Important Reminders
12/12 Last day of fall semester classes
12/13 Commencement
12/15-18 Final exams
12/18 Lunch is the last meal of fall semester
12/19 Residence halls close at 10 a.m.
12/19 J-term/break housing begins
12/29 Final grades due in eSIS
12/30 J-term tuition payment due
10 Ways to Negotiate the Holidays

Most people will agree that “going home” at any age, especially for the holidays, is a mixed bag of feelings. For those college students who are returning home for the first time, this reunion can be the most enjoyable, difficult and significant of all. With some planning, going home can be more enjoyable and less difficult.

Seek professional help if you need it
You may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, or unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Do not abandon healthy habits
Eat healthy foods and exercise. Maintain your energy and emotional health by keeping your usual habits. Make holiday goodies an addition, not a substitute for balanced healthy eating and moderate exercise. Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don’t go overboard on sweets, cheese, or drinks. Continue to get plenty of sleep and physical activity.

Be patient with yourself
No matter our age, when we get back with our families, we can get a little frustrated. When at home a simple word, look, or sigh can trigger a range of emotions. By giving ourselves some slack when it comes to dealing with our emotions, it is easier to hold on to who we want to be. Remembering that this is a time of transition for everyone involved will help ease the stress.

Be realistic
Holidays do not have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold onto and be open to creating new ones.

Acknowledge your full range of feelings
If someone close to you has recently died or you cannot be with loved ones, realize that it is normal to feel sadness and grief. It is okay to take time to cry or to express your feelings. You can’t force yourself to be happy just because it is the holiday season.

Take a breather
Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Take a walk, listen to music, or find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring your inner calm.

Be patient with your family
You have managed your own time and friendships, dressed as you wanted, and taken care of your day-to-day needs on your own since you’ve been at school if you are on campus. However, parents may act as though you have been living at home the whole time. These may cause disagreements around freedom and control. It can be difficult on both sides, but you can soften the potential conflict by remembering that this is an adjustment for your parents as well. They haven’t been with you as you’ve learned how to take care of yourself. This is a time of compromise and understanding. Effectively handling this will help your family to see the changes you’ve made.

Be prepared for loneliness
Going home for the first time can sometimes be a shock because our friends may not be the same. Think ahead; try to make plans with the people you want to see. Find out who will be home. Moving between worlds, our sense of self can get lost, and bringing photos from school, journals or a favorite book can help. While at home, remember that you can write, email, and call people you want to be with. It’s easy to forget that our relationships don’t disappear with distance.

Consider volunteering
Volunteering your time to help others is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. It’s not just a meaningless cliché that giving to others can be a gift to ourselves and a way to give new meaning to this season.

Consider a “family of choice”
If emotional adulthood is impossible in your birth family, or if your birth family is far away, consider spending time with chosen family of others.

Article written by Student Health and Counseling Services
Thinking About Graduate School?

Who on campus helps students learn more about graduate school?

- **Academic Advisors:** Your advisor is an excellent resource related to graduate school and can advise you on potential programs and schools that will meet your needs.

- **Faculty:** Your faculty have “been there-done that.” They attended graduate school and have colleagues at universities all over the globe who may be great connections for you when learning about your options.

- **Career Services:** Career Counselors are on staff at UWRFL to assist students in navigating what programs are available and which may be a good fit for you.

Each fall, Career Services hosts Graduate School Week where students attend workshops related to GRE preparation and writing the personal statement.

If you are thinking about graduate school and don’t know where to begin, call Career Services for an appointment today. For further information on preparing for the graduate school application process, click here.

Where should you go for help during the application process?

- **Academic Advisors:** Your advisor may be a no-brainer when thinking about who to ask as a reference as they know you well and can speak to your time management skills, critical thinking skills, and ability to follow directions.

- **Faculty:** There are graduate schools who expect all of your references to be academic in nature. This means your supervisor at Subway may not be the best reference for this application. Faculty you have engaged with, conducted research with, and served in a student organization where this person was your advisor, are all great options to serve as references. **Tip:** many schools require three references so start deepening those connections with your professors now!

- **Career Services:** Career Counselors are available to assist you during the application process to provide are basic tips to best organize your materials and feedback regarding your personal statement. A personal statement is very similar to a cover letter and provides the reader with a deeper look into who you are, what you want to pursue as further study, and your goals.

Are you interested in extra letters behind your name on your business card? If receiving a M.S., M.A., or PhD are of interest to you, there are resources on campus to assist you in reaching your graduate school goals.
Commencement/Graduation Day Tips

WHO? Graduating Students

WHEN? Saturday, December 13, 2014, at 2 p.m.

WHERE? Robert P. Knowles Center (view in map)

Watch it LIVE: The UW-River Falls will be streaming the commencement ceremony live on UWRF Channel 19. The live stream will begin 15 minutes before the ceremony and end at the conclusion of the event.

Parking Information:

• All campus parking lots will be open to the public from 7 a.m. until midnight on Commencement Day.
• Citations will be issued prior to and after those times if cars are parked in lots that are monitored.
• Parking during Commencement is on a first come, first serve basis. Family and friends should plan ahead in order to ensure that they arrive in a timely manner.
• Family and friends should arrange to share rides and drop off family members or friends who have a difficult time walking long distances.
• There are limited accessible parking spaces available at Ramer Field. Parking attendants will be on duty prior to and during Commencement.
• If you have any questions regarding parking facilities, please contact the Parking Office at 715-425-3333.

Join the event on Facebook for updates!

Article written by Ryan Bench in the Registrar’s Office
Financial Aid Information

Returning Students
It’s almost that time of year again – time to fill out your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2015-16 academic year. There is no priority deadline for filling out your FAFSA but the earlier you do it, the earlier you may know what you’re eligible for. The 2015-16 FAFSA becomes available January 1, 2015. File it as soon as you can after you (and your parents) have filed 2014 taxes.

The quickest and easiest method of completing your FAFSA is by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows students and parents to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the FAFSA and transfer the data directly into their FAFSA from the IRS website. The tool is available in the FAFSA within 2-3 weeks after your taxes have been e-filed (or 6-8 weeks after paper filing). Instructions for using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool are available on the UWRF Financial Aid Website.

Continuing students will be awarded financial aid after spring ’15 grades have posted. This is to ensure the correct financial aid amounts are awarded to students who will be advancing a grade level after the spring term.

Graduating Seniors
If you are a graduating senior who borrowed federal loans, you will soon be receiving statements from your loan servicer. To determine the amount of federal student loans you have borrowed as well as who your loan servicers are, login to www.NSLDS.ed.gov using your FAFSA Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you do not have your PIN, you may request a duplicate at www.PIN.ed.gov.

Additional information on repaying federal student loans and loan consolidation is available on the www.StudentLoans.gov website.

Questions? Please contact the UWRF Financial Aid Office at (715) 425-3141 or finaid@uwrf.edu, or stop in and visit us 315 North Hall.
Affordable Care Act and Health Insurance Enrollment

You have probably heard in the media that the Health Insurance Marketplace launched on October 1, 2013, as part of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). Students may wish to consider new health insurance options available due to the ACA, a federal law passed in March 2010 which phases in over several years. One provision of this law that has already benefited many students allows dependent children (including students) to remain on their parents’ insurance until their 26th birthday. Under the ACA, dependent children can remain on a parents’ plan even if they no longer live with their parents, are not a dependent on a parent’s tax return, are no longer a student, or are married.

Changes to western Wisconsin plans make insurance more affordable. The Health Insurance Marketplace has good news for Western Wisconsin residents! The Marketplace opened for 2015 enrollment on Saturday, November 15, 2014, and residents of Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties will find rates down 17% this year, a welcomed relief after the 2014 open enrollment cycle, when our region had some of the highest premiums in the country. Premium subsidies are available for individuals and families from 100%-400% of the federal poverty level, and those below 250% of the federal poverty level will qualify for additional financial assistance with deductibles, co-insurance, and co-pays. Those already enrolled in a plan through the Marketplace are encouraged to visit the Marketplace to update their information and review available plans and costs. Under provisions of the Affordable Care Act, those who choose not to secure health insurance may be fined. Penalties for 2015 will increase to $325/person ($162.50/child) or 2% of income, whichever is higher. Individuals looking for more information are invited to attend one of the free information and enrollment sessions being offered throughout the region.

You can also attend some information sessions to answer your questions about the Affordable Care Act:
• Monday, December 1, 2014: Hudson High School Media Center 1501 Vine Street, Hudson WI 54016
• Tuesday, December 2 2014: River Falls Public Library 140 Union Street, River Falls, WI 54022.

Ebola Virus Disease

The risk is low for Ebola on campus or in this community and there have been no cases at UWRF. UWRF has an Ebola plan and continues to work together on campus with local, state, and federal partners and health authorities to monitor the situation and follow current guidelines and recommendations. We have been monitoring the situation, including students, faculty, and staff who may be coming and going from the affected areas. If anyone has a positive travel history (travel to/from the affected countries) or exposure history in the last 21 days, these persons may be monitored or possibly quarantined for 21 days after coming to the U.S.

If you have travel plans where this may apply to you or for questions, please contact Student Health Services (715-425-3293) or Pierce County Public Health Department (715-273-6755). For more information click here!

Article written by Student Health and Counseling Services