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Faculty Salary Struggles

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University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point faculty members are paid, on average, less than their peers at other universities across the nation. According to the salary initiatives Web page—located on the university website—out of 338 UWSP faculty members, about 90 percent are paid less than the national average salary for their position. In addition, half of those professors are paid around $10,000 below the national average; in some cases that amount is doubled.

Amidst the problem of salary gaps lies the issue of merit-based salary raises.

Summers said that pay increases for faculty come from a couple of different sources. There are percentage increases that are given when a professor is promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, and then again when they are promoted to a full-time position.

"Those moments come exactly twice in a faculty member's career. Apart from that, the only other time we tend to offer pay increases is when the state provides us with a pay plan," Summers said.

At the state level money is given to the University of Wisconsin System as part of a pay plan. The UW System will then give UWSP permission to raise faculty salaries by a small percentage across the board. After that percentage is dispersed, it is required that the remaining amount must be dispersed through merit.

"That's what's been lacking here. Last year there was no pay plan, and we're going through the process this year in the hope that there will be," Summers said.

Summers and Warren both said that the process of merit-based pay is useful when trying to find those faculty members who might not be meeting the necessary criteria.

"It's never a fun time of year for faculty when we go through this merit process," Warren said. "You hope you get lucky and have a good year when there is a pay increase from the state."

Summers and Warren both explained that the system of assigning points could potentially lead to unhealthy competition, but that it might also spark creativity.

"It's never a fun time of year for faculty when we go through this merit process," Warren said. "You hope you get lucky and have a good year when there is a pay increase from the state."

"It's important to hold each other accountable for academic quality at UWSP," Warren said. "It is absolutely appropriate to have a system that allows us to flag the individuals who are not participating at a level we might like them to."

"It works intuitively in that regard. If a faculty member is not doing their job effectively, there's a way of making sure they don't get extra pay," Summers said.

Due to the legal obligations of UWSP, there is no way to work on leveling salary rates for all faculty members. Summers said the current system has existed since well before his employment at the university.

Under the "Investing in our future" headline on the salary initiatives Web page, it is stated that UWSP would need almost $3 million to close the salary gap.

Committees within the university departments are responsible for evaluating the work of faculty within that department. Assistant Professor of Philosophy Dona Warren briefly explained some aspects of the evaluation process within the College of Letters and Sciences.

"We look at the teaching evaluation numbers at the end of each semester when the evaluations are given. If they seem low, the faculty member has the opportunity to submit some other work for consideration," Warren said.

There is a certain amount of mixed emotions regarding merit pay according to Warren. She said that the system of assigning points could potentially lead to unhealthy competition, but that it might also spark creativity.

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Parking Services, Here and There

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Students and faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point are likely all too familiar with the orange envelopes placed underneath the windshield wipers of their car.

The orange envelopes contain citations for violations, such as parking at an expired meter or parking without a permit in a designated permit area.

Parking citations vary in cost according to the type of offense. Parking at an expired meter on campus is $6, while a citation for an incorrect or missing permit is $20.

The revenue garnered from citations and coin meters goes to maintaining and improving the lots on campus. This includes funding projects, such as the new parking structure planned for development in Lot X.

The revenue also goes to paying the wages of parking services employees, who has three full-time employees, some part-time employees and between 10 and 15 student employees.

Parking services, whose mission statement includes providing permit and convenience parking to students, faculty, staff and guests, requires some of the lowest permit fees in the University of Wisconsin system and charges some of the lowest citation prices.

For example, an expired meter citation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison costs $30, five times the rate of UWSP. The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh’s citation price is $11.

The difference in price for parking permits is even greater. It is $790-

for the majority of UW-Madison lot permits. UW-Oshkosh charges $70 per semester for a parking lot off campus. UWSP charges just over $93 for a yearly permit.

“Sometimes you pay more than that in a month [at other schools],” said Bill Rowe, director of Protective and Parking Services, who has been with UWSP since 2003.

Jude Likely, a senior journalism major attending UW-Madison, said that the parking situation on the campus is less than ideal.

“I’ve had a car for three years here. My first year, I was six blocks away from my apartment. The lot was never plowed, and it was still $85 a month,” Likely said. “Garage parking is expensive, and meter parking and street parking is even more expensive. Long story short, I hate parking in Madison.”

At least one student feels the current parking situation on the UWSP campus could also be improved.

Kaitlin Schuman, a web and digital media design senior, said she struggles to find parking spots on campus that she does not have to pay for because she has to stay extended periods of time on campus. She also said that at certain times of the day, even metered spots are a struggle to find.

“Paying four dollars a day or even more for metered parking breaks the bank,” Schuman said. “At the end of the day, I may complain a lot about it, but I do realize it could be worse. It’s frustrating and all, but I guess I could be paying a heck of a lot more out of pocket than I am currently. A lot of my frustration comes from the fact that I work on campus, and there’s no compensation for parking offered for student employees.”

UWSP Alum Hired as Warden

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Every semester, hundreds of students sign up for classes in the Natural Resources department, many of them working towards a career in environmental law enforcement, and once in awhile one of them lands a dream job close to home, like Wisconsin’s newest DNR (Department of Natural Resources) conservation warden, Rick Rosen.

Rosen graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1994, with a major in wildlife and minor in law enforcement. Rosen was named regional warden West Central Region, head quartered in Eau Claire and covering 19 counties.

“I would consider the job of a conservation warden the greatest job in the world,” Rosen said. “I just love being able to work outdoors, share my knowledge and experience with the public, and not having to be in an office all the time.”

Rosen noted changes in the program at UWSP since his graduation, saying that it is a huge advantage for students to be able to be out of school already certified as law enforcement officer. Students who do wish to work as a warden must first complete training at the police academy. Many chose to take the semester long course at Mid State Technical College here in Stevens Point.

In the fall of 2012 there were 77 students registered for the environmental law enforcement minor, it is not offered as major so students must choose another major to pair with the minor.

“In my 36 years with Career Services, I’ve only seen federal agencies recruit law enforcement folks directly from college on one occasion,” said Mike Pagel, a career specialist at UWSP. “They usually recruit from the military or from existing ranks of law enforcement professionals. Aspiring Wardens typically pursue work related to their majors (vs. the Environmental Law Enforcement minor) or they take conventional law enforcement work and wait for states to post vacancies.”

Rosen worked as started his career as a park ranger at Devils Lake State Park in 1994. He also worked as a patrol officer for the Baraboo police department and most recently as a warden supervisor of five counties new Spooner Wis.

“I enjoy the challenges of working with the public, and getting the opportunity to educate them on natural resource topics,” Rosen said. “As a law enforcement officer you can make a huge difference in actually catching the folks that are violating the law and bringing them to justice.”

Rosen stated that he enjoyed his time at UWSP and came out feeling confident that he had gained a great education with great instructors. He offered some advice for students in school now who are aspiring to be a warden one day.

“I would say number one thing is to get to know the department of natural resources by doing either internships or ride-alongs. Really thoroughly explore your options on what is available for jobs within the department. Stay engaged in the outside of class work, make the extra efforts to take internships on, go to your safety courses and become certified in ATV, snowmobile boating, hunter safety.”
Student Legal Services

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The Student Government Association is sponsoring legal services for students who attend the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Jan Roberts, the attorney on campus, is happy to offer advice on Point. the University of Wisconsin-Stevens

family issues.

concerns, off campus tickets, and things such as landlord and tenant

issues. "I like helping people get through a legal problem, however I cannot provide any legal advice on topics that go against UWSP or the UW-System," Roberts said. "For example, if a student falls on the ice in the campus parking lot, I can't assist them."

Ryan Specht, the Student Life Issues Director of SGA, says that you must be a student to use her services.

"There was a female student once that brought her boyfriend in to talk to the lawyer, but he wasn't a UWSP student, so she couldn't help him," Specht said.

Most of the issues that Roberts deals with include landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, automobile accidents, speeding tickets, and family issues, such as divorce, child support, and custody.

"One student came to me because the roof above her bedroom had caved in. I was able to help her get reimbursed for the damages," Roberts said.

Roberts also deals with quite a few criminal cases, such as possession of marijuana.

"A lot of problems relate to alcohol abuse. It is a problem that we need to get under control, because students would have a lot less legal issues," Roberts said. "Binge drinking is big in Wisconsin, and especially in Portage County. I try to steer students in the right direction and get them the treatment they need. I want them to learn from their experiences."

Apointments are thirty minutes long and cost $5 at the Information and Tickets desk.

"I am also willing to meet during breaks and in the summer time. I love meeting all the people I come in contact with and helping them with their legal issues, and if a student needs a follow up session, that is free of charge," Roberts said.

Roberts' office is located in room 106B of the Allen Center. Roberts is usually available on Thursday nights and students can make appointments online at www.uwsp.edu/centers/ssl.

Wrap It Up For Valentine's Day

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Anastie Held and Julie Marten, Reproductive Peer Educators in Delzell Hall, have organized a Condom Club—sponsored by Student Health Services—that supplies interested students with condoms and advice on sexual safety.

Since Feb. 5, information about the Condom Club has been appearing in the student edition of the Campus Announcements. The announcements advertise a punch card that students can buy for $5. The cards are worth five punches, and each punch is worth five condoms, meaning that for $5 a student will receive 25 condoms.

Held and Marten were inspired to start this organization after visiting the American College of Health Association Convention in Chicago last year. Students, doctors, and lab technicians attended the conference and offered insights and suggestions for reproductive resources and their presence on college campuses.

"I saw other schools were doing this, I think we need to promote condom awareness here, too," Held said.

"It's definitely about caring about yourself and the people you're having interactions with."

The Women's Resource Center has offered condoms to students for free for years, which leaves a lot of members and students wondering why students would pay for a punch card.

"As a student, I know I can get condoms for free, so why would I pay?" Stephanie Roland, a student that visited the Women's Resource Center table in the Dreyfus University Center, said, gesturing to the jars of condoms on the table.

"It's good that they are supporting safe sex, I just don't think students should have to pay for condoms," Women's Resource Center member Jeanna Mielcarek said. "We have boxes of condoms and there's always the opportunity to get more."

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point allocates grant money to the WRC for condom purchase, whereas the Condom Club uses the money paid for punch cards to fund their condom purchase.

"I think we're both good resources," Marten said. "But the condom club is more medically based."

Despite the opposing views about paying for condoms, the WRC and the Condom Club are working together to promote STD/STI Week, which will take place from April 1 to 5.

The focus of that week will be to point out the difference between STIs (which are incurable) and STDs (which are curable). STD and STI screenings will be held at Delzell, and will be free for students.

"It's completely discreet. They can just come in to the clinic, pee in a cup, leave and wait for their results," Held said. "We're also trying to organize different hall programs, too. We hope to collaborate eventually with the Women's Resource Center more in the future."

Marten said that she is hopeful students will turn out to join the club on Valentine's Day.

"I think students like the sound of a club, and I'm hoping our slogan 'No Glove, No Love' will catch on and promote awareness about sexual protection," Marten said.

According to Marten, the Condom Club has had 30 students join within this first week. The Condom Club and Reproductive Peer Educators offices are located on the first floor of Delzell Hall. Marten said that there are many signs pointing to the Condom Club office.

The WRC will be organizing condom gift bags and distributing around the downtown area tonight for Valentine's Day.

SGA Updates

With new ideas, energy, growth and a community that is willing to collaborate we can start addressing issues throughout campus. Feb 20th at 6:00pm in the DUC Encore, SGA will be hosting their first open forum "Fresh" focusing on campus sustainability. This is your chance to bring issues to a casual roundtable discussion. With hopes of this being an ongoing program, we are also looking for suggestions on future "Fresh" campaigns.

SGA is also recruiting for United Council LobbyCon 2013 Conference February 23-25th at UW-Madison. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to gain the necessary skills to effectively lobby legislators to support higher education in Wisconsin.

Visit http://unitedcouncilcon.net or e-mail SGA@uwsp.edu for more details!

Last week at our senate meeting we received a presentation from Ryan Specht and David Boardman on the Wellness and Recreation Study. The study is assessing the possibility of combining the campuses wellness and recreational needs into one facility.

As always we would love to see you at our weekly senate meetings 6:15PM in the Legacy Room.
Wrestling Team Ready for Conference Championships

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point wrestling team has experienced some success this season and is currently ranked 10th in the country.

"We had high expectations going into this season," said Johnny Johnson, head coach. "This team has lived up to those expectations.

The team wrapped up their regular season last Friday, as

they lost to the University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse 27-7. The team now looks ahead to the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Conference Championships this next Sunday.

The Pointers started the season off strong, winning the 2012 Lakeland College Muskie Invite in Sheboygan. They most recently won the Budd Whitehill Duals at Lycoming College in Pennsylvania this past January.

However, lately the Pointers have lost five of their last seven meets. Coach Johnson cites team injuries as a major issue.

"We have had some injuries of late, but people are starting to get healthy, and we should have almost everybody ready for the conference championships."

A big part of the team's success this season has been its strong class of upperclassmen. Of the 11 wrestlers that are juniors or seniors, seven have won at least 20 matches this season.

"This group of juniors and seniors were one of the best recruiting classes that I have ever been able to pull in," Johnson said. "It's really a tight group, and they have stepped up for the team's leader on the mat is senior Jordan Kust. Kust has a high team of 30 match wins this season, and is closing in on 100 match wins for his career.

"My season is going pretty good. I got a good record so far this year, but I need to keep working hard so I can accomplish my goals for the season," Kust said.

Another senior that has had a strong season is Ben Strobel. Strobel has 23 wins on the season, despite wrestling for part of the season above his normal weight class. "I feel really confident now that I made the drop down to 149 lbs," Strobel said.

The upperclassmen aren't the only wrestlers that have stepped it up this season. Jordan Kordana, a sophomore, is third on the team with 25 wins and has a 90 percent conference winning percentage.

"My main individual goal at the beginning of the year was to be an asset to the team," Kordana said.

The success for Kordana initially came as a surprise, as this is his first year wrestling at a collegiate level.

The team has gone a long way this season. According to the wrestlers, that has a lot to do with the coaching staff.

"I think it's really important for everyone to know that this team would not be as good as it is without our coaches," Kordana said. "Our coaches put in so much time with everyone individually to make us all better."

The team is focused on the conference championships, but even if they are successful, it still won't mean an NCAA championship berth.

The individual wrestlers will have to perform well at NCAA regional to advance to the championships. The team believes that they can have success to finish this season.

"This team has no limit, and when we are at our best we are one of the toughest in the nation," said Favre.

Indeed the thing you first notice about Driver is his smile. No matter how hard he got hit after catching a pass over the middle he would always pop up grinning.

Driver said that what's important is to make every moment count. Driver said they have done something great, and we are going to make the most of this opportunity.
Men's Hockey Hosting Playoff Games

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Even after finishing the season with a 4-4 record in their last eight, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point men's hockey team has clinched two home playoff games.

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Even after finishing the season with a 4-4 record in their last eight, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point men's hockey team has clinched two home playoff games.

The Pointers, a three-seed, will play sixth-seed University of Wisconsin-River Falls in the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association quarter-final on Friday and Saturday at 7:00 PM at K.B. Willet Arena.

"Home ice for us is huge," said head coach Chris Brooks. "We have had great crowds at Willet all year, and home is an advantage that we wanted to be sure of."

Stevens Point finished the season at 14-10-1, with a conference record of 8-9-1.

"The team has been up and down for the last month. We have played some of our best hockey, and other nights we have been average," Brooks said.

The Pointers did have a rollercoaster finish to the season, but they know they can't dwell on the past. They also know they have to step up their game now.

"I would have liked for us to be more consistent with our games lately, but now the regular season is over, and we can't look back," said team captain Jerry Freismuth, senior forward. "We are looking forward to playoffs and playing a more consistent game."

A common response from the players to the playoff games was excitement. They want to prove they can play at a high level.

"Playoffs is a different level of hockey, and I think our team is really excited and ready to get this week of practice going and be ready to go on Friday night," said sophomore forward Andrew Kolb.

"I expect it to be a battle," said sophomore forward Joshua Daley.

"Playoffs are a whole different game. There is no room for error from either team."

This season the Pointers have experienced success because of a collection of players that can get the puck in the net, an element that last year's team did not possess.

Kyle Heck, last year's leading scorer, leads the team with 12 goals this season, but other players have stepped up to join Heck in scoring.

Stevens Point has eight players that have scored at least six goals and nine players with at least eight assists.

"In order to be successful, selfish behavior cannot be accepted," Brooks said. "Our guys have done a good job buying into the team first concept."

Therefore, the Pointers look forward to University of Wisconsin-River Falls, a team that Stevens Point defeated and tied with in mid-November of this season.

The Falcons finished the season 12-9-2, with a 4-5-3 conference record.

Rivers Falls has also hit a rough patch lately, winning only two of their last eight games.

The Pointers' expectations have them going past River Falls. Coach Brooks and his players believe this team has the potential to make a deep run.

"I think we can make it to the NCAA final four," Kolb said. "We can be a real hard team to play against when we have everything rolling and everyone is on the same page."

"The sky's the limit for us," Daley said. "If we play our game and execute Coach's systems well, there is no reason we shouldn't win it all."

"I have high expectations for our team, and winning the National Championship is a goal we believe we can achieve," Freismuth said.

Photo by Jack McLaughlin

Sophomore forward Scott Henegar celebrates after a Pointer goal.
Nighttime often means snack time, but before you devour an entire box of Frosted Flakes, you should determine whether habit or hunger is driving this desire.

"Hunger is a physical state. If what you are feeling is an emotional state, it's not hunger," said Annie Wetter, Chair of the School of Health Promotion and Human Development.

"Even if it is emotional, it shouldn't be dismissed," Wetter said.

If cravings are taking over your mind and preventing you from concentrating on anything else, go ahead and attend to those cravings—mindfully.

"Attend to them in a thoughtful and mindful way, so cravings don't turn into eating an entire pizza, but rather mindfully spending 15 minutes eating a 50-calorie cookie. Attending to cravings can help prevent bouts of overeating from feeling deprived and restricted," Wetter said.

For busy students trying to balance jobs, internships and homework, it is especially important to get a good night's sleep while managing all of the other commitments in order to experience true hunger, depending on how late they are staying up, the size of their last meal and the time at which they last ate," Wetter said. "Many students are forced to eat early because of the Debott schedule."

Even if your stomach isn't growling, it's okay to snack with a notion of calorie balance.

Nighttime isn't the enemy. Eating at night isn't necessarily bad. If you are going to eat a cupcake today, it won't make a difference whether it's consumed at 10 a.m. or 11 p.m.

Time of day doesn't change the number of calories entering your body. What matters is the type of food being consumed. Whether you snack during the morning or in the evening before bed, be conscious of the nutritional value.

So next time you're experiencing a late-night trip to the kitchen, it's okay. Instead of spending the entire night trying to avoid these cravings, attend to them— as long as you are doing it mindfully.

A Bedtime Snack: Habit or Hunger?

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A Bedroom Culture Shock

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Our culture is fueled by information. An ungodly and almost unlimited wealth of information is available at the touch of the enter key and has even changed the way we interact with the world. The nature of the younger generation's interactions is less personal and more digital, but the fundamental idea remains the same: the ability to connect and interact with others through an online medium. This online culture brings the people together into communities that match their interests and into a world where they control the content.

In contrast to Stoner's experience, he believed people now do not know the names of their neighbors in the room next to his. Certainly, times have changed. The nature of the younger generation's interactions are less personal and more digital, but the fundamental idea remains the same: to connect and interact with a wider group of people.

"I have witnessed what I would call 'mediated friendships' develop," Stoner said. "I can honestly say I knew just about every guy on my floor. It was a social experience."

How students were all in their rooms—most of them with the doors shut—Korean students would then proceed to have a social networking exchange like that."

Anna Verhagen, communication major, and Kate Reck, Information and Outreach Coordinator for Residential Living, both use social media to connect with people online,

SEE ONLINE CULTURE:

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Photo by Samantha Feld

Late night cravings afflict many college students. The importance is to know the difference between habit and hunger eating.

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History is currently being made in East-Central Europe: experience it! Travel the little known and fabulous culture, the reality of a more improved economy or transformation to a market economy, the tragic sweep of History in the postwar era, and the triumphs of social and economic innovation. This program will be the trip of a lifetime.

We offer you the exceptional opportunity to live in the cultural splendor of historic Krakow, Poland. There, the Jagiellonian University, founded in 1564 will be your home. Offered is the cultural encounter not only to study Polish culture and society, but also to experience over 500 years of history, magnificent architecture and art.

Financial Aid is Available!

CLASSES: Also upper division classes concentrating on the Humanities and Social Sciences; Conversational and Intensive Polish, Art, Art History, Culture and Civilization of Poland, History of Poland, East European Policy and International Studies.

COHST: Approx. $10,000 for airfare, room and board, tuition, entry-exit, field trips, insurance, etc. The trip is an amazing bargain. Considering what you need budget for a semester here, this is not that much more.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS:

"Visited my nephew's dorm a few years ago. I was totally struck by how students were all in their rooms—most of them with the doors shut. It seemed so different from when I lived there in the 1980s," Stoner said. "I can honestly say I knew just about every guy on my floor. It was a social experience."

In contrast to Stoner's experience, his nephew did not even know the names of his neighbors in the room next to his. Certainly, times have changed. The nature of the younger generation's interactions are less personal and more digital, but the fundamental idea remains the same: to connect and interact with a wider group of people.

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Go Green, Win Big

This year marks the third annual Residence Hall Energy Competition, an event in which the residence halls compete against one another for the greatest energy reduction per resident average throughout the month of February.

"Energy data is gathered from the November 2012 kWh Electrical Usage and Outside Electrical kWh readings for each hall and compared to their hall's February 2013 numbers," said Residential Living Facility Designer, Cindy VonGnechten. "The hall that shows the greatest energy reduction per resident average during the month of February compared to their hall's November 2012 base line wins." The winning hall will have $200.00 added to its budget, and five residents from that hall will also receive a tote filled with over $100-worth of eco-friendly gifts. VonGnechten also added that there will be many other opportunities for students to walk away with prizes throughout the month of February, including a weekly eco-trivia contest.

"Our main goal is to have students learn how to easily conserve energy in their daily lives and the value within it," VonGnechten said. "Eric Chier, a resource management major and resident of Smith Hall, strongly supports the residence hall Energy Competition and all other green initiatives. Like VonGnechten, he also believes that tiny measures such as these can have powerful, long-lasting effects.

"It helps form the habit of recycling, so that when younger students do get houses of their own, they will know how to and hopefully want to recycle or at least use resources a little more sparingly," Chier said. "These initiatives also have a great impact on how the school looks to the community and also set examples for other schools."

Assistant Professor Robert Michitsch, who teaches courses in soil science and waste management at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, agrees that the residence hall Energy Competition and other green initiatives do an excellent job of educating students. "These green initiatives are great for us all to take back in our own lives," said Michitsch. "If I want to be warm and fuzzy and talk about the world and sustainability, then these are all steps towards that. I think that living this greener lifestyle is definitely the way we need to move forward." Lauren Wirsbinski, a resident of Hansen Hall, also spoke positively of the green initiatives currently underway across campus. "I like that the residence halls offer green initiatives because it makes me feel like I'm doing my part and helping without having to change much in my sometimes hectic life," Wirsbinski said.

VonGnechten urged students to participate because of the "positive monetary and global environmental impact that energy conservation has on all of us."

"It is easy for the students to get involved - simply use less energy than they normally do," said VonGnechten.

For more information on the residence halls Energy Competition or any other green initiatives taking place on campus, contact your hall's CA or Green Advocate.
**Quarter-Life Crisis**

The typical quarter-life crisis as experienced by college students.

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**KAITLYN LUCKOW**
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"What are you doing after you graduate?"

"What a seemingly deadly question.

Is it just me, or do very few of us know exactly where we want to be five years from now? For the confused and the frightened, the future is know exactly where we want to be with my life? Should I switch my major to something totally different? Is everyone else actually happier than me?

Valentine's Day

**RACHEL PUKALL**
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Valentine's Day is the second most celebrated holiday worldwide after New Year's. It is a day to celebrate love. Many people give out flowers, chocolates and gifts to their significant others or family and friends. It is a day to spend time with the people you love, whether you have a significant other, making them feel happy.

Maas' favorite thing about Valentine's Day is spending time with friends and family since the holiday usually falls on a weekday. Although Valentine's Day targets couples, single people can enjoy the day, too.

"I always said that single girls or guys could always get together and buy each other small gifts, like a box of chocolates or flowers and do, like, a white elephant kind of game night, or have a white elephant kind of game night, and do your whole life.

The best memories I have of Valentine's Day is spending time with the people you love, whether it is a significant other or family and friends.

"My girlfriend talked to one of my best friends and had him invite me over for a while. Then we went back to my house, and there was a balloon in my room just sitting on my bed. It said 'pop me,'" Maas said.

When Maas popped it, a bunch of confetti flew out with a note rolled up and tied with a bow. The note said to go look in a certain place of the house for another clue, and so on, until he got to the last one under his bed.

"Under my bed there was a giant, heart-shaped cookie that my girlfriend had decorated, and it said, 'Happy Valentine's Day, Erich,'" Maas said.

Maas' favorite thing about Valentine's Day is getting a surprise, like the scavenger hunt he got for a present a few years ago.

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Letter to the Editor:

I would like to dispute false claims that were made in the article written on the Pointers for Life last week. The Isthmus, a Madison, WI based newspaper, recently wrote an article entitled "Pregnant? Scared? Abortion risks are exaggerated at Wisconsin's Crisis Pregnancy Centers." This article was based on an appalling investigative study done by NARAL Pro-Choice America. Last week Pointers for Life stated that they partner with First Choice, a crisis pregnancy center in Stevens Point.

Upon visiting the web site for First Choice, I encountered numerous spelling errors, a lack of references, and fear-mongering "testimonials" on emergency contraception that appear fabricated. First Choice claims that emergency contraception, which is available over the counter in Wisconsin, can cause abortion. According to Princeton University and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, none of the FDA-approved emergency contraceptives can work after an egg is fertilized.

In addition, First Choice states that abortion increases breast cancer risk. This is a long-standing fallacy; there is no association between abortion and breast cancer according to the National Cancer Institute. Yet if that is not enough, there is a long list of horrendously exaggerated, medically inaccurate side effects presented on their web site. Again, there are no references listed to support their claims.

Also, the article written by Pointers for Life insinuates that abortions can cause PTSD. The American Psychological Association found that psychological problems in adult women with an unplanned pregnancy is not different if they have a first-trimester abortion or a pregnancy. In addition, Johns Hopkins University holds that research does not support post-abortion traumatic stress syndrome.

I fear for the vulnerable women that could encounter the inaccurate and incomplete information that this organization provides. This is a faith-based operation and withholding of certain forms of family planning, including emergency contraception is due to religious reasons. I feel that it is deceitful to not present all options in a clear, unbiased, scientifically sound manner. Services are limited at crisis pregnancy centers and fear, guilt and intimidation is used to pressure women into making very sensitive personal decisions.

All legal options should be available in a non-judgmental setting so that women can make well-informed choices without being persuaded or misled. There are several reputable resources in the campus and community. For resources on campus, you can contact the Women's Resource Center, in the basement of the DUC. For community resources, Family Planning Health Services is located across Division Street adjacent to campus. The family planning waiver covers reproductive care and all women and men are eligible to apply for this program through the state of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,
Jeanna Mielcarek

Valentine’s Day - Only as Awful as You Make It

KYLE FLORENCE
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COMMENTARY

This past week, I was having a conversation with a good friend of mine about this upcoming Valentine's Day. Having recently trudged through a very precarious break-up, his outlook was bleak, to say the least. He claimed that the actual meaning of the holiday had been lost in a blizzard of heart-shaped candies and cheesy Hallmark catchphrases. Instead of celebrating the one you love most, this day had become an obligation—a day that card companies across the country could hang their hats on. But most notably, this day now served as a cruel reminder to all those flying solo that they will inevitably die cold and alone (that was satire, before you all go throwing yourself from cliffs).

I won't lie. In many ways, I agreed with him. True enough, it does seem silly that we dedicate a single day out of the year to our "special someone"—if they're really that special, shouldn't we be showering them with affection 365 days a year? And yes, I, too, will be spending Valentine's Day alone this year. I will admit, it's aummer knowing that my romantic evening will likely be spent with the cast of "How I Met Your Mother" and pounds of string cheese.

Still, as disheartening as these realizations were, this conversation with my buddy really stuck with me, as it brought with it a sense of enlightenment. I have a secret for you, my friend—a secret that will change your life for the better as soon as you are willing to accept it as fact. What is it? Life's a bitch, and then you die. It sounds harsh, but as we all will eventually realize, it is undeniably true. Life comes with no guarantees, no time-outs and no second chances.

Taking this into account, one realizes that Valentine's Day, like any other day, is going to be an irrefutable piece of crap unless you consciously choose to make it otherwise. That is to say, you are responsible for your own happiness. Not your mom, not your ex, not that Ryan Gosling look-alike that sits in the back of your English class—only you. Honestly, how do you expect to feel when you're ears-deep in a cocktail of melted ice cream and your own tears (again, satire)?

My point is, who cares if you're alone on Valentine's Day? After all, you were alone yesterday, and likely the day before that, and look, you're still here! Ultimately, happiness is all about perspective, and no one ever bettered their situation by focusing on the negatives.

So this Valentine's Day, whether you are spending it with the love of your life, a group of friends, or all by your lonesome, find some solace that you are on your feet, breathing and able to experience this holiday to some capacity. I know too many good people who no longer have that option.
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**COMICS**

*Life*

By Jonathan Seymour

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*LEFT & RIGHT*

Eating healthy sure is hard. It’s been nothing but fruits and vegetables.  
No, don’t eat that stuff! Recent studies show that it’s all bad for you!

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**Joe Budden – No Love Lost**

From the oft-maligned “Pump it Up”, the “Mood Muzik” series, getting assaulted by members of Wu-Tang’s posse, a rap beef with Lil Wayne, and recently the formation of rap super-group Slaughterhouse, Joe Budden’s career as a rap artist has been multifarious. At his best, Budden is a lyrical juggernaut, capable of rapping circles over the industry with wit and incredible story-telling ability. At his worst, his antics distract from his ability to create good music and make it seem as if he’s more suited for reality TV. With his release, “No Love Lost”, Budden jumps between the two effortlessly and creates a chaotic yet strangely pleasing listening experience.

“No Love Lost” starts off like a stereotypical rap album. “Ya’ll would call it birthday sex/I call it a ritual” Budden raps on the Kirkko Rangs assisted “Top of the World”, a song perfectly suited as a battle-cry for insecure, club-going men. The following tracks, “She Don’t Put it Down Like You” and NBA endorser Hip-Hopheavy-weights Lil Wayne, French Montana, and Wiz Khalifa. Both offer catchy and ultimately successful hooks, and “She Don’t Put it Down Like You” includes the most listenable Lil Wayne verse since “No Ceilings”.

As Budden settles in to the album, the tone shifts. On “All In My Head”, Budden chronicles his struggle with addiction and depression while showcasing his lyrical prowess. “I’m so seasonal/some of you knew I’d spring back/With a heart this cold how’d ya’ll think I’d be receptive to fall?” On “Skeletons”, the listener finds Budden on an inner city “blues cruise” listening to Marvin Gaye induced by his fatherless upbringing. It’s the type of dark and lyrically induced by his fatherless upbringing. It’s the type of dark and lyrically unmatch music Budden listeners have come to expect.

As the album nears completion, it takes yet another sharp turn. While more suitable for a Drake album, Budden’s talent carries us through two heavily R&B influenced tracks. “Switch Positions” features former B2K member Omarion. Neither are certain skips, but songs with overtly sexual titles and themes are as played out as trying to get rich through a social media website. Luckily, Budden drops the experiment and finishes on a positive note. On “My Time”, Budden assures us that issues he’s been dealing with throughout the album bubblegum track titles like “Girls Want Rock” and “Dance All Night,” which turn out to be about just that, girls liking rock music, and dancing all night. Some have viewed this as the band only trying to create a clean, fun, rock ‘n’ roll album, but if I remember right, rock ‘n’ roll doesn’t have a whole lot of room for “clean” in there with all the sex and drugs.

**Free Energy – Love Sign**

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90FM ALBUM REVIEW

As a recovering Minnesotan, I was a big fan of Red Wing-based superhook indie rock band Hockey Night. With their melodic throwback to the days of Pavement and other works from Steven Malkmus, Hockey Night put out two spectacular albums (“Keep Guessin’” and “Rad Zapping”) during their run from 2002 to 2007. With the deflating news arriving in 2007 that Hockey Night would be dissolved, the 2009 formation of Free Energy by the Wells brothers and Paul Sprangers, all members of Hockey Night, was more than welcome. Developing Hockey Night’s overwhelmingly catchy sound into soaring power pop, Free Energy released their debut album “Stuck on Nothing” to overwhelmingly positive review from a multitude of sources including the hipster capital, Pitchfork.

Being such a fan of previous works from the band’s members, and even the band’s previous works, seeing Free Energy’s sophomore album “Love Sign” settling so comfortably into such familiar territory was a disappointment to me. The songs, no doubt, preserve the outward bliss we have come to expect from the group, but seem to embrace a “clean” sound that falls dangerously close to simplicity. From the first track, the album’s nameake, it’s very clear the goal of the songs is to worm their way into your brain and never leave, a goal the band is largely successful in. However, if this catchiness does bring you in for a closer look at the album, a disturbing lack of depth emerges from every song. Very little implicit meaning lies behind the albums bubblegum track titles like “Girls Want Rock” and “Dance All Night,” which turn out to be about just that, girls liking rock music, and dancing all night. Some have viewed this as the band only trying to create a clean, fun, rock ‘n’ roll album, but if I remember right, rock ‘n’ roll doesn’t have a whole lot of room for “clean” in there with all the sex and drugs.

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