

UW-L STUDENT AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT



2024 | 25

OUR VALUES

STUDENT LEARNING

We believe learning is a lifelong developmental process.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

We embrace the value and strength that resides in our human differences.

INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

We seek to establish an environment consistent with our values, characterized by openness, compassion, accountability, respect, modeling and appreciation for our students, colleagues and partners.

INTENTIONALITY AND ASSESSMENT

We strive to create an environment and programs for improving the institution and student learning experience.

STUDENT WELLNESS

We believe that a healthy mind and body are prerequisites for student success.

COLLABORATION

We strive to enjoy our work in a supportive and collaborative setting inclusive of students, faculty, staff and administration.

WHAT WE DO

The Division of Student Affairs enriches the educational experience for students by facilitating personal growth and development. We collaborate with university and community partners to promote student learning, welcoming of all, healthy lifestyles and civic engagement.



STUDENT AFFAIRS



ADMISSIONS & RECRUITMENT

We create energetic and engaging experiences that exceed expectations to recruit, admit and enroll students. We also take good care of people, creating a successful environment for reaching enrollment targets.

DID YOU KNOW

UWL's fall 2024 first-year class included 2,325 students – the largest in school history!

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over \$1.4 million in scholarships were awarded to incoming students.
- Nearly 300 new transfer students participated in TREK: Transfer Resources and Engagement Kickoff.
- Special campus visits were coordinated for 65 community-based organizations, high schools and middle schools from throughout the Midwest.
- International student recruitment initiatives with the Malaysia transfer program resulted in a total of 30 students enrolling at UWL from Malaysia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and Vietnam.
- Leveraging coding, technology and collaboration with UWL Graduate & Extended Learning, 73 individual graduate admission decision letters were condensed into four standard decision letters merging complex, variable data fields.
- Programming for New Student Orientation and Family Weekend provided opportunities to build connections and establish a sense of belonging at UWL.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build upon established relationships and discover new opportunities to engage campus partners in the recruitment and enrollment of new students.
- Evaluate parent and family engagement initiatives.
- Review operations manuals to facilitate training and onboarding of staff.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

Members of the Vanguard Organization volunteer their time to provide campus tours. In 2024-2025, Vanguards led 1,308 tours around campus.

“The Vanguard Organization allowed me to grow my confidence, practice professionalism and gain experience serving my community in a way that will support my development in my post-graduate journey.”

Lydia Schult, Merrill



DID YOU KNOW

- UWL won four national championships in 2024-25. The men’s cross-country team was the first team to win a title, followed by the men’s track and field team winning both the indoor and outdoor NCAA titles. Gymnastics won the national championship to make four national championship trophies for the year.
- UWL recorded 460 student-athletes with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in 2024-25.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- UWL won nine WIAC titles in 2024-25. Of the 21 UWL teams playing in the WIAC, 18 finished in the top three. UWL earned 131 all-conference first team honors.
- UWL Athletics was awarded the WIAC All-Sport Award for the sixth consecutive year. UWL also won the Men’s All-Sport Award and the Women’s All-Sport Award.
- UWL student-athletes earned 272 athletic all-region or All-America honors during the 2024-25 season.
- Eight teams finished in the top10 nationally: gymnastics (1st), men’s cross-country (1st), men’s outdoor track and field (1st – indoor, 1st – outdoor), women’s track and field (3rd – indoor, 3rd – outdoor), wrestling (5th), men’s basketball (8th).
- UWL placed 10th in the Directors’ Cup Standings (top 2%), becoming one of just seven institutions in NCAA Division III (440 total programs) to finish in the top 40 in all 28 years of the competition.
- UWL’s student-athlete GPA of 3.37 in 2024-25 was higher than the undergraduate student body GPA for the 23rd time in the past 24 years.
- UWL student-athletes earned 77 academic all-district or Academic All-America honors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Hosting the 2026 NCAA Division III Men’s & Women’s Track & Field National Championships.
- Revamping the Maroon Platoon, a student organization supporting UWL Athletics.
- Establishing more revenue-generating initiatives.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

Donors pledged nearly \$300,000 in support of Athletics on One Day for UWL.

“Swimming has been a great way for me to connect with others that are similar to myself. Additionally, it has taught me very valuable time management skills. My collegiate athletic career has been the most fun I have had in the sport of swimming, and I am very grateful to be a part of UWL Athletics.”

Men’s swimmer



ATHLETICS

Building Champions. In Sport. In School. In Life.



CAMPUS CHILD CENTER

We provide quality care and education to young children on the UWL campus. The center's philosophy is rooted in respect and appreciation for each child's unique abilities. Our goal is to create a safe, healthy and enriching environment where children can reach their full potential through partnerships with parents, teachers and the community.

DID YOU KNOW

This is the Campus Child Center's 40th anniversary! The center originally started caring for the youngest learners on the UWL campus in the Archeology Center. We will host a community celebration in May upon completion of our 40th year of early care and education.

The Campus Child Center recently had a few playground updates, which was a collaborative effort with teachers to ensure the new equipment met their needs while prioritizing health and safety. The new playground includes two large play units, one specifically designed for children under the age of 2, and an updated tunnel and concrete work to create a larger surface area for bicycles.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The center completed a highly anticipated playground remodel, adding two large play units (one for children under 2), a mud kitchen and tunnel, and repurposed our much-loved climbing dome. The design focused on providing maximum shade and play space by moving all the swings together for the children's safety.
- The center collaborated with the Facilities Department and Card Office to install a new card access system at the main entry and at the door connecting to the Recreational Eagle Center. This new security measure provides peace of mind for families.

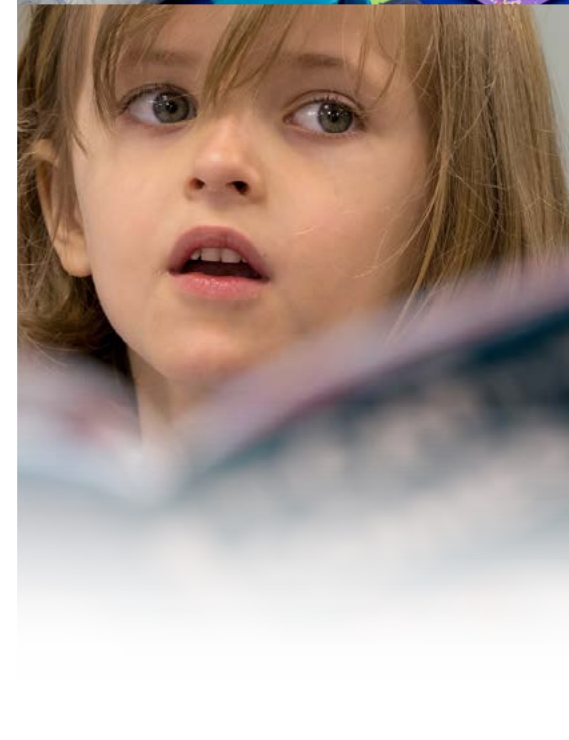
- In partnership with the School of Education, the center hosted a successful family fun night attended by 18 families, with positive feedback encouraging future events.
- The center engaged with the Lead-Safe Wisconsin: The Lead-in-Water Testing and Remediation Initiative to have all of our faucets tested. We were eligible to receive two faucets and two hand washing basins, which have been replaced at no cost to the center through this initiative.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The center hired a professional teacher over the summer to ensure a full team going into the school year. We look forward to getting to know this individual and their insight into making our early care and education setting the best it can be.
- The Child Care Counts grant funding, which has been used for significant improvements, has ended. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families has continued this support with a new name. They are now offering Bridge Payments until June 2026 to continue supporting centers that qualify.
- The Campus Child Center professional staff will begin hosting voluntary monthly continuing education opportunities for student staff.
- The center will expand and establish new community and school district connections to explore future programming partnerships.

“Continuing to cultivate and uphold a culture that values inclusion, welcomes diversity, supports kids where they are, and insists on kindness and safety.”

Child Center family



COUNSELING & TESTING

We promote students' psychological, academic, social and cultural growth through professional and confidential counseling services; we provide welcoming testing spaces with secure, confidential and dependable assessment services.

DID YOU KNOW

The Counseling & Testing Center (CTC) now has two locations for Let's Talk consultations, where students can informally consult with a counselor: the Center for Civil Dialogue & Civic Engagement, and the Student Union.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Three CTC providers are now licensed in eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, a specialized treatment for responses to traumatic events.
- Students and faculty/staff can learn more about how to help a student in distress through the Recognize, Respond, Refer: Suicide Prevention Training.
- The UWL Testing Center is now led by Testing Coordinator Matt Jurvelin.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The CTC will be providing more opportunities for students to learn about our services during classroom presentations and information provided to student organizations.
- The Wisconsin Area College Counseling Conference will be hosted in La Crosse in April 2026.
- Three CTC providers are now able to provide clinical supervision to counseling trainees and counselors who are working toward independent licensure.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

Donations from One Day for UWL and a generous individual donor helped to fund self-care kits for students in distress, along with specialized training for CTC staff.



“Of UWL students who were seen at the CTC in 2024-25, 91% would recommend the center to a friend.”

“ Rec Sports has given me a healthy outlet for my mental health through the fitness center and being able to stay on top of my health. It has also given me friends who I feel are more like family, people I can go to when I am in trouble or just need someone to talk to. Intramurals have allowed me to work together as a team and enjoy the company of my friends.”

Samantha Brown, class of 2027

RECREATIONAL SPORTS

We enhance the UWL experience by offering diverse programs, innovative services, growth opportunities and welcoming facilities within the area of recreational sports.



DID YOU KNOW

- 86% of UWL students utilized Rec Sports programs, services and facilities in 2024-25.
- 3,129 unique students participated in intramural sports programming in 2024-25.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- After years of planning and collaboration with Construction & Planning, Rec Sports opened a newly renovated and expanded climbing gym in the Recreational Eagle Center. Since its opening in January, the facility has seen a 101% increase in visits compared to the previous spring semester.
- In partnership with Counseling & Testing and Wellness & Health Advocacy, Rec Sports launched Intro to Mindfulness classes for the campus community. This initiative was supported by University of Wisconsin funding, which covered the certification of Mindfulness Institute for Emerging Adults (MIEA) instructors.
- Following the resignation of Competitive Sports Coordinator Ali Hengel just before the academic year, staff demonstrated remarkable flexibility and resilience. Despite an unsuccessful search to fill the position, the professional staff – led by Nathan Barnhart – and our student leaders successfully maintained the program during this critical transition. This was no small task, given the program’s high engagement with over 32,000 participations annually.
- After learning in fall 2022 that 77% of survey respondents felt the Recreational Eagle Center (REC) was overcrowded, Rec Sports began developing a plan to address the issue. Created in collaboration with the Student Services & Buildings Committee of the Student Association, the plan—which includes purchasing additional equipment and expanding facility hours—was presented to senior leadership and approved for implementation.



OPPORTUNITIES

- To meet the ever-changing needs of students and staff, Rec Sports will reevaluate and implement changes to our current mission, vision and values.
- We will update our Safety & Risk Management Plan and training, making it more digestible for student staff to learn and comprehend.
- To better support the well-being of student participants, student employees and professional staff, Rec Sports will utilize the ideas presented in “The Science and Practice of Well-Being for Student Success Practitioners” workshop to audit our current programs, facilities, services and staff expectations/practices, and identify and implement possible changes and opportunities.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

One Day for UWL was a huge success for sport clubs, with more than \$27,000 raised across 19 participating clubs.

DID YOU KNOW

Residence Life manages all mail for the residents. During the 2024-25 academic year, 61,610 packages were received. That figure is up by more than 17,000 packages since the Eagle Mail Center launched in 2020.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- In partnership with the PRIDE Center, Residence Life launched the PRIDE Center Living Learning Community in Wentz Hall, housing 29 students in its inaugural year. Students lived together, took Race, Gender and Sexuality 100 as a cohort, and engaged with the PRIDE Center and campus resources. End-of-year feedback highlighted that students valued the sense of safety and support within the community.
- A longtime wish-list project was to update the Sanford Courtyard. Direct resident feedback led to the following features being installed: built-in fire pit, bistro lighting, hammock stands, permanent cornhole setup, turf/updated pathways, Adirondack seating, solar tables and ADA access to the Sanford basement.
- Staff from Disability Resource Centers, Housing, Emergency Management and the Office of General Counsel across the 13 Universities of Wisconsin campuses convened to strengthen disability-related housing emergency protocols, support students, and enhance cross-campus, system-wide and interdisciplinary collaboration to enhance best practices.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Residence Life remains deeply committed to providing a safe, clean and supportive living environment for all students. While ongoing staffing challenges have made it more difficult to uphold our high standards, Residence Life will continue to reimagine our approaches, strengthen our team and explore innovative solutions that continue to center student well-being and residential excellence.

- After years of comprehensive planning, Residence Life will initiate renovations of the cube-style residence halls. These updates will enhance both infrastructure and aesthetics, with a focus on creating a more comfortable, student-centered and relaxed living experience.
- Residence Life will collaborate with key campus partners to evaluate and redesign resident assistant training, with the aim of addressing identified gaps, strengthening interdepartmental relationships, clarifying performance expectations and integrating innovative, foundational learning to better prepare student staff for their roles.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

During One Day for UWL, Residence Life continued a campaign to raise funds to complete the installation of water bottle filling stations on each floor of the residence halls, and to begin installing hammock stations in courtyard areas near the halls. We raised \$930 from generous donors last year. This was in large part due to alumni Laurie and John Diekhoff, who offered a match challenge during the campaign.

Residence Life staff received a \$500 grant from the Parent Advisory Board to create a “welcome back” gift for students who have been away from campus due to mental or physical health concerns. The “Hug in a Mug” provides a way for professional staff to re-establish relationships, provide resources and demonstrate an ethic of care for a successful reintegration to campus.

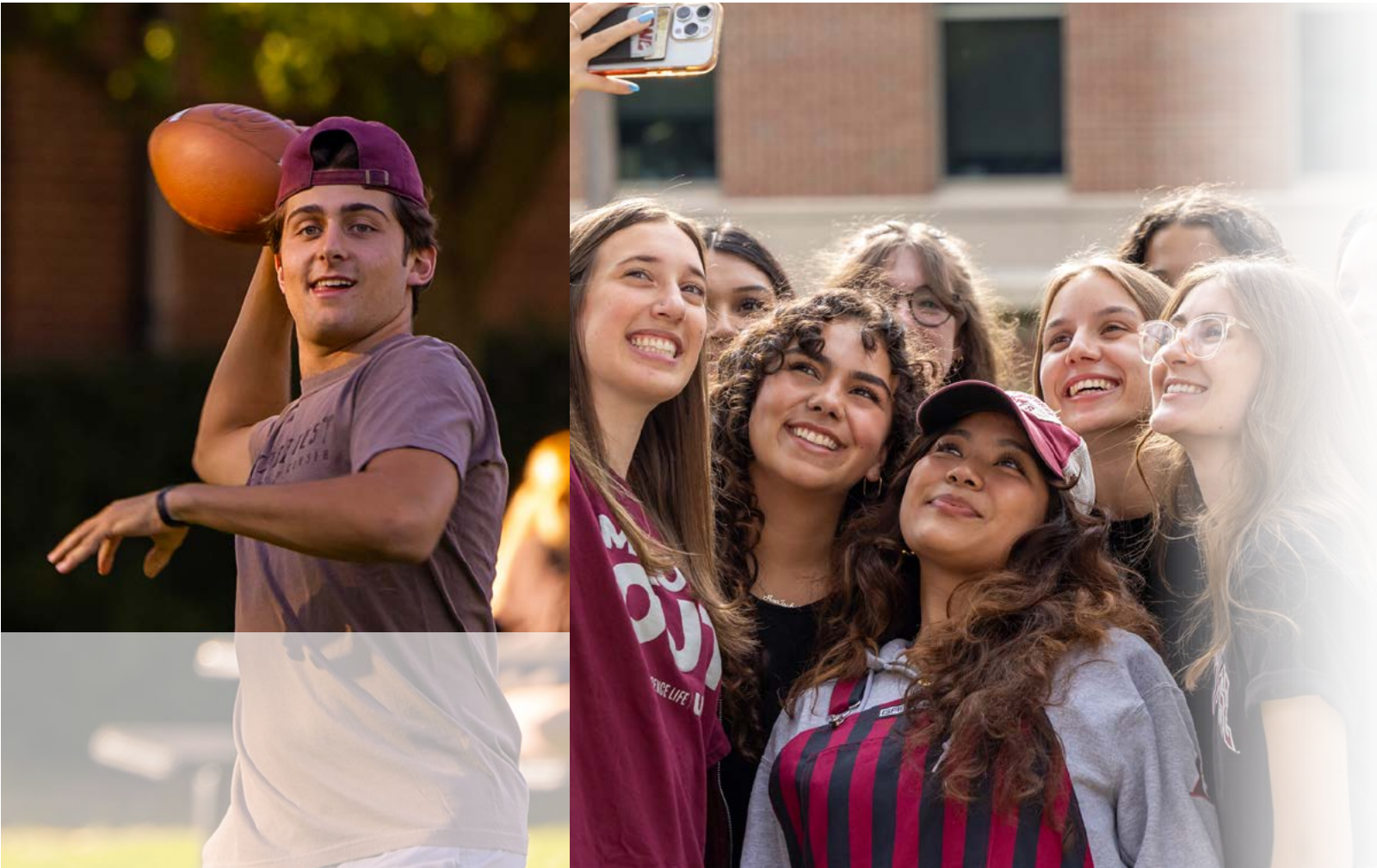
PRESENTATIONS

Association of Colleges and Universities Housing Officers, International (ACUHOI) Upper Midwest Region (UMR) Annual Conference, November 2024

- Lisa Walker, associate director for Residential Facilities “Bad Words vs. Good Practitioners: Facilities Edition”

RESIDENCE LIFE

We strive to create affirming and inclusive homes for our residents, where everyone can achieve academic and social success through experiential learning and meaningful relationships.



“As an international student, Res Life made UWL feel like home. It became a place on campus where I felt grounded, supported and empowered to lead while navigating life far from home.”

Khang Duong, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

We provide cost-effective, evidence-based, student-centered healthcare that promotes wellness and academic success in an atmosphere of kindness, inclusivity and respect.

DID YOU KNOW

The Student Health Center (SHC) is the healthcare provider of choice for UWL and Western Technical College students. We offer all the services of a traditional outpatient clinic, including same-day care and on-site, laboratory and physical therapy.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 10,305 – health visits made by students (3,733 unique patients)
- 547 – visits for mental health concerns
- 724 – immunizations given
- 5,144 – lab tests performed

Top five Mayo send-outs:

- Complete blood count (differential and platelets) – 216
- Complete Metabolic Panel – 179
- Thyroid Function Cascade – 130
- Ferritin – 117
- Iron and total iron binding – 85

Top five in-house tests:

- Rapid strep – 822
- Urine dipstick – 483
- Wet prep – 443
- Urine microscope – 315
- Urine pregnancy – 230

OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve awareness and utilization of the SHC by Western Technical College students by working with Western staff and student liaisons.
- Build relationships with other UWL areas for collaboration regarding services offered.
- Develop a more cohesive referral process for students to ensure they follow up as needed.
- Determine a marketing strategy to increase awareness and utilization of the Student Health Center.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

- The SHC and Mayo Clinic Health System sponsored and participated in several campus events:
- Universities of Wisconsin (UW-La Crosse, Department of Microbiology)/Wisconsin Science Education and Research (WiSER) Conference – \$3,000
- UWL Turkey Trot sponsorship – \$750
- UWL Wrestling Golf Outing – \$580
- UWL Football Golf Outing Sponsor – \$1,500

“The PA I saw was great! She listened to my concerns, explained my options and the pros/cons, and answered all of my questions. I felt extremely comfortable and like I was really being listened to, which I’ve had negative experiences with in the past (not with the SHC).”



“My behaviors now reflect the realization that there are a lot of factors that I should consider before I follow through with an action. I am also changing my behaviors by working at planning ahead more.”

UWL student



STUDENT LIFE

We support and encourage students' growth and well-being in ways that enable them to thrive. We strive to empower students to share responsibility in the learning process and to create a positive learning community.

DID YOU KNOW

- Advocacy & Empowerment, in partnership with Financial Aid, referred nine students to the Wisconsin Emergency Fund Grant, and was able to provide \$7,000 in financial support.
- Advocacy & Empowerment saw a decrease in overall withdrawal numbers from UWL, from 195 to 144.
- Second Year Experience started as a new program in the Student Life Office.
- Second Year Experience had 125 people attend its showcase program during Family Weekend.
- Student Conduct implemented video reflection for some sanction assignments.
- Student Conduct received a total of 46 academic misconduct cases. Of those cases, 13 were reported to involve Artificial Intelligence.
- Violence Prevention had over 300 people attend its fall program with Mike Domitrz, an author and speaker specializing in sexual violence prevention.
- Wellness & Health Advocacy provided 296 sexual health items to students during the 2024-25 academic year.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Dean of Students Kara Ostlund and Assistant Dean of Students Amanda Abrahamson submitted a proposal for a student success mini-grant and were awarded \$13,500 to implement Student Success Coaching on UWL's campus.
- Student Wellness Coordinator Issy Beach served on the Universities of Wisconsin's President's Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Well-Being. The committee engages in critical discourse related to effective and impactful provision of equitable system-wide support for students' mental health and wellbeing. The committee provides feedback on ongoing and new initiatives to ensure they are evidence-based, culturally relevant and inclusive. The group may also review and recommend innovative practices that could benefit students across the Universities of Wisconsin.

- Violence Prevention Specialist Blythe McConaughy presented on behalf of the Department of Justice on two occasions, once in Bayfield, Wis., in August 2024 and once in Hudson, Wis., in January 2025. The topic of both presentations was Myths, Facts and Dynamics of Sexual Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Sex Signals is a program that has been held the past few years during New Student Orientation (NSO) to meet requirements regarding sexual misconduct training for new students. With the continued increase in the size of the first-year class, we have run into capacity concerns with the number of people allowed in the room. Budget constraints limit the number of times we can host the program. Given the success of Mike Domitrz, one opportunity is to explore having him come during NSO. This would require a partnership with NSO and Residence Life.
- Now that the coordinator of Student Conduct has been in the position for a year, he wants to create programming opportunities designed to enhance students' knowledge of their rights and the student code of conduct. The goal is to reduce the number of student conduct cases.
- A new way to increase Resident Assistant (RA) engagement is to create a dedicated RA distribution list. This will allow us to share information about upcoming programs and events more directly and efficiently. This new channel could also be used to create some friendly competition among RAs by introducing an incentive structure. This approach will not only streamline communication but also motivate our RAs and build a stronger sense of community among the team.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

Second Year Experience was awarded a Parent Fund Grant for \$500 for the Second Year Celebration in the spring to cover the cost for awards, speakers and catering.

DID YOU KNOW

- More than 6,000 people attended the fourth-annual Eagle Fest Sept. 6, 2024.
- In December 2024, we celebrated the 100,000th use of an OZZI reusable container on campus. UWL has saved roughly 5,500 pounds of waste and \$38,000 in single-use container costs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- University Centers produced the fourth-annual Eagle Fest Sept. 6, 2024, featuring musical performances by Vocal Ties, Black River Band, and Bad Bad Hats. The event also featured a welcome from Chancellor James Beeby, a performance by the Screaming Eagles Marching Band, booths run by student organizations and campus departments, food trucks, and an array of games and activities.
- The A9 Eatery opened inside Whitney Dining Center Aug. 28, 2024. A9 is a dedicated kitchen and dining space supporting students with food allergies and dietary restrictions. A9 served 66 registered students during the academic year and expanded service to UWL staff and faculty. Since launch, student participation at A9 has tripled. The allergen-safe environment was made possible through a close partnership and commitment to inclusive dining between Dining Services, University Centers and the Disability Resource Center.
- Additional signage was installed in the Student Union, including Union Art Exhibit Gallery installation/lighting outside The Bluffs and an outdoor jumbo double-sided TV monitor between the Union and the Prairie Springs Science Center. The Information Center was rebranded as the Welcome Desk, aligning with our mission to create a warm, inclusive environment.
- In December 2024, UWL celebrated a major sustainability milestone with the 100th use of an OZZI reusable container on campus. Use of OZZI containers increased significantly in 2024-25, driven by an awareness campaign and celebration of the 100,000th use, as well as OZZI being the container of choice at the A9 Eatery.

OPPORTUNITIES

- By June 30, 2026, University Centers will establish a comprehensive, strategic University Centers Student Employee Training and Engagement Program. The intention of the Student Employee Program is to develop a pride and unity among student staff, promote the good work of students, help students develop transferable, career-ready skills, and apply those skills to their work beyond graduation.
- By May 31, 2026, University Centers will complete a comprehensive assessment of the Student Union lower level, focusing on space utilization, best practices for recreational equipment access, programming frequency and style, and food availability.
- By June 30, 2026, University Centers will establish a student-centered Dining Advisory Group to deepen understanding of the campus dining experience through intentional dialogue, structured feedback and data-informed decision-making. Serving in an advisory role to Dining Services, the group will identify student and staff needs and explore opportunities to enhance services and communication.
- By June 30, 2026, the University Centers team will collaboratively review the new UWL Strategic Plan and develop a set of department-specific goals that demonstrate how the Student Union, The COVE and Dining Services will contribute to and align with the university’s overarching priorities.

PRESENTATIONS

Kyle Burke co-presented with Tena Bennett from Southern Illinois University Carbondale on the subject of “Preparing for the Unexpected: Managing Finances Effectively Through the Unknowns,” at the March 2025 Association of College Unions-International Annual Conference in New York City.

UNIVERSITY
CENTERS

We serve the community by providing a welcoming environment that facilitates learning opportunities, embraces diversity, and enriches the campus experience. The Student Union is the living room for campus!



“ I love the sense of community that comes with working in the COVE. Especially working with CAB, I love seeing students smile at events and have fun! It’s rewarding to know that we have a positive impact on others’ college experiences!”

Erica Steinmetz, marketing coordinator,
Campus Activities Board



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