

Service and education: Brad Quarberg

UW-L's presence in the Oktoberfest Maple Leaf Parade is almost legendary, from the Screaming Eagles leading it, the Alumni Band wrapping it up, and scores of faculty, staff, and students in between. An important piece of the university presence in the 2001 parade is Brad Quarberg, Advancement and External Relations, who is president of La Crosse Festivals Inc., the group that runs Oktoberfest.

He is an integral part of what helps make the community and the university work. Quarberg is the 2001 recipient of the Academic Staff Excellence Award.

"I believe in the UW System," says Quarberg. He says the system's high quality, inexpensive education gave him an opportunity to leave his family's Buffalo County farm to get a career.

Daily, Quarberg shows his appreciation for the System and his UW-L degree by serving the university by educating the community. As associate director of university relations, he spends his day helping the media with their coverage of the university, writing articles, news releases and public service announcements, editing a number of publications, supervising students, coordinating the campus directory, and more.

He came to UW-L in the early 1980s from his family's Mondovi-area farm, seeking the mass communications major. But the big draw was the Marching Chiefs band, a group promising a trip to London. UW-L's hold on him increased after he took mass comm's applied radio course, which involved him in WLSU FM and news work directed by the frenetic news director at the time, Robert Mullins.

Following his 1985 graduation, which also included a political science major, he stayed at the university, getting an LTE position in the Information Services Office. He is still there, now as a senior university relations specialist, and now in a 100 percent appointment after spending years in a 93 percent position.

"People like to call you a P-R hack, but I see my role as an educator, educating the community about the university," he says. "It is a way to be an educator in a different way."

Quarberg's efforts to educate the community come with zeal, yet quietly. He generates news releases, public service announcements, and writing for numerous publications. The glossy *Alumnus* quarterly contains material he planned, wrote and edited. The same is true for CBA's *Building Bridges* magazine. He fields a multitude of requests for information like admission materials for UW System publications; coordinating the Student and Staff Directory and U.S. News and World Report surveys; and then supervising student

employees, giving him another chance to teach.

Oktoberfest activities have Quarberg in a public light — more so because of the lederhosen and German outfit — but he believes in community service, tasks he takes seriously. He chairs a United Way of the La Crosse Area program review panel; he is active with the English Lutheran Church and ELCA synod committees as well

as serving on the Sugar Creek Bible Camp Board; and he is treasurer for the United Coulee Region Baseball Committee, the group that sponsors the annual La Crosse Area Day at the Brewers. He is a regular blood donor and hopes to reach the nine-gallon level later this year. "I want to give something back to the community," he explains.

UW-L's Adopt a Highway project is another of Quarberg's pets. He organizes the work crew that cleans a section of State Highway 33. And each year, he organizes the university's team for the spring cancer run.

"I don't want to be in a rut," says Quarberg as he describes his involvement with district five of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE. CASE is the organization for advancement professionals. He has edited CASE V conference publications for four years and edited the district's magazine, *Advance*, for two years. He is also on the CASE V board and conference committee. "It helps give me different perspectives; what people at other institutions are doing with the challenges we face," he says.

Quarberg works hard to balance these activities with family — his wife, Gale and two children. He took part-time paternity leave after both children were born.

Quarberg is active with academic staff issues on campus and in the UW System, serving as Academic Staff Council chair for two terms, and as a member of various council committees almost every year he has been an academic staff employee.

This involvement made him realize how academic staff are invisible, so he wrote procedures for the excellence

award at both the UW-L and System levels. "I became more aware of academic staff and what they do," he says. He is now receiving that recognition, and for the first time since the campus award's inception, he is not writing the article about the recipient.

— Bob Seaquist, *University Relations*



The Brad Quarberg File

- Bachelor's from UW-L 1985
- University Relations Specialist since 1985
- Associate Director of University Relations since 1996
- Numerous community service groups, including:
President La Crosse Festivals (Oktoberfest)