

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS STUDENT VOICE

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UWRF marks Black History Month

Lexi Janzer

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The Black Student Union and the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging office are collaborating to celebrate Black History Month by hosting numerous events in February to honor the importance of Black history while educating UWRF students and faculty on the subject.

According to the Library of Congress, Carter G. Woodson initiated the first Negro History Week in February 1926. Woodson chose that week because Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two key figures in Black history, who contributed to the end of American slavery, have birthdays that same week. Congress officially passed a law recognizing Black History Month in 1986.

DIB Director Derek Bradley said that BSU's theme for this year's Black History Month events is "harambe." The word harambe means "all pull together" in Kenya's national language of Kiswahili. This word helps to highlight DIB and BSU's goal of unity.

Bradley said that "[DIB] cultivates a community of care, making sure that students come into this space as their authentic selves, but then also utilizing this space for supportive services."

Mayala Keita, the BSU president and event coordinator, mentioned BSU's goal and said, "[We are] trying to foster a community for Black students who come to River Falls who have struggles seeing themselves within the community just to have somewhere for them to go and say, 'Hey, there are people who look like me who understand what I'm going through,' and just be at peace."

Angel Riley, the BSU freshman representative, said "Our goal is to connect with as many students as possible and make as many connections as we can because at the end of the day we do go to a PWI [predominantly white institution], [and] it's really hard to find people who you fit in with and who you feel like can relate to you." BSU also hosts a number of events related to financial literacy, scholarships, and cultures around the world.

Black History Month is something that is very important to the Black community and, as such, it is important to expand the knowledge of the general public about important parts of history that may not be well-known. Riley said "It's one of the most important times of the year and that



Mayala Keita, president of the Black Student Union, teaches African dances during the opening Black History Month event on the UWRF campus. (UWRF photo)

goes for not just me but all Black people because, obviously, living in America, we don't get acknowledged as much as we should for all that we do."

Bradley added, "It's American history, Black History Month. Learning a little bit more about our history as Americans but also dedicating a specific month to learning a little bit more about our history as Black individuals because our history was erased from us. So not only being able to pay respects but being able to actually have knowledge behind who we are as an identified human demographic. It's also just really educational for all of us just to be informed about different people and different backgrounds."

Samuel Gale, an African American History teacher at UWRF, highlights the idea of listening to Black experiences while teaching, saying, "I am a white man born in the United States. I am someone who is from an academic perspective. I am someone who has studied the history and the historiography of the African American experience in the United States, but that is as far as my knowledge goes. The lived experience is something beyond my grasp."

"It is okay to acknowledge

'It's one of the most important times of the year and that goes for not just me but all Black people because, obviously, living in America, we don't get acknowledged as much as we should for all that we do.'

—Angel Riley, Black Student Union

that there might be gaps, and whether that is from the teaching you had in high school, the community you lived in, or your lack of interactions with African Americans throughout your life, that shouldn't preclude you from taking a risk and having uncomfortable conversations and learning stuff that is challenging," Gale said.

Although Black History Month is celebrated by many, there is still backlash as well. In response to this, Keita said, "Every year we get, oh why not do this for white students, why not do this for German or different cultural students or things like that. My answer for that is to encourage it. If we didn't host this as a group it wouldn't happen."

Keita added, "I just want people to actually take a step back and see Black history for more of a celebration rather than a competition. It's a celebration that we have put on for ourselves and we invited you to join us, come celebrate!"

BSU has many other events planned throughout the month, including a movie night, African night, spirit week, and a closing ceremony.



Participants line up for the Soul Food Dinner held Feb. 9. Several events related to Black History Month are planned on the UWRF campus during February. (Photo by Lexi Janzer)

McNair Program to leave UWRF campus after 22 years

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The McNair Program is leaving UW-River Falls after playing an integral role in the pursuit of graduate and doctoral studies over the last 22 years. The McNair Program is facilitated by the U.S. Department of Education, with a goal to provide resources for first-generation and low-income students to pursue graduate and doctoral studies.

This program was passed by Congress in honor of Dr. Ronald E. McNair, who was killed in the Challenger explosion in 1986. The program financially supports research efforts and mentorship for generally underrepresented groups. At UWRF, the program has helped 256 students, with 113 going on to complete graduate degrees and 37 completing doctorate degrees. Currently, 12 students remain in the undergraduate program and 29 are completing graduate programs.

For universities across the nation, grants are evaluated on a five-year cycle. According to McNair Program Coordinator David Behling, UWRF missed the scoring requirements on the grant application by a slim margin, and the university plans to reapply when the election cycle reopens in the spring of 2027.

Since UWRF has secured the grant since 2001, leaders within the university are confident the program will be able to return in the future. Federal funds from the program ended on Jan. 28, 2023, but the university continues to fund the essential parts of the program for its current Cohorts 22 and 23.

Cohort 22 will graduate this semester and Cohort 23 is expected to complete their undergraduate studies in Spring 2024. These essential parts include promised financial assistance as well as the summer research program, where students are paired with a faculty member to conduct research in their chosen area of study.

David Behling expresses his hope for an interim program or other support for students during this time. He believes



Left to right: McNair Scholars Haley Schultz, Riley Powers and Karyn Duddeck (Photo by UW-River Falls)

that Chancellor Maria Gallo finds this work necessary being a first-generation undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral student herself.

The next steps remain undecided, as no new students are being accepted into the program in the coming years. There is also no current timeline as to when an interim program

will be decided and implemented. Both staff and current students in the program express the impact this program has had and their desire for it to return to campus as soon as possible.

UWRF college merger approved by regents

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On Dec. 9 the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents approved the merger of the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS.) The merge will officially happen July 1, 2023.

The merger will reduce the number of colleges on campus from four to three and save on administrative costs, according to campus officials. The goal is to help increase support for employees and students, according to Dawn Hukai, the interim dean of CBE and CEPS.

There are three specific goals for the reorganization. "Achieving greater balance among the remaining colleges in terms of the size, number of faculty, staff, and students, as well as the size of the budget and representation on governing groups and removing barriers for collaboration across the academic programs in the current two colleges. Strengthening the argument for accreditation by giving programs in the newly merged college more support," said Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

David Travis to the Falcon Newsroom. The new college's name is the College of Education, Business, and Allied Health (CEBAH.) There have been over 50 presentations, meetings, and group discussions that took place to move the reorganization, according to Travis. There will be 1,900 students in this new college.

"[This will] allow our complementary professional fields to work more closely with each other and take advantage of efficiencies and economies of scale," wrote Hukai. Leadership groups are still working on the internal structure of the new college.

Students will remain in the same departments as they are now and will be advised by the same faculty and staff. The colleges will host a combined award recognition event in April and in Fall of 2023 both colleges will walk together for commencement, Hukai wrote.

"I'm pleased by the collaborative spirit I have seen at UW-River Falls which resulted in this important reorganization," Jay Rothman, UW System President said. "It's a testament to the value UW-River Falls places on continuously trying to improve the student experience."

UWRF uses federal grant for scanning electron microscope

Maxwell Rekela-Jasper
Falcon News Service

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has acquired a scanning electron microscope (SEM) for students and faculty to use through a \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant.

According to Associate Professor Sam Alvarado of the Chemistry and Biotechnology Department, the main reason why the SEM was purchased is its key differences from a regular microscope.

"One of the main reasons why it was purchased was due to its distinguishable features from a regular microscope," Alvarado said. "The key difference in (a scanning electron microscope) is that it uses the electrons to look at the sample."

Alvarado added that one of the many advantages it has over a regular microscope is its ability to see "really small things."

"One of the big advantages that it has over a regular microscope is just how much smaller you can see compared to a regular microscope," Alvarado said. "Not only can the microscope see really small things, but it can also tell you the elemental composition of a sample that you're looking at."

Learning how to use the SEM can be complex, but Alvarado said once one does learn how to use it, it becomes natural.

"It's not the easiest thing to learn how to use, but it isn't super difficult either," Alvarado said. "It definitely requires some training to master. Once you get the hang of it, it becomes like second-nature."

In addition to being used in chemistry, the microscope can also be used in other science-related fields. Geology Assistant Professor Kevin Thaisen said the microscope can be used to look at any rock or mineral, as long as it isn't "much bigger than a softball."

"One way we will be using the (microscope) is to look at how the way different minerals grow and how their composition changes," Thaisen said.

The scanning electron microscope itself weighs a little over 1,000 pounds and is a bit under five feet tall. It is currently located on the second floor of Centennial Science Hall for students and faculty to use. Once the new SciTech building is complete, it has a reserved spot on the first floor where it will be available for use.

What do you do to show people you care?

Anna Gunderson | anna.gunderson@my.uwrf.edu



Jenna
Wilcoxson

Sophomore

“I like to take care of people, so if they’re cold I like to get them a blanket, or if they’re hungry I’ll get them a snack. I like to show it by doing.”



Erica
Lewerenze

Sophomore

“Spend time with them and give hugs.”

Louisa
Warren

Senior

“I set aside time for them and try to think of things that can make their life a little more convenient.”



Kalynn
Kowitz

Senior

“I make food.”



Wyatt
Tranby

Freshman

“I show my leadership but am also willing to listen and reach out to make sure they understand.”



Amber
Randall

Freshman

“If someone needs help I’ll help them.”

Andrew
Loken

Sophomore

“Listening and giving feedback.”



Bailey
Clifton

Sophomore

“Hanging out and making sure they know that I care and doing things they ask because it’s the nice thing to do.”



Falcons hockey tops Gusties in overtime thriller

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The UW-River Falls women's hockey team hosted the Gustavus Adolphus Golden Gusties on Jan. 31 in a battle for supremacy over the league. The Falcons, riding a ten-game win streak, had outscored their opponents 66-7 since Dec. 10. The league took notice, and on Jan. 30, River Falls was decisively ranked no. 1 in the USCHO Division III Women's Poll and officially became the team to catch. The Gusties came in behind the Falcons, rated at no. 2, and looking to pull off a road upset.

The Falcons opened period one fiery on offense, putting four shots on goal in the first 3:30. The Gusties soon responded and carried out their own offensive strike. Falcons Goalie Sami Miller and Gusties Goalie Katie McCoy were busy in the first period, each blocking 10 shots from the opposition. A defensive battle was waged, and the first period ended 0-0.

The Gusties held their same defensive formula in the second period but found themselves on a five-on-three power play with 8:44 left. Gustie Forward Kaitlyn Holland put it through senior goalie Sami Miller, and the Gusties took a 1-0 lead with 8:14 remaining. The Falcons put nine shots on goal but failed to score through the second period.

Mid-way through the final period, the Falcons still trailed by one. The Gusties played defensively down the stretch, putting no shots on goal for the first 11 minutes. The Falcons took advantage, and with only 8:35 to play, freshman defender MaK-



Left to right: Kayla Vrieze of the Gusties and UWRF's Alex Hantge face off in a close match. (Photo by Jenna Stockinger)

enna Aure raced down the ice and evened the score at 1-1.

Hunt Arena flared into a roar as fans let out cheers of joy and relief from a possible shutout. Aure leads all Falcon defenders with nine goals on the season. Both teams held each other off for the remainder of the third period, and Hunt Arena reset.

Into overtime, the Gusties struggled on offense and only managed to put one shot on goal next to three for the Falcons. Neither team could find an opening early, and each defense held its own. As the clock wound down under ten seconds, Falcons Forward Abigail Stow found herself on a breakaway from the defense. She lifted the

puck and the Falcons into victory and was immediately mobbed by her teammates.

The Falcons improved to 19-2, and the Golden Gusties dropped to 16-3. Both teams remain primary contenders for the NCAA Division III tournament this year, but it's officially championship or bust for the Falcons.

Men's basketball loses to UW-Oshkosh's Titans, 70-79

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The UW-River Falls men's basketball team hosted the UW-Oshkosh Titans in a late-season conference matchup on Feb. 4. The Titans came in on a seven-game win streak and holding the number one seed in the WIAC, while the sixth-seed Falcons were looking to get back to .500 on the season.

River Falls jumped to an early 19-10 lead, getting the ball to seven different shooters. Center Rodrick Payne is known for his signature slams and fights to the rim, but he sank an early three-pointer to give River Falls momentum.

The Falcons continued to shoot well from short but were quickly eclipsed by the sensational three-point ability of the Titans. Oshkosh grabbed the lead off of a crucial three-pointer from Quinn Steckbauer. The Falcons held their deficit to four at the half with a score of 31-35. Three-pointers defined the Titan's lead, as they shot a reliable 6-of-13 next to a faulty 3-of-12 from the Falcons.

The second half saw two disciplined offenses fight for the lead. The Falcons faced

an eight-point deficit but came roaring back midway through the half. Center Jack Leifker shot well in the paint, sinking three shots on a Falcon's 11-4 run. With 8:25 left to play, Guard Logan Jedwabny put the Falcons up 53-52 with a vital three-pointer.

Down the stretch, the Falcons struggled to defend the Titan offense and could not hit critical shots. Inside the three-minute mark, Oshkosh sank two dangerous three-pointers, putting the Falcons into desperation mode. Multiple free throws strengthened the Titan's lead, and they defeated the Falcons 79-70.

River Falls dropped to 10-12 overall and 4-7 against conference opponents. The Falcons struggled primarily on defense, as Guard Quinn Steckbauer went 6-of-8 on threes and willed the Titans to shoot 47.6% on three-pointers. Fouls also cost the Falcons, as they gave up twenty-nine free throw attempts, nineteen of which were made.

Despite the loss, River Falls shot 50% from the field and had four players score double-digits. The Falcons faced off against UW-Stevens Point on Feb. 8, with hopes to ignite a late-season surge and patch up their defensive wounds.



Left to right: UWRF's Dylan Parker goes for a layup as Oshkosh's Levi Borchert tries to block. (Photo by Sam Silver)

Students, faculty can dive into history within University Archives

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While students at UW-River Falls traverse the bookshelves and study spaces in the Chalmer Davee Library, below them rests decades of documents, floppy disks, and genealogical records. The UW-River Falls University Archives and Area Research Center offers students and researchers a variety of means to explore the history of the university and surrounding counties.

"We cover a four-county area of Pierce, St. Croix, Burnett, and Polk counties," University Archivist and Records Manager Morgan Paavola said in an interview. Located in the basement of The Chalmer Davee Library, university records make up roughly 500 cubic feet of the space, according to Paavola.

The records are stored behind a locked door, on shelves that bear the weight of decades worth of information. The shelves are built for compact storage, and equipped with wheels like those of submarines which, when turned, dive deeper into history.

"For the university specifically, the oldest document we have is from 1870," Paavola stated. The record vault climate is carefully controlled with an HVAC system that monitors the temperature and humidity. "We also have a special fire suppression system...it is a clean agent which protects the documents," she said.

These measures ensure that the records are kept safe from external environmental factors. They also keep a steady atmosphere in the room, which feels suspended in time. Archive staff have the only means to access the locked room; however, the archives are open to the public. "We have tighter security because what we do have are probably the only copies in existence," Paavola stated.

Students can also index possible documents of interest on the university's library site, which the archive staff can then pull for them out of the records room. "It takes a couple of tries to find what you're looking for, but definitely reach out to us [archive staff], we love working with students to help find what they're looking for," Paavola said.

The variety of records stored in the archives is large, and they range from public tax records to photographs, pins, banners, maps, and more. Acquisition of these items comes from an assortment of sources; one such way for Paavola is to coordinate with departments on campus.

"I reach out to departments and if they have any documents or files that they need to go through; I will come and help with those," Paavola said.

Other less-official means are utilized to collect documents as well. Recently, another



Shelves within the UWRF University Archives are stacked with records and artifacts. (Photo by Joshua Brauer)

member of the archive staff was working on school records and went out to a local farmstead, where the owner had records from a rural school in Pierce County.

Documents are not the only pieces of records that are stored in the archives. There is a banner from the university's Agriculture Department from 1912, homecoming pins from the 1960s, and even a whole row of shelves that are dedicated to sports media, displaying the evolution of technology as the content shifts from film to floppy disks, to VHS, and then CDs.

Restoring and viewing these forms of outdated media can be tricky, according to Paavola, but she enjoys the learning that comes with the challenges. "I am constantly learning, about different technologies," Paavola said. Most of the records now are digital, and I work to take things off those old materials,

like floppy disks, to be accessible for everybody," she said. The archives recently received a large scanner to assist in processing documents last spring, stated Paavola.

While students continue their studies, and time travels beneath each footstep, the University Archives will be preserved and presented for those who choose to take a step back in history.

"People have come in and said, 'kids these days are not interested in history,' and I say that just isn't true," Paavola said. "Seeing their [students'] faces and that they can't believe what they just found, and what is here and what has been saved, is always really rewarding."

The front desk of the UWRF University Archives. (Photo by Joshua Brauer)



Academic freedom addressed in Q&A with UW attorney

Jack Van Hoof

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UW-River Falls held a Q&A session on Feb. 3 to address recent concerns with academic freedom at universities across the United States. Jennifer Lattis, attorney for the UW System Office of General Counsel, spoke on these concerns, including events at Hamline University and universities in Florida, and answered questions from attending faculty.

Lattis served on the Wisconsin Department of Justice as an Assistant Attorney General from 1989 to 2010 and specialized in civil litigation with an emphasis on employment law, constitutional defense, and public records. She joined the Office of General Counsel in 2010.

Lattis began the Q&A session by describing the Hamline case. Professor Erika Lopez Prater, an art history professor at Hamline University, was removed from her position after she showed students a depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in an online class on Islamic art. Lattis said that she believes Prater is now teaching at UW Stout.

Lattis said that, after this removal occurred, she was asked, “what should we do if this happens at [the UW] institution?” Lattis said that academic freedom does not exist in any state constitution or body of law in the United States, but is defined in Black’s Law Dictionary as “the right to teach as one sees fit, but not necessarily the right to teach evil.”

UW-River Falls defines academic freedom in its Resource Guide for Academic Freedom and Records Requests as “the freedom to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, [and] the right to speak and write as a member of the university community or as a private citizen without institutional discipline or restraint, on scholarly matters, or on matters of public concern.”

Hamline University is a private institution, and Lattis said that, because of this, it is not subject to the First Amendment, which concerns freedom of speech. Many private institutions, including Hamline University, have incorporated academic freedom policies into their employment contracts. However, UW System institutions, including UW-River Falls, are public institutions, and, as such, can make no law against freedom of speech.

Lattis referenced the UW System code, UWS 4.01 (2) which states, “A faculty member is entitled to enjoy and exercise, the rights and privileges of academic freedom as they are generally understood in the academic community. This policy shall be observed in determining whether or not just cause for dismissal exists. The burden of proof of the existence of just cause for a dismissal is on the administration.” Lattis said that this policy applies to professors, adjunct faculty members, and instructional academic staff.

Lattis mentioned how, in the Hamline case, Prater was not directly fired, rather, her employment contract was not renewed,

resulting in her removal. “You can non-renew somebody for any reason except for an illegal reason,” Lattis said, with an illegal reason being because of a person’s race, gender, gender, or similar reasons.

According to the UW System code, UWS 4.01(1), “A decision not to renew a probationary appointment or not to grant tenure does not constitute a dismissal.”

Lattis said that one of the most important court cases for academic freedom in Wisconsin was John McAdams v. Marquette University, which took place in 2018. Dr. McAdams, a tenured professor at Marquette University, had criticized Cheryl Abbate, a graduate student and student instructor, for not allowing students to discuss a number of contemporary issues, including gay rights. Abbate had reportedly said, “some opinions are not appropriate, such as racist opinions, sexist opinions . . . you don’t have a right in this class to make homophobic comments.”

McAdams posted his criticism to his personal blog, and after the post was publicized in the national press, Abbate received harassment by email and on her own blog. Marquette then suspended Dr. McAdams. It should be noted that Marquette is a private institution.

The Wisconsin Supreme court ruled that Marquette had wrongly disciplined McAdams and that “the University breached its contract with Dr. McAdams when it suspended him for engaging in activity protected by the contract’s guarantee of academic freedom.”

Lattis mentioned another, much older case that established the foundation of academic freedom in Wisconsin. In 1894, following an argument between Richard T. Ely, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, now UW Madison, and schoolteacher Oliver E. Wells, the Board of Regents published the following statement.

“Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.”

Finally, Lattis discussed events at the University of Florida and Florida’s state university system. The Stop W.O.K.E. (Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees) Act, now known as the Individual Freedom Act, prohibits instruction that promotes concepts related to race, ethnicity, or sex. One of these concepts is that “a person’s moral character or status as either privileged or oppressed is necessarily determined by his or her race, color, national origin, or sex.”

Lattis said that, in Florida, the state is “zeroing in on what faculty are saying at public institutions of higher education and also in K-12 [schools].” She also said, “[they] have to discipline, even up to termination, of any professor who [teaches these concepts].”

Many of the attending faculty members expressed concern at these events, especially the events at Hamline University. One professor said, “I think people are afraid to



Jennifer Lattis, a UW System attorney, presents on academic freedom in the Kinnick-inn River Theater. (Photo by Jack Schindler Van Hoof).

‘A faculty member is entitled to enjoy and exercise, the rights and privileges of academic freedom as they are generally understood in the academic community.’
— University of Wisconsin System code

say things that may be controversial, that may get complaints, because they could be non-renewed and nobody [would know] why.”

In November, 2022, Maria Gallo, Chancellor of UW-River Falls, and David Travis, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UW-River Falls, sent out an email to UWRF faculty that announced their support of academic freedom “as a vital part of the mission and values of this university.” The email also mentioned that “we will continue working to develop policies and procedures that support you and the important work you do,” and that the provost’s office and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are developing potential protocols for handling academic freedom concerns.

Quick Pitch event to challenge students to consider impact of their research

UW-River Falls student researchers are set to compete in the WiSys Quick Pitch competition from 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, in the Trimble Room of the University Center.

The pitch competition inspires students to consider the impact of their research. Participants have three minutes to impress a panel of judges with their research and their ability to articulate its larger importance to society. The top “pitches” will receive cash prizes.

Leading up to the event, student participants receive training and support to craft their presentations. All participants will receive the WiSys Research Communication

badge, a résumé-boosting digital credential.

In addition to a cash prize, the top presenter will secure a spot in the WiSys Quick Pitch State Final, which will take place at the WiSys SPARK Symposium, Aug. 6-8 at UW-Oshkosh.

For more information about the WiSys Quick Pitch program, visit wisys.org/quick-pitch.

WiSys is a nonprofit organization that works with faculty, staff, students and alumni of the UW System to facilitate cutting-edge research programs, develop and commercialize discoveries, and foster a spirit of innovative and entrepreneurial thinking across the state.

Winter safety concerns continue at UW-River Falls

Over the last few months, winter safety, and particularly sidewalk conditions, have been the subject of mounting concern, and complaint, among both students and faculty at UW-River Falls. On Dec. 6, 2022, in the midst of severe winter weather and hazardous sidewalk conditions, students discovered that ice melt stations, six of them, to be exact, had been set up at various locations across campus.

The Falcon Daily said, later that day, that the stations were a joint effort by the Grounds Maintenance and Risk Management departments to “provide another mechanism for putting ice melt down on our sidewalks and to refill walk-safe shaker bottles.” These ‘walk-safe’ shaker bottles were provided by Risk Management to the various departments for use by faculty and university employees. However, these measures have raised additional concerns.

First and foremost, the effectiveness of the ice melt stations and shaker bottles is uncertain at best. Faculty have expressed concern that the majority of students and employees are not using the stations and the shakers, and the ones who are using them are doing so in ways that are more harmful than helpful. Ways that are harmful include using too much salt in too small of an area, taking the salt for personal use, or using the salt in temperatures below -15 degrees (at which the salt becomes much less effective).

On Grounds Maintenance’s website, it is listed that Grounds Maintenance is responsible for “snow and ice control of over 10 miles of sidewalks, 22.5 acres of parking lots (2400 spaces), and 3 miles of streets.” This raises questions of

whether the ice melt stations, with their limited range of coverage, can cover this large area.

Sustainability is also a concern. Mark Klapatch-Mathias, the Sustainability Coordinator for UW-River Falls’ Office of Sustainability, has said that increased salt levels on campus as a result of the overuse of the stations and shakers could raise salt levels in the Kinnikinic River and harm the local ecosystem. While it can be debated that the health and safety of students and faculty should take priority over sustainability concerns, there is a way to increase the effectiveness of the ice melt stations and decrease their harm to the environment.

The answer is simple: increase education on how to safely and effectively use the ice melt stations. As it stands, this information is displayed on the ice melt stations, but evidently should be communicated more widely as well, perhaps in a campus-wide email, a notice on the university website, or via additional signage.

However, even if the more informed use of these resources is an effective short-term solution to winter safety concerns, due to the issues of sustainability and coverage, it is a less than adequate long-term solution. The ice melt stations and shaker bottles are likely the result of understaffing at the Grounds Maintenance department. On their website, specifically the Student Grounds Assistant Position Description, the hourly wage for a student employee is listed at “\$8.00 per hour (effective 5/15/16).”

Many university departments have increased the hourly wages of their student employees, and to address understaffing, and the hazardous



An ice melt station outside of the Agricultural Sciences Building. (Photo by Jack Schindler Van Hoof)

conditions that understaffing results in, Grounds Maintenance should do the same. This would be a much more effective and environmentally-friendly solution than continuing to rely on the ice melt stations.

There are other potential solutions as well, such as outsourcing Grounds Maintenance operations, at least in some sort of limited capacity, or investing in other, more sustainable winter safety measures, such as spreading sand, or perhaps sand and salt, on sidewalks. These measures would be more expensive than the current ones, as would increasing the pay for Grounds Maintenance workers, but, if the health and safety of UWRF’s students and faculty are a concern, the expense may have to be considered.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS STUDENT VOICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Humane Handling Institute visited by state officials

UWRF’s Humane Handling Institute, a partnership between the university and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), will offer training and hands-on experience for students interested in working in the meat industry when it becomes available to select Wisconsin schools on Feb. 13. The program will be available to all Wisconsin schools on April 3.

On Jan. 26, state officials visited UWRF to learn more about the insitute and tour the UWRF Meat Plant. Kurt Vogel, Associate Professor of Animal and Food Science at UWRF and the director of the Humane Handling Insitute, described the program and its goals. “My goal is to get to a point where we don’t have humane handling enforcement actions because handling animals in [a humane] way has become the standard,” Vogel said.

Ryley Rehnelt, manager of the Meat Plant, directed a tour of the plant, in which he explained production and answered questions. Randy Romanski, secretary for DATCPs, said that the Humane Handling Insitute is an “example of how a little bit of funding, with some great thought and collaboration, can go a long way.”

Other visiting officials included Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and Elmer Moore, Jr, chief executive officer for the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority.

Photos by Jack Schindler Van Hoof

