms swept through the Janesville area Friday night, bringing heavy rain and damaging winds. The storms caused widespread flooding, road closures, and power outages. According to Juliana Tornabene of WMTV, “Three locomotives in total derailed and crews are working to bring the train cars back on track.”

Officials reported that roads were closed; residents were displaced due to flooding, and trees were downed across the city. An EF-1 tornado was also reported just southwest of Janesville.

According to WISN 12 News, “The Wisconsin National Guard had been deployed to Rock County to assist with damage from an EF-1 tornado and ongoing flooding.”

Course conditions remained difficult throughout the weekend, as wet grounds, cold temperatures and strong winds pushed wind chills below 30 degrees.

Severe storms and tornado activity continued across Wisconsin, causing additional structural damage in communities throughout the state.

17-18 April 2026





UW-WHITEWATER
SPRING INVITE
GOLF TOURNAMENT

UWRF SCORECARD

T18. [LAUREN SKOV](#) - 80

T18. [MARTHA EFFERTZ](#) - 80

27. [MEGAN BERMEJO](#) - 81

56. [LILY SULLIVAN](#) - 87

71. [ELLIE WHITBRED](#) - 90

65. [MADISON HAINES*](#) - 89

90. [ANNIKA SUMMERBELL*](#) - 96

93. [KATE KRAUKLIS*](#) - 100

*Competed as an individual

Graphic by: Alison Keeler
Data from <https://uwrfsports.com/>

UWRF Women's Lacrosse Senior Night

The UWRF women's lacrosse team competed against Hamline University on April 15. The Falcons honored nine graduating seniors and they won the game 21-7.



Nine women's lacrosse players are seniors who are graduating this spring.



The 2026 UWRF women's lacrosse team poses for a group picture on senior night.



#21 Avery Watzke runs through a tunnel of lacrosse sticks to go high-five her coach before the game.



The women's lacrosse team stands in a line for the singing of the National Anthem on April 15.



The Falcons huddle up before the game against Hamline University begins.



#11 Natasha Berthiaume handles the ball past Hamline in the midfield.



#5 Samantha Hayek makes a shot on goal during the first half of the game.



#2 Kinlee Knutson makes a pass down field. She scored an unassisted goal during the second period.



#25 Macy Patton runs with the ball during the first half of the game, making a pass to her teammate.



#27 Brooke Glumack scores during the third period of the game. She also assisted two goals with Elizabeth Clough.



#12 Molly Pierce scores an unassisted goal during the fourth period of the game on April 15.



#14 Murphi Specht scores three goals, helping the Falcons win against Hamline with a score of 21-7.

(All photos by Alison Keeler)

Visit the Student Voice website at uwrfvoice.com