

STUDENT VOICE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS

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New pantry tackles food insecurity on campus

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Freddy's Food Pantry has officially joined Rodli Hall in room 268 to help supply food and other necessities to faculty, staff and students of UWRF. It will operate Monday through Thursday 7:30am to 9:00 pm, and Friday from 7:30 to 5:00pm.

The inspiration for opening a second food pantry on campus came to light when four students in the COMS 308 Small Group Communications course last spring developed a plan of action for tackling food insecurity on campus. The foundational report for the food pantry explained that, "30.6% of students polled (n=438) limited what they ate to save money, and ... 41.4% of the students polled (n=438) stated that they could not afford to eat balanced meals. If we extrapolate those numbers to our overall campus enrollment of 5268 (Fall 2021 enrollment) that means that far too many students face food insecurity - between 1600-2100 students."

The location for the food pantry was decided because Rodli Hall holds many of the main student success services on campus. The Student Success Center and Honors Program is located right around the corner from the food pan-



Food and supplies provided at the food shelter in Rodli Hall. Photo by Meghan Jirik.

try, which is ideal for students visiting those departments.

Kathleen Hunzer, the interim associate vice chancellor for Academic Excellence and Student Success, stated that she had wanted a food pantry on campus previously, but had issues with getting it up and running. She mentioned that Ian Stroud, the Director of Student Success, was interested in starting a campus food pantry as well. "...so I knew he was interested and I knew I was interested... so we got it going on in CAFES, and we have these students who did this amazing report, so we kind of took it and launched it in Rodli."

Managing the food pantry will be done mainly on a volunteer status. Honors students will be able to gain volunteer leadership experiences by helping run the food pantry. Hunzer said that, "We will have volunteers sitting at the front desk of Rodli 268, [who will be] writing to companies or brands asking for products, running to the River Falls Food pantry to restock, those kinds of things." She is also hoping to utilize skills from marketing and communications students to promote the pantry by creating material such as posters to spread the message around campus.

Hunzer will be managing the volunteer coordination, and Stroud will be helping with daily operations, like receiving the room in Rodli and the food itself from the River Falls food pantry.

The majority of the food at Freddy's Food Pantry will come from the River Falls food pantry. When the food shelf in AgSci started, it was mainly supplied by staff and faculty. They then began receiving weekly allotments of supplies to stock the shelf. Hunzer said, "Right now, everything's coming from the River Falls food pantry. We do have an account set up through our University Foundation for Freddy's Pantry where monetary donations can be placed." Hunzer believes that with money donations, they will be able

to stock their shelves with more "buying potential" than receiving food donations, but are looking at doing a food drive in the future.

Monetary donations will go toward stocking shelves with food and personal hygiene items. Hunzer mentioned a long-standing donor, Manley Olson, who graduated from UWRF in 1959, had donated money strictly for personal care items. "So we do have some personal care items right now, some deodorant, shampoo, sanitary napkins, these kinds of things... but we do want to expand those offerings and we will be able to do that with that donor's money."

What sets the food pantry in Rodli apart from the food pantry in AgSci is the refrigerator and microwave. With a fridge, they are able to offer students items that would otherwise spoil, and students can utilize the microwave to eat their food right away and take it to go. The food pantry in AgSci only offers nonperishable food items.

A year from now, Hunzer says she hopes the food pantry will expand with more to offer. "Right now, we do have a small gluten free section, but we would like to expand to accommodate vegetarians, accommodate vegans, accommodate people dairy free, these kinds of things." She also mentioned having ready-made meals to microwave as well as grab-and-go sacks.

"One of the things we eventually want to do," Hunzer said, "is get a rack and have some winter coats." Having a full service pantry dedicated to all care items fitting for the current season will provide even more to students who are in need of different care items. The Student Sustainability Club is hoping to open a clothing closet, which would eventually become a part of Freddy's Food Pantry. "In a year, we want it to be bigger and well known," she said.

Students who are interested in utilizing the food pantry in Rodli should know that if a volunteer is not around to let them in the room, the Student Success Center will provide a scanner that will let them in. Students will note their student ID number upon entry, but they personally will not be tracked. The idea behind signing in to the food pantry is to track overall usage to see patterns and demographics, so that what is provided can be adjusted to best accommodate those who frequent the food pantry.



Kathleen Hunzer in front of a fridge at the food pantry. Photo by Meghan Jirik.

What do you love and why?

By Isabella Forliti



Abby Schwartzhoff

“I love my friends because they’re amazing!”



Quinn Orcutt

“I love my friends because they have always been there for me!”

Tyler Aryes

“I love geology because it ROCKS.”



Natalie Rodgers

“I love the River Falls community because it’s supportive and makes me feel happy.”



Tess Schoenborn

“I love music because it is totally an outlet for me. Not only because I perform but also listening to music is a great way to de-stress.”



Peyton Thomas

“I love the ceramics program because it allows me to express my creativity while utilizing campus resources. #neverquit.”

Faith Boss

“I love reading because it allows me to disconnect from my life and immerse in something else and obtain knowledge and wisdom.”



Becca Kingsland

“I love my family and my boyfriend because they’ve been so supportive of me. I could always lean on them and they could pick me up.”



Scholarship established after death of elementary education adviser

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Michael Sean Martin, the senior coordinator of Educator Preparation Program Student Services at UW-River Falls, died Jan. 28 at the age of 53.

Martin was born in Honolulu, Hawaii to the late Dr. Carroll and Marilyn Martin on Feb. 1, 1968. He married Rory Wittmus on Sept. 30, 1995, in Chilton, Wisconsin, and together they had three daughters. A dedicated and loving family man, Martin grew to love the sport of volleyball as he supported his daughters, all three of whom played throughout their K-12 education. Martin, an avid gamer, enjoyed playing a variety of games and was known to the gaming community as Thraxzz.

He graduated from St. Catherine's High School in Racine, Wisconsin in 1986. Martin earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1991 and a master's in counseling in 1993, both from UW-Whitewater. He started off at the UW-Marathon County as a hall director in 1994.

Martin started his career at UWRF as the advisor for the Elementary Education Program

in 1997. Over his 25 years of service, Martin touched the lives of many students and held several responsibilities, including the TEACH learning community advisor, the elementary education teacher advisor, the admission to teacher education preparation program coordinator, and the data program manager and teacher licensing officer. In 2016, Martin's dedication to his work was acknowledged when he was the recipient of the Academic Staff Excellence Award from the UW Board of Regents, the most prestigious award for a member of his field.

Martin is survived by his wife, Rory; three daughters Kaleigh, Makenna and Kennadi; sisters Michelle (Jason Rownd) Martin and Meghan (Tim Gifford) Martin; brothers Matthew and Mitchel; and aunt Jane Peterson. He is preceded in death by his parents Dr. Carroll and Marilyn Martin.

The UWRF foundation has established the Michael Martin Memorial Scholarship Fund in his honor. Donations to the fund can be made at uwrf.edu/give/Michael-Martin-Memorial.cfm.



Michael Sean Martin. (Courtesy photo)

Variant cases influence COVID guidelines

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As we strive for a safe return to campus, COVID-19 cases continue to skyrocket. On Dec. 1, 2021, the new Omicron variant was identified in the United States. Since then, cases have shot up drastically. In just over a month, the U.S. hit a shattering record of 1.4 million COVID cases in 24 hours on Jan. 10. As cases are slowly declining from our winter-break spike, it's crucial to stay updated on our campus's COVID regulations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that being up to date on vaccinations means a person has received all recommended COVID vaccines, including the booster doses. To receive a booster dose, one must be fully vaccinated by their primary doses of COVID vaccines. Vaccinations and boosters are strongly encouraged by the university.

Free vaccines and booster doses will be available in the month of February on campus. The next vaccine and booster clinic will be held on Wednesday Feb. 23, and will be available from noon to 4 p.m. in room 232 of the University Center. On Wednesday Feb. 16, they'll be available at the same time in the Falcon's Nest at the University Center. Appointments are not needed for these events.

During our vaccination events, first, second and booster doses will be available. Students are responsible for bringing their vaccination cards if they're receiving a second or booster dose. First-dose participants may be responsible for scheduling their second dose at another location.

Boosters will be given to those who have received their first two rounds of vaccinations five months prior for both Pfizer and Moderna. Those who have received the John-

son & Johnson vaccination may follow through with their boosters two months after their first dose. For more information on vaccinations and locations, check the Vaccine FAQ's on the Falcons Forward website.

Testing obligations for UW-River Falls have been updated. All unvaccinated students and employees have one required testing obligation during the first week of classes. In the spring update posted by Chancellor Gallo, any student or staff member on campus with symptoms or a known exposure is expected to be tested immediately regardless of their vaccination status.

Like last semester, testing in Hagestad is quick and easy. Testing is open in Hagestad Hall Monday through Friday. Appointments can be made between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. An appointment can be scheduled online on the main page of our Falcons Forward website. It takes about one or two minutes to make the appointment, and it can be canceled up to an hour before the scheduled test time. With a quick five-second swab in each nostril, the test itself takes less than 30 seconds from start to finish. Results come in about 15 minutes.

At-home tests are not permissible for those who must reach campus testing requirements. They are not satisfactory when it comes to proof of belonging. Vault COVID tests are allowed, as they must be administered in front of a medical professional over Zoom.

If an unvaccinated student is exposed to COVID, they are expected to be tested immediately after exposure, and again five to seven days after results. After exposure, they are expected to quarantine for at least five full days.

If a vaccinated individual is exposed, they do not need to quarantine, but testing is recommended three to five days after exposure.

If a student's COVID test comes back positive, they will first have a brief meeting with a contact tracer. Then, they will be required to return home and self-isolate. Following the CDC's current guidelines, people who test positive for COVID must isolate themselves for five days. Day zero is the day symptoms begin, or the day a test returns positive. After five days, isolation is complete unless there are remaining symptoms such as a fever. Following your return, post-positive students must take extra precautions to social-distance and correctly wear their masks.

Face coverings are now required in all indoor spaces even with social distancing. The university is recommending that students upgrade to better masks like the N95, KN95, or KF94. N95 masks are available for free at the information desk in the University Center, and 254 Rodli Hall. There is a limited amount of masks available to us at the moment, so they are first come, first served. Upgraded masks are also available at most federal pharmacies upon request.

A reminder to all staff and students: masks are only effective when worn properly. They must cover both the mouth and nose.

As cases rise and fall, there will be times when some classes may have outbreaks. In this case, professors may temporarily deliver class online. Under these circumstances, class will not be online for more than two weeks. Students will be notified by their instructors via Canvas or email if class will be online.

If any questions remain regarding COVID-19, visit the Falcons Forward website or reach out to covid-19@uwrf.edu.

UWRF music professor accepts position in Korea

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Professor of Music JW Park announced his retirement from UW-River Falls as of Friday, January 28th. This happened following Park's announcement of his acceptance to the Seoul City Concert Choir as the new Artistic Director and Conductor. Park made his move to Seoul, South Korea and began this position on February 7th, 2022. This announcement comes after Park dedicated 20 years of service to UW-River Falls, which was extensively recognized by his colleagues.

Park was appointed in 2001 and ended his time at UW-River Falls as Director of Choral Activities while teaching private lessons, Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, and conducting on the side. Park has taught across the United States in Indiana and Alabama and at an international level in Seoul, Korea. He is also an active lecturer in the United States, Korea and Japan. On top of this, Park has created two different choral groups. One in Seoul, Korea and one here at UWRF with both students and staff members.

Park leaves UWRF with an abundance of knowledge from a variety of institutions. He earned his D.M.A. in Choral Conducting at Michigan State University and his M.M in the same thing from Cleveland State University. Park received his Master of Management in Voice Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music and his Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance at Yon-Sei University in Seoul, Korea.



JW Park. (Submitted photo)

UW System names lawyer from Milwaukee as new president following Thompson resignation

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Tommy Thompson, the UW-System Interim President, is set to resign from his position effective March 18, after 18 months in his position. He took on his position July 1, 2020 after being selected by the Board of Regents.

Taking his place will be Jay O. Rothman, who is currently chairman and CEO of Foley & Lardner LLP, a Milwaukee law firm. The Board of Regents voted him in unanimously and offered the position on Jan. 21, making him the eighth UW-System President. He holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree from Marquette University. His term is set to begin June 1, and he will earn \$550,000 annually.

Rothman grew up on an 80-acre farm located near Wausau where he and his family raised horses and cattle. His father worked as a dentist and his mother was a school teacher. Until leaving for law school at the age of 22, he worked on his family farm.

Rothman took his position at Foley & Lardner LLP in 2011, which is ranked in the top 50 law firms in the country, and employs over 1,100 lawyers and 1,000 professional staff. His work mainly consists of corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions, and capital

markets. He is also the director of the Junior Achievement of Wisconsin and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. He previously served as a chairman and member of the Children's Wisconsin Foundation.

In his statement, Rothman said, "I'd like to say to the 39,000 people who work with the system, first of all, thank you, simply that and all of that."

"I value education, I want Wisconsin to thrive, and I want it to thrive for future generations. And if I can play some small role in that as President of the system, that would be a great honor," he continued.

In her statement, Chancellor Maria Gallo spoke positively of Thompson's time as interim president and wished him the best, "His legacy will endure as a champion for meeting the needs of campus and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a voice for the future success of students, business and industry through his advocacy for UW-River Falls's Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech)."

Former regent president Mike Falbo will serve as interim president between March 18 and June 1.

"I am humbled by the opportunity to lead the UW-System and approach this role with profound respect for the unparalleled role public higher education plays in the lives of our students, alumni, and communities," Rothman said.



New UW System President Jay O. Rothman. Photo courtesy of UW System.

Annual dance theatre performance brings back alumni

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UWRF Dance Theatre will show their 40th Annual Spring Concert this year. The concert is a family reunion of sorts with performances by current students, past alumni, faculty, and professionals all coming together to show their talents. This concert will showcase many diverse dance styles such as Modern, Hip Hop, Japanese, Peruvian, Swing, Jazz, and Contemporary dance.

Familiar faces like alumnae Jesse and Emma Hoekstra, Natsumi Kubo, and Torrior Amie will return to UWRF with their own choreographed performances. Jesse and Emma worked as a team to create a lighthearted piece titled "A Dance Break" which will flaunt styles like Swing and Lindy Hop. Natsumi Kubo has worked hard with students to fuse traditional Japanese dance with fresh new elements that will bring the UWRF concert stage to life. Torrior Amie will present a piece titled "The Power of Someone Who Saves." This performance highlights what compassion can mean to someone who is experiencing hopelessness.

Faculty Choreographer Mari Kline-Kluck will also introduce her performance titled "reDress." This performance will explore the inequality women face and the pressure to achieve certain ideas. A piece titled "A Tensive Phobia" by Kline-Kluck will be restaged for this performance as well. This experience will examine the power of fear and anxiety.

Alumnus Choreographer Natsumi Kubo has been working with students to restage "Kodo-Soran" virtually from Japan. The piece fuses traditional Japanese dance with some exciting new elements that are different from its premiere with Dance Theater in 2007.

Minneapolis's own Danielle Ricci, a professional choreographer, will show her unique talents with a piece titled "We Know Not What We Do." This piece displays what humans have done to the planet and demands for a change to save it.

The concert will take place in Abbott Concert Hall in KFA Feb. 16-19 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale at marketplace.uwrf.edu or you can buy them on performance days starting at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$5 for students and children, \$8 for seniors (60+), and \$10 for adults.



Dance Theatre performers pose after the conclusion of a 2016 show. (Student Voice file photo)

UWRF collects student input to reach sustainability goals

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UW-River Falls is conducting the Sustainability Survey 2022 as part of a series of efforts to promote sustainability on campus. The survey allows students to choose which sustainability goals the university should prioritize.

These goals fall under a wide variety of categories, such as buildings and grounds, food and dining, transportation, diversity and affordability, and others. The survey was distributed on Jan. 28, and students will be able to complete it up until Feb. 15.

Mark Klapatch-Mathias, Sustainability Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability said, "The campus wants us to be more sustainable, but how we actually get there is what we need to figure out. So our survey is really aimed at trying to get some of that feedback."

Sustainability efforts on campus are reported under the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System report, or STARS. STARS is conducted by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education,

or AASHE, for campuses worldwide.

Klapatch-Mathias said, "The report gives us a very solid benchmark of all the things we're doing and all of the things we are not doing in terms of sustainability."

STARS rates campuses on sustainability with four main tiers: bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. In 2018, UW-River Falls obtained a gold STARS rating; however, in 2021, this rating was bumped down to silver.

Klapatch-Mathias said, "some of that is simply because we just haven't done things on campus or things have changed priorities." Modifications to the STARS criteria also affected the rating. "Ultimately," Klapatch-Mathias said, "we are still a very, very high STARS silver."

Now, the campus is looking to return to a gold rating and perhaps even obtain a platinum rating. Currently, no universities in the UW system or in Wisconsin in general hold a platinum rating. "I do think we could be a STARS platinum institution," Klapatch-Mathias said. "It will really take a concentrated effort by our campus, which includes funding and support."

The university is taking steps toward this goal in a few

ways. "Sustainability has been included in UWRF's Strategic Plan and the Academic Plan," Klapatch-Mathias said. "So those new documents have very strong sustainability ties to them."

The Sustainability Survey 2022 is another of these steps the university is taking. "Our hope is that over the next few weeks, we'll get a better idea of what our campus community wants to see happen for sustainability," Klapatch-Mathias said.

Following the survey, the university is planning to revise its Sustainable Campus Community Plan by the end of March. The Sustainable Campus Community Plan is UWRF's strategic plan for sustainability on campus, and has not been changed since 2012.

"There are a lot of things that we could do that would improve our score," Klapatch-Mathias said. "I think if we even did a handful of those, we'd be back up to STARS gold in a heartbeat. As far as platinum, I think probably five to 10 years would be the time frame if we really just keep gaining traction. But I do think platinum is possible for us."

Falcon athletes gearing up for WIAC tournaments

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The regular seasons for a handful of Falcon teams are drawing to a close. With the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) tournaments fast approaching, here is where some of those teams stand going into the home stretch of their seasons.

Men's Basketball

The UWRF Men's Basketball team closes out their regular season with a home game against UW-Platteville and a road game at UW-Stevens Point. Heading into their game against UW-Platteville on Saturday, Feb. 12, the Falcons were 11-9. Their matchup with Stevens Point will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m.

In conference play, the Falcons sit in sixth place out of the eight teams in the WIAC with a record of 4-7. UW-La Crosse is currently leading the pack with an overall record of 19-3 and a conference record of 9-3. The Falcons rank fifth in the conference in total offense with an average of 75.6 points per game, and seventh on total defense, allowing opponents to score 75.2 points per game.

The Falcons have been led by their dynamic duo of Senior Guard Noah Hanson and Freshman Center Rodrick Payne. Offensively, Hanson is the straw that stirs the drink. He is averaging 18.7 points per game, making him the fourth leading scorer in the conference. Payne has had a strong inaugural season with the Falcons, contributing 14.3 points per game, 6.5 rebounds per game, and 1 block per game. Sophomore Guard Regan Merritt has served as a useful spark plug off of the bench, averaging 6.4 points per game while shooting 42.6% from beyond the arc.

Typically, both the WIAC men's and women's basketball tournaments only feature the top six teams. However, because of numerous games being canceled due to COVID-19, all eight teams will be seeded in the tournament. It appears, in all likelihood, that the Falcons are locked in for the No. 6 seed, meaning they would end up playing the No. 7 seed. If the Falcons do indeed secure the No. 6 seed, that would mean that UW-Eau Claire would be the No. 7 seed.

The first round of the tournament begins on Friday, Feb. 18, featuring the No. 8 seed at the No. 5 seed and the No. 7 seed at the No. 6 seed. The championship round will be played on Saturday, Feb. 26.

Women's Basketball

Like the men's basketball team, the UWRF Women's Basketball team will finish their season by facing UW-Platteville, followed by a game against UW-Stevens Point. Prior to the game against Platteville, which was played on Feb. 12, the Falcons' overall record was 10-11. The Falcons' matchup with Stevens Point will be played on Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. at Don Page Arena. The two Falcon seniors, Guard

Jenna Zeman and Guard Haley DeSouza, will both be honored during their season finale for senior night.

The Falcons sit in seventh place in the WIAC with a record of 3-8, putting them a game behind the sixth-place UW-Stevens Point, which is 3-7 in the conference. At the top of the standings is UW-Whitewater with an overall record of 21-2 and a 11-1 record in the WIAC. The Falcons rank fifth in the conference in total offense, scoring 63.6 points per game, and last in total defense, giving up 67.5 points per game.

The calling card of this Falcons team is their three-point shooting. They lead the WIAC in three-point field goal percentage (33%) and three-point field goals made (8.2 per game). The Falcon's leading scorer, Sophomore Guard Macy Nilsen, is a high-volume shooter and has been knocking down threes at a 36.7% clip. Nilsen's 14.4 points per game ranks fourth in the WIAC. Zeman is also a dangerous shooter, averaging 12.1 points per game, while shooting 36% from downtown. Other notable three-point-shooting percentages, DeSouza's 35.5% and Junior Guard Cassie Heinrichs' 39.7%, make the Falcons a difficult team to guard behind the three-point line.

If the Falcons can win their final two games, they will leapfrog UW-Stevens Point and secure the No. 6 seed in the WIAC tournament, which would give them the home-court advantage. Regardless of the outcome of their remaining games, they will be playing Stevens Point on Feb. 18 in the first round of the tournament. The championship will be played on Feb. 25.

Men's Hockey

The UWRF Men's Hockey team completed its regular season with back-to-back games against UW-Eau Claire. Prior to the games, the Falcons overall record stood at 13-9-1, and their record in the WIAC was 9-4-0.

As of games played through Feb. 9, the Falcons sat tied at the top of the standings alongside UW-Stevens Point with 26 conference points, while Eau Claire held down third place with 21. The Falcons rank third in the WIAC in both goals scored per game (2.65) and goals allowed per game (2.43). The Falcon's definitely have room for improvement when it comes to their special teams. Their conversion rate on the power play is last in the WIAC at 11.1%, and their penalty-killing percentage is second-to-last at 83.3%.

Senior Forward Cayden Cahill has led the charge offensively thus far for the Falcons, notching 18 points split between six goals and 12 assists. Defenseman Noah Ganske has been a revelation for the team with his ability to make an impact on both ends of the ice. Ganske was named the WIAC Kwik Trip Men's Hockey Athlete of the Week for his play from Jan. 31-Feb. 5 after he scored a hat trick, two of those goals coming on the power play, during the Falcon's 4-3 comeback win over UW-Superior on Feb. 4. Ganske is the second leading scorer with

six goals and 11 assists. The Falcon's primary puck stopper, Sophomore Goaltender Dysen Skinner, has a 10-6 record allowing 2.32 goals per game.

As long as the Falcons avoided losing both games in regulation to Eau Claire, they will have secured one of the top two seeds and a first-round bye in the upcoming WIAC tournament beginning on Feb. 18. Thus, the next time you will see the Falcons take the ice will be during the WIAC semifinals, which are set to take place Feb. 25-26.

Women's Hockey

The UWRF Women's Hockey team has been dominating opponents all season long to the tune of a 21-1 record and a No. 4 ranking nationally. They will wrap up their fantastic season with back-to-back tilts with UW-Eau Claire, the only team to put a blemish on the Falcons record. The Falcons' will put their 14-game-winning streak on the line at Hunt Arena on Friday, Feb. 18, time to be announced. They play their last game of the regular season at Eau Claire on Saturday, Feb. 19, at 2 p.m.

Currently, the Falcons are deadlocked with the No. 5 Eau Claire Bugolds at the top of the WIAC standings with 18 points. The Falcons lost their previous faceoff with the Bugolds 0-2 at Eau Claire. The Falcons boast the most potent offense in the WIAC, scoring a blistering 5.95 goals per game, meanwhile, the Bugolds have the stingiest defense, allowing 0.90 goals per game. This matchup is a perfect example of an unstoppable force meeting an immovable object.

The Falcons' offensive onslaught is headed by their linchpin Senior Forward Callie Hoff. Hoff, the top point scorer in the WIAC, has netted 20 goals and tallied 30 assists in her 19 games played, putting

her 11 points ahead of the next player. Not only has Hoff cemented herself as arguably the best player in the WIAC, but she has also staked her claim as the best player in UWRF's history. On Jan. 26, she scored her 85th career goal to make her the program's all-time leading goal-scorer, and then on Feb. 1, she became the all-time leading scorer with her 169th career point.

Hoff is certainly not without help considering that of the top five point-scorers in the WIAC, the remaining four are her teammates. Senior Forward Abigail Stow, Senior Forward Kora Torkelson, Sophomore Forward Alex Hantge, and Junior Forward Maddie McCollins help Hoff round out that top five, and Senior Forward Erin Olson ranks seventh herself. Senior Goaltender Sami Miller sports a 10-1 record with 4 shutouts, a 1.55 goals against average, and a .919 save percentage.

Depending on how they fare against Eau Claire, the Falcons will either have the No. 1 seed or the No. 2 seed in the WIAC tournament. Both of the top seeds come with a bye, meaning the Falcons wouldn't play in the tournament until Feb. 25 or Feb. 26. The WIAC championship will be played on Mar. 5.

Although the Falcons' eyes are set much higher than winning the WIAC, they hold dreams of winning the 2022 NCAA Division III Women's Ice Hockey Tournament. In 2019, the last time the Falcons played in this tournament, they were bounced by Hamline in the quarterfinals 5-1. Nine teams will qualify this year, all but assuring the Falcons will be in the dance again this year, and they are currently ranked fourth. The 2022 NCAA Division III Women's Ice Hockey Tournament begins on March 10.



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Question for the culture: Valentine’s Day edition

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Every year on Feb. 14, Americans celebrate by sending cards or love letters, writing poems, giving gifts such as chocolate or flowers, and sitting down for a meal at a nice restaurant. Many people see Valentine’s Day as an occasion to spend money and offer expensive gifts to their significant other. Have we lost the true meaning of Valentine’s Day?

Feb. 14 is often marketed as a day for couples. Corporations manufacture products sold in heart shapes with pink and red colors and cute messages. Despite one’s own beliefs, consumers will often purchase the items regardless of their personal views on Valentine’s Day. This holiday should be about love for all things regardless of relationship status and money that you are willing to spend.

So where did the idea of Valentine’s Day come from? In the year A.D. 496, the true meaning of Valentine’s Day was violence, blood and sacrifice in the name of love. The celebration began in third-century Rome when the Catholic church held the power. The Romans would celebrate a yearly festival called Lupercalia from Feb. 13 to Feb. 15. The festival included the sacrifice of a goat and a dog. They practiced the whipping of women with animal intes-

tines with the belief that it would increase their fertility. They included a matchmaking lottery where young men would choose a woman’s name out of a jar to spend the festival with. But the name Valentine’s Day comes from the execution of two men. Both of these men were named Valentine. They were executed on Feb. 14 for marrying couples against the emperor’s wish.

In the last 1,525 years since Valentine’s Day has started, it has taken a turn for the worst. In the year 2022, thousands of dollars will be wasted on flowers, dozens of roses, jewelry, earrings, necklaces, rings and anything sparkly that will make you happy for the next 24 hours of your life. Maybe it is time that we find a way to honor relationships that doesn’t rely on buying stuff.

This is not to say the original Valentine’s Day is better than how we celebrate today, but maybe somewhere in the middle there is a beautiful way to celebrate. Ignoring societal pressure is a good place to start. Showing you love and care about yourself, friends and family in other ways besides giving in to large corporations’ advertisements is a great way to celebrate. Spend Valentine’s Day this year showing gratitude for where you are now, who you are with, regardless of relationship status.



Valentine’s Day candy sold at local store.
Photo by Isabella Forliti.

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

Editorial: More attention needed on retaining students

What is our university doing to retain its students? Frankly, this complex question is not unique to UW-River Falls (UWRF), universities everywhere grapple with how to improve their retention rates. COVID has undoubtedly exacerbated retention efforts since its onset by forcing socially distanced learning and amplifying the kind of disparities that can deter people from pursuing a college degree. As society continues to adjust to this strange post-COVID world, higher education has had to deal with an ever-changing landscape when it comes to attracting prospective students and keeping them.

According to UWRF’s campus data reports, from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, 84 percent of new freshman students were retained, either by remaining in their initial program or declaring a new one.

The Student Voice considered a few different perspectives outside of the pandemic that may be affecting retention

at the University. With a new generation comes a new type of student. This incoming and current wave of students seems to contain a larger variety of first generation and transfer students who do not have a lot of experience when it comes to the college lifestyle both from an academic and social perspective. We believe that with this wave of students can struggle with the complicated process of ensuring all paperwork is in order to get into the University and may continue to deal with this confusion once they arrive. If there is a lack of guidance for these new students they may be less likely to stay if not given sufficient support.

The University should ensure they are putting energy and effort into the students they currently have on campus. It is important to continue recruiting new students but we believe the key is to look at what the University currently has.

STUDENT VOICE

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.

Twist and shout about the UWRF dance team

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Claire Kjome and Ari Carrasco, both seniors at UW-River Falls also play a vital role in the gears that make the Dance Team on campus keep moving. Kjome is studying Communication Studies with a minor in Spanish and acts as Vice President for the dance team. Her responsibilities include running practices, taking care of the budget and running all of the social media accounts. In addition to these duties she also assists with fundraising and anything else the other Presidents need. Carrasco is double majoring in Spanish and Psychology and is one of the acting Presidents on the team. Her responsibilities run along the lines of foreseeing decisions and registering for a variety of different events and competitions.

The 26 members of the Dance Team makeup this club which typically meets four times a week for practices during competition season and three times a week in the off season. The workload for the team members include these two hour practices as well as some take home workouts and lifts to improve their strength. “We want them to do the lifts and workouts twice outside of practice. However, we don’t make them send proof,” says Kjome, “We say do what you feel will help you the best and know that it will help you with dance.” The 26 members, including their five Presidents, develop all of their own workouts and practice curriculum without the presence of a coach or adviser of any type, Kjome states, “I think as of my freshman year, we were the only team that competed at competition without a coach.”

Coach or no coach, the dance team can be found performing all the skills they learn at practice at a variety of sports events on campus such as football and basketball games. They also host an annual event called Dancing with the Stars, featuring them and any partners that want to pair up and show off some dancing skills. On top of these campus events, the dance team participates in a variety of competitions, including a recent national competition that was held in Orlando, Florida.

“We got to travel down to Orlando and compete in the



Front row: Kerrington Warner, Fiona Stahl, Lauryn Fieldseth, Avery Roepke, Caileen Hughes, Hanna Litscher, Maddie Kraft. Back row: Amber Polomis, Erin Jacobsen, Olivia Lind, Jenna Schultz, Emily Gabrielson, McKinsie Davison, Amelia Hensch, Claire Kjome. Photo provided by UWRF Dance team.

ESPN Wide World of Sports National Competition,” said Carrasco, “We even get to stay in a Disneyland Resort, the ESPN Disney Resort.” The competition overall lasted two days with the team competing against a variety of different levels from across the country, including D1 teams. In their free time, the team was able to provide Disney Park Passes and could be found roaming the parks. Out of the 19 teams competing, only nine were going to move onto the final round of the competition. The UWRF team was only one point away from making the cut but fell slightly too short. “It was so close it was like .3,” says Kjome.

Kjome and Carrasco have both been on the team all four years that they have been students at UWRF. Just as COVID-19 has impacted the campus in a variety of different ways, the dance team was no exception. COVID-19 stopped all of their regular performances and competitions which made making practices interesting a difficult task. “We were one of the few clubs that got to meet over COVID time which was cool,” says Kjome, “We just worked a lot

on technique, learning combos, really trying to get our style to be one.” Carrasco explained that COVID being slowing everything down allowed them to slow down too, “because we weren’t planning there wasn’t any pressure.”

The Dance team keeps busy year round with no coach. They hold tryouts twice a year in the Fall and Spring to continue growing their team. Fundraisers are also hosted throughout both semesters such as car washes, Valley Scare, Chipotle and their biggest fundraiser Dancing with the Stars. An event that is coming up this Spring Semester.

Both girls expressed that joining the dance team has been a wonderful experience for those who have had a difficult time connecting with people since COVID happened. “We just really want people to feel included and know that they can come and try it,” Kjome expressed, “especially like we’ve had girls who have never danced before, or only have one or two years. We really accept everyone and anyone.”



Front row: Mariah Ford, Serina Scott, Maddie Kraft, Saeda Hampton, Avery Roepke, Amelia Hensch, Claire Kjome, Ariana Carrasco, McKinsie Davison, Taylor Falde, Erin Jacobsen, Amber Polomis, Lauryn Fieldseth, Emily Gabrielson. Back row: Lyric Charney, Olivia Lind, Kendra Nesvold, Lauren Look, Caileen Hughes, Fiona Stahl, Hanna Litscher, Hannah Steinmetz, Kerrington Warner, Allison Schlegel, Love LaBarre, Jenna Schultz, Isabelle Hillman. Photo provided by UWRF Dance team.