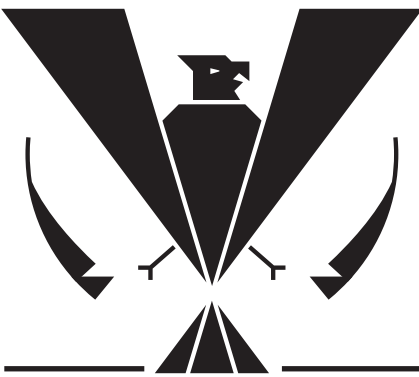




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story.



University of Wisconsin
STUDENT VOICE
April 22, 2016
uwrvoice.com
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Winning ideas proposed by UWRF students

Jacob Rogers
Falcon News Service

Students at UW-River Falls are seeing success developing their entrepreneurial skills, and in the past two years, have placed in the top three spots at the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament (WBIT), a statewide competition.

Mader’s first place finish earned him a \$25,000 Ideadvance Grant to help him with Hippy Feet. He also earned a spot in the International Business Model Competition (IBMC) that takes place on April 29-30 on the Microsoft corporate campus in Redmond, Washington. Matsushima and Merrick will be going to the IBMC with Mader because they earned a bid in the at-large round at the WBIT. Michael Mader placed first during this year’s WBIT for his Hippy Feet idea and Edward Matsushima and Zach Merrick placed third for their Protein Pods proposal. The competition was held April 9 in Madison and was open to students from across the UW System. Last year, Team SoPOD — made up of Eric Wenz, A.J. Lind and An Trieu — placed first.

Mader, a senior marketing major, said he created Hippy Feet with the goal of helping the homeless community by creating a sock line. Mader found out from the Salvation Army that socks are the most sought-after products in homeless shelters.

The socks are made from organic material and are durable. When a pair of Hippy Feet is purchased, another pair is donated to a local homeless shelter. Mader said he is in the beginning stages of getting Hippy Feet into REI, a national cooperative that sells outdoor recreation equipment.

Danielle Campeau, director of the Center for Innovation and Business Development, is one of the coaches who help the teams prepare for the UWRF Innovation Challenge and the WBIT. Campeau, along with faculty advisor Marina Onken, said they are excited to have a winning team for a second straight year.

“We’re thrilled, for the second year in a row, to have a winning team along with a third place team,” Campeau said. “There’s a lot of

preparation that we work with the students in terms of coaching.”

The road to WBIT began with the UWRF Innovation Challenge. Mader gives a lot of credit to Campeau and Onken to his success because they coach and encourage the teams throughout the process that began in early September.

“We do a lot of one-on-one coaching with the teams to help them prepare and work through the business model canvas,” Campeau said. “The business model canvas focuses on getting students outside the building.”

The business model canvas is what Mader, Matsushima and Merrick used to develop their entrepreneurial ideas. As opposed to building a business behind closed doors through writing a business plan, the business model canvas focuses on interviewing people about an idea, according to Campeau.

Mader credits the business model canvas for helping him think outside of just a sock company to a sock company that helps the homeless community.

“I saw a problem, and I knew that I could provide a solution, and so one of my pivots was that I realized I was spending too much time on the sock company aspect of things,” Mader said. “Not enough time was spent expressing the values that I was trying to have my company represents.”

Hippy Feet is not just a school entrepreneurial project for Mader.

“After graduation, I plan on making Hippy Feet my full-time job and giving all of my attention to the company,” Mader said.

Campeau and Mader encourage students in all majors to think about participating in the UWRF Innovation Challenge because, contrary to what students might think, it is not just business majors who are allowed to participate.



Photo Courtesy Danielle Campeau
Michael Mader (left) and Edward Matsushima (right) placed first and third at the Wisconsin Big Ideas Tournament in Madison, Saturday, April 9.

Sacrifice, prospects among reasons faculty leave UWRF

Katie Galarno
Falcon News Service

With the end of this academic year, some UW-River Falls faculty and staff are making the decision to leave the university, including the chair of the biology department and the chief information officer.

For Biology Chair Mark Bergland, retirement is coming early after 38 years at UWRF. Recent budget cuts to the UW System left Bergland with a challenge, he said. If he had not decided to retire after this year, he would have had to cut one of the department’s four instructional academic staff (IAS) entirely or cut the salaries of all four by nearly \$11,000 each. Both options would have hurt the department, he said, and Bergland also wanted to keep all of the IAS because they are just as valuable as the department’s tenured faculty.

“In my mind, there’s no difference between faculty and instructional academic staff. They’re colleagues, right?” Bergland said. “Just because somebody happened to go through the tenure track process doesn’t make

them any better.”

Bradley Caskey, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said that retiring early in an effort to save departments’ offerings is not something he has seen until recent years.

“This past year, we had at least three faculty members who retired earlier than they would have probably retired in an effort to keep enough money in their departments to keep them functioning,” Caskey said. “That’s new. That’s a lot of self-sacrifice.”

Kris Butler, chair of the Department of Modern Language, also has said she is leaving UWRF. Her salary, she said, could be used to save some language courses that otherwise might be dropped because of budget cuts.

Bergland said that, even with his retirement, the department is still going to be affected, as it will take time for Professor Fred Bonilla to transition into the role of chair. Another challenge is going to be continuing to pay for the department’s supplies and equipment. Bergland said that frozen tuition and declining state support make it hard to run a department in which technology becomes more sophisti-

cated and expensive every year.

“We’re surviving right now. I’ll tell you, though, any additional cuts and I don’t know what we’re going to do, because they’ve gone through the fat, through the meat,” Bergland said. “Now they’re to the bone. Now they’re going to start sawing into the bones of the university if they cut any more.”

Chief Information Officer (CIO) Steve Reed has accepted a position as CIO and vice president of Information Technology and Telecommunications with Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. Reed said that he ultimately decided that accepting the position was something he needed to do to develop his career.

“The biggest factor in my decision was what’s best for me and my family and my career,” Reed said. “I still have a lot of time left to work, and I have career goals, and this really provided an opportunity for me to advance my career.”

Reed said that he was surprised by how difficult it was to make the decision to leave UWRF. He said that he has a lot of loyalty to his staff in the Division of Technology Serv-

es, which is not something that he has experienced before.

“I enjoy coming to work every day, and again, it’s the people,” Reed said. “It’s probably the first time in my career where I’ve really stepped back and had that realization of how nice it is to be able to work around a group of people that you enjoy.”

Like Reed, Bergland also said that the thought of leaving UWRF feels strange. He said that he recently gave an ornithology lecture, which is a branch of zoology that focuses on birds, for the last time.

“It’s going to be really bizarre. Like today, I had that lecture, and I’ve talked about things like that for the last 38 years,” Bergland said. “I think, ‘That’s the last time I’m going to do that,’ so that’s really tough. I’m going to really miss the students and my colleagues.”

Reed starts at Metropolitan State University on April 25, and Bergland’s retirement will begin officially on July 2.

Finals Fest to include EDM groups and Florida rapper

Ryan Funes
Falcon News Service

Before finals take over the minds of the students, UWRF will be putting on its Finals Fest on Friday, May 6, bringing several music acts to campus along with an assurance that the event will not be stopped by bad weather.

The performers this semester include house music band Autograf, DJs Dudley D and Quamunist of GenerationNOW, and singer Justin Buzzi.

The music acts in particular have been chosen through the feedback of students at the university who wanted to see more diverse acts brought in, said Director of Student Involvement Paul Shepherd, who added that he hopes the acts this year will satisfy the students.

“We try to get as much feedback as we can from students,” he said. “We try to get feed-

back on genre. The problem with asking for specific artists is that it depends on who’s travelling in our general area to work within budget.”

He said that the university tries not to look for national acts or those that tour constantly due to the latter reasons, working with agencies to see who can come to the area and matching them with what the university wants the most.

Chicago-based Autograf is noted for their electronic dance music and live instrumentation, GenerationNOW are the official DJs for the Minnesota Timberwolves basketball team, and Buzzi was contacted for a special performance.

Shepherd said that Buzzi was invited because he wrote a song called “Falcon Nation Anthem” to be played for Finals Fest. Buzzi, reached by telephone in his home state of Flor-

ida, said the university came across the song and asked him to perform for the students at UWRF.

Buzzi will be coming for his first time to Wisconsin to perform a remixed version of the song, bringing his cameraman to shoot footage around the campus and festival.

“I’ve just been trying to travel as much as I can recently, and that’s one of the big reasons I wanted to come up there and do this,” he said. “It’s a place I’ve never been before. It’s a new experience, and meeting new people.”

Buzzi said that he released a new album earlier this month and will be bringing about 500 copies to the show.

Though these artists were voted upon according to most wanted genre and who’s available, Shepherd said he understands that not everyone is satisfied when it comes to the acts booked in years past, but added that

he believes that it’s the spirit of coming out and having the experience of live music with friends and fellow students that counts.

Finals Fest is also being marketed mainly to the students at the university. Even though UWRF advertises the event in River Falls, Shepherd said the university expect there to be more students than community members in attendance.

Those afraid that this year’s concert might be rained upon or too cold can rejoice as Finals Fest will be held indoors in the Falcon’s Nest of the University Center. Shepherd said that it is easier to set up the lights for the show and will be safer if the weather is bad.

Prior to Finals Fest a pre-party is scheduled at 6 p.m. at the University Center. Doors for the concert open at 7:30 p.m.

News briefs:

UWRF student named agriculture ambassador

Kaylin Spaeth, a junior at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, has been selected as one of 15 campus ambassadors for Agriculture Future of America (AFA). Spaeth, of Emerald, is studying agricultural business and dairy science at UWRF. AFA is a leader and professional development organization for collegiate leaders and young professionals. Providing leader development, intern support and scholarships, AFA seeks to be a catalyst in the preparation of a new generation of agriculture leaders. Spaeth and her fellow team members serve as ambassadors between AFA and their college campuses and AFA’s corporate partners.

“My involvement with AFA has been a great way to help promote agriculture, learn more about myself, and also meet other passionate students from all across the nation,” Spaeth said. “AFA also gives students numerous opportunities to network with companies and learn more about them and how their employees are working to promote agriculture every day.”

Spaeth and the other campus ambassadors were selected through a competitive application process to serve as AFA’s student voice and represent their peers on a national level. In addition to serving as a liaison between AFA and their respective campuses, the ambassadors will assist the Student Advisory Team in delivering the 2016 AFA Leaders Conference. This event is AFA’s core leader development program and more than 700 delegates from across the nation will be selected to attend. The Student Advisory Team and the AFA Campus Ambassadors met March 31-April 2 to kickoff this planning process.

Spaeth’s entrance into the AFA leader development program began her freshman year of college when she was selected as a National AFA Leader and Academic Scholar. Since then, she has attended three Tracks of AFA Leaders Conference as well as the AFA Animal Institute and AFA Policy Institute. At the Animal Institute she was able to visit with young professionals from companies such as Select Sires MidAmerica, Ceva Animal Health and Cargill, and gained insider knowledge on different career paths. At the AFA Policy Institute in March, she connected with Wisconsin legislative representatives and learned about the policy process. Participants also met with specialists from government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. State Department and the Foreign Ag Service to gain a better understanding of career options in the policy field.

In addition to her involvement with AFA, Spaeth is also active in student organizations and activities at UW-River Falls, including the Agricultural Business and Marketing Society, Dairy Club, Collegiate Farm Bureau and Agribusiness Quiz Bowl. Last summer she completed an internship with AgStar Financial, ACA focused on Ag Star’s Young, Beginning Small Farmer and Rancher Program.

For more information, email laura.walsh@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3535.

Annual agricultural technology contest held at UWRF

Seven contests qualified teams to compete in the Wisconsin FFA state contest April 29 in Madison and two of the contests qualified teams to go on to the national contest in October following the 56th Annual Agricultural Technology Contest held April 2 at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Nine hundred forty one FFA students representing 66 schools competed during the contest. Students competed individually or in teams selecting from 18 different competitions, including dairy cattle evaluation, forestry, and ag technology and mechanical systems.

The annual contest is coordinated by the Agricultural Education Department, with two students in the lead roles. Tyler Foote, of Brandon, served as the 2016 coordinator and Madeline Bode, of Cassville, served as the assistant coordinator. Faculty, staff and students from across the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) volunteered their time to organize and oversee the individual

contests. Additional information about the Agricultural Technology Contest and full results can be found at www.uwrf.edu/AGED/CDE/AgriculturalTechnologyContest.cfm.

40th Annual Colt Sale set for Saturday, May 7

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls will host the 40th Annual Colt Sale on Saturday, May 7, where 50 high quality two-year-old horses will be offered for sale.

The horses for sale have been trained by UW-River Falls students enrolled in the Principles of Training Horses class taught by Nathan O’Connor. Horses in this group would satisfy buyers looking for serious performance prospects or a trail horse for the family.

Buyers can preview the horses starting at 11 a.m. in the Brainard-Kasten Colt Barn arena on the UW-River Falls Campus Farm, 1475 S. Wasson Lane, River Falls. Student trainers will be riding their horses for potential buyers. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. and the student trainers will be available at that time to answer questions about their horses. The sale will begin promptly at 2 p.m. Phone bids are welcome, but buyers must be pre-registered; check the website (www.uwrf-coltsale.com) for details.

Photos, sires and dams of the 2016 colts are on the UWRF Colt Sale website. Final photos, videos and the sale catalog (including full performance pedigrees and a description of riding qualities) will be posted on the website by Wednesday, April 20. To see the progress of the student trainers and their horses over the course of the semester, visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/uwrfcoltsale.

The Colts in Training course was founded in 1972 by renowned horseman Jack Brainard, along with Jim Dollahon, an animal science faculty member. Larry Kasten, hired in 1973 as the second animal science faculty member for the equine program, further developed and refined the program, and beginning in 1976, opened the doors each spring for the annual Colt Sale. Kasten oversaw the UWRF Colt Sale for its first 30 years until he retired and was succeeded by O’Connor. To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the UWRF Colt Sale, alumni will be invited to gather under the tent outside the Colt Barn from noon to 2 p.m.

For more information, email laura.walsh@uwrf.edu or call 715-425-3535.

University plays host to science olympiad

University of Wisconsin-River Falls English Professor Greta Gaard will have her work honored in a scholarly journal in China. The dedication to her work is set to accompany the much anticipated translation and publication of her creative non-fiction book, “The Nature of Home,” into Chinese.

Beyond her accomplishments outside the university, Gaard also serves as coordinator of UWRF’s Sustainability Faculty Fellows, a group that has developed more than 45 interdisciplinary sustainability courses in every college on campus. The group is in process of institutionalizing their new program that will feature an interdisciplinary foundations course in sustainable justice, and a capstone course with options for civic engagement, research, and experiential education.

Gaard’s passion permeates her classroom as she assigns an environmental essay in her advanced composition courses and brings forward her environmental concerns to “green” her business writing courses.

“UWRF students are a very practical group of learners,” said Gaard. “They want to test-drive the ideas we are studying. Through the experiential learning component in my Literature of Environmental Justice course, students have been able to explore the links between social justice and environmental health that we are reading about in class.”

“Dr. Gaard is a superb professor, talented writer and terrific colleague, said Brad Caskey, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “I am especially excited about her work being translated in Chinese as this distinction fits so well with the UW-River Falls mission of helping students be productive, creative, ethical, engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective.”

In addition to her teaching and sustainability leadership, Gaard also speaks at local, national, and international venues. She recently gave invited presentations for North Dakota State University, Ashland College, and Claremont Colleges Food Justice Summit. In May, Gaard will be speaking at the Goethe Institute in Frankfurt, Germany, and at the École des

Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Her sixth book, “Critical Ecofeminism,” will be published in fall 2016. For more information about Gaard, or the programs offered through the UW-River Falls College of Arts and Sciences, visit <http://www.uwrf.edu/cas>.

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Have something to say?

Write a letter to the editor.

Email your thoughts to editor@uwrfvoice.com

River Falls Police/UWRF Police Department


Saturday, April 16

- A person reported being sexually assaulted in Grimm Hall around 9:30 p.m. No other information has been released at this time.
- Police responded to a welfare check request at 1475 S Wasson Lane around 11 p.m.

Sunday, April. 17

- Police responded to reports of vandalism at North Hall around 2:30 p.m.

Editor’s note:
Information for this section is taken from
UW-River Falls Police incident reports.




The “It’s Only Another Beer”
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Buzzed driving is drunk driving.

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River Falls leadership course teaches community members

Molly Kinney
Falcon News Service

The latest Leadership River Falls class, a community course put on by the Chamber of Commerce, will graduate on May 5 upon completion of a community project.

The Leadership River Falls course is in its 14th year. The nine-month program typically has between 12-14 members recruited from all facets of the community. Some of the students are from the private sector, others are city employees, University faculty and staff, or members of the community who want to take on a more active leadership role in River Falls.

Maranda Mahr, the events and program coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce, is involved with developing curriculum and setting the yearly agenda for Leadership River Falls. She said that a community project is the focal point of the Leadership River Falls class.

What the class decides to do completely depends on the personalities and interests of each class, Mahr said. Many factors are considered when the group is choosing the project, such as how sustainable is the project, whether it addresses an unfulfilled need in the community, and if it can even be done as a large group project. Past projects have included everything from building benches around the community, to placing historic plaques on Main Street buildings, and even building Little Free libraries.

This year’s class took a different, more sustainable approach to the project, and decided to develop and implement a youth version of the Leadership River Falls course to community education.

“One of the class members said they just couldn’t believe that they’ve lived here their whole lives yet they got so much out of the class, and wouldn’t it be great for youth community members to get started down this path, too,” Mahr said. “So the program will mimic and shadow the same program we have for the adults in the community.”

Kristin Samp, the conference and contract services manager at UW-River Falls, is a member of this year’s class. She decided to apply for the course simply to learn more about the community.

“I’d seen the application promoted in the chamber’s emails, and just as the idea was spinning through my mind, I had two of my coworkers say, ‘You should apply for this.’ They had both been through the program and thought I would love it, so I applied and got in and I’ve loved it too,” she said. “The only way I really meet (community members) is if they’re a potential client. So for me I’ve gotten to know people from all facets of the community, in house care, banking, CVTC (Chippewa Valley Technical College) — you name it. And that’s been nice, connecting.”

Samp said she and her classmates were so affected by the program that they wanted to leave a sort of legacy with their community project.

“We started just tossing around some ideas, and we were all enjoying this program so much as adults. We talked about how cool it would be if younger people could go through this. It’s a great way to totally get them engaged with their community,” she said.

The program will require a two-year contract between the Chamber of Commerce and the River Falls School District. The course will be geared towards kids in middle school, likely seventh and eighth graders. Three members of this year’s adult Leadership River Falls class will serve on an executive board for the program, and two to three members will lead the youth courses each month.

The Leadership River Falls class is typically held on the first Thursday, starting in September. The course starts with a one-day retreat led by leadership specialist and UWRF Student Involvement Coordinator Paul Shepherd.

“The first day retreat this year took place in a nice house down by the perimeters of Glen Park by the Kinni,” said Mahr. “It’s used as a day to get to know one another and Paul is our

leadership component guru, so he leads a lot of discussion getting into the leadership mindset for the course.”

After that first day, each meeting takes on a certain theme, led by a community representative knowledgeable on the subject. Mahr said one of the favorite days is always Heritage Day, where the group is led on a walking tour to the historic points in River Falls, often accompanied by an older community member who can speak about the changes they’ve seen to these spots throughout their days in the community. Another theme typically done is Health and Human Services Day, which took place on April 7 and was led by Jennifer Elsesser and Alice Reilly-Myklebust, who work for Counseling and Health Services at UWRF.

Another important aspect of the Leadership River Falls course is the working lunch each month, led by Shepherd. According to Mahr, students are provided with lunch paid for with tuition, which is \$800, and Shepherd talks about leadership skills and techniques that students can utilize for their community project.

The graduation “ceremony” that will take place on May 5 is more of a debriefing and reflection meeting for members of the class and a guest, typically someone from their workplace, Mahr said. The discussion gives class members an opportunity to talk about what they’ve learned and how they’re going to continue to do progressive work in the community.

Samp said that the most impactful part of the course was simply learning how much goes into running the community she’s grown to love.

“I guess for me it’s been kind of eye-opening what it takes to run a community,” she said. “Everything from public works to the council to chamber to retail, it’s just amazing, and how you just go through it and don’t pay any attention to all that. And so what it’s caused me to do is be very aware that everything that’s happening and being done in this community is done very mindfully, and with a lot of people. It’s just made me more appreciative of what’s all happening here.”

Faculty Senate creates task force to study budget process

Paul Langfellow
Falcon News Service

In the wake of recent budget cuts at UW-River Falls, a faculty task force has been created to examine their impact.

The Faculty Senate created the task force during its April 6 meeting, but a group of student leaders successfully lobbied to get a student representative included as well.

The task force is to study how the university’s budget works and ways to improve communication about the process. It is to submit a report to the chancellor and the Faculty Senate chair by Aug. 1.

Brady Murphy, the Student Senate’s director of external relations and one of the students who lobbied for student representation within the task force, said that the group has been focused on being part of the budgeting process and making suggestions toward what could be done.

“This task force basically exists so that Faculty Senate has a voice in the budgeting process for the colleges, so they will be involved in the budgeting process. To what exact level of involvement and what degree or capacity is still not entirely known,” Murphy said.

Other students are looking at the task force to bring a level of transparency to the budget-

ing process to ensure that programs in which they are involved will be able to be funding properly.

UWRF Senior Malachi Becker, who also lobbied for student representation on the task force, said that he believes that the group will be able to shed some light on how things are run and avoid future miscommunication when it comes to budgeting.

“This honest miscommunication is the simple fact that the administration hasn’t been allowing the College of Arts and Sciences to look at a good chunk of their budget,” he said. The college, one of four that make up UWRF, was hit with a \$1.5 million budget cut that will

have an effect on course availability, class sizes and staffing.

Professor John Heppen, chair of the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, said that the budget task force is a way of seeing how budget decisions are made.

“I liken it to a brewery tour. It’s just gonna go see how beer is brewed and bottled but it has nothing to say in regards to how beer is made, what’s being made, what ingredients are put in. Like I said it’s like going to a tour or it’s like looking through a window,” Heppen said.

The budget task force currently meets on a weekly basis.

UW-River Falls Ag Day promotes awareness of agriculture



Tori Schneider/Student Voice

There were two calves on display at UWRF Ag Day held in the Campus Mall outside of the University Center, Tuesday, April 19.



Jacob Martin, freshman, rides the bull simulator as Mitchell Devine, a member of the Rodeo Club controls it.



Alicia Gaszak, treasurer of UWRF Poultry Club, poses with the rooster that was a part of the club’s table.

EDITORIAL

Earth Day gives universities chance to look at options for sustainability

This Friday is Earth Day, the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in the 1970s. Earth Day is a time to honor our wonderful planet and reflect on how we are treating it. While Earth Day is sadly only one day, UW-River Falls has been participating in Earth Week, while some have participated in Earth Month. While we reflect on our planet and what we as individuals can do to treat it well, we should also look at how the university is working to be sustainable and eco-friendly.

As pinnacles of knowledge, it’s no surprise that most universities today claim to value and support sustainability on their campuses. UWRF is certainly one of those: the Mann Valley farm has an extensive composting program. The Recyclemania program in Residence Halls tries to get students excited about minimizing waste. The University Center for a number of years was the most sustainable building in the area, if not the nation. This year, for the second year in a row, UWRF was given a silver rating on the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System report.

However, there are always areas where any campus can improve itself to lower its communal carbon footprint. For UWRF, some of those things could be: offering compostable rather than plastic eating utensils at dining services is a simple start. Another could be banning water bottles everywhere on campus, and offering more class options to focus on how and why reducing energy usage should be implemented. Bigger scale things must happen too, such as divesting the UWRF Foundation from the fossil fuel industry, and reinvesting in renewable energy.

Students should also take part in these subjects through whatever means they can afford, whether that be spreading the word on the importance of sustainability and environmental awareness; joining or forming organizations which focus on these matters; talking with campus government about these issues; or just staying informed on the subject.

So while UWRF is on the right track when it comes to sustainability, we encourage those who have the ability to make a difference to never stop asking the question of what more can be done. Meanwhile, students should do what their schedules allow, but at least make sure to be educated when it comes to the important subject of environmental awareness. Earth Day, Week or Month should not be the only time to celebrate the Earth and to take everyday steps to help the environment.

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

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STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT: AASA



Hue Cheng Vue
Asian American Student Association

Q: How long have you been involved with the org and why did you decide to get involved?
A. I have been involved in the AASA organization for two years now. Last year I was a member, and this year I had held the position of co-president of AASA. I decided to be involved in AASA because it’s really a safe place for me as well as me being comfortable when it comes to interacting, and best of all just spending time with students from the same identity based as me. With that being said, I held onto this position this year to welcome new students like how AASA had impacted me.

Q: What are three things you want people on campus to know about your org?
A. The events, the people and knowing that AASA is opened up to everyone rather than just specifically for Asian American students.
Q. When and where does your org meet?
A. For officer meetings, we meet in the Red Cedar room on Monday from 4-6 p.m. Whereas for org meetings, we meet in the St. Criox room on Tuesday from 6-7 p.m.

Q. How can other students get involved in your org?
A. Pretty much just come in anytime that we have our org meeting because we really open it up to both staff and students. Along with that, during involvement fair, it’s when we are recruiting new members.

Q. What do you think makes a person a good leader?
A. In my opinion, what I find in a good leader is to be opened minded to his or her followers. With that, have different qualities such as interactions, communications, and reaching out to other ideas and sources. I also think that what makes a person a good leader is to represent or really have a passion for what he or she stands for.

STUDENT VOICES

Which music artist do you wish never released music?

Compiled by Samantha Decker



Taylor Ponce
Freshman
“Kanye West.”



Mason Pint
Freshman
“Pitbull.”



Cody Wagner
Senior
“Miley Cyrus.”



Hailey Johnson
Senior
“Iggy Azalea.”



Josh Wagner
Senior
“Shawn Mendes.”



Sydney Sleichert
Freshman
“Skrillex.”

Follow the Student Voice online!

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Facebook: facebook.com/Uwrstudentvoice

Meet your Student Senate candidates



Bledja Desiree Astrid Kramo

Junior

Agricultural Business

Running for: President and Vice President

Why have you decided to run? “I wanted to get involved because it is my first year in River Falls and I think it will be a challenge. Being an international student I think it would be great to become president or vice president.”

What issues will you focus on if elected? “I’m looking at how international students get involved on campus. They are here but they don’t get involved. So one of my priorities is to let them know that it is okay to get involved. When you look at campus, all of the cuts are getting to be a lot. So being able to improve students’ experiences after the cuts is something I want to look at.”

How can Student Senate be improved? “I think the Senate could be more open to the students. People would be able to learn more about it. If they held more activities and events where students could see them, they could learn who they are. Not a lot of people know who the president and vice president is.”

Why should students vote for you? “I’m not from here so I can offer a different perspective. I think I could bring a lot to Student Senate.”



Jessica (JJ) Knapp

Junior

Art History

Current Position in Student Senate: Inclusivity Senator

Running for: Vice President

Why have you decided to run? “Honestly I had been in the Senate for less than a week when I had people approach me saying I should run for president, vice president in the next year. And I started thinking about it more and I started getting more involved than I already was in the university system, I do a lot of different things. I just kind of thought why not? I already do so much, I know so many people and I know what the students are looking for and what they want, so why not take that and run with it and see what I can do? And one of the really big opportunities I want to have through this is to go and lobby at the state level and the national level, and the traveling that we get to do to talk with our state legislators and talk with them about higher education and some of the problems we have going on in the state of Wisconsin. As well as taking things to a national level and talking about the issues that we have in our generation, especially from minority students, LGBT students, racial minorities, just a lot of the things that I’m really passionate about in politics. I figured it was my open window to kind of take things that I talk about with students every day and move forward with it and try to make a difference and make a statement.”

What issues will you focus on if elected? “I really love what we’ve done with the It’s On Us campaign this year, so I really want to keep the ball rolling with that. I think we’ve developed a really good partnership with SART. I already work with SART a lot in my other work so I think that will only get stronger with me on the exec board. Same thing with Turning Point. I work as an advocate at Turning Point. There are a whole lot of open windows for more partnerships to kind of connect us more to the city, which I think is something that we’ve always had some struggles with. I also really want to focus on sustainability. I would really love to see the Green Fee proposal push through and get started in this next year. I really love how Governor Doyle started putting us on the map with sustainability back when he was in office, but I feel like the ball has kind of been dropped since then besides the construction of the University Center. Probably the biggest thing is inclusivity and diversity. Looking at our data, I really feel that we’re lacking in the area, both with faculty and in students. So I really want to see what I can do to help student organizations based in identity grow and have more opportunities to share their cultural identities with students and see if we can kind of bridge the gap there. It’s not only important for solving issues with social justice, it also helps people in the River

Falls community and our school become a lot more rounded. And with globalization becoming more and more of a thing, it’s really important to go out in the world with a more rounded understanding of how the world works and how it’s people function and what the people think about. Another thing would be mental illness. I really love Chris [Morgan’s] platform this year. I’m really proud of Chris and what he’s worked with. I really would like to continue with a lot of the pinpoints that he has, but I feel like I have a lot more experience with a lot of those things than he does and I feel like I have a lot more ideas that I can bring to the table to help him, especially if he does end up winning re-election. Mental health is something I work with a lot on campus through Active Minds and with my multiple partnerships through Student Health and Counseling and through SART and Turning Point. I would really love to see us do something to address that.”

How can Student Senate be improved? “I think one of the biggest opportunities that we have, especially with all the reaching out we’ve done this year, I think we really discovered that there are a lot of really great resources that departments are doing all across campus, but they’re not being connected. A lot of these resources target the same issues, and I feel like there must be a way that we can combine our resources to make these programs and resources more available and more well-known to the students, especially first-year students. So that’s something I really want to focus on. I think we’ve done a really good job in our events pulling partners throughout the university and we’ve been kind of finding out more of what people have been doing in the past couple years and re-immersing ourselves in the university. I know in year’s past Senate has been kind of detached, kind of doing its own thing. So I think we have a really good opportunity to just overall improve in connecting our university more. I think that’s one of the biggest things we have, a lack of communication and a lack of collaboration. I think we improved that a little bit this year, but I think there’s a lot more work to do on it and I think Senate could play a part in that. We really need to push ourselves to talk to students more, to go out to more functions that are being put on by different organizations and different departments in the university so we can talk to students more and get their opinion on what’s going on in the UW System and what’s going on at UWRF.”

Why should students vote for you? “I think I really represent a good portion of the student body. I think I really keep myself well connected with the study body and I think having somebody from an artistic perspective, we don’t really have people in Student Senate that are art majors. That’s not something that’s really typical. Most people that are in Student Senate are interested in economics, business and political science in general. I think it’s nice to have an outside perspective that still knows what they’re talking about. And politics is my passion, sociology is my passion, but I don’t make it my whole life. And I think that helps me kind of step back and look at the biggest picture and look at what’s really important. My biggest thing is that I don’t make any decision until I talk to students first. I want to make sure I am fully representing the study body whenever I make a decision, whenever I vote on anything. I think overall I’m really qualified for the job. I’ve had a lot of leadership experience in just the two years I’ve been at River Falls. I think another reason why I would be a good VP is that I recognize that my competitors are just as good as I am. I’m not going to be too upset if I lose to Halan especially, because I know that she’s just as qualified, just as driven, just as passionate about the same issues that I am. But I think the difference is that I bring a different perspective to the table, and I think again I have a more well-rounded understanding of what the students are actually looking for.”



Christopher Morgan

Senior

Economics and Political Science

Current Position in Student Senate: President

Running for: President

Why have you decided to run? “I saw the success we’ve achieved this year and I really just want to build upon that for next year. Sustainability, we laid the groundwork this year and we’re going to work really hard at implementing a green fee to our campus. Walking away from the Climate Summit, we were really all inspired about what was being discussed. And so I want to be a part of that when it happens. Inclusivity, we officially brought a position here that deals directly with that specific topic. I want to see that person come on board, I want to see them set in stone and I want to get graduate interns to work with them and really build up an office for inclusivity at this university. So there are various reasons why I’m running again, but mostly I’m running because I realized that I’m the best guy for the job and I know that if I’m president again I’m going to have a great team and we’re going to make next year even better than this year.”

What issues will you focus on if elected? “There are two issues that we’re going to look at beyond our four priorities of this year. Number one is improving the food situation on this campus. First off, we’re going to advocate directly for an increase in the block transfer rate. Five dollars and fifty cents is inadequate when you’re already being forced to pay upcharge food options. So what we’re looking to do is increase that rate for lunch, dinner and breakfast and allow students to actually have an adequate meal without having to dip into their own pocket and pay for things when they’re already spending thousands of dollars on a meal plan as it is. And then also beyond that for food, we have a lot of students with food allergies and students due to their religion can’t eat certain foods. And we really want to improve how we market the food down in the Commons, improve signage and improve labeling. I’ve heard students having reactions to some of



Halan Tran

Junior

Business Administration

Current Position in Student Senate: Student Affairs Chair

Running for: Vice President

Why have you decided to run? “I’ve been on Senate for two years and I was the International Senator and this year I am Student Affairs Chair, and I have a different perspective of the organization and I want to continue improving the organizations and give back to the university, to the students and dedicate my time to improve this place for students.”

What issues will you focus on if elected? “For It’s On Us, I’ve been on this campaign,

the stuff they’ve ate because it wasn’t marked clearly enough and I know a lot of Muslim students wanting there to be better signage on what is pork. Lastly, I’m going to pledge support to improving our library. When we walk into the lobby of the library it’s very outdated and I want us when you walk into the library as a student to be impressed and wowed and feel proud of the university you’re at. So spending a significant amount of money buying all new furniture, buying really nice symbolage of the university and putting it in there, putting really nice televisions on the wall, maybe add charging portals where you can sit down. Basically making it a very nice lounge where students can go and hang out and feel proud of. And then besides that, it’s hard to believe but the state will already be talking about the next budget. That, beyond anything else, will affect students the most. And so as student leaders we need to go to Madison and put a face to the issue of higher education, and so I have every intention of having an increased travel budget this year and I have every intention to bring students to Madison to meet directly with state lawmakers and show exactly who is affected when you cut higher education.”

How can Student Senate be improved? “As a Senate, we’ve done a lot of great things this year. But there’s growing pains. We went from not really doing anything and then we expanded and started campaigns and started dealing with students and through that growth we started to realize that as an organization internally, there can be a lot better communication that goes back and forth. So improving the way as senators we work with one another. We’re all friends, so that’s a great thing, but when it comes to getting a job done, communication is a key component. Other than that, what Senate needs to work on above all else is its brand. We’re still feeling the effects of poor decision making that was occurring three and four years ago. And that stigma is unfortunately still lingering with Senate. So when you go into Yik Yak and you go onto Facebook and you see people who don’t know and really have never had an interaction with Senate saying that we’re corrupt, saying that we’re complacent, saying that we don’t know what we’re doing, it not only hurts to hear that, it also hurts because you know that every time someone sees those comments that they start to believe it. At the end of the day, to get the word out to students that Student Senate is here for you, that we care about this university, that we really are advocates for the student body, and that this isn’t a closed organization. If you honestly feel that we’re doing a bad job, run yourself and make a change. That’s what I want students to know.”

Why should students vote for you? “I think that I have the most experience out of anyone currently running. I know that what we are planning to do next year will leave such a lasting impression on this university. We’re going in the right direction currently this year. With my re-election, we will continue to make great strides and at a time when this university will face another budget cut possibly, you’ll want someone experienced at the top that can meet with lawmakers and articulate exactly why higher education matters in Wisconsin. That’s why you should vote for me.”

supporting this campaign for two years. I think this is a really important issue because it’s not just on our campus, but also on every campus in this country and around the world. So I want to continue with this campaign to prevent sexual assault on this campus and also I want to focus on the diversity on this campus and inclusivity. I know we have a lot of international students on campus, but they don’t get involved enough. With the foreign languages courses being cut, I think it’s important for us to promote the cultures and diversity on this campus so students can learn more, not just the language but the culture. With my teammate Chris Morgan, we want to focus on remodeling the library, making it a better place for students to study and have a space to relax. Also a better meal plan, that’s the thing we’ve heard students complain about. Continuing with mental health and the Safe Ride Home Program.”

How can Student Senate be improved? “The biggest thing that I think we need to improve on is just getting our name out there and letting students know who we are and what we do, because a lot of our projects are big and make impacts on students and help them, but a lot of students just don’t know about us.”

Why should students vote for you? “Because I think I’m the most qualified candidate for this position. I have been on Student Senate for two years. I am also very involved on campus. I’m a Chancellor’s Student Ambassador, I’m also the president for Global Programming Society, we put together the International Bazaar. I’m also the publicity officer of Dance Theatre. Being a business student and an international student I have a really unique perspective and I have good leadership experience. I can lead and I can help make a positive impact on our campus and make it a better place for everyone.”

Year after surviving budget cut, UWRF tennis team rebuilds

Trenten Gauthier
Falcon News Service

It has been a full year since the UW-River Falls women’s tennis team survived an effort to drop it in response to state funding cuts. Now, under new Coach Dan Stumpf, a former tennis player at Creighton University, the team is rebuilding.

According to Stumpf, the team has played with confidence. Although it has struggled in the wins column, he said the players are glad they have got a chance to compete this year.

“I think my players play with passion. Whether that is coming from the thought the program was going to be cut or not, I just think they are

competitors,” Stumpf said. “Every player on my team has (competed hard) from top to bottom. That is probably what I am most proud about.”

Stumpf said that he doesn’t believe the players have any negative feelings toward anyone about what happened last year, but senior Kelsey Hochberger said the cuts still have been in their minds this year.

“Some people have concern that it could possibly happen again in the future, but I hope not,” she said. “I don’t think it has affected the way we have been performing at all though. But I think we’ve connected more as a team. We came together even outside tennis, and

have gotten a lot closer after last year.”

Sophomore Molly Deering said meetings last spring about the possibility of being cut did affect the team’s performance this year because they took players away from practice.

“We had so many meetings, we didn’t get to practice as much,” Deering said. “And I think it affected the team because we didn’t get as many recruits, it scared some of our recruits away because they didn’t know we were going to have a program or not,” Deering said. “I was seriously considered transferring if the program was going to be cut.”

Stumpf, who has over 10 years

of coaching experience, said he has loved his first year at UW-River Falls. He said the program aims to become an established team in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC), but is not there yet.

“We play teams like Whitewater, La Crosse and Eau Claire that are very well established and have had long-term success and are higher in recruits, and we don’t have that right now,” Stumpf said. “I’m not sure at what point we will be at that level, if we ever will get there.”

According to Stumpf, he has heard no more talk about the tennis team being cut.

“We don’t discuss that in our program,” he said. “We assume the

future is bright. That it was just the one time that the program has maybe seen its darkest day. I won’t allow my players to think that. If that happens it is out of my control and out of my players’ control.”

The tennis team finished its season on April 20 at Hamline University, and will lose two seniors from the 10-player roster. Stumpf said the team has four recruits coming in next year.

“I see a bright future,” he said. “I am excited what we have going on here. I really believe the stability of this program will continue as long as I am representing the school as the head coach.”



Kathy Helgeson/UWRF Communications
Dan Stumpf, head falcons women’s tennis coach, consults with a player, Thursday, September 24 in Knowles when the team played against UW-Oshkosh.

UWRF softball beats UWEC, ends six-game lose streak

Zach Dwyer
zachary.dwyer@my.uwrf.edu

The Falcons opened up their new softball field with an impressive performance Wednesday, April 13, dropping the UW-Eau Claire Blugolds 7-1 in the first game of their doubleheader and tied 3-3 with a finish to be announced later in their second match-up.

This first conference win of the year came on the heels of a rough weekend for the Falcons. They were outscored 28-2 in doubleheaders against UW-Oshkosh and UW-Whitewater and seemed to have a lack of energy to start out the conference season. But all of this misfortune went out the window when UWRF returned to defend their home field for the first time.

Michelle LaCasse took the mound in her fifteenth game of the year and gave an incredible performance. The junior pitcher threw all seven innings on the afternoon and allowed only one earned run on three hits. Her ability to work around their strongest hitters and keep the Blugolds off balance kept Eau Claire frustrated throughout the first match-up.

“There was a lot of excitement, but a couple of nerves, going into the game. We’re still getting used to how the balls react off the dirt on the new field and the view from the mound is much different from previous seasons,” said LaCasse.

This didn’t seem to impact the Falcons’ hitting, with sopho-

more Shannan Borchardt blasting a solo home run to center field to open up the new stadium with a bang. After an RBI by LaCasse in the first inning, Borchardt’s homer swung all the momentum in favor of UWRF to put them up 2-0.

“We came ready to get the first win on our new field and protect our house at all costs. The energy was high and the crowd really made a difference,” said Head Coach Amber Dohlman.

This energy propelled the Falcons to a five run fourth inning that put the contest out of reach for the Blugolds. Aiyana Ledwein and Mady Bunnell both drove in two runs apiece to give the packed stands something to get excited about. The hitting that seemed to disappear the previous weekend came to life against UW-Eau Claire.

“We hit to open spots on Wednesday while we weren’t able to get runs on the previous weekend. We did a good job of getting people around,” Dohlman said.

The Blugolds got on the board in the sixth, but the Falcons managed to prevail 7-1 to pick up their first conference game of the year. This win snapped a six-game losing streak and may prove to be the turning point in the Falcons’ season.

“The win was a mixture of a lot of things, with utilizing the defense and having everyone on the same page. We hit a fun, flow state and the team plays a lot better when we’re enjoying it and staying loose,” said LaCasse.

The Falcons played the second part of their doubleheader

immediately following their big win and faced tougher competition from the Blugolds. The game went back and forth throughout, with the Falcons evening the score at 2-2 in the bottom of the third. Only one more run would be scored by each team before the game was called for darkness, tied at 3-3 in the bottom of the ninth.

Dohlman said, “We were all a little disappointed in the result in the second game because getting a sweep over Eau Claire would be huge. Our team knows they earned and deserved that win, and they will come out and finish it.”

The second game will be finished at a later date. However, the effort seems to have completely swung the Falcons’ season around. The team swept Finlandia this past weekend and split a series with UW-Stevens Point. The Finlandia game was especially significant, with pitchers LaCasse and Maddie Studnicka combining to throw a no-hitter.

With the wins the Falcons improve to 11-17-1 in the season and 2-5-1 in the WIAC. With the top teams in the conference already off the schedule, the Falcons could make a serious push to be contenders in the WIAC playoffs.

“This team could of rolled over and given up, but they came back and were ready to start fresh and new. We now have the three toughest teams out of the way, so now we need to go out to battle and win out,” Dohlman said.

Unnoticed by many, athletic trainers keep Falcons healthy

Kate Vruwink
Falcon News Service

At UW-River Falls there is one job that makes all sports possible: Athletic trainers make sure athletes are physically capable of participating in sporting events, and take care of them when they’re not.

Although it’s an essential part of athletic departments, it’s a job that goes unnoticed by many.

The UWRF Athletics Department includes three trainers, two full time and one part time. Head Athletic Trainer Andrew Baker and his two assistant trainers evaluate injuries, provide treatments and help administer physical therapy to recovering athletes. For a staff of only three, covering all athletics is a challenge.

“We’re not at every practice for every team,” Baker said. “We just don’t have the staff to do that. The sports that are in season take priority.”

Currently the only two sports in season are softball and track and field according to the UWRF Sports Information website. Despite that, football, soccer and volleyball currently have spring practices and athletes of other sports are continuously conditioning. With all the activity that occurs, the need for trainers is prevalent and provides a busy

schedule for the staff.

“You’re never really in charge of your schedule,” Baker said. “If a coach wants to change practice, then I need to be there to cover that and be available. My schedule is based on what the teams are doing.”

Assistant Athletic Trainer Calla Karl also has to base her schedule around the athletes, and for her that means a lot of early mornings. Because she is rehabilitating athletes who just had surgery, she spends time with them in the weight room in the mornings before their classes. Some days, Karl explained, she has to be on campus by 6 a.m., and doesn’t leave until 8 p.m.

For her, taking an injured athlete and putting them back on the roster again is the best part of her job.

“(I like) knowing that I did everything I could to help the team to succeed,” Karl said.

To help the teams to succeed she does a lot. After Karl spends her mornings in the weight room with the recovering athletes, she’ll go to one of the two training rooms on campus and get set up for that day’s events. She then will go to a practice and work with athletes. After, she helps with ice, provides treatments, and talks with the athletes and coaches.

For her, the biggest challenge of the job is making sure athletes are

fully prepared to go back to their sport, and occasionally it’s not as soon as a coach would like.

“Sometimes you’re not always on the same page as the coach,” Karl explained. “So you’ll kind of butt heads a little bit because they’ll want something, but you’ll want it a different way.”

However, the challenge comes with the territory. Karl said it’s important to know that, and went on to explain what every aspiring athletic trainer should know.

“Work on your time management skills, have patience, have a great attitude, and personality,” she said.

Although the job comes with long hours and hard work, Baker said there is a reason people want to do it.

“Most of us are in the profession because we enjoy helping athletes,” he said. “Obviously nobody wants to be in the athletic training room. If you’re in there it usually means you’re injured, or not practicing, or not playing a game. Nobody wants that, including me.”

However, if an athlete is in his care, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for both of them.

“When they get back to their sport and are playing again,” he said, “that’s the rewarding part for us.”



Tori Schneider/Student Voice
Human health performance major Sarah Kane tapes the ankle of Jared Johnson, a football player, Wednesday, April 20, in the Knowles athletic training facility.



Tori Schneider/Student Voice
Left: Calla Karl, a UWRF athletic trainer tapes the legs of Michelle Lacasse, a softball player, Wednesday, April 20 in the Knowles athletic training facility. Right: Morgan Derloshon, a health and human performance major, tapes the hand of Nikko Miller, a UWRf football player in the athletic training facility.



Tori Schneider/Student Voice
Nikko Miller, a football player holds up his hands after they’ve been taped by Morgan Derloshon, a health and human performance major who is trained to tape in the athletic training facility, Wednesday, April 20.



Tori Schneider/Student Voice
Left: Andrew Baker, head athletic trainer, tapes the ankle of football player Tyler Halverson. Middle: Morgan Derloshon, a health and human performance major, tapes the hand of Nikko Miller, a UWRf football player. Right: Sarah Sorensen, a softball player, gets her shoulder taped by Andrew Baker, the head athletic trainer.

Attention to detail and brilliant voice performances make ‘The Jungle Book’ a worthwhile viewing experience

Nicholas Weninger

Reviewer

Everyone knows about the Jungle Book. This was a movie that I grew up watching as a little kid and it was one of my favorites (the 1967 animated movie). When I heard that they were making another remake of the movie, I was both excited and nervous

The CGI in this movie was probably the best that I have ever seen and I mean that in all seriousness.

because not all remakes are worthy of the original. This is NOT the case when it comes to this movie. This adaption of The Jungle Book not only did the original justice, but it improved on it.

The CGI in this movie was probably the best that I have ever seen and I mean that in all seriousness. I was completely blown

away by how real everything looked. None of the animals or the locations you see in the film are real because the entire movie was shot in Atlanta. They took photos and videos of real locations and then adapted it to fit the image. Everything you see from the grass to the trees to the animals big and small were

Each character in the movie seemed to have a perfectly fitting voice for how each character looked and acted in the film. That just goes to show how well this movie was put together.

all CGI. Really the only things that were real were some small location scenes with man-made objects.

Now normally I am not a huge fan of CGI. I am in favor of using practical effects and creating set features to use in the film. I think that it gives the movie a more realistic and practical effect. In my opinion, CGI should be used sparingly and only when you have

to. However, after seeing how spectacular everything looked, my opinion might be starting to change. The Jungle Book has started a new era of CGI; an era where you really can bring anything to life and make it look completely lifelike. Each frame of Baloo took over five hours to master. The dedication to making each animal look, move, and act like real animals was mind blowing.

Adding to how lifelike these animals were, the voice actors brought these characters to life in spectacular fashion. Some of these amazing actors were Bill Murray (as Baloo), Ben Kingsley (as Bagheera), Idris Elba (as Shere Khan), Lupita Nyong’o (as Raksha), Scarlett

In my opinion, CGI should be used sparingly and only when you have to. However, after seeing how spectacular everything looked, my opinion might be starting to change.

Johansson (as Kaa), and Christopher Walken (as King Louie). These people brought these characters so much depth and personality. Bill Murray was the perfect choice for Baloo and he will have you laughing and falling in love with the character all over again. Another fantastic choice was giving Idris Elba the roll of Shere Khan. He gave him such a dynamic and intimidating voice and it was awesome. Each character in the movie seemed to have a perfectly fitting voice for how each character looked and acted in the film. That just goes to show how well this movie was put together.

With all honesty, there are really only a couple of very small issues here and there but nothing that amounts to anything serious. This to date is the best adaptation to the movie and like I said, I even think it improves on the original movie. I absolutely loved this movie and it brought back all the awesome childhood memories of when I watched the original. This movie is a must see!

Nick Weininger is a fourth year broad field social studies major and has hopes to be a high school history teacher. He has a passion for movies, video games, sports, and being outdoors.

Jungle Book remake meets expectations and much more

Ryan Funes

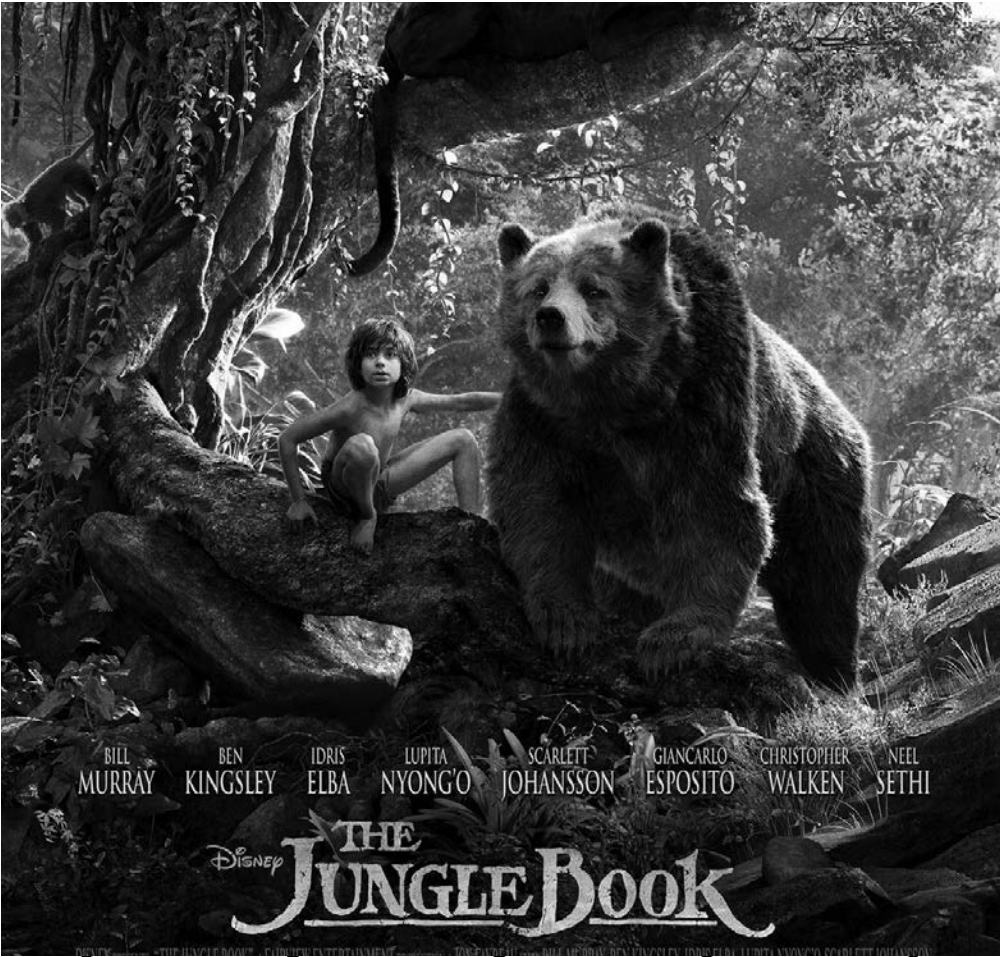
Reviewer

Disney makes another ray into its past to bring about an adaption that for once adds to its original work rather than takes, as The Jungle Book manages to be enjoyable, simple, but true to its source material.It’s a story many know, but few remember. Mowgli is a young boy in the India wilds who has been raised by wolves his whole life. With only his caretaker, the puma Bagheera, to look out for and mentor him, he feels like he doesn’t belong as a man-cub among the animals of the jungle.When the vile tiger Shere Khan makes it clear he will kill the man-cub Mowgli out of his hatred for man, Mowgli moves out on his own journey to find his place in the world, encountering friends like the bear Baloo, the mysterious python Kaa, and the ambitious orangutan King Louie, and Mowgli hopes to get through every obstacle to find out where he fits as his own animal in a big kingdom.

Suffice to say I did not have such high initial hopes when I saw the previews for The Jungle Book; Disney’s recent phase of converting all their classics into live-action remakes has proven so far to be a mixed bag of mixed results, ranging for okay to stupid.

But I am ever thankful to be thoroughly surprised by The Jungle Book to find that it does not submit itself to clichés, or dumb political plots, or over complicated world-building, but finds its place by being ultimately simple and true to its source.

When I say simple, I mean they skip back stories, they ignore any concepts of confusing magic or mysticism to make you believe



any of this is happening. The film respects you and presents its world with a sense of awe, leaving you to make your own decisions on some of the more mystical and abnormal things that appear in the film, and knows that you probably know and love the original as much as it does.

It’s plot is overall pretty simple, with Mowgli’s journey being the same as it was in the

books and original movie, but what supplements it is its great direction and animation. The computer graphics in this film are quite respectable, creating the largely animal cast in a way that does not make it look creepy or cringe-worthy at seeing talking digital animals.

The gorgeous nature shots, romps through the jungle, and eerie primitive environments

separate this film just enough from the original to make its own thing, and it feels like you are just seeing another side to the original film that you haven’t seen before.

Worth noting is also the acting, featuring such actors as Ben Kingsley, Bill Murray, Christopher Walken, and Scarlett Johansson, all quite noticeable from just hearing their roles in the film but delivering good performances, though special recognition should go to newcomer actor Neel Sethi as Mowgli, who manages something not common in being a good child actor portraying Mowgli.

He’s not annoying for the most part, he can act parts out well and deliver the emotion the plot demands, and he’s fairly enjoyable. I couldn’t really find much wrong with his performance, which is a rare thing when it comes to child actors.

If Disney is to continue their run of live-action film adaptations of their past works, then The Jungle Book should be held as a precedent for all upcoming features.

It does not sacrifice emotion but only improves it. It does not try to hook you in with gimmicky wars or conflicts but revels in its world with you. It proves that simplicity in your storytelling, characters, and heart can really be for the best and makes for good cinema overall.

Ryan Funes is a junior at River Falls majoring in journalism with a minor in art history. In his personal time he enjoys all facets of popular culture, discussing the influence of the media, and desperately trying to find the chance to sing a drinking song with all his friends.

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