Sustainability: in action, on campus, around the world

Falcons Shine

Copp’s 33 Years & beyond

Pionke Profile
New Campus Plan Takes Shape

Joseph Harbouk, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, points out one of the many features of the UWRF campus plan unveiled this spring. Among them is the Health and Human Performance Complex slated for construction in 2013 pending approval from the Wisconsin State Legislature. For more details visit www.uwrf.edu/OIP.
Greetings from River Falls!

A long winter has finally given way to signs of spring. Our campus is alive with flowers and blooming trees, and a new class of graduates has joined the ranks of our alumni.

Thank you for taking time out to explore this, our first-ever online-only version of Falcon Features. Prompted by our commitment to sustainable practices, we recently made the decision to produce only one printed edition of Falcon Features a year. While I am confident you will find this edition to be full of the same outstanding content you have come to expect from this publication, we welcome your feedback on ways in which this online version, both in terms of content and delivery, can be improved.

Speaking of sustainable practices, we thought it only appropriate this first online edition focus on the strides UW-River Falls has made in the area of sustainability. Earlier this academic year, UW-River Falls received high marks on the 2011 College Sustainability Report Card, produced by the Sustainable Endowments Institute. The overall A-grade received by UW-River Falls is a confirmation of what many of us already knew, UW-River Falls is “walking the talk” in sustainable education and practices.

Five years ago, sustainability was identified as an operational goal of our current strategic plan, Living the Promise. Since that time, the students, faculty, and staff of UW-River Falls have launched an impressive number of initiatives designed to reduce our campus carbon footprint, develop alternative energy sources, and promote sustainable community development throughout the St. Croix Valley. I hope you enjoy reading about a cross-section of these initiatives in the pages that follow.

On behalf of all of us at UW-River Falls, thank you for your continued support of our great university. This support is even more important during these difficult economic times, as our faculty and staff continue the personal commitment to our students that has defined the River Falls experience for 137 years.

Best wishes for an enjoyable spring.

Sincerely,

Dean Van Galen, Ph.D.
Chancellor
New UWRF Spirit Song Composed and Performed

Kris Tjornehoj with Phyllis Goldin (right) at rehearsal of “Our Chance to Fly”.

A longtime friend of UWRF, Phyllis Goldin, recently wrote a spirit song in honor of our university. Associate Professor Kristin Tjornehoj of the Music Department worked with Jay Unseth of Technology Services to develop an arrangement of the new song. The piece was premiered by UWRF’s Symphony Band in Abbott Concert Hall on Dec. 7, 2010.

A tape of the arrangement was played at the Spring Semester Opening Meeting on Jan. 18. Lesa Jacobsen, assistant professor of music, performed the vocals for the taping. A link to a video of the meeting with the taping of the song can be found at http://www.justin.tv/uwrf_tv/b/277911771. Lyrics to the song are:

OUR CHANCE TO FLY
UWRF Spirit Song - © 2010 Phyllis Goldin
Remember us as we remember you
From Falcon’s nest we soar anew
With striking colors, white and red
Our promise to the world that lies ahead
We live to learn and learn to live
With knowledge earned by what we give
We treasure this as years go by
Our school, our home, our chance to fly
Wisconsin bluffs and rolling hills aglow
River Falls, the Kinni’s rapid flow
A campus built of brick and rock
History where generations walk
We live to learn and learn to live
With knowledge earned by what we give
We treasure this as years go by
Our school, our home, our chance to fly
Our school, our home, our chance to fly

Goldin is a songwriter, composer, writer and visual artist. She performs widely and has produced several recordings. She practices psychiatry in St. Paul.

Martin Wins State Advising Award

College of Education and Professional Studies Senior Advisor/ Administrative Specialist Mike Martin has been recognized at the state level for his talents in advising. Martin received the Wisconsin Academic Advising Association Advising Excellence Award at their state conference in late September.

Only two such awards are presented each year. Martin is also a recent recipient of the UW-River Falls Academic Advisor of the Year Award. He has been a UWRF staff member for 13 years and advises approximately 350 pre-elementary education students.

“I am flattered to receive this award, however watching my students grow and move forward, both personally and professionally, year after year is far more rewarding,” says Martin.

“Using the developmental approach to advising, he works in a caring, supportive, yet firm, manner with his advisees to help them make difficult decisions,” CEPS Interim Dean Faye Perkins says of Martin.

Among his other professional duties, Martin also serves as the UWRF Academic Staff Council representative to the University of Wisconsin System, serves as the UWRF certification officer, manages reports required by the state, and lends his expertise to other programs across campus.

Mike Martin advising in the College of Education and Professional Studies.

Chancellor Dean Van Galen notes, “Mike Martin has been an exemplary advisor for many years, and this honor is well deserved. He has guided, mentored, and influenced the lives of many UW-River Falls students.”
New UWRF Hudson Center Serves St. Croix Valley

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls opened a Hudson-based educational facility in the fall of 2010. The facility, located at 2501 Hanley Road in the Carley Ponds office building, includes three technology-enabled classrooms and meeting spaces to serve a range of educational and community needs.

The UW-River Falls Hudson Center serves the St. Croix Valley with a focus on undergraduate courses for non-traditional and working adults seeking to complete a baccalaureate degree, or enroll in select graduate and certificate programs.

“We are excited about establishing a facility to serve the St. Croix Valley in new ways, and to further strengthen our partnerships with the community,” UWRF Chancellor Dean Van Galen says.

Located just a short distance south of Interstate 94 at the intersection of Hanley and Carmichael Roads, the Hudson Center provides a convenient location for local residents and the approximately 80,000 residents of Wisconsin and Minnesota who travel I-94 through Hudson daily.

“The selected location provides the ideal combination of interstate access, adequate parking, proximity to amenities and appropriate adult learning environments,” says Blake Fry, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, who led the team charged with identifying a location for the Hudson Center.

Educational offerings at the Hudson Center during the center’s inaugural year included the business administration adult degree completion program, the master’s in business administration program and two master’s in secondary education shared inquiry cohorts. Additional undergraduate courses and certification programs were offered by the College of Arts and Sciences and Outreach and Graduate Studies.

Exploration of future educational offerings at the Hudson Center continues with regional educational partners including the Hudson School District.

“UW-River Falls and the Hudson School District are partnering to provide new, engaging learning opportunities for Hudson High School students through the center,” Superintendent Mary Bowen-Eggebraaten says.

Hudson School District Board of Education President Dan Tjornehoj adds, “The district has a history of developing partnerships to better serve the learning needs of our students. This new partnership with UW-River Falls aligns well with the district’s long-range strategic plan. The UW-River Falls Hudson Center is a logical partnership in preparing Hudson graduates for post-secondary success and providing them with opportunities to expand their 21st century learning skills.”

The center also serves as a base for UWRF to strengthen relationships with the area business community to meet economic development and workforce needs.

The Hudson Center will also support the University of Wisconsin System’s “More Graduates for Wisconsin” initiative, and the UW System provided start-up funding for the center.

“As part of the UW System’s Growth Agenda for Wisconsin, we’re asking campuses to serve more students in new and creative ways, with a goal of stimulating a more vibrant state economy. The Hudson Center is a great example of how UW-River Falls is embracing this challenge and improving the university’s service to the entire region. I applaud Chancellor Van Galen and his team for their leadership and forward thinking,” says UW System President Kevin Reilly.

More information regarding the UW-River Falls Hudson Center, including a complete list of course offerings, hours of operation and directions may be found at www.uwrf.edu/hudson.
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“Carbon footprint.” It is a frequently tossed around buzz word. UWRF is taking that buzz and turning it into real, measurable results.

A person’s carbon footprint is how much their activities impact the environment – the less of a carbon footprint you have, the better for the planet. Reducing the carbon footprint of UWRF is a high priority on campus.

As far back as 1970, UWRF has been integrating the desire for a greener planet into the curriculum. In that year, majors in conservation and land use planning were added, and the first Earth Day activities also took place on campus. In 1989, paper for campus copy machines was required to contain a large percentage of recycled material. 1995 saw the Student Voice printed with soy ink on recycled paper. In 2005, UWRF made the commitment to purchase only Energy Star-rated appliances.

“We’ve been talking about climate change for 25-35 years in which the climate science has been seeing patterns and trends that indicate that something was amiss,” says Kelly Cain, director of UWRF’s St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development (SCISCD). “It really came into the language of campus when we signed the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2007.”

Signatories to the ACUPCC agree to complete an emissions inventory and take immediate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They also agree to integrate sustainability into their curriculum and to set a target date and interim milestones for becoming climate neutral. Signatories make an action plan, inventory and progress reports publicly available.

The year 2007 was a major time for examining ways for campus to reduce its carbon footprint. In that year, the SCISCD was founded at the university. Often described as a “think and do tank,” the institute serves as a regional resource on sustainability and environmental issues and advises campus and the community on ways to reduce their consumption of the earth’s resources.

Sustainability is also a focus of undergraduate research. From proposals for habitat restoration along the south fork of the Kinnickinnic River, to creating a communications plan for student action on sustainability, to working on a Habitat for Humanity Eco Village, UWRF students are learning advanced knowledge and getting hands-on experience.

The ways in which UWRF chooses to make our carbon footprint smaller is at times unconventional. Campus mail is delivered by an electric vehicle. Student Affairs also owns an electric car, nicknamed “NEV” for “neighborhood electric vehicle.” Fast Copy recently purchased an electric vehicle to deliver print publications across campus.

Green pizza on campus? Not quite, but close. Food at the various...
dining areas on campus includes local options, decreasing the use of fuels needed to transport consumables from far away. Campus food service provider, Sodexo, is a partner in efforts to bring more local foods to the plates of UWRF students, faculty and staff.

“We’re trying to identify the depth and breadth of how we can bring as much locally-sourced fruits, vegetables, grains, meat, dairy, eggs and honey to our dining service offerings, and we’re working with Sodexo to do that,” says Cain. “Consuming local food can mitigate and minimize the impacts and cost of energy and transportation. When the price of gas starts to go up from $3.50 to $4, $5, or even $7, the numbers around locally-sourced food begin to look a whole lot different,” notes Cain.

In addition to shipping costs and the impact trucking food has on the environment, using local food also helps Wisconsin’s economy.

“In an economic standpoint, money not spent on local food is money that we are shipping out of our state, one of the richest agricultural states in the country. We have the ability as a university, one of the largest institutional consumers of food in the area, to drive markets and create and expand local farming jobs,” says Cain.

Tim Thum, facilities project engineer, has been with the university since 1989. Thum works with campus offices on a wide variety of energy conservation projects.

“From my perspective, reducing the campus carbon footprint is the result of using less energy through conservation efforts and efficiency improvements,” says Thum. “Reducing energy usage has always been a priority at UWRF.”

Sustainable building practices help keep UWRF’s carbon footprint minimal. When the Ames Education building was demolished in 2005, 90 percent of the structure’s materials were reused or recycled, keeping our contribution to the state’s landfills low. Other campus building projects continue to be completed with the planet in mind.

“Completion of the chilled water plant was a great energy use reduction project. The Kleinpell Fine Arts ventilation system replacement has also turned out to be a good energy reduction project,” notes Thum. “We expect the new library data center machine room will be a big improvement for energy use over the old machine rooms. As buildings are remodeled or as we build new buildings, they will be more efficient. We’re also including thermal solar collection as part of the new residence hall construction.”

The University Center, constructed in 2007, is the feather in UWRF’s green cap. Built with local construction materials and with low-E glass windows that make maximum use of natural light, the University Center is a shining example of how a massive construction project, usually detrimental to the environment, can counter its own impact on the earth.

At the University Center, students study and talk with friends while sitting on tables that once had a home outside Ames. They walk on carpet woven from recycled material. Toilets in the building flush with rainwater. Water bottle refilling stations can be found at multiple places around the building, discouraging the use of wasteful plastic bottles. Upon walking through the building, your nose might detect a hint of vinegar - the building is even cleaned with green cleaning solutions.

Light switches in the building are marked to denote the most sustainable lighting options. Projectors in technology-equipped rooms are mercury free. Even the waste oil from fryers is converted to biodiesel and fuel for university vehicles and machinery.

The University Center is also host to the UWRF Environmental Learning Kiosk, detailing the building’s green aspects and keeping tabs on the on-going residence hall energy efficiency contest. The vibrant kiosk also includes information how individuals on campus can reduce their personal carbon footprint.

When it comes to leaving our mark on the planet’s ecosystem, UWRF is treading lightly and making sure to preserve our environment while educating the community.
UWRF Residence Halls Embrace Sustainability

By Amy Christensen

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ commitment to sustainability has extended into the residence halls, which are now powered by 100% clean energy through Green Block purchases. They also feature communities where students are encouraged to develop a sustainable lifestyle.

The Green Blocks program is a renewable energy initiative that allows utility customers to purchase these renewable energy credits (RECs) to offset their energy consumption.

UW-River Falls first participated in purchasing Green Blocks of energy when the new University Center opened in 2007. The residence halls began their participation the following year. Each hall now buys enough Green Blocks to account for 100% of their electricity consumed annually. Last year, that amounted to UWRF purchasing 2,916,000 kWh for the year. This equates to roughly an additional $9.50 per residence hall student per year over what it would have cost to use less clean energy sources.

While “green” renewable resources like sunlight may be free, the technology used to capture this energy is still more expensive than traditional power generation methods. Therefore, purchasing Green Blocks of energy is more expensive than purchasing traditional, less clean energy options. However, increased demand for green energy will likely lead to lower costs in time. By choosing to pay a little more for green power now, UWRF is serving as a leader in helping advance clean energy technology and increase the amount of electricity generated from cleaner sources.

UWRF’s Residence Life program is currently the only residence life program in Wisconsin to participate by using clean energy at a 100% level. Their participation, combined with other campus Green Block purchases, places UWRF’s overall participation in the Renewable Energy program at approximately 40% for the entire campus. And, due to the campus involvement in the Green Blocks program, River Falls as a community participates in the program at 14.8% rate, which ranks the River Falls community as #4 in the state of Wisconsin.

In addition to serving as a leader in green energy usage in its residence halls, UWRF Residence Life is also offering first year students an opportunity to advance their education and commitment to living a more socially conscious and sustainable lifestyle with the “uMatter” (formerly “iRock”) Learning Community. This community was established in the fall of 2010 and included forty-four participants during its first year.

First year students interested in participating in uMatter live together in a designated hall and take classes together centered around general education requirements with an emphasis on sociology and environmental studies. This program also provides students with additional opportunities to connect with some of the best faculty at UWRF and foster closer relationships with students of similar interests.

Research has shown that Learning Community participants overall are more likely to succeed in their academics and be more satisfied with their social and cultural experiences. UW-River Falls is taking that knowledge one step further by encouraging students to become involved with uMatter during their first year. The goal is for students to begin to develop sustainable lifestyle habits that will continue to make them environmentally conscious throughout their college career, as well as post-graduation.
Waste Not, Want Not: Campus Proposes Launch of Compost Project

By Lisa Stratton

A half-eaten sandwich. Banana peels. Pizza boxes. Napkins. Apple cores. Chip crumbs. Right now, these items usually end up at the bottom of a trash can at UWRF. Soon, they'll be used to make campus lush and green (in more than one way.)

Staff recently proposed the introduction of a compost project making use of food waste from campus food services. Some 66 percent of total waste from the University Center, home to Dining Services, is organic.

“We've been working on the idea for several years,” says Director of Dining Services Jerry Waller. “We want to include this project in our green initiatives and use it to utilize waste on campus.”

Together with Kelly Cain, director of UWRF's St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development and other campus offices, Waller explored multiple ways of using food waste before settling on composting as the best option.

“We evaluated several options such as vermiculture (worm composting),” says Waller. “We also considered hauling it to farms for animal forage.”

Using discarded food for biodiesel was another option the group considered. Campus Dining Services already turn oil from fryers into biodiesel. Food service operations at UWRF have already made steps to reduce waste.

“Two and a half years ago we stopped using trays for our food service,” says Waller. “People used to fill their trays before stopping to think how hungry they actually were. Now, we’re reducing waste and our carbon footprint – we don’t have to use resources to wash 4,000 trays.”

Waste comes from other places besides the leftovers from someone's plate. Food that has been served in public can’t be saved and must be thrown away according to food safety regulations.

The proposal also includes a provision for pizza boxes discarded in residence halls to be used for compost. Though cardboard is recyclable, pizza box cardboard is contaminated with food and cannot be recycled. It works well, however, for composting.

The group working on the project researched several options with the help of UWRF students. The students explored what other schools do with their waste, and helped the group decide on which composting option would best fit campus. The proposal lists Laboratory Farm One as the ideal site for housing the compost.

“It's another way of saving resources. We don't have to leave campus, and we can use the resulting compost directly on campus,” says Waller.

Students will also have the opportunity for hands-on learning. The project will be particularly valuable to academic programs such as agriculture engineering and the sciences in particular.

The idea of composting certainly is not new, but making it work exceptionally well on such a large scale is a task Waller and UWRF are ready for.

“Ideally, I'd like to have this launched by next fall,” says Waller. “Our goal is to be a comprehensive composting program. We're not the first campus to compost, but we're going to be one of the most comprehensive in our operations.”
Harnessing the Power of the Wind

By Lisa Stratton

Call it revenge for the frigid temperatures River Falls and the rest of Wisconsin is forced to endure each winter - what if our legendary powerful wind chill could be turned into wind power?

UWRF, known as one of the St. Croix Valley’s leaders in sustainability efforts, recently completed a feasibility study for the installation of wind turbines on campus.

The study, completed in December, was funded by the Wisconsin Division of State Facilities, a Focus on Energy grant and energy rebate dollars, and was completed in conjunction with Spicer, Minn.-based business Windations. Windations specializes in developing and managing large-scale alternative energy projects, and worked closely with members of the campus community to complete the feasibility study.

Specifically, the study looked at the feasibility of a potential turbine site at the Mann Valley Laboratory Farm, north of River Falls along St. Croix County Road MM. While the final report of the study has yet to be completed, preliminary data shows positive results.

“The study determined that the site could feasibly accommodate two two-megawatt (2MW) turbines,” says Mike Stifter, director of Facilities Management at UW-River Falls.

The idea of using the wind to power society is hardly new. After all, many of our ancestors used wind power to arrive on America’s shores on ships, and let’s not forget the fictional Don Quixote’s epic battle with a windmill. Prior to the jump-start of the modern wind industry in 1979, however, efforts to use the wind were relatively low-powered.

Current commercial wind turbines, including the proposed 2MW turbines, could potentially produce nearly 50 percent of the energy used by campus.

“If two turbines were constructed, it’s anticipated that nearly 50 percent of our average electrical energy load could be offset by wind energy based on current usage,” says Stifter.

The initiative to bring wind power to campus is a collaborative community effort. Groups working on the project include UWRF faculty, staff, students, River Falls Municipal Utilities and WPPI Energy, Focus on Energy, the Wisconsin Division of State Facilities, the UW System, Xcel Energy and locally owned site and civic consulting and excavation companies.

Though the feasibility study may be complete, it is just the initial spark for the journey to wind turbines at UW-River Falls.

“In some ways, it’s only starting to get interesting. There are a host of issues to still be determined. A project delivery method will have to be determined that also includes the best way to finance the project,” says Stifter.

It may be awhile before the profiles of wind turbines grace the skyline at the Mann Valley Laboratory Farm, but the possibilities generated by the feasibility study have lent an air of anticipation to the project.

“Actual construction and eventual operation and maintenance may still be a few years away,” Stifter notes. “The study clearly demonstrated the possibility of them. Now the real work begins.”
Three Students Complete the First SCISCD Fellowship

By Amy Christensen

St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development (SCISCD) fellows recently completed a fellowship revolving around calculating UWRF’s Carbon Footprint and establishing the data needed for the UWRF Climate Action Plan.

The SCISCD Fellows program was developed in 2010 to provide a multi-disciplinary platform for high impact educational experiences. UWRF students and faculty apply the science of sustainable community development to the ecologic, social, and economic needs of the campus, the City of River Falls, the St. Croix region, and all external stakeholders, from local to global. Working closely with the SCISCD Director, faculty, professional staff, and administration, fellows are immersed in an integrated planning approach that promotes entrepreneurial solutions for campus and community issues.

The objective of the first SCISCD fellowship (which actually involved combining three individual students’ fellowships) centered around calculating UWRF’s carbon footprint and then developing a Climate Action Plan. The objective of this research was to learn how UWRF could reduce its footprint to meet institutional, UW System, and state and national goals as a model for campus sustainability.

Emissions calculations were conducted and ACUPCC data was entered from various departments across the university into the Clean Air - Cool Planet emissions calculator to calculate the university’s carbon footprint for the years 2007-2009. Additionally, a greenhouse gas inventory was conducted and analyzed back to 1990 to see if there were any valuable trends or areas of improvement. This research positions UWRF as one of the relatively few campuses in the country that have been able to gather this much historical footprint data.

The students’ research also established that UWRF’s carbon footprint has dropped by 20% in the last three years, which is also a rare accomplishment. Much of the success involved with this decrease is due to the efforts of UWRF’s Facilities Management under direction of Mike Stifter to maximize our conservation and efficiency efforts across campus. The students also taxed themselves with a segregated fee to purchase 100% of electricity for the residence halls and their portion of the University Center electrical energy demand from renewable energy sources.

All of the information uncovered during this research project was then included in the Climate Action Plan report for the university and is also relied upon for setting target dates, processes, and milestones for achieving a campus that is truly carbon neutral, if not carbon negative, which is the ultimate goal. The final part of the fellowship involved creating a benchmark on how to improve data collection processes in the future by implementing a central data bank.

The three students who contributed to this project included:

Ian Johnson

Ian’s post-high school educational career began with a four-year tour in the Marine Corps. From there he obtained a B.S. in Construction Management from UW-Stout and went to work for several years as a project manager for a nationwide homebuilder until he enrolled at UWRF to obtain his master’s in Sustainable Community Development. He was a third-year graduate student at UW-River Falls when he co-authored and headed up the carbon footprint fellowship project with SCISCD Director, Kelly Cain. Ian defended his thesis earlier this winter and is now applying to Ph.D. programs.

Ian’s formal research interests lie primarily in climate change and ecology. His professional goals ultimately lie in education with hopes to someday work at a college or university, continuing his work in the climate change and ecology field.

“Ishis fellowship (was) a valuable addition to my personal and professional portfolio. My knowledge and input will be used to help define what data is used to define average student commutes, how staff travel is recorded for ease of future use, and ultimately how UWRF can continue to reduce its footprint to meet institutional, UW System, and state and national goals as a model for campus sustainability.”
Bo Storozuk

Bo Storozuk is a self-proclaimed, “Eco-Jock” who graduated last spring with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a minor in environmental studies. He is currently enrolled at the University of Denver’s Daniels College of Business in pursuit of his International Master of Business Administration (IMBA) degree.

Bo was born and raised in Swan River, Manitoba, and his main interest growing up was hockey. After transferring to UWRF in the middle of his sophomore year to play for UWRF’s higher caliber hockey team, he immediately looked for opportunities to make a difference and met SCISCD Director, Kelly Cain. Shortly after meeting Kelly, he joined the Sustainability Working Group, as the College of Business and Economics student representative, and within a year also became president of the ECO (Earth Consciousness Organization) Club.

“These experiences have helped me understand the logistics and operations that these issues require in organizational settings. Fueled by the desire for a more sustainable business world, I have structured my education around the business and environmental studies sectors, which has redefined my view of the world, and has allowed me to look through new lenses of sustainability, environmental and social responsibility, and social justice. I look forward to travelling a lot in business and will hope to learn as much as I will teach other cultures and countries about these issues.”

Haiya Zhang

UWRF Senior, Haiya Zhang, originates from Kunming, China and recently completed an undergraduate degree in Business Administration, with a minor in Environmental Studies. Haiya is a passionate volunteer and champion of the earth. On one of her recent trips to volunteer was in Kolkata, India. She observed the living conditions there and realized how important it is for everyone to be responsible for the impact they leave on the earth and to utilize the resources in a sustainable manner. She is interested in, and believes the future of business lies in sustainable development, environmentally friendly product marketing and retailing, or businesses that involve environmentally friendly issues, such as eco tourism as she believes the future of business lies in sustainable development.

“I was thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of the fellowship project. It provided me a great opportunity to learn hands-on experiences in real project and also gave me a new way of reviewing operations of organizations in terms of sustainable management.”

Since the completion of this fellowship in the spring of 2009-2010 the SCISCD sponsored another fellowship in the fall of 2010 and four this spring. For more information about the SCISCD, please visit: http://www.uwrf.edu/Sustain
Dr. Brian Copp is retiring at the end of the spring 2011 semester. Since arriving at URF in 1978, Dr. Copp has been at the leading edge of the sustainability movement, even before it was referred to as sustainability.

Copp holds a B.A. from Grove City College in Pennsylvania, a M.A. from the University of Virginia and a M.A. and Ph.D from the University of Chicago.

Falcon Features sat down with the former chair of the faculty senate to discuss how he first became involved in sustainability, what changes he has seen at URF over the past 33 years, and what his post-retirement plans entail:

Q: You have been researching and teaching environmental sociology since its earliest days, how did you become interested in such an emerging field?

A: When studies suggesting a population boom emerged in the sixties and early seventies, demographers began looking at the environmental impacts. In the Peace Corps I became interested in demography and population and met a guy from Chicago who invited me to come to the University of Chicago. Once I arrived in Chicago, I started to see the connections between demography, population, and the environment.

Q: Were there any objections to your introducing such a new field into the curriculum when you arrived at UW-River Falls?

A: When I arrived here, I inherited a course called Sociology of the Future. The textbook I used has a section on environmental concerns, so that is how I started to insert it into courses. I taught that course for 10 years. It was a popular course and I had a lot of fun teaching it. When we went from the quarter to semester system, I changed the course name to Social Ecology and almost nobody took it! I went to the department chair and said I am going to change the name to match what is happening in the field and went with Environmental Sociology. The next year I had 25 students in the class. I have consistently had 25-30 students take the course ever since.

Q: At times it feels as if the students are a step ahead of the rest of the campus on sustainability initiatives. Has that always been the case?

A: I don’t think so. Unless you were interested in recycling or whole earth stores, people of my generation, the Boomers, didn’t latch onto this. It wasn’t in the curriculum of our educational process, whereas today’s students, at least the ones coming out of Wisconsin, have had teachers who are required to address environmental issues. Every student graduating from URF with a teaching certification has taken a course in environmental education. Today, children begin hearing “reduce, recycle, reuse” in the 1st grade, so yes they are a step ahead, because most of them take caring for the environment as a matter of fact.

Q: You’ve always been quite visible through your service to campus. Was service something that was ingrained in you growing up?

A: I was trained to do social research in my graduate studies. I had to ask myself, would I prefer to keep doing social research, or would I prefer to teach? When it came time to search for a job, I didn’t shoot for the Research One institutions. I decided I wanted to do two things, I primarily wanted to teach, and I wanted to find a place I could put down roots. The service piece came along with the teaching. I have wound things down in terms of service over the past few years, but I have served on eight search committees in 10 years and of course became involved with the sustainability working group.

Q: What are your post-retirement plans?

A: I am heading to Korea for about 10 days for a Peace Corps reunion. I have a grandchild who was born last Thursday and a grandson who is two. They live in Seattle, so I might be out there for weeks at a time. My twin brother who retired five years ago, is on his eighth trip to Biloxi, Mississippi since Katrina. I am going to give him a call and find out when he is planning to head down and I will fly down to help him build homes.
For the Falcon women's hockey, men's basketball and softball teams, the 2010-11 season was one of unparalleled success.

The softball team put together a first for its program – winning the WIAC regular season and tournament championships in the same year.

The Falcons went 4-0 in the WIAC tournament to capture the title, and along with it a berth into the NCAA Championship series. This is the third time the Falcons have qualified for the NCAA tournament having participated in 1993 and 1994. This is also the school's first WIAC softball title since the 1994 season.

Pitcher Rose Tusa was named the WIAC Pitcher of the Year and Coach Jody Gabriel was named the WIAC Coach of the Year. Tusa, Amanda Ryder and Ashley Goettl were all named to the first All-WIAC team.

Gabriel, who played for the Falcons from 1994-96, won her 100th career game when the Falcons beat nationally ranked UW-Whitewater, 5-4, on May 1 in River Falls.

The hockey team went through the season undefeated and ended the regular season with a near perfect 22-0-3 record. UWRF won a school record 13 straight games to start the season, and ended the year with a five-game winning streak.

For three straight weeks the Falcons were the No. 1 ranked team in the USCHO.com poll.

UWRF won the NCHA regular season title with a 17-0-3 record. The team is just the second NCHA team to go through a conference season undefeated.

Coach Joe Cranston was named the NCHA Coach of the Year. Forwards Kait Mason and Jessica Thompson and defensemen Lauren Conrad and Kayleigh Bell were all named to the first All-NCHA team. Conrad and Mason were named AHCA All-Americans.

Mason set a school record for points in a single season (40) and tied the school record for goals in a single season (20).

The basketball team reached the NCAA National Tournament for the first time in school history. The Falcons finished 20-8 overall and were 12-4 in the rugged WIAC.

The Falcons put together a school record 15-game winning streak.

The Falcons reached the WIAC Tournament championship game for the first time in school history after finishing second in the league standings.

Coach Jeff Berkhof was named the WIAC Coach of the Year and was a finalist for the Glenn Robinson Coach of the Year award.

Guard Shane Manor and forward Jake Voeltz were both named to the All-WIAC team. Voeltz, a senior, finished his four-year career with 1,056 points. Voeltz was named to the NBCA second All-West Region team while Manor was named to the D3hoops.com third West All-Region squad.

“Matt brings a wealth of successful football experiences to the position,” said Ternes. “He has the necessary intangibles to be successful at UW-River Falls. He is a man of incontrovertible character who embodies the ethics and ideals established here at the UW-River Falls.”

“Our family is honored to become a member of both the UWRF and River Falls communities,” said Walker. “I’m anxious to meet with the team and the entire Falcon athletic department staff. I’m ready to get started and get to work.”

Walker was also the head baseball coach at DePauw from 2001-09 and led the Tigers to five conference divisional championships and to a NCAA regional berth in 2001. He was named the conference Coach of the Year in 2001. Three times he led the Tigers to the most wins in a single season (2004, 2005, 2008).

He earned a sports science undergraduate degree from DePauw in 1999. He went on to earn his master’s degree in physical education from Indiana State in 2001.

At DePauw he played football from 1997-99 as a quarterback. He also earned three letters in baseball. He was a pitcher and was named to the 1999 All-SCAC team.

Walker was an instructor of kinesiology at DePauw and will have teaching responsibilities in the UWRF health & human performance department.

Walker, a native of Crawfordsville, Ind., will be the University’s 20th head football coach in the school’s history. He replaces John O’Grady who completed his 22nd season with the Falcons in 2010. O’Grady retired after the 2010 season.

Walker and his wife Jana have two daughters; Kraly, five, and Hudson, nine months.
Retired UWRF Sociology Professor, Dr. Robert Pionke continues to enrich the lives of students with his gifts of university scholarships.

By Amy Christensen

Although it has been over fifteen years since Pionke has stood in front of a class of students, his commitment to UWRF, and its students education continues to flourish through three scholarships:

**Donna J. Arne Scholarship**
This scholarship is awarded to a junior sociology major with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 who demonstrates financial need and honors Donna Phernetton-Arne, who served as the secretary in the social science/sociology department. Pionke decided to sponsor a scholarship in Donna Arne’s name in appreciation for all the work she did for UWRF over three decades. “Donna was always giving 110 percent of herself,” Pionke explains. “She always took time to answer the many questions that students posed. I think she probably ‘advised’ more students than most faculty.”

**Annette Harrison/Dr. Robert Pionke Scholarship**
This scholarship is named for Pionke and a former colleague, Annette Harrison, who taught sociology courses at UWRF from 1969 until her death at age 30 in 1972. Annette was very popular with the students and would unselfishly spend hours helping them with their studies and counseling them in regard to personal problems. This scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate, female student over 25 who demonstrates need, aptitude, and a commitment to attain a degree from UWRF.

**Jessie M. Davidson-Pionke Memorial Scholarship**
Pionke also honored his mother, Jessie Davidson-Pionke, with a scholarship in her name that is awarded yearly to an elementary education student. Jessie lived all of her busy life in central Wisconsin where she raised four children, helped her husband on the farm, and completed her professional educational training in elementary education then went on to teach elementary school for 25 years. Jessie died in 1963 at the age of 68 – the same year her son Robert began teaching at UW-River Falls. Robert says of his mother, “If she were alive today, she would surely say that teaching children and observing them learn and grow is one of life’s finest rewards.”

**Dr. Pionke’s Legacy**
Pionke was born and raised in central Wisconsin. Upon graduation from high school he spent a brief period working in a factory until being drafted in the Army for two years. After his discharge, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point on the GI Bill to pay for tuition and graduated in 1960 with a bachelor’s degree in sociology and English.

Pionke was accepted for a teaching assistantship at Southern Illinois University and received his master of arts degree (1963) in sociology with a minor in psychology.

He was subsequently employed to teach sociology courses at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in September 1963, and he remained at UW-River Falls until his retirement in May 1995.

While teaching at UW-River Falls, Robert was also enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota and received his doctorate of philosophy in 1972 with a major in sociology and a minor in political science with a fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health.

During his years of teaching at UWRF, Pionke was a very strong social activist on campus, as well as in the River Falls community at large.

While serving as UWRF Faculty, Pionke chaired a steering committee responsible for bringing a number of high profile social justice activists to campus such as Vincent Price, Alex Haley, and Maya Angelou. He still recalls the thrill of getting to meet some of these amazing people at the airport and escort them to campus.

Pionke also enjoyed bringing real life experiences into his classroom. For example, he regularly took his classes on prison tours and conducted deeper research revolving around the penitentiary system himself at three area correctional facilities. At each facility, he served as an observer for three to six hours a day for several weeks and sat in on group therapy sessions, inmate interviews, etc. so that he could truly offer a realistic view of life in a correctional facility for his students.

In the greater River Falls community, Pionke served on the Grievance Committee for the St. Croix Valley Chapter of WI Civil Liberties Union for over thirty years and helped handle some smaller civil liberties cases and was also published for writings about various social issues.

Pionke feels that, “Education is the most important part of a person’s life—first, in seeking out a career, and second, in enabling the student to become an informed and socially aware citizen possessing the ability to intelligently participate in the democratic process.”

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls is forever honored for the experiences Pionke brought during his career here, as well as the legacy he is providing for future generations of students through the scholarships he sponsors.

**Falcon Features in print & online**

The Fall issues of *Falcon Features* will be available in print and online.

In an effort to support UWRF’s dedication to environmental conservation and to decrease costs, Spring issues will be available to you on-line if we have your e-mail address.

The same alumni features, news items and class notes that regularly appear in *Falcon Features* will be offered at: [www.uwrf.edu/falcon-features](http://www.uwrf.edu/falcon-features)

If you have not received an electronic notice, please provide the Advancement Office with your e-mail address so that we can notify you when the next issue is available on-line. You may send your e-mail address to: alumni@uwrf.edu

Or go to: [www.uwrf.edu/alumni/feedback.php](http://www.uwrf.edu/alumni/feedback.php) to use the online update form.

Be sure to update the Advancement Office of any mailing address changes as the Fall issue of *Falcon Features* will continue to be printed and mailed as usual.

Look for the print and on-line versions in the Fall.