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How Court Systems in Wisconsin are Handling the Pandemic

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, plenty of precautions have had to happen to keep the general public as safe as possible. Certain businesses have been forced to close since they are nonessential while others have added extra cleaning procedures and limited employee-customer interactions. However, it is not just businesses forced to take precautions during this time.

Court systems are an essential part of peaceful living so have not been shut down. Much like in essential business, as many precautions as possible have been taken to limit the spread of any disease.

Washburn County Circuit Court judge, Angeline Winton explained what precautions the court has taken so far to prevent the spread. She said, "There are signs on the Courthouse doors directing people to attempt to call whatever department they are trying to reach, rather than entering the building if at all possible. The buildings are being cleaned multiple times a day and maintenance distributed sanitizing cleaning supplies and encouraged us all to wipe down our areas to reduce the spread."

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Online Learning Produces Problems

Image courtesy of Julia M Cameron on Pexels.com.

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Online learning at UWSP officially started on March 30.

The University expected problems to come up for students and faculty and planned accordingly. Resources were put in place and new schedules were prepared. Despite these preparations, difficulties have still been occurring.

Students have complained with personal problems such as procrastination, problems with classes, and problems with professors. Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Doctor Troy L. Seppelt shared some solutions, advice, and encouragement to all students in an interview.



Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Dr. Troy L. Seppelt.
Image courtesy of UWSP.

"I do certainly try to reach out to all of our students wherever I can," said Seppelt.

pelt. "The pieces of advice that I think I would offer is your faculty and staff are still here working for you... Encouraging students to actually talk to their teachers... I think the other thing, and I know that this has been over-said. At least it feels like to me at times this has been over-said, but it also still rings true. We're going to get through this."

How are the faculty and staff still available when most students are stuck at home? Student resources that are normally on campus, such as tutoring and counseling, are still available. Seppelt explained more.

"You want to talk to me, we'll figure it out and we'll arrange a conversation," said Seppelt. "You want counseling? They're open, call the counseling center. You have a healthcare question? They're open, call them. They'll do tele-health with you. Need academic support? Tutoring and Learning Center is open. They're doing drop-in math help. All the things are happening, just happening differently. It is okay to ask because that's why we're here, that's what we do for our students."

Student troubles of procrastination fit well into this solution. In an effort to help this problem, UWSP's counseling services have put together videos of advice if a student does not want to talk to a counselor personally.

Other students complained of more class-specific problems. Freshman biology major Julia Rehm experienced a large increase in work. Her roommate, freshman wildlife major Gabrielle Eklund, had similar complaints.

Eklund said, "Some professors think that since we are home they can pile more homework than what would normally be at school."



Freshman Biology Major Julia Rehm.
Image courtesy Julia Rehm.

Another student who wished to stay anonymous complained of late or no responses from professors when it came to questions about homework.

In both of these situations, Seppelt had the same advice.

"99.9 percent of our faculty want to help," said Seppelt. "I realize that that is often anxiety producing for some students, but it is okay to lean in there.... If students feel that they are getting push-back or aren't being listened to, we have a

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The Sports Hub - 1 p.m. on Mondays

Or watch their content on YouTube at "SPTV at UWSP"!

Online...
continued from page 1

great system in place to address that. You can get ahold of me, you can submit the “Ask a Question” on our COVID website.”

For most students and faculty, life is very different. It may seem hard and unreasonable, something Seppelt reiterated.

“Yes, you are still a full-time student,” said Seppelt. “But you are also living at a time of crisis that we’re all trying to figure out. Everyone’s anxiety is higher. We’re all wound a little more tightly. This semester is weird as hell, and that is true, but it also can be true that we will be able

to work through the questions and the challenges. Both can exist. It’s weird, and we can figure this out together.”

Close on the minds of those at the university are the senior students.

“We’re sorry that this is what happened in our lives,” said Seppelt. “We still want to honor them and their hard work of being a student at Point for however many years it took to get through their education. They are still a Pointer, they’re still a member of this institution.”

In the end, Troy Seppelt wanted to make sure students knew the school was still there to help. He pointed to the Dean of Students page online where resources are available.

“We try to work with students to get them to the right resource,” said Seppelt.

“So students can and should go check that out if they have a question or concern... We are still here to help.”



Freshman Wildlife Major Gabrielle Eklund.
Image courtesy of Hailey Lundborg.

How Court
Systems...
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Courts are currently not able to run as they used to. Due to Governor Evers Safer-at-Home order, all jury trials are postponed and no in-person hearings may take place. However, this does not mean all legal issues are at a standstill. Some important hearings are still being held, such as custody hearings and certain preliminary hearings.

Winton said, “We are still having contested proceedings... but doing them through video conferencing or by phone. This has required some creativity in connecting

all the parties but by and large, it has worked well... Initially, for the amount 2 weeks, we rescheduled many of the hearings but now with Zoom and phone concerning capabilities, we are holding as many hearings as possible, just in a non-traditional way.”

Even if many cases cannot be put through a trial, the court system is still working hard to get as much done as possible. The goal is to find another method of obtaining jury members so once the order is lifted, the work needed to be done is as minimal as possible. It is important to keep the court system running as smoothly as possible during these times.

The court system also has to worry about arrests coming in as well as hearings with convicted criminals. Winton explained how the court system and law enforcement

system have worked in these times. She said, “Officers are still making arrests, and defendants are still getting charged, but the volume seems quite reduced during this time. On our end, we are trying to assist and whenever possible, do what we can to reduce transporting from jail to jail.”

No matter what happens with the current issues, the court system will continue to function to the best of their ability. Judge Winton said, “What we will try to do is address as many cases now, in a timely manner. We are also very aware, however, of needing to abide by proper rules of evidence, procedures and generally maintaining order and a sense of normalcy... Somehow it all works out. It’s good to keep a sense of humor about it all and not take ourselves too seriously.”



Washburn County Court House takes as many precautions necessary to stay safe and clean during the pandemic.
Photo taken by Florence Anderson

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City Discusses Economic Impacts of COVID-19

Downtown Stevens Point is home to a number of small and local businesses; many of which will likely be impacted by COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders in the state.

Photo by Ross Vetterkind.

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As the COVID-19 crisis continues, the city of Stevens Point is addressing the local economic impacts.

On April 13, business, government, and community leaders from Portage County hosted a virtual economic briefing, designed to address the needs of central Wisconsin businesses and detail what resources are available.

From large corporations to small businesses, the Economic Recovery Team seeks to provide assistance, organization and solutions for the community during this difficult economic time.

According to Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza, the team was, "Designed to try and put those business resources in one location and to get community leaders on top of the needs of this community."

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted many businesses in Wisconsin. Among them, small businesses, and brick-and-mortar stores in general, face some of the greatest risks and challenges.



Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza. Wiza recently attended a virtual economic briefing on solutions for Portage County during COVID-19.

Photo courtesy of stevenspoint.com.

The economic briefing also allowed business owners and community members to voice their concerns, questions, and needs. Around 90 people attended the virtual meeting.

The Economic Recovery Team is elucidating local, state and national level resources that are available to businesses. From rent payment assistance to payroll functioning, the team seeks to point business owners in the right direction of what programs they qualify for.

According to a new report from Main Street America, millions of small and locally-owned businesses face major revenue declines and employee lay-offs. If the crisis continues for months, nearly 7.5 million small businesses may face perma-

nent closure.

"The economic ramifications of this are going to last well into Fall and probably through the end of the year," says Wiza.

While the COVID-19 crisis has created hurdles for many local businesses, each business faces different circumstances. One important distinction between businesses is whether it's deemed 'nonessential' or 'essential', dictating whether a business can remain open.

Zest Bakery and Coffeehouse in Stevens Point is locally-owned by Jake and Brandi Marchant. While the business remains open, it has faced some challenges thus far.



Zest customer utilizes the walk-up window at Zest Bakery and Coffeehouse on Isadore Street.

"A major challenge we face is balancing all of the responsibilities with minimal staff on hand while continuing to engage with our customers. It makes for more work for the fewer people we do have on hand," says Brandi Marchant.

As for changes to its business model, Zest has implemented a walk-up window, in lieu of in-shop ordering, as well as some menu adjustments and unique menu offerings.

"We've also been offering more in the way of cookie decorating kits and such; things that people can do at home," says Marchant. "People are looking for things they can safely do at home, especially with children, and this is one thing we have been able to offer."

Wisconsin businesses have been dealing with the worst of the COVID-19 crisis for at least a month now. However, they will need to continue to find ways to adapt and stay afloat under these conditions for the foreseeable future, as nonessential businesses remain closed and the Safer at Home order has been extended to May 26.

Fortunately, some businesses, including Zest, have been faring better than anticipated. According to Marchant, the local community has been a huge support

during this time.

"I would say business has been more than we expected. It certainly helps that we have gone through two holidays, which are always our busiest time; but so many local people have come out to support us in such a huge way," says Marchant.

Other essential businesses, like food producers, have also experienced different impacts during the stay-at-home order.

Steve Albert is a co-owner and farmer at Prairie Bluff Farm near Mt. Horeb, WI. He says that the farm, which raises chickens for organic eggs, has temporarily

well as eggs for Community Supported Agriculture programs.

At Prairie Bluff Farm, Steve and Beth Albert pasture-raised chickens for organic eggs.

Photo courtesy of Prairie Bluff Farm.

"I think people have just been looking more for foods that are available outside of the grocery store," says Albert.

For businesses allowed to remain operating, such as Pasture Patterns and Zest, being able to keep the business going while also engaging in higher-safety practices has been crucial.

For Zest, that has meant closing its doors and utilizing a walk-up window for service. At Pasture Patterns, the farm has increased sanitation practices, mask-wearing and other practices to ensure optimal safety and cleanliness.

Moving forward in Stevens Point, Wiza says that the Economic Recovery Team will continue to have both private and public meetings to ensure the needs of Portage County and Stevens Point businesses are being met.

"We're addressing all of them to the best of our ability, and trying to make sure nobody slips through the cracks," says Wiza.

As Wisconsin businesses continue to acclimate to a changing economic environment, the support of community members and community-focused organizations, as well as a positive attitude, is vital.

"There are so many different aspects of life that have been turned upside down," says Marchant. "But we're sticking together, supporting each other and staying positive."

For more information and resources on economic recovery efforts in Portage County, visit portageeconrecovery.org. For delicious baked goods and hot beverages, visit Zest Bakery and Coffeehouse on Isadore Street in Stevens Point. More information on Pasture Patterns Eggs can be found at prairieblufffarm.com.



At Prairie Bluff Farm, Steve and Beth Albert pasture-raised chickens for organic eggs.

Photo courtesy of Prairie Bluff Farm.



Farmers' Market Stays Busy During Tough Times

As the winter farmers' market comes to a seasonal close, the summer market begins May 2.

Photo courtesy of the Stevens Point Farmers Market

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The Stevens Point farmers' market continues to be a reliable place to find local and sustainable food during the COVID-19 epidemic.

The Stevens Point Winter Market, which saw continued sales and community presence, finished its winter run on April 25. As an essential food resource, the summer market-on-the-square is still set to begin on May 2, though it will include additional public safety practices.

Joel Kuenhold, owner of Lonely Oak Farm and manager of the summer farmers' market, says that the market is still a place for people to find local food.

"We still strongly believe that a farmer market is an essential service," says Kuenhold. "To our community, it's getting food into the hands of people that need it the most."

In regards to public health, the summer market will be following "Covid-19 Strategies for Farmers Markets" from the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

This document includes numerous strategies and ways for people and vendors to stay safe while picking up fresh produce, meats and other local foods.

According to Kuenhold, "The biggest thing is that it's outside, there's fewer people, more spacing and fewer people that are handling the food."

Still, Kuehold advises people to use the market as an essential service, as opposed to a social gathering at this time.

"Really, only one person per household should be coming out. Just follow those guidelines set forth by the state, they're there for a reason, which is to keep everyone healthy," says Kuenhold.

The winter farmers' market was in the midst of its seasonal run when Wisconsin instituted its "stay-at-home" order on March 25. Following the order, some of the market's operations changed for public health reasons.

John Petrillo, farmer and co-owner of Liberation Farm in Almond, WI, has been selling goods grown at his small, diversified farm at Stevens Point farmers' markets since 2013.

According to Petrillo, the winter market, "Started taking precautionary measures back at the end of March."

At that time, the market was moved to an outdoor setting and more buffer zones were created for space, among other strategies that were implemented. Since that time, Petrillo says that more people have been shopping at the market, while his farm has had a boost in sales, as well.

"Compared to the last couple of winter markets, sales have gone up and more people are sourcing food from the farmers' market, which is awesome," says Petrillo.

As people look for ways to be outside and avoid stores, the farmers' market has continued to be an outlet for fresh and healthy food. Even so, many people have decided to get local food by directly ordering from farms or joining a Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, program.

Lonely Oak Farm and Liberation Farm both do direct orders to customers as well as CSA programs.

At Lonely Oak Farm, the CSA program is run year round. In addition to community member orders, the farm also supplies many local restaurants, including Emy J's and Father Fats in Stevens Point, with meat and other goods. In this area, Lonely Oak has felt some of the impacts



The winter farmers' market saw continuing sales and food traffic this season.

Photo courtesy of Farm Fresh Atlas.

of COVID-19.

"With the closure of restaurants, I am missing out on some money from there," says Kuenhold.

Liberation Farm has its own CSA program for meat, eggs, and coffee. The farm has seen an increase in egg CSA members as well as increased egg demand at the farmers' market.

"People tasted the difference between a fresh, local, pasture-raised egg," says Petrillo.

Liberation Farms is also home to a farm-to-table café, coffee roastery, and local food marketplace. While the farm's operations and sales have been relatively stable, the social atmosphere at the café has been dampened.

"It has changed more at our café, because everything is carry-out now," says Petrillo.

At the farmers' market, the social as-

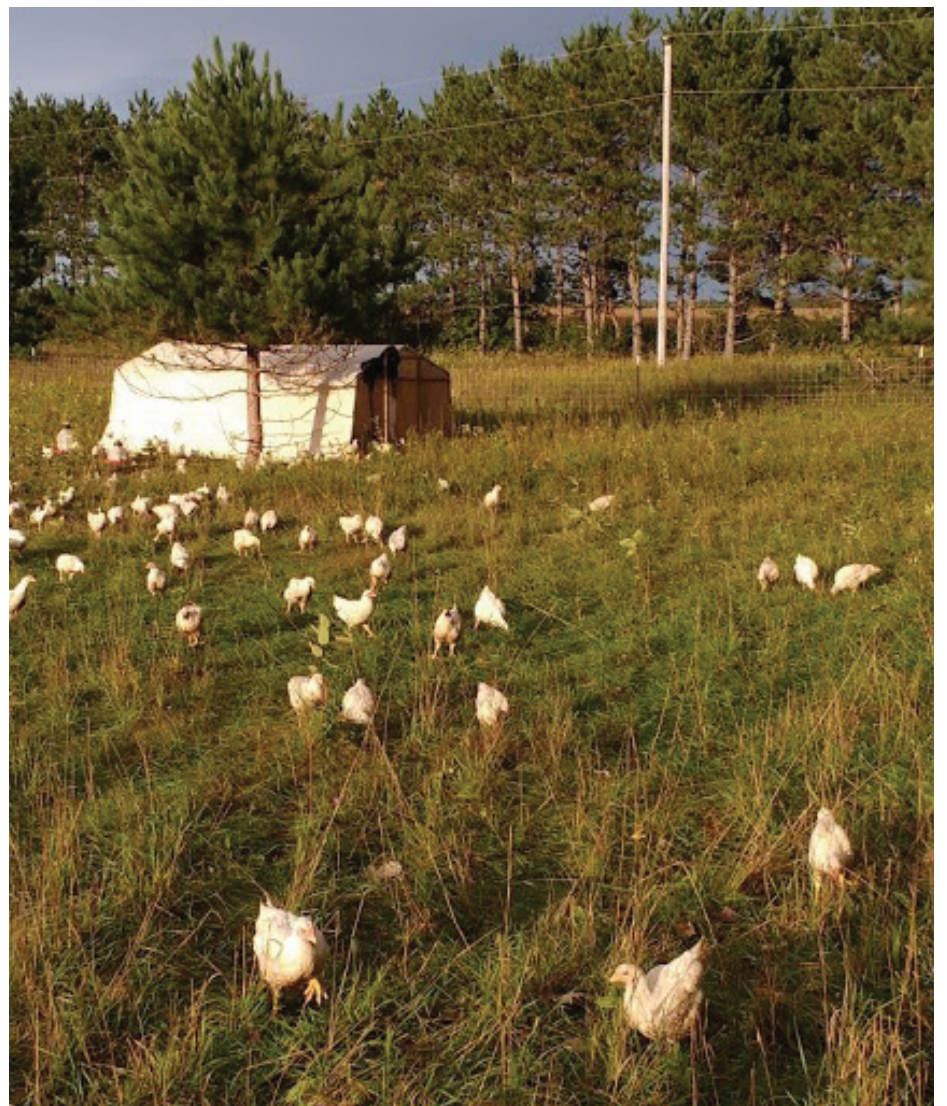
pect will be a little different as well. For many people, the farmers' market is an enjoyable community event to spend outside with family and friends.

"It's as much of a social thing as a place to buy groceries," says Petrillo.

Still, the Stevens Point farmers' market offers people a safe, outdoor activity and place where they can find fresh vegetables, fruits, eggs, meats, baked goods and more; all the while supporting small farms and local growers.

"I hope once they experience it, they'll see how great it is," says Petrillo.

More information on Liberation Farm can be found on their social media pages or at liberationfarmers.com. Information on Lonely Oak Farm can be found at lonelyoakfarm.net or on their Facebook page. Be sure to check out the Stevens Point summer farmers' market, located in downtown Stevens Point, starting May 2.



As the winter farmers' market comes to a seasonal close, the summer market begins May 2.

Photo courtesy of the Stevens Point Farmers Market.

Essential Workers During COVID-19

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Many students are working hard to adjust to online school. Some students have the added struggle of being deemed an essential worker.

Many of the jobs deemed “essential” are positions heavily held by younger workers and students. These jobs include fast food employees and grocery store workers. All healthcare workers are also helping to fight the pandemic.

Haley Wold, a sophomore sociology and social work major at UWSP, works at an assisted living home in Boyceville, WI. She’s a part time employee who works anywhere from 16 to 48 hours.

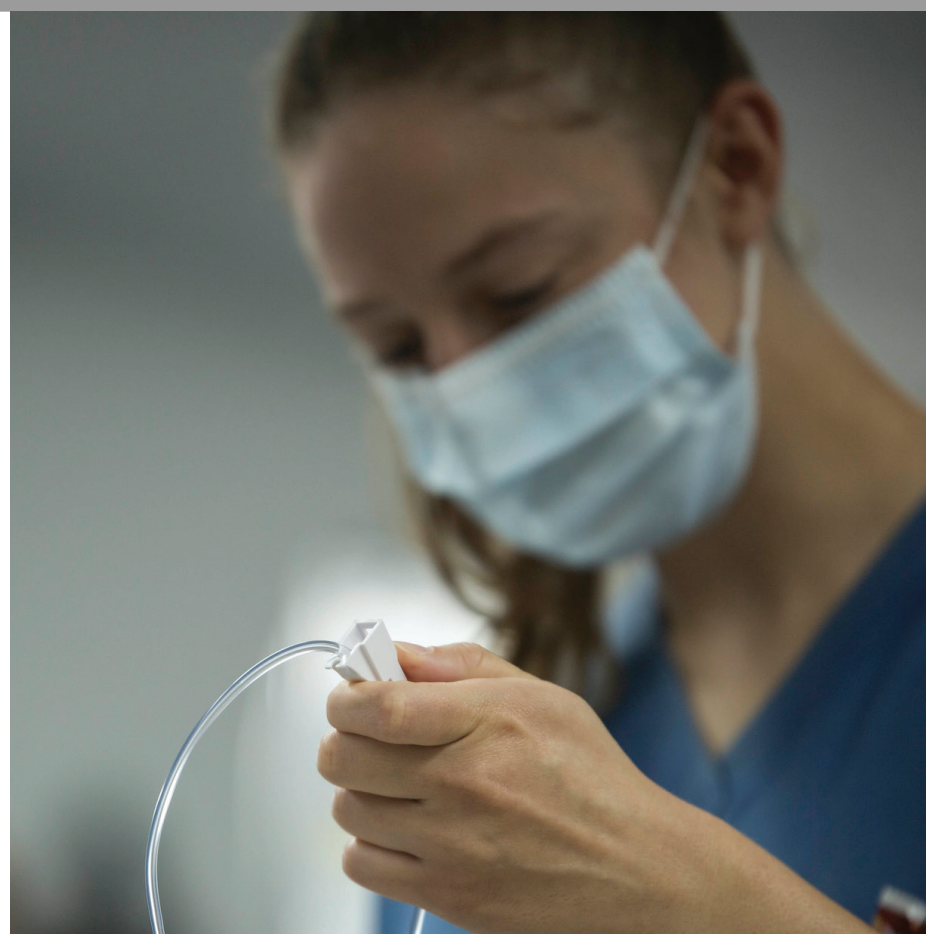
The pandemic has added more responsibilities to her work day. All surfaces are wiped down rigorously. Residents are showered more often, which means she is showering at least two residents for every eight hour shift.

Despite the added responsibilities there are less employees working. Management has warned employees to stay home at any sign of sickness. This means more employees are calling in and those who continue to work are left with a heavier workload.

This is common practice across many organizations. Many businesses are suspending points systems that punish employees for calling in too many times. They’re urging employees to stay home at any sign of sickness to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

With many businesses closing those that remain open are flooded with customers. Grocery store employees are overwhelmed and overworked. Stores such as Aldi have hired temporary employees to accommodate while other make do with their current staff.

Social distancing has caused many to reevaluate who they consider essential workers. Grocery store employees and fast food workers are providing essential services to ensure society keeps going.



Essential Navy Hospitalman Emily Childs, from 3rd Medical Battalion, aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt in Guam.

Photo by Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Jordan E. Gilbert under Flickr user “Navy Medicine.”

Students Studying Abroad Forced Back Home due to COVID-19

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Studying abroad either internationally or nationally, all students in the UWSP Study Aboard and National Student Exchange (NSE) programs, were told to end their program early and come back to their homes due to COVID-19.

The Office of International Education (OIE) at UWSP sent an email to all the current students on a program that they only had a few days to return back home.

Claudia Neve, junior majoring in Communication Media Studies, was on a semester trip to Ireland, one of the recipients on this email from the OIE saying she had to come back. She received the email March 14 and had to buy her own way back and fly out on March 17, St. Patrick’s Day, ironically.

Already planning to spend \$12,000 for a semester abroad in Ireland, she is worried that she won’t get any money back.

Study Abroad Advisor and NSE Coordinator, Katya Leek, said that student will “get refunds for housing and meals.”

It’ll take some time due to delays with the pandemic, but students will get some

still finishing up classes at home online.

“I was able to take classes that weren’t offered at UWSP that weren’t towards my major but for the experience,” Neve explained. “I’m still continuing classes online but it’s really difficult because there is a 6-hour time difference.”

It was hard for Neve to say goodbye to her new friends so soon, but she says she would definitely go again if she had the opportunity to truly complete the program.

Neve said, “Study abroad pushes you to grow, mature, learn and adapt to new environments.”

Despite programs ending early right now, Leek is still hopeful for the summer, fall and future programs for the students.

The summer and fall programs have been postponed and only one program has been canceled: Australia; since their semester starts in July, the program has been postponed to next spring.

There are a few options the OIE is giving for students. If they have a summer or fall program that they are able to transfer their application for the next year.

“Many applications have been transferred,” Leek said. “I’m really surprised by the outcome of spring applications. Nobody’s canceling, they all want to study abroad!”

By giving students the hope of still of-



(L-R) Students Hanna, Anyon Rettinger, Hayley Simmons, travel abroad together to France and stopped by the Eiffel Tower awhile back.

Photo Courtesy of @UWSP StudyAbroad on Instagram.

fering programs for the future because it is worth it but gives them hope.

“I believe this gives them hope to return back to normal.” Leek expressed.

Study abroad programs are usually planned two semesters in advanced, so planning is key. The NSE is another option that is less known but becoming popular. The student pays UWSP tuition but able to travel to another U.S. state, take classes, while they still get a new culture experience.

The OIE follows the CDC guidelines and watches where the levels are at for students to travel to other countries as well as working with each individually country and the program. If the level is 3 or 4, they cannot travel but if it’s 1 or 2 they can. Both partners, Leek and the abroad schools, are trying their hardest to make sure summer and fall programs happen and give student’s this experience.

Leek expresses, the UWSP OIE have been “very hands on, receiving positive feedback on how we handled it.” They were one of the more helpful, positive and smooth institutions with this transition during this time for students and tried to make it the easiest for them.

Alison Anthony, junior Biology major, is planning to study abroad in the fall in Hungary and her program is suspended. Being accepted back in December, she’s been planning this trip for months and won’t find out until July at the latest, if the program is officially on or not.

“I’m disappointed because I have been planning this for so long, that it’s suspended and right now it doesn’t sound like we’ll be able to go because they keep

placing more restrictions on travel.”

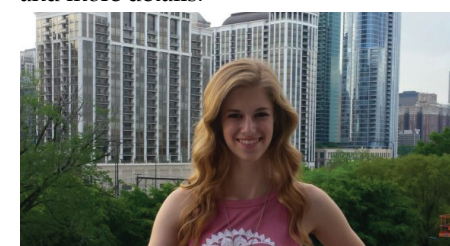
Anthony mentioned she could still make it work if her program is canceled for the fall but chose to transfer it to the spring, she’d “definitely consider it,” depending on her biology classes and schedule play out.

She doesn’t want to pass up this opportunity, neither does Neve, if she could go again.

Both Anthony and Neve, going to be seniors, they mentioned they would consider delaying their graduation date for this unique experience.

“We’re here to help everyone and have an amazing experience,” Leek emphasizes. Leek and the rest of the OIE at UWSP are working hard in making all programs happen and all students able to receive this opportunity.

For more information on future programs and all details on NSE and Study Abroad, check out the UWSP Study Abroad website for virtual advising meetings. Or follow them on Facebook at UWSP Study Abroad, and Instagram @UWSP_Study Abroad, to see student’s personal stories sharing their experiences and more details.



Alison Anthony planning to study abroad in fall 2020 in Hungary; if all gets better with COVID-10 travel restrictions and her program isn’t canceled.

Photo courtesy of Alison Anthony.



Claudia Neve while traveling abroad in Ireland this spring 2020 semester.

Photo Courtesy of Claudia Neve.

kind of refund for their program. In addition, UWSP has been one of the few schools to be able to give refunds for students from these programs.

Not just refunds but the University of Limerick, the school Neve studied at, is



UWSP OIE Study Abroad Advisor and NSE Coordinator, Katya Leek.

Photo Courtesy of Katya Leek.



Cameron Cieszki.
Photo by Bea Schmitt.

Series Finale

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It's difficult to write a send-off without acknowledging how the elephant in the room completely changed the course of the semester. I obviously never imagined Zoom calls and online assignments would govern the end of my undergraduate experience.

Nevertheless, this is the new normal for now.

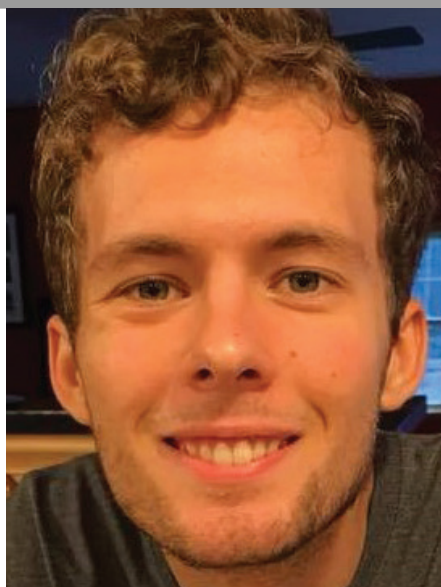
I won't lie - it has been extremely challenging just getting through the rest of the semester. Overwhelming dread, uncertainty, and fatigue have dictated my life in quarantine. Any sort of wish to establish a routine or be moderately productive - out the window.

Despite these troubles, our staff's weekly Zoom meetings never failed to brighten and invigorate my day.

A huge thank you is due to my Co-Editor Jeremy, Dr. Steve Hill, and the rest of the staff at The Pointer; their determination and character have been crucial to keeping the paper (and my sanity) alive. I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside such stellar people.

I hope the Division of Communication continues to support and fund student media for the foreseeable future. Beyond just The Pointer, both SPTV and 90FM have been formative in solidifying my passion for critiquing and examining media. Also - they just work fucking hard.

Although I'm sad to see UWSP go, I am eager to pursue my professional master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communications at the UW-Madison in the fall!



Jeremy Wolfe.
Photo by Jeremy Wolfe.

See Y'all Later, Maybe

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I'm a little sad, and a little happy.

I'm sad to know that I'll be entering the U.S. economy. I'll just be another laboring palm in the American workforce - this supermassive orgy of comfort and commodity that exploits all others on a global scale.

If I'm anything like the average American, I'll spend the vast majority of the rest of my life doing two things: sleeping; and making just enough money to live and feel coddled, for the profit of some faceless corporation. And then I'll die.

I'm happy to know that I won't be plummeting into debt (at least, for a couple years. haha.) Now I just have to pay whatever bills come and forget the rest. Some other generation will have to worry about how fundamentally broken our nation is:

It's abundantly clear that our entire political system promotes the exploitation of students; our government would rather drone-strike family gatherings than support its own infrastructure. We can't even lose our debt in bankruptcy anymore.

I'm a little sad to know that our graduation ceremonies have all been postponed. It feels like I've already finished college, and now all this extra work is just some closing follow-up. To be optimistic, I hope that this deferred validation will drive me to work harder than ever toward further self-improvement.

I'm a little happy to know that the pandemic hit during my last semester here. I spent the last 4 years telling myself (and being told) that, once graduation hits, everything will be different forever. And, now that everything is different, I feel completely psychologically unaffected. It's pretty nice.

I hope that the Pointer continues to do well as it and our university struggle to survive within the corporate-welfare state. I hope our nation learns the basic foundation of successful modern infrastructure: education, medicine, and transportation.



Nathan Dorn.
Photo by Nathan Dorn.

It Ends With a Whisper

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This has been a strange way to end college. But it happened. I'm not sure what kind of note college was supposed to end on, but this was definitely unexpected.

How would it have felt, leaving the lecture hall of my last class for the final time? Or walking around a busling campus during finals week, students heading this way and that, eager with anticipation for exams to be over?

Let's not forget taking that last exam and feeling such relief at being finished, being done. And this time, for good.

But then I think about it, about how things truly don't go the way we visualize them in our minds before they happen. The fact that experiences - small, large, and everything in between - tend to turn out at least a little differently than anticipated. It's what adds surprise, excitement, grief, sadness, and every other emotional quality that grabs our attention on a daily basis. It's what makes life, life.

Even so, it can be difficult to adjust to unforeseen circumstances; to allow ourselves the flexibility to change course, and maybe even find some enjoyment and value in the revision.

Now, as college comes to a fairly

anticlimactic, and completely unforeseen close, I can't help but realize how easy it is to get caught-up with ends, lasts and finals.

These four years have been incredible in so many ways: from the amazing people I've met to the influential experiences I've had. So it seems wrong to let these final, bizarre couple of months of college overshadow all the good and important things that have happened along the way.

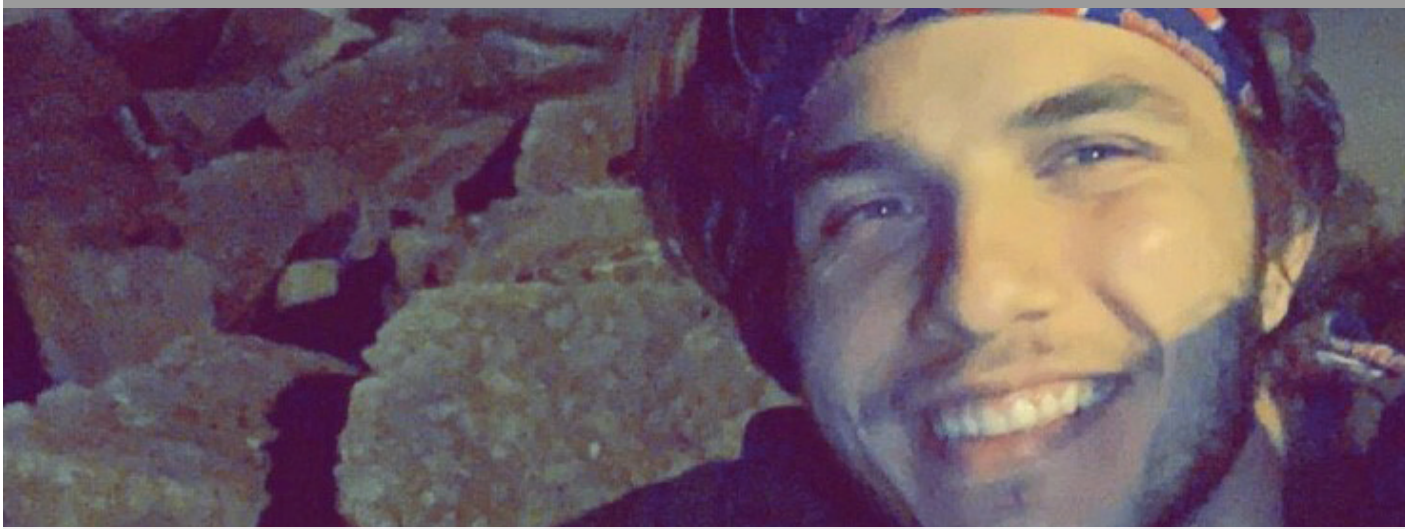
We all love a good finale: a neat-and-tidy, satisfying closure to our experiences, myself included. But the world almost always takes us in unanticipated directions.

And it's these unanticipated directions that not only make life compelling, but also shed light on new directions, opportunities, and options that weren't previously available or apparent to us.

In the end, what matters is the manner in which we react to the axiom of change that determines the quality of our lives; not the last or final bit.

I feel grateful and happy for the sum of these four years of learning, experience, and growth. The number of unique, enjoyable and meaningful things that have happened are difficult to count, but easy to remember.

College didn't end with a bang. But then again, it didn't really need to.



USWP Senior Jerry Markarian.
Photo by Jerry Markarian.

My Unfinished, Finished, Journey

JERRY MARKARIAN
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This was not the plan. This was not the way my senior year was supposed to end.

Online. Away from my professors. My classmates. My friends that I have made over my last three years while attending the wonderful UW-Stevens Point.

This online schooling situation was something that I honestly could've seen myself loving in previous years-- I'm home with my family whom I love dearly. I'm still getting very good grades in my classes, and this will turn out to be one of my best semesters academically.

But right now? Why did this have to happen right now?

The chances are good that I will no longer walk at my college graduation, whenever it does finally happen. I will no longer be celebrating that weekend with my family in the house that we rented for the event.

This is also something that I don't think would've really bothered me in the past, but college was not easy. I worked hard and this is the first time in my life where I feel proud of something that I accomplished.

Honestly, I have felt a lot of guilt lately for feeling down about missing out on the ceremony. It's nothing more than a walk on a stage. I know there are people out there dying. There are people who have lost loved ones. There are people out there who are living lives far worse than mine, and I feel very grateful for the spot that I am in.

My college experience was an unorthodox one for a few different reasons. The first of which being it almost didn't even happen.

I graduated high school with a 2.2 GPA, and my odds of attending a

university school looked bleak. My first application to UW- Parkside was denied, and I was forced to re-apply with a letter explaining how I planned to do better in college. Luckily, they accepted my second application and I will forever be grateful to them for doing so.

While Parkside allowed me to get my foot in the door, I knew they were only the first step on my road to being where I actually wanted to be. I was planning on transferring to either UW- Whitewater or UW-Stevens Point after my freshman year.

In the end, I chose Stevens Point because I really loved the scenery when I visited my friend Jayden on campus the year before. My best friend Anthony was also looking to transfer out of Parkside, and we decided that we would live together on campus at Point.

While attending Stevens Point, my experience also strayed away from the norm because I came home to visit my family every weekend. It is a three-hour drive (or four when I visit my girlfriend in Chicago) but it was always worth it to never miss a family gathering (it also gave me a newfound love of podcasts).

I completely understand that traveling home may have hampered my ability to make the most of my time in college, but I would not change a thing if I were given the opportunity to do it all over again.

One thing that I would change about my time spent at Stevens Point was how much I got involved on campus. This semester was my first spent with The Pointer, and it has overall been one of the most enjoyable experiences during my time in college.

If I were given the option to change one thing about my time in college I

would go back to my first semester and sign up as a sports reporter for The Pointer. I hope to one day be a sports reporter for a leading writing agency, and The Pointer offered me some wonderful learning experiences that I will be able to bring with me to my field.

As a Communications major, I was able to create some things that I never thought I was creative enough to have a hand in. I was able to work closely with some of the best professors this university has to offer, and I could not possibly fit all that I have learned from them in a tiny blurb on a Senior Profile.

As a professional writing minor, I was able to greatly further my writing abilities. Much like my major, I was lucky enough to work with some very engaging professors that pushed me to do my best. It was also there that I learned what it was like working on the university's criminally underrated student-run Cornerstone Press, which was a really amazing experience.

As an individual, I grew, and I adapted, and I changed. I broke out of the shell that held me back for so many years and I am beyond thankful for the experiences that have made me the man that I am today.

I made a few friends that I know I will stay in contact with for the rest of my life, and I think I was also able to leave a positive imprint on a few more people's lives.

As far as my next step goes, your guess is as good as mine. I have no idea where I will be five years, let alone five months down the line, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't scared.

No, I don't know where I am going. What I do know, however, is that I am eternally grateful for every inch of the road from where I came.

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Pointer Profiles

These profiles highlight student athletes that have been competing for UWSP.

Pointer Profile: Allison Berger



Allison Berger. Photo courtesy of UWSP Athletics.

JERRY MARKARIAN
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jmark234@uwsp.edu

Sport: Volleyball

Year: Sophomore

Major: Business

Hometown: Sheboygan, WI

How long have you been playing volleyball? I have been playing volleyball since 5th grade. I joined a team at the Boys and Girls Club when I lived in West Bend. I quickly fell in love with the sport and have been playing ever since.

Why did you decide to start playing volleyball? My parents had a huge influence on me. They both played when I was younger and introduced me to it. My mom coached me when I was younger at the Boys and Girls club where I found I was naturally good at it and continued to play.

Have you ever played any other sports? I have played a wide variety of different sports. I played basketball, soccer, track, tennis, swim, dance, and softball. As I grew up I continued to play softball, basketball, and track along with volleyball. I wasn't the best at basketball because I didn't care for it much, I mostly just played because my friends did. I really enjoyed track while I was in middle school in which I competed in hurdles and the mile run. While my enjoyment for the other sports decreased, I continued to play softball and volleyball through high school, both of which I was very passionate about. I lettered in softball four times and three times in volleyball while competing both at my school and for clubs in both sports.

Why did you choose volleyball over the other sports? I was originally going to play softball at Stevens Point but made a

last minute decision to try out for the volleyball team. Once I made the volleyball team I decided it was best to not participate in both sports at the collegiate level because I wanted to focus on academics. I was more experienced in volleyball which made it too hard to make the decision to stop playing after high school.

What do you consider a successful season for yourself? A successful season is when my participation in some way assists in making the team overall better. Being an asset for the team wherever I can fit in by accomplishing both personal goals and team goals. Consistently getting better at volleyball as the season goes on is also another indicator for what I believe a successful season consists of. Focusing on making the team better in any way that I can is the largest indicator for a successful season. If I can walk away at the end of the year knowing that the team wouldn't have been the same without my involvement I know I had a successful season.

What is your favorite memory from playing volleyball? My favorite memory is from our last season when we beat Whitewater in the Conference Championship and continued all the way to the

Sweet Sixteen. Just seeing that all of the hard work and dedication our team was committed to putting in every day at practice and workouts to make it to the NCAA Tournament was so motivating. Being with my teammates day in and day out trying to become the best team possible and getting to compete in such a high level of play felt like all of the hard work was worth it. Making it to the NCAA Tournament and beating Whitewater to be the conference champs will forever be one of my favorite volleyball memories.

Why did you choose to come to Stevens Point? I chose to come to Stevens Point because I thought it was the perfect fit for me. I knew I wanted to go to a smaller school and play a sport since I had so much passion for sports. I didn't want to be too far from home or too close so a two hour drive to Stevens Point from my house was perfect. When I toured the campus everyone was just so nice and caring which made my decision a lot easier. I am forever grateful that I came to Stevens Point because I have made the best memories here and have met some of my bestest friends so I know I picked the right school for me.

Pointer Profile: Tommy Duddleston



Tommy Duddleston. Photo Courtesy of UWSP Athletics.

CALE JACOBY
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Sport: Baseball

Year: Senior

Major: Sociology

Hometown: Chicago, IL

How long have you been playing baseball? In the house and in the yard, probably since I could walk, but organized, probably since I was like four.

Did you play other sports before college? Yeah: basketball, football, and hockey.

Did you ever consider playing any of those sports collegiately? Yeah. I actually played my freshman year at Point; I played football, and then after that, I just stuck with baseball.

What are you interested in within the sociology major? To be completely honest, I have no idea. It's just the one thing that gives me the most interest. That was just really my choice for choosing it. It kept me focused on school.

What has been your favorite aspect of playing college baseball? Probably all the things outside of actually physically playing baseball. Just being with your team every day. You know, you live with them; you practice with them every day and then bus rides, staying in hotels. It's honestly, it's a step below minor league

baseball, so that's the really cool thing about it that you get to experience that.

What is the biggest difference between high school baseball and college baseball? I would say the biggest difference is probably pitching, how much better pitching is, and how much more goes into the game. It's kind of hard to explain but where high school you just show up, you play, win or lose, game over, where in college you're showing up three hours before the game, you're taking BP, you're getting early work done, practicing, and then you play, and sometimes you play a doubleheader. After that, you go back to the hotel and then you have a meeting that night to talk about the game, to really just talk about baseball and you learn from the good things and the bad things which is really cool.

Do you have a favorite memory from your baseball career? The one that sticks out to me the most was when I was playing summer ball with the Wisconsin Woodchucks in Wausau. We were playing in Kalamazoo and one of their relief

pitchers, he was a closer, he came in and he was throwing like 100 to 103, and he missed my face by like six inches. It's not a favorite but definitely one of the most memorable.

What advice would you give an incoming freshman college baseball player? To play college baseball, I would say you have got to manage your time wisely, especially being a student-athlete. It's really hard to be a good student-athlete, have a social life, stay connected with your family back home, and get enough sleep and the right nutrition and all of that stuff, so I mean you kind of have to cut one out I would say. You've got to focus on your athletics and academics, and then most people have a social life or at least try to. You've got to try and get enough sleep, and I would say most of the people I know don't get enough sleep, because they'd rather have a social life and be athletically and academically successful. The simplest way to put it is just to manage your time wisely.



MICHELLE PETKOVSEK
UWSP - 1ST RELAY LEG

Track and Field Has Virtual Meet

Georgia Harrison, Emma Guenther, Michelle Petkovsek.
Image Courtesy of YouTube @UW-Lacrosse Athletics.

CALE JACOBY
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With the coronavirus cancelling the track and field season, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-La Crosse's Women's Track and Field teams competed in a virtual meet from April 14 to April 18.

There were multiple creative events included in the virtual meet including the peanut butter and jelly relay, frozen pizza discus, milk jug weight throw, swing set long jump, speedy dish wash, card-stacking, toilet paper jump, piece-it-together - which is putting together a 300 piece puzzle - handstands, and "hurdle this."

UW-La Crosse would come out on top beating UW-Stevens Point by a score of 8-4.

In the first event, speedy dish wash, senior Isabelle Kick of UWL beat out senior Lydia Ulrich of UWSP by over 20 seconds.

In the swing set long jump, UWSP junior Adrienne Lewis lost to UWL senior McKenzie Kirtz by only 2.75 inches.

In the card stack competition, UWL senior Katheryne Horne beat UWSP sophomore Paige Allemann by 6.25 inches.

In the milk jug throw competition, UWL senior Brianna Schyvinck lost to UWSP senior Larkin Hoepner by about half a meter.

In the puzzle race, UWSP sophomore Katie Schaefer lost to UWL senior Hanna Meyer by about 36 minutes.

In the pizza toss competition, UWSP sophomore Makenzie Lueck beat UWL senior Brittany Jaeger by over four meters.

In the hurdle race, UWL senior Erin Zajc beat sophomore Kalena Clauer by a full second.

In the toilet paper high jump, UWL senior Kemmesha Thomas eclipsed seven rolls while UWSP senior Briana Simonis

had the edge jumping over ten rolls of toilet paper.

In the handstand competition, UWSP sophomore Audrey Wright was able to hold her handstand for over 11 seconds longer than UWL senior Cassie Buelow to edge her in the competition.

In the peanut butter and jelly relay, UWSP long-distance runners Georgia Harrison, Michelle Petkovsek, and Emma Guenther lost by over a minute and 20 seconds to UWL Track and Field athletes Sophie Klein, Emma Platzbecker, and Libby Brugger.

UWL Track and Field athlete McKenzie Kirtz had the idea of the virtual meet and her coach put together the events, rules, and scoring criteria and sent it to UWSP.

UWSP Track and Field athletes would film their events and then send it in to UW-La Crosse for them to decipher the results and put it together.

Senior Track and Field athlete Larkin Hoepner said, "Most of the events were just modified versions of our actual events, whereas others like the speedy dish wash and card stacking were just events people would be able to do from home."

The virtual meet proved to be a creative and fun way for track and field athletes to continue to compete during these trying times.



Larkin Hoepner.

Photo Courtesy of UWSP Athletics.

NCAA Extra Year of Eligibility Helps Some But Not All

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The NCAA voted to allow an extra year of eligibility for 2020 student-athletes in spring sports on March 30 but did not allow any extra eligibility for winter-sport student-athletes and left it up to the universities to decide how much financial assistance to give the student-athletes.

The universities themselves will largely be the ones deciding if a student-athlete gets an extra season or not. For DI and II universities, the universities themselves get to decide how much scholarship aid to give athletes, whether that's the full amount or none of it.

For DIII student-athletes, like the athletes at UWSP, athletic scholarships are not allowed to be given in the first place, so if a UWSP athlete wishes to use their extra season, they would need to pay their extra spring semester tuition in full.

The NCAA did release a statement saying that "The Division III Adminis-



Calden Wojt. Photo Courtesy of UWSP Athletics.

trative Committee provided flexibility for schools to assist students with travel, lodging, and meals as a result of campus displacements."

The student-athletes are receiving assistance in that regard, but for some senior student-athletes, their decision on whether to use the extra eligibility depends on whether or not they planned to graduate this spring.

Senior track and field athlete Calden

Wojt talked about his thoughts on the NCAA's decision.

He said, "For a lot of people I think it'll be a good idea, because no one could have seen this coming, but at the same time, there's still going to be seniors like myself that aren't going to use it, because I for example want to get on with my life. I can't be waiting because I'm graduating. I can't afford another year of coming back just to run track."

Senior track and field athlete Briana Simonis discussed whether she would use the extra eligibility. She said, "I am going to be at UWSP regardless, so I am definitely coming back to compete."

Both Simonis and Wojt discussed their thoughts on winter-sport student-athletes not receiving any extra eligibility.

Simonis said, "The extra spring eligibility is a great start to helping the athletes, but what many are hoping to see is the reinstatement of those who went to compete in national championships get their season back."



Briana Simonis. Photo Courtesy of UWSP Athletics.

Wojt said, "I guess I can understand that, because the winter-sports people did get all of their seasons in, but we spring athletes didn't even get the chance to finish ours, so with this extra year, everyone will be able to get all four years of eligibility, so I think that's fair."

While the NCAA's decision amid the coronavirus is beneficial to some student-athletes, others are left in the dark.

Trivia Contest Postponed

SARAH SARTELL
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The new trend of concerts and festivals to be cancelled or postponed have been on the rise recently and this is also affecting UWSP's own campus radio station largest worldwide Trivia 51 contest.

90FM is UWSP's student-run campus radio station that plays alternative music but has many special events during the year such as holding the annual 90FM Trivia Contest every April. It was cancelled due to the crisis but that isn't stopping the 90FM executive staff in planning one for the fall and next spring. This year is supposed to be Trivia 51.

The week of March 9, right before spring break for UWSP students, they were notified by Chancellor Bernie Patterson that their spring break was extended until March 29. This was the start of everything being postponed for the campus.

Jim Oliver, trivia coordinator for 90FM, made the decision to cancel this year's trivia due to this announcement after hearing the news on the extended spring break.

Oliver did have the idea of having "Retro Trivia" in place over the same weekend Trivia would be, the weekend of April 17-19. There was questions from the past 50 trivia's that listeners could play on their own at home, but no one kept score like they normally do, have prizes or any kind of places but for fun during this period.



News and Public Affairs Director for 90FM Anna Herrmann. Photo Courtesy of Anna Herrmann.

Trivia is a huge fundraising contest not only for the radio station and UWSP but the Stevens Point community too. The 90FM studio runs a 60-mile radius all around Stevens Point. News and Public Affairs Director for 90FM, Anna Herrmann explains how big of an event this is for both communities.

"People travel all over to play," Herrman said, noting that postponement is "not just hurting the campus but the community as well."

Over 300 teams and 8,000 participants from all over come for this worldwide event, so it brings a big crowd and that wouldn't be able to happen due to the Safer at Home order from Governor Tony Evers. Gov Evers officially declared the second week of April "Trivia Week" in honor of 90FM, and because it is the largest trivia contest in the world.

It is a pretty big deal but still hard to hear that it got postponed. The executive staff at 90FM also have been planning for trivia for months but now they have even more time for the contest being rescheduled for Oct 23-25. They will also have the contest in the spring for their annual calendar.

"We're not cancelling the whole thing completely but still have the opportunity to do this even if it's at a later date," Herrmann said. They are trying to stay positive and keep this special tradition going.

WWSP 90FM radio also puts on other events such as an on-air auction every December, called Radio-athon, Beatlesfest in early May playing all Beatles songs for a weekend, Dylan Days playing all Bob Dylan music for a weekend as well.

According to NME, an article recently published "Healthcare expert predicts concerts and festivals will not return until autumn 2021" Caleb Triscari reported.

There was a conference hosted by the New York Times bioethicist and professor of healthcare management Zeke Emanuel says he has no idea when concerts and festivals to start again but he thinks "realistically we're talking fall 2021 at the earliest."

Many major festivals and concerts have announced their postponed dates for later this year. Taylor Swift's Lover



WWSP90FM is UWSP's student run campus radio station and holds many events during the year, including the world's largest trivia contest held every April. Photo Courtesy of Anna Herrmann.

Fest and all her concerts are cancelled for the rest of the year. Summerfest, world's largest music festival here in Milwaukee, is from the end of June to early July, is postponed for early September. CUSA or Country USA, the biggest stars in country music coming to Oshkosh, WI, was scheduled for late June and rescheduled for mid-August.

Emanuel believes that larger group gatherings such as sport events, concerts and festivals will be the last to return but 2021? That doesn't sit well for concert goers and fans. Major events such as these stated above bring in so much money for all of these communities and their reputations. Americans are not able to be in public or do anything outside their house, they are eager to see their favorite artists in concert and enjoy the summertime.

A few concert goers had something to say about how they're feeling and getting through hearing the recent news and now their plans are changing.

Dianna Broas, junior majoring in history and international studies, planned on going to the BTS concert for early June in Chicago but found out a few weeks ago that the show is not cancelled but postponed yet, no new dates announced.

Chelsi Knorr, soon to be graduate majoring in health promotion and wellness, has been to CUSA for a handful of times and including going this year but they found out recently that it's been postponed and has a few options if they couldn't attend the new scheduled dates.

Both Broas and Knorr are really sad about their concerts being postponed because they were looking forward to them.

Broas said she's "sad that it's cancelled," because it was part of her birthday trip.

Knorr said she "rather have the concerts be postponed than cancelled." Although, Broas also agreed and still hopeful they will be put on but at a later date.

Seeing everything being closed, cancelled or postponed it's hard for everyone and just hoping this pandemic will end soon as possible so they can enjoy their concerts and time with their friends outside in the warm weather.

To help out with 90FM Trivia's contest and more information on the radio station, follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @WWSP90FM or visit their website at 90fm.org.

Ignoring Quarantine Precaution Makes You Look Like a Child

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OPINION

When I was in the fifth grade, I was quarantined for Whooping Cough. Twice. I was home from school for almost two weeks the first time, and thankfully, only three days the second time. I had to get tested twice, with a giant cotton swab shoved up my nose to scrap the back of my throat, very similar to the COVID-19 test. I didn't show symptoms. I had a mild cough at worst, and it was likely due to allergies. I was only quarantined and tested because I happened to be in the same place with another kid who had it, first a birthday party then an extracurricular event at another school.

It sucked.

I couldn't be around family or friends. This was before I or any of my friends had a cellphone so I couldn't even text anyone. I was stuck in my room, playing

Mario Kart on the Wii alone. I cried a lot. I even thought I'd fail the fifth grade.

But no matter how hard I cried, no matter how much I wanted to go outside, and no matter how much I wanted to see my friends, I didn't. The only time I left the house was to spend a day with my grandparents and even then, they were both vaccinated and I still wore a mask.

I didn't understand why I couldn't go to school if I wasn't coughing back then. I knew I could get other kids sick and that was it. I wasn't really old enough or smart enough to understand how dangerous Whooping Cough could be to I never once thought of it as a punishment. Of course, I thought it was unfair and I threw a fit, but that changed nothing.

Just like a ten-year-old crying about wanting to go to school doesn't change anything, a bunch of adults throwing tantrums about not being able to get their hair cut doesn't change anything. Unfortunately for public health and safety, there's no parent there to ground them if they try to break their quarantine.

It's absolutely childish and frankly selfish to participate in protests or ignore precautions. The number of people endangered by a small protest is astronomically larger than just the people who went to the protest itself. Those people go on to endanger the safety of their families, including vulnerable demographics like children and senior citizens. It's simple exponential growth but it's easy to ignore facts when they don't support your way of thinking. It's easy for a fifth grader to say "I'm not even sick" when they don't know if that's true or not, and it's easy for an adult to say "I can't get it" when they don't know that.

I understand how stressful this situation can be. I could use a hair cut myself. However, as a rational adult, I also understand how diseases like this spread so easily. All it took to get quarantined the second time around was being in the same building as someone with Whooping Cough, which is why it's important to work within the guidelines of the mandates quarantine.

What's important to remember is that this is temporary. It may be longer than a few weeks, but it is temporary. Businesses will reopen and recover, you'll be able to see your friends again, and if you need it, you can get your hair cut by a professional. In the meantime, we have all these ways of getting around the inconveniences created by necessary measures. Restaurants still have take-out. You can still buy things online. You can still see your friends through social media and zoom, and there are plenty of youtube videos on how to cut your own hair.

There are plenty of things you can do. Learn a new language, try cooking or baking, spend some time with the family or friends you may be quarantined with. But if you'd rather cry and pout about how you can't get your nails done or go eat inside the restaurant then maybe reconsider whether or not you should re-take fifth grade math and science.



Staying Healthy During Quarantine

Image courtesy of Pixabay on Pexels.com.

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COVID-19 has pushed many students back home for the remainder of the semester.

With stress levels high, many students may be drawn towards unhealthy snacks. However, keeping the body and mind healthy is imperative at times of crisis, both to keep the body safe from illness and to keep the mind strong.

Healthy eating may not be the first thing on the minds of these students, but UWSP's registered dietician for Dining and Summer Conferences Becky Konkol believes it is very important.

"If I had to pick five things everyone had in their house, I would really look at those top five food groups," said Konkol. "You know, your fruits, your vegetables, your grains, your protein, and your dairy and picking things from those groups that really are staples for you."

Students may not be used to preparing healthy meals for themselves. Many think that it is too expensive or too difficult. However, Konkol disagrees.

"You know there is that misconception that healthier food costs more and I just don't think that that is 100% accurate," said Konkol. "You can go to a store and



Becky Konkol, the registered dietician for UWSP's Dining and Summer Conferences. Photo courtesy of UWSP.

buy either fresh, canned, or frozen. You can buy in bulk. There's definitely ways to eat healthy and save."

Senior dietetics student Samantha Foote has the same train of thought.

"A bag of chips is three dollars," said Foote. "You could buy so many fruits and vegetables with that, three cans of food for that, eggs, stuff like that... there's definitely ways that they can stick to a budget, right now especially. Grocery stores are doing the pick-up or delivery, so online shopping, you can easily stick to your budget."

With so many more students unemployed now, keeping on a budget is important. Luckily, there are plenty of

cheap foods that can make nutritious and easy meals.

"Carrots, celery," said Konkol. "It's really easy to whip a meal up, you know, a salad. Whatever you got in your fridge goes on a salad. And then looking for those sale proteins. A lot of times you can find chicken, you can find fish on sale."

Foote also had plenty of cheap solutions.

"If you struggle to get your vegetables in, cooked vegetables taste a lot better than raw vegetables," said Foote. "Sautéing is super easy. Just on a pan add some oil, some olive oil or butter, and at medium to low heat add any vegetables on and just cook them for 5-10 minutes and they become a lot tastier. You can add different spices, even just salt and pepper help."

If protein is the problem, there are many cheap alternatives, such as beans and eggs.

While these healthy meals may be feasible for students at home, back at UWSP, a few students still remain on campus. Dining Services is working to still provide food for these students, but in a safer way.

"Right now we have two meal periods—brunch and dinner, Monday through Friday," said Konkol. "Then we have one meal period on Saturday and Sunday."

To keep food clean and students safe, student contact has been diminished.

"We're using the Green-on-the-Go containers, so you can come in, our staff fills up the containers for you," said Konkol. "Then on the weekend you come in on brunch and you get extra Green-on-the-Go containers to give you enough for those meals for the day. There's no in-house dining."

Whether students are at home or on campus, Foote has one reminder.

"Everyone, just stay healthy."



Senior dietetics major Samantha Foote. Photo courtesy of Samantha Foote.

CURRENT VOICES

A STAGED READING SERIES OF STUDENT-WRITTEN WORKS

MONDAY, MAY 4TH - 7:30PM
UWSP PLAYERS FACEBOOK PAGE



Quarantine Isn't Stopping Student Org from Showcasing Student Work

Poster for Current Voices premiering May 4 at 7:30 p.m. via UWSP Players Facebook page.

Photo Courtesy of the UWSP Players Facebook page.

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The Players Student Artistic Alliance strives to sponsor and put on student work through a variety of events throughout the year and is still continuing them during this pandemic through an online format.

Their upcoming events are Spotlight Night on April 24 and Current Voices on May 4, both at 7:30 p.m. via their Facebook page at UWSP Players.

Players is an organization through the department of Theatre and Dance that is run by students, promotes student work, student involvement and student opportunities.

Spotlight Night is an event where students can showcase any kind of talent they want, ranging from a monologue to a dance to a song. Whatever talent the student has and wants to show it off, this night is the event for that, especially during this time.

Junior BA Drama major, Risk Manager for Players and coordinator for Spotlight Night, Morgan Tillman, expresses what she's looking forward to Spotlight Night due to this event being online and not in person per usual.

"How we adapt to this digital concept and see what the students come up with and how people will respond," Tillman said. She can't wait to see their work.

Many people are being creative with all this free time online. Showcasing a talent for this night is definitely a challenge with the circumstances but will be fun to see. Students sent in a self-tape themselves and then posted on the Facebook page on the night of the event.

Spotlight Night may have passed but Tillman mentions that students can send in self-tapes of any talent they would like to share to send it to the Players Facebook page. They want to celebrate all kinds of talent that's more than just a single night.

Another event coming up, Current Voices, is a playwriting-driven event and new to Players events in the recent years. An event that showcases aspiring student playwrights with a passion to write and bring out their creativity in another way.

There are seven plays that were selected for this year's event. Each staged reading will be recorded via Zoom. These plays are a one act, or a max time limit of about 10-minutes, where the playwrights receive feedback on how to improve their play.

A freshman BA Drama and Communications: Media Studies major, Florence Anderson's play was one of the seven that were selected. Anderson is new to the department but she isn't shy of the opportunities. With an event like Current Voices where she can share her work with her peers and learn how to improve her writing.

"It's a really nice opportunity to get

good feedback from my peers," Anderson expressed that whenever she asked for feedback is awkward but an event like this it's perfect and she's super excited to share her play.

It'll be different this year in how they receive feedback because it'll be on the comment section from the post on the Players Facebook page when released.

Anderson mentions she is "excited to see other people's work" and eager to learn and grow from her peers and being so young for this event.

"The Sky I Belong To" is Anderson's played called and she was able to share a sneak peek what her play is about.

A girl named Jupiter born in a city that only exists in the clouds and leaves the city for the first time in her life to explore what she thinks is an abandoned, destroyed world to only find people living including Mercury, the other character in the story.

Anderson's is a sci-fi piece while other

plays in the lineup include dark realism, drama, comedy, and many more.

Spotlight Night and Current Voices are two of the many more events Players host that let students showcase their talent and their work as aspiring artists.

Anderson said Current Voices is "a good event Players does in addition to Fringe." Since not every play or piece of work gets selected into Fringe, this kind of event is another opportunity to work at it and hopefully get selected next year.

Other events Players put on during the year include their annual Fringe Festival happening every spring and it's another student run, student produced and student written production. They are currently releasing staged readings of the chosen plays on their Facebook page since the production was cancelled.

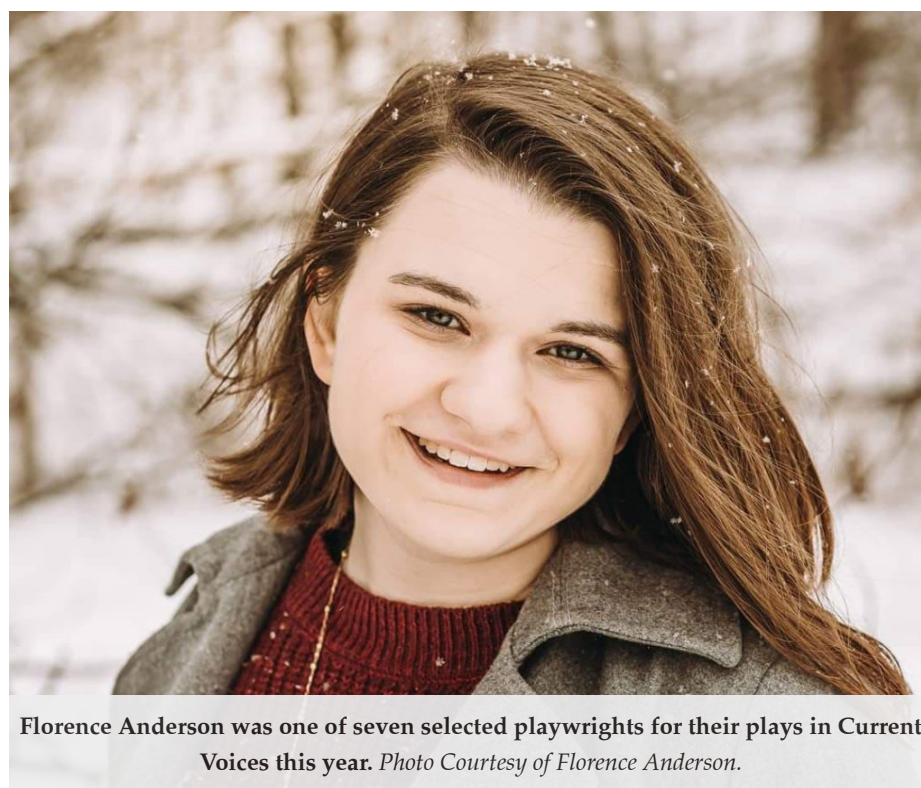
The Artistic Alliance also holds workshops and master classes with as many professionals they can get and plan field trips for students to experience a touring show that comes to town or in the surrounding area.

Even though there are mostly theatre students active in the organization, Tillman stresses that they are open to everyone on campus and always love to see new students join.

Tillman mentions that Players "Provides more opportunity for students to explore another creative outlet," and students have "more creative freedom, more events, and more opportunities" in general for students, Tillman adds.

Despite the current circumstances, Tillman and the rest of the organization is trying everything they can to keep the student work alive and showcased even if they can't be in person.

For more information on these upcoming events and Players in general, find them on Facebook at UWSP Players and Instagram at UWSP Players.



Florence Anderson was one of seven selected playwrights for their plays in Current Voices this year. Photo Courtesy of Florence Anderson.