Greetings from UW-River Falls!

Thank you for taking time to learn more about ways that the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is meeting its goals of becoming more global, innovative and excellent. As you will see in this issue of Falcon Quarterly, the past three months have been filled with exciting achievements and opportunities. Many may not be surprised that UWRF is an award winning sustainable campus, or that we are home to the second largest undergraduate dairy science program in the country, but hopefully the stories you’ll read about here will also testify to the quality of our students and their experiences.

For example, you’ll learn more about the creative ways we are promoting global awareness and entrepreneurship on campus. Whether we’re welcoming international experts or sending our students abroad, or simply exposing our domestic students to the culture of a different country, UWRF is committed to preparing our students to be part of a more diverse and inclusive world.

At a time when there is much debate over the value of public higher education, UW-River Falls continues to demonstrate how providing access to high-quality education not only supports our students to have successful careers but also to be outstanding citizens. A good example of this is recent graduate and Innovation Challenge winner Michael Mader who took first place at the Wisconsin Big Ideas Tournament which you will read about in this issue. Michael will soon be launching his social enterprise venture, HippyFeet, which was inspired by the Salvation Army’s findings that the number one requested item in homeless shelters is socks. Michael’s company intends to produce socks made from organic, sustainably sourced wool to be sold following the “buy one – give one” model: for every pair of socks purchased, a pair will be automatically donated to a local homeless shelter.

UW-River Falls is an institution in which my own pride is continually renewed by the great stories happening every day on campus. I am confident you will join me in feeling impressed with the exciting impact this university is having on our students and the world.

Dean Van Galen, Chancellor
celebrated and 2015-16 was the Year of Mexico. Educational and cultural activities will highlight the country in raising awareness of Brazil. Faculty, students, and community participants to help meet that goal. The program allows Falls initiated the “Year of,” an exciting program for Brazil selected as next “Year of” country. For more information about these and other UWRF stories, visit www.uwrf.edu/news.

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One of the three goals of the UW-River Falls Strategic Plan, Pathway to Distinction, is global education and engagement. In 2013, UW-River Falls initiated the “Year of,” an exciting program to help meet that goal. The program allows faculty, students, and community participants to help break down stereotypes and connect across cultures. UW-River Falls will explore and celebrate the country of Brazil during the 2016-17 academic year where various educational and cultural activities will highlight the country in raising awareness of Brazil. During 2013-14, UWRF celebrated the Year of Germany, while in 2014-15, China was celebrated and 2015-16 was the Year of Mexico.

UW-River Falls is part of NSF renewal of Antarctic IceCube collaboration. The National Science Foundation has renewed a cooperative agreement with UW-Madison to operate IceCube. The five-year, $35 million award entitles the continued operation and management of the observatory located at NSF’s Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. UW-River Falls is an integral part of this collaboration overseeing the education and outreach program of this long-standing research effort. Headquartered at UW-Madison, IceCube includes a staff of nearly 60 scientists, engineers and technicians. In 2013, the IceCube Collaboration reported the first detection of high-energy cosmic neutrinos, opening a new astronomical vista on the universe and on some of its most violent phenomena.

Wyman Visiting Professor in History lectures about American-Asian relations. A scholar specializing in U.S.-East Asia relations and member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Warren I. Cohen, Distinguished University Professor, Emeritus, University of Maryland, visited UW-River Falls in April to present two public lectures and a discussion as part of the annual Wyman Visiting Professorship in History event. In his presentation, Cohen, who is also Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, discussed the evolution of the U.S.-China relationship in the past 150 years. While visiting River Falls, Cohen also hosted a roundtable discussion of his most recent book, “The Challenge to American Primacy, 1945-Present,” and gave a public lecture on the golden age of Asia art collecting in America during the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.

UW-River Falls innovation teams continue on to international competition. For the second year in a row, UW-River Falls teams from the campus Innovation Challenge earned top ranking at the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament (WiBRT) held in Madison, going on to compete in the International Business Model Competition in Redmond, Wash. The 2016 teams Hippy Feet and EZ Pocket (previously known as Protein Pod) placed first and third, respectively, at the WiBRT and advanced to the quarterfinals in Washington, where they competed against more than 5,000 teams from around the world. Both teams have now also qualified for a $25,000 ideavance Grant, a UW-Extension seed fund program. The annual UW-River Falls Innovation Challenge intends to help create a culture of innovation on campus, using Lean Startup methodology to guide budding entrepreneurs to test their business ideas more effectively.

UW-River Falls faculty and students team up in the name of research for the Summer Scholars program. This summer, up to 30 UW-River Falls students will work with faculty mentors to conduct research projects related to their studies. The Summer Scholars program began in 2010, granting students the opportunity for hands-on, high-impact educational experiences outside of the classroom. Participants receive a stipend of $3,000, with an additional $500 available for relevant supplies and other expenses. While the program has been competitive in past years, with an acceptance rate of around 25 percent, students now have greater opportunities to take part. This summer, the program’s sixth iteration will see its capacity triple from 10 to 30 student-faculty teams.

UW-River Falls students present at National Conference on Undergraduate Research. In April, UW-River Falls students once again presented their undergraduate research, scholarly, and creative projects at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The 56 UW-River Falls participants gave a wide range of printed and oral presentations at the conference on research topics that included engineering, greenhouse management, ways to combat the drug-resistant malaria causing parasite Plasmodium falciparum; the use of nature-based learning techniques in the elementary classroom; the effect of foot inclination angle on running and injury; and cosmic-ray shadows of the sun and the moon as observed at the IceCube laboratory in Antarctica. Also presented in Asheville were live readings of original poetry, visual arts productions of prints from etchings and live dance performances.

UW-River Falls teams earn first place at North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge. The UWRF dairy team earned a first place award in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) in Syracuse, N.Y. in April. The NAIDC is a two-day competition where teams evaluate a well-managed dairy farm business and recommend management enhancements to a panel of judges comprised of industry and academic professionals. This was the 15th year of this international competition, which involved 128 students from 32 different universities. In addition to a recognition plaque, each team member received a $200 scholarship. The NAIDC is committed to developing tomorrow’s dairy leaders and enhancing the progress of the industry. Industry sponsorship helps cover the travel, lodging and meals expenses for teams and provides the scholarships.

UW-River Falls student one of three new members appointed to UW System Board of Regents. Gov. Scott Walker announced the appointment of UW-River Falls student Lisa Erickson to the Board of Regents as the non-traditional student member starting in May. Erickson is in the Honors Program and is pursuing a degree in journalism with a food science minor. As a mother of four, Erickson writes a food column in the Osceola Sun newspaper and works as a counselor at the Tri-County Life Care Center.

UW-Extension. The Board also plans how best to meet future state needs for collegiate education, sets admission standards, and approves university budgets.

UW-River Falls again earns STARS Silver Rating for sustainability efforts. UWRF has earned its fourth consecutive STARS Silver Rating in recognition of its sustainability achievements from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education. The campus is committed to modeling the values, principles, and practices of sustainability through initiatives including alternative fuels and transportation; energy and water conservation, waste minimization, and infusing sustainability into the curriculum. UW-River Falls was one of the original institutions that participated in the beta testing for the initial development of the STARS ranking tool.

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