

# WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN ABOUT TRANSFERRING

*Real Advice from Students*



## FAST FACTS

From UW-Sheboygan the top five schools that students transfer to are:

- ✓ UW-Milwaukee
- ✓ UW-Oshkosh
- ✓ UW-Green Bay
- ✓ UW-Madison
- ✓ UW-Whitewater

The top five baccalaureate transfer majors are:

- ✓ Business
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Communication Arts
- ✓ Biology
- ✓ Health Sciences

Moving to a larger university can mean working harder to balance school work, friends (new and old), and a host of diversions. All this may happen while you are adjusting to new living arrangements too.

Photo illustration by Miles White. Students (from left): Stephen Parent, Chelsey Martin (hidden), Abigail Fassbender and Sara Bemis.

## Larsen: Don't pack too much, don't smoke to fit in, don't be lame

By Lacey Engel

Kristen Larsen attended Lewis and Clark College of Arts and Sciences in Portland, Ore. She graduated in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in studio arts. Currently, she is a non-degree-seeking student at UW-Sheboygan.

Q: What advice would you give to people planning to attend a four-year college?

A: You don't need to smoke to fit in, or do drugs for that matter.

The first people you meet won't necessarily be your friends.

Go to art openings, shows, and films that colleges offer. They are great places to meet people and keep you from being lame.

Join a club, you'll meet people.

Q: How did you feel about attending a four-year university?

A: I was more excited than anything. I brought everything with me, and I realized I didn't need to bring as much stuff.

Q: What would you say as far as the work

See **Don'ts from Larsen**, page 6

## Donlon: Talk to students, get an internship, party in moderation

By Steve Hameister

Allison Donlon, who attended UW-Sheboygan in 2007, transferred to UW-Milwaukee and graduated with a bachelor of business administration degree. Currently, she works in Chicago as a human resources generalist.

Q: What tips and advice do you have for students who are transferring?

A: Meet with an adviser to find out which classes to take. They'll have all the information for degree options, and there are so many degrees and different schools in the university.

Spend some time with students who go there. They know what programs have good reputations.

Do visits—do a couple visits—to make sure you're making the right choice. There may be other schools that are a better fit for you, and it's hard to find out in the course of a couple hours.

Check out the town around the school to

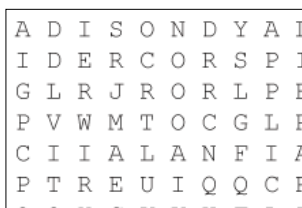
See **Dos from Donlon**, page 6



**Better couches, new TV, and more. Page 2**



**Transferring? More advice. Pages 4-5**



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**What happens to your plastic? Page 7**



**Aquaponics: Farms of the future. Page 8**



# Student government uses fees to make campus better

## New television, better couches, water bottle refill stations

By Iakovos Balassi  
SGA Senator

Coming back from spring break, you probably noticed a few changes around campus. Some changes are in the Commons area.

Remember that enormous, clunky, and outdated television? Well that was replaced with a flat screen.

And those old ratty chairs? Now there is a big, comfortable couch.

Other changes involve the water fountains around campus. Soon five fountains will have water bottle refill stations. So far, one has been installed.

You may have wondered why these changes were made and whose ideas they were.

The Student Government Association (SGA) of UW-Sheboygan decided to make these changes. One of the association's largest responsibilities is to spend segregated fees on projects like these. Segregated fees come out of the students' tuition that they pay to the campus.

SGA members thought that the area in the Commons needed a more up-to-date look. It is important to have an area so frequently used by students that looks and feels better.

In an effort to make the campus more environmentally friendly, SGA decided to put the water bottle stations on campus. Many campuses in the UW System have had these for many years, and

it was about time that we got a few. The first one is in the Commons. Other stations will be installed outside of the library, in the Fine Arts Building, in the science building, and near the gym.

SGA made these purchases with the students and improvement of the campus in mind.

SGA would like to remind students that it is the association's job to represent students. As a

result, students' views are welcomed and encouraged. If you have any questions about segregated fees, these changes on campus, or are interested in joining SGA, contact SGA President Doug Meyer or Vice-President Megan Zielke.

Also, meetings are held every Tuesday in the Student Organization Room during noon free hour, and all newcomers are welcome.



Kurt Schmitz uses one of the new water bottle refill stations that have been added to campus drinking fountains.



Students (from left) Alexis Puchalla, Emily Stock-Farris, J.J. Seifert, Iantha Collin and Jordyne Runkel check out the new furniture in the Commons. Photos by Collin Carey

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# OPINION: I CARE AND OTHER STUDENTS SHOULD TOO

**They're making decisions about our teachers, our librarians, and more. They're not telling us!**

By Chelsey Martin

Gov. Scott Walker signed into legislation a budget plan on June 30 that would cut \$2.33 million from the budget of the 13 two-year University of Wisconsin Colleges campuses. Our campus, UW-Sheboygan, has been tasked with cutting \$73,000 from the budget. This amount was decided by former Chancellor Ray Cross. A Repositioning Task Force was put together to come up with ways the colleges could reduce their budgets. I met with Professor Matthew Raunio, the only member of the committee from our campus, to discuss the potential implications of this budget cut.

The RTF committee was tasked with offering suggestions to the chancellor, who will make the final decisions on what changes will be made. Any programs funded by student tuition cannot be cut, such as any position involved with student life like our multiple advisors. However, any shortages can pressure the campus into raising tuition to cover monetary deficiencies.

## Student life advisor

What originally caught my attention was the small debate around whether or not the campus should cut the student life advisor position before we filled it. This is a position the school has struggled to fill since our previous long-term advisor left to pursue other options. I heard this debate through my work on various committees on campus. The question of whether or not this position would be more viable to cut than a position that was already filled came up on a few occasions. Thankfully, because 75 percent of the position is devoted to student life, a function funded by student tuition, only the 25 percent of the position devoted to advising can be cut. If this 25 percent of the position was cut, however, it would lead to a lower annual salary, possibly making the student life advisor position even more difficult to fill.

## Classes and professors

The only other “safe” positions, jobs that cannot be cut, are professor positions. This is great news for students who will not have to worry about losing any of the quality professors currently on staff. However, while positions can't be cut, classes can and salaries can be reduced, and the chancellor is strongly considering cutting some of the “unnecessary” courses, such as the First-Year

LEC 100 Seminar and other courses that serve as introductory courses and not as degree courses. Removing some of these courses can severely hamper those students who are struggling.

This cutting of classes may not seem like that big of a deal, especially considering that not every student on campus will take these courses, but this loss of teaching time can reduce the hours of some professors to the point where they may face the potential of losing benefits. This loss of benefits could cause some professors to look elsewhere for more stable employment. Also, well qualified new professors might not take a UW-Sheboygan position if they cannot be guaranteed the course hours they desire.

On top of the loss of potential extra credit hours professors face the risk of being denied raises and in some cases having their pay cut over the years. This could

further encourage professors to either devote time outside of the campus to pick up credit hours at other colleges or to attempt to find another, more secure position with another university.

Even though all of these things could have some effect on the student body at large—even if these effects are as minor as a professor being slightly more grumpy than usual—the student body is not being encouraged to get involved in these discussions as the chancellor moves forward in making his decisions. Even if the student body has no say in the final outcome we at least have the right to be aware of the decisions being made about our campus behind closed doors.

## Library changes

The biggest, most recent change caused by this budget cut is the attempt at centralizing the library director role and library services. The goal is to replace

the library director position at each of the campuses with a single centralized position that will handle the everyday happenings of each campus' library through email and other technological means. On Feb. 10, Chancellor Cross announced his budget reduction decisions. The restructuring of the libraries was part of his decision, and to my knowledge not a single student who was not involved with committee work on the campus was made aware of these decisions. I understand that people in power have to be able to work without the pressure of being told what to do by every uninformed party in the world, but once the decisions were made what excuse can be given to keeping the student body—the ones ultimately affected by this budget cut, no matter how hard people try to keep the affect to a minimum—in the dark about those decisions?

## Lack of communication

Since the decision was made Chancellor Cross moved to a new position, and as of this moment the Interim Chancellor Aaron Brower is in charge of finalizing the decisions and enacting the changes the budget cut requires. The campuses have no ability to decide whether or not this budget cut will happen because it already has and must now simply put the pieces together and deal with the damage as it happens, and no one is faulting anyone involved for the budget cut. The only issue that anyone sees is the lack of communication to the student body about an issue that will, no matter what happens, change how the student body interacts with their campus. Even while researching for this article it was extremely difficult for me to get a straight answer out of many people. My most helpful, and most appreciated sources, all had the same questions and lack of knowledge that I did. The information has to be out there, and it has to be accessible to anyone reaching out for it.

People with knowledge have an obligation to share that knowledge openly with everyone involved and as the student body of the University of Wisconsin we are intrinsically, undeniably, involved. All we want is an email, “Dear Students, this is the news with the budget cut that has sadly fallen on our campus and this is what we are doing about it to make sure the outcome is as positive as it can be for everyone involved.”



Interim Chancellor Aaron Brower (right) chats with Student Government President Doug Meyer on an April 9 visit to UW-Sheboygan. Provost Greg Lampe included the following in his reflection on the administrators' campus visit: “Aaron and the students spent considerable time talking about how to enhance student involvement in clubs, student government, and how to engage peers by addressing issues that have meaning to them.” Photo by Carrie Hoppe



## McGovern: Voice your opinions, make a difference

By Jesse Ramos

Amanda McGovern transferred from UW-Sheboygan to UW-Stevens Point. She is currently a senior studying sociology with a minor in women and gender studies.

While at UW-Sheboygan, McGovern was active in the Student Government Association.



Amanda McGovern

**Q:** What do you wish you had known before starting college or transferring to a new school?

**A:** Something that I wished that I knew before starting college was how many opportunities there were for a person to have a way to voice their opinions. I think that thinking that no one cared what I thought and that I couldn't make a difference on my campus was the one thing that I wish I knew before I started college.

**Q:** What were you most fearful or anxious about, and how did it turn out? What were you surprised to find?

**A:** I was most fearful about meeting people on a bigger campus and whether I'd be able to get involved on a bigger campus. It turned out really good. I've made a lot of new friends and have gotten really involved on my new campus and in my department! I was really surprised to find out how many cool things go on just in your department and how many opportunities there are for different majors. It was cool getting to know all the faculty in the Sociology/Social Work Department at some of the events we had.

**Q:** What did you find that was better than expected?

**A:** Something that was better than expected was that instead of buying all my textbooks, my campus had a textbook rental program. This program had a majority of my textbooks, and they only cost about \$90 out of my segregated fees. It made getting my textbooks way easier.



Larger classes are among the fears mentioned by students transferring to large universities. In a photo from fall 2011, undergraduates kick off a new academic year in a Nutritional Sciences 132: Nutrition Today course taught by senior lecturer Peter Anderson in Agricultural Hall at UW-Madison. Photo by Bryce Richter/UW-Madison

## Conklin: TA's help with most big lecture classes

By Amber Saunders

Emma Conklin, a former UW-Sheboygan student, is now a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her major is undeclared, but she is currently working with a "great" cross-college advising service.

**Q:** What were your biggest fears transferring to a larger state school?

**A:** My biggest fear was having larger, more competitive classes and not being able to get individualized help from instructors. Luckily, most lectures here have smaller discussion sections with TA's [teaching assistants], which are great for asking questions and learning from peers.

**Q:** How has transferring to UW-Madison influenced your student abilities/success?

**A:** There are a variety of specific libraries with a lot of information on whatever you are studying, which is awesome for doing research. Also, the classes are very heavy on information, so I feel like I am learning quite a lot at a very fast pace.

**Q:** What advice would you give to those transferring?

**A:** Don't hesitate to get involved with transfer activities. They are a great way to get free food, but they're even better for establishing yourself at the university and making new friends in the big city.

## Glander: Am I smart enough? Can I keep up?

By Deanna Wiehr

Rachel Glander is a sophomore majoring in special education at UW-Sheboygan.

**Q:** What do you wish you had known before starting college?

**A:** I wish I would have known how dedicated you have to be, how much time and effort you have to put into studying and into the classes themselves.

**Q:** What were you most fearful or anxious about and how did it turn out?

**A:** I was most fearful about whether or not I would be able to keep up with the work load and if I was smart enough for the classes I had to take.

**Q:** How did that turn out for you?

**A:** It turns out I am handling it better than I thought. You just have to focus and put school before free time and dedicate your time to your classes.

**Q:** What were you surprised to find?

**A:** I was surprised at how helpful the advisors were. They really wanted to help you make the best of being at UW-Sheboygan and wanted you to succeed in your education and career.

**Q:** What did you find out that was better than you had expected?

**A:** The people here. They're so nice, which makes it easier to make new friends.

## Davis: Be open to new experiences to get over fears

By Samantha Bowers

Alyssa Davis is a senior majoring in music education with an endorsement in elementary education at Adams State University in Alamosa, Colo. She is a former UW-Green Bay student.



Alyssa Davis

**Q:** What was your main fear in transferring from UW-Green Bay to Adams State University?

**A:** Being away from my family, moving to a different state, and being alone were my biggest fears.

**Q:** How did you go about paying for school?

**A:** I got many loans to cover my schooling, but I knew it would be up to me to pay that all back after I finished.

**Q:** What would you give as a tip to a first-time college student?

**A:** To be open to new experiences is the best way to overcome the fear of going to college.

**Q:** Is there anything you would have done differently?

**A:** I would of went on more tours of the colleges I had in mind. That way I would of picked a college that best suited me the first time around instead of having to transfer.

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## Puchalla: Don't let your fears get the best of you

By Elizabeth Zimbal

Alexis Puchalla studied American Sign Language interpreting, theater, and children and family ministries at North Central University before transferring to UW-Sheboygan.

**Q:** What were some of your fears first going into college?

**A:** Being so far from my family. The change. Not knowing anybody.

**Q:** Is there anything you learned from your experience? Is there any advice you would give to someone else about to start college?

**A:** Believe in yourself. It's not as easy or hard that it may seem. To focus on homework even though it doesn't allow you lots of free time. Don't take the freedom you have for granted. Don't be afraid.

**Q:** Once you got to North Central University, were your fears really as bad as they had seemed before?

**A:** Yes and no. It was a little intimidating not knowing anyone, but I got to know people very quickly, which made it a little easier being so far away from my family as well as my other friends. It required a lot more prioritizing, organization, and concentration than I thought.

**Q:** What were your fears about transferring to UW-Sheboygan?

**A:** Having to start over and not knowing anyone again.

**Q:** Were your fears really so bad once you got here, and do you have any advice?

**A:** No. I actually made one of my best friends the first day at UW. I guess just be confident, and don't let your fears get the best of you.

## Arenal: Balancing family, job and UW-Milwaukee

By Wesley Melton

Vincent Arenal received his associate of applied sciences degree from UW-Sheboygan in 2009. He graduated from UW-Milwaukee in 2012 with his bachelor of business administration degree. Arenal is currently enrolled in the Master of Business Administration Program at the Lubar School of Business at UW-Milwaukee, and he works full-time at UW-Sheboygan as a financial specialist in Business Services.



Vincent Arenal

**Q:** Why did you choose UW-Milwaukee?

**A:** UW-Milwaukee is the academic equivalent to the school of business at UW-Madison. It is a lot closer to home. Lubar graduates get jobs quickly after graduation. There are benefits from smaller class sizes in comparison to UW-Madison—more individualized instruction. UW-Milwaukee provided excellent preparatory work for transition into graduate school during my undergraduate program; they made it a very smooth transition where it can be difficult for students.

**Q:** What were your concerns when choosing to go to a four-year campus?

**A:** I wasn't sure if I could balance employment, family and education. I was worried that my grades might be affected. But I learned after a little while that, with hard work and dedication to my studies, I could maintain full-time employment and enrollment status.

**Q:** What were your fears about transferring to UW-Sheboygan?

**A:** Having to start over and not knowing anyone again.

**Q:** Were your fears really so bad once you got here, and do you have any advice?

**A:** No. I actually made one of my best friends the first day at UW. I guess just be confident, and don't let your fears get the best of you.

## Mutsch: Surprised by big class sizes, tons of clubs

By Jacob Albright

Nathan Mutsch is in his second year of college and is majoring in finance and international business at UW-Whitewater. He spent his first year at UW-Sheboygan.

**Q:** What was your biggest concern or fear when transferring to UW-Whitewater?

**A:** Concerns or fears I had first starting was initially picking out my classes and finding them since it's just not one big building anymore.

But it turned out to be not so bad because the advisor made choosing classes easy, and the number of classes offered let me pick classes I was interested in.

It also didn't take me long to figure out the campus layout.

**Q:** What surprised you about Whitewater once you began school there?

**A:** The biggest thing that surprised me was how big the classes are compared to Sheboygan. Some classes I had about 50 to 80 other students with me.

**Q:** Is there anything you like better about UW-Sheboygan?

**A:** A thing I liked better at Sheboygan was the professor knew who you were on almost a personal level. Here at Whitewater they know your name and kind of know you but not really.

**Q:** Is there anything you like better about UW-Whitewater?

**A:** Some things that really stand out to me about Whitewater are the food service that provides a huge variety of quality foods and the student life.

Everyone is pretty involved with each other, and there are tons of clubs and organizations. Also the parties and the ladies are worth mentioning.

## Wieland: Choose dorm options that offer privacy

By Collin Carey

Kellyn Wieland transferred from UW-Sheboygan to UW-Green Bay. She is a junior majoring in Spanish with a minor in education.



Kellyn Wieland

**Q:** What do you think about UWGB?

**A:** I actually really like it here. The class sizes are only just slightly bigger than what we had at UW-Sheboygan.

**Q:** What was one of your biggest fears about transferring to UWGB?

**A:** I would have to say finding all of my classes. It is a bigger campus with more buildings.

**Q:** What is something that you wish you would have been told about before transferring?

**A:** I think the campus actually does a good job of informing you on what you need to know when you transfer. I felt pretty comfortable with the transition because it was rather easy.

**Q:** Do you have any advice to those who will be going through the transfer process?

**A:** Get an apartment dorm room that allows you to have your own private bedroom. There is more space to yourself, and you even get a full kitchen in the apartment as well.

Also, find out more about the Pass Point system when you get to campus [UW-Green Bay]. It is a great way to put money in the form of credit on your student ID card to buy things all over campus.

## Review: Christina Perri's *Head or Heart*

By Steve Hameister

With her second studio album, pop rebel Christina Perri looks to put a new foot forward. Gone is her bleached hair—and her look is a bit softer than during her “Jar of Hearts” days—but the album suffers a bit from a lack of creativity and goofiness that was present on her first full-length. There seems to be a theme of rebirth on *Head or Heart*—a feeling of having, having lost, and coming back stronger for it. That isn't to say this is a record about bitterness, but rather the battle between your logic and your feelings during the life-cycle of a relationship.

Starting off really strong,

“Trust” is a delicate, introspective song that sets you up for intricately woven vocals and the promise of a fresh start. A driving bass beat and a sing-along chorus make “Burning Gold” a likely first hit and is the strongest track on the album. At its best,

*Head or Heart* encapsulates what Sara Bareilles brings to the piano-based-pop table (“Burning Gold”) and the sunny acoustic guitar romp that Colbie Caillat is known for (“Be My Forever”). At its worst, it's just another mainstream record. The biggest criticism is that ultimately Perri plays it too safe. There are some beautiful moments of chamber orchestra arrangements, with Perri acting as her own chorus in “Butterfly,”



but these moments are too few and the heavy pop production of other songs can take away from the heart and soul of her words.

The story comes full circle with closer “I Believe” declaring, “This is not the end of me/ This is the beginning.” Though it may seem like she hasn't learned much from the experience, our lives are revolving doors of relationships that we glean a bit of wisdom from to apply to the next. Perri is learning as she goes and bringing us along for the ride, and while it may not always be revolutionary, she can't be anything but genuine.

**Rating: 3½ out of 5 stars**

## STUDENT VIEWS

“Getting distracted by friends and parties” was **Jonathan Turner’s** fear about coming to college. His strategy is to “Stay focused at all times.” Turner is a first-year student at UW-Sheboygan, and he plans to study business at Butler University.

**Richard Benson’s** worry: “Was I going to get the grades?” His strategy was to “Work hard in every class, and do my best on every assignment.” Currently, Benson is a sophomore at UW-Sheboygan, and he plans to continue his education at UW-Stevens Point.

“That I would not be able to pay for it,” said **Aqwon Collins** about his fear about coming to college. His solution: “I applied for scholarships and grants.” Collins is a first-year student at UW-Sheboygan, and he plans to continue his education at UW-Milwaukee.

Contributed by George Hawkins

### Don'ts from Larsen (continued from page 1)

to stay on top of things?  
Academic advice.

A: In general, you should attend class. You probably aren't a super-genius savant, so going to class will actually help you.

Q: Steve Jobs would beg to differ.

A: Yeah, but Steve Jobs was a balls-to-the-wall risk-taker and genius. Unless you have an ass full of confidence and literally a junkyard full of ambition pouring out of your ears, you might have to do it the old-fashioned way.

Q: Open discussion. Last thoughts?

A: About transferring to a four-year school: I hate wearing pants as much as the next guy, but pajamas in class is just not acceptable. You may be able to get away with it, but you look like a “noob” and ain't

nobody gonna respect you. The only time pajamas are acceptable in public is when you no longer have any memory of who or where you are.

Also, intramural sports are great if you aren't that good at meeting friends. It's literally the last time in your life that intramural sports will not be a weird singles dating club and will instead be exactly what they claim to be: fun and stupid competitive exercise.

Also, don't be an asshole. Regardless of how out of place you may feel, being mean about people to gain favor or respect isn't going to work for you.

Every new year is full of new people—most people don't know each other, and you're just as new as the next dude.

Q: What were some of

your favorite classes?

A: Field Paleontology of Oregon was awesome. A summer full of camping in the desert and digging for trilobite and sequoia fossils.

I took a Japanese tea ceremony class, which was held in the basement of a chapel by a really old lady who did not speak Japanese. Basically two hours a week of whisking matcha powder in hot water... And folding napkins correctly.

I took a Jesus history class, called Jesus History: Myth and Mystery, which was essentially just a protracted battle between two or three “Jesus scholars.”

But the only reason I learned any of that was through the “if you see something interesting, investigate it” maxim.

### Dos from Donlon (continued from page 1)

see if you like it because you're going to be spending a lot of time there. If you're in Milwaukee, always carry pepper spray [laughs].

Try to get an internship while going to school, and attend any and all career fairs and resume building workshops. It's all free resources that you won't have once you leave school.

I joined SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) which had a \$30 membership fee, but it was very worth it. Find one in your field.

A lot of transfers get distracted by partying. Do this in moderation and keep focus. Otherwise it [college] is a waste of time and your money.

Take aptitude tests that identify strengths and interests to find a path if

you don't know yours yet. I was interested in law and psychology, but human resources was a good middle ground since it has both the legal aspects and knowing how to read people.

Q: What did you expect from a big school?

A: I expected classes to be large, which was exciting but scary. There was less one-on-one with teachers, and it was harder to get clarification, but the professors were very helpful. Know when their office hours are, and they are very eager to help.

I was worried about having terrible suite mates in the dorms, and this ended up being true. They were very messy, but eventually you get to pick your own roommates when you move out.

# ALL ABOUT TRANSFERRING

O M A D I S O N D Y A L T Y E  
S T I D E R C O R S P I T A K  
H T G L R J R O R L P B U B I  
K M P V W M T O C G L R I N U  
O A C I I A L A N F I A T E R  
S J P T R E U I Q Q C R I E E  
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I N T E R N S H I P L L E P W  
E R U T C E L L A C R O S S E

- APPLICATION
- BACHELORS
- CREDITS
- DORMITORY
- GREEN BAY
- INTERNSHIP
- INTRAMURALS
- LABORATORY
- LA CROSSE
- LECTURE
- LIBRARIES
- LOANS
- MADISON
- MAJOR
- MEAL PLAN
- MILWAUKEE
- OSHKOSH
- PARKING
- PELL
- PROFESSOR
- QUAD
- SCHOLARSHIP
- TRANSCRIPTS
- TRANSFER
- TUITION
- WHITEWATER





A variety of plastics await recycling in the Town of Cedarburg. Photo by Bob Petrie

## What happens to plastic bottles that are thrown into the street?

By Wesley Melton

According to Greenpeace, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, also known as the North Pacific Gyre and the Pacific Trash Vortex, has grown to the size of the state of Texas. Some reports estimate that it has grown larger than the state of Alaska. There are now patches forming in other oceans around the world.

Most of the plastic that gets thrown onto the street pollutes waterways and soil, and it ends up in the ocean. According to Oceana, International Ocean Conservation Leadership, "As much as 1.6 billion pounds of plastic end up in the ocean every year, and does not biodegrade, meaning that the plastic that

ends up in the ocean remains there indefinitely." By the force of hydrological flow street litter goes from the gutter into street drains and into city sewer systems, then either into a river, lake or other waterway. All content of all wa-

terways eventually empties into the oceans.

Plastic bags and bottles photodegrade, meaning that the petroleum by-products they are made of slowly break down from exposure to the sun's energy, a pro-

cess that takes several hundreds of years.

In many countries and at least one American community (Truckee, Calif.) laws and ordinances have been passed that ban the distribution of single-use plastic bags because of their damage to the environment.

Plastic consists of various polyvinyl chlorides, polystyrenes, polypropylenes, and polycarbonates that are harmful to the environment and the human body. All of the food and water supply for the inhabitants of earth is sustained by water from oceans that is eventually consumed by humans and animals. Today, more and more of this water is being compromised by plastics.

### What do you think?

In an informal poll, 20 high school students in Sheboygan were asked: What happens to plastic bottles that are thrown into the street?

- An alarming 65 percent gave responses indicating that they thought the bottles break down naturally in a process similar to biodegradation.
- Another 30 percent indicated that city "garbage workers" or "street sweepers" collect this litter.
- One student's response indicated that citizens who "recycle for money" search out and collect the litter from the street.
- Zero percent knew where street litter goes.

## Let the Writing Center relieve some of the pressures of college writing

By Deanna Wiehr

College is a place where students are faced with different kinds of pressure. Throughout the academic year, students work hard to handle the pressures of balancing their work life, family life, social life, and school life. They sometimes pull late-nighters completing different kinds of assignments/projects and studying for tests. Here at UW-Sheboygan there are different forms of resources that students

can take advantage of to help relieve some of the pressure that goes along with college life. One resource on campus that many students are familiar with is the Writing Center.

The Writing Center is a great educational resource where students can go and receive free support and help at "any stage of the writing process." There are qualified and dedicated peer tutors who are willing to sit down with students during tutoring sessions

and provide helpful feedback and answer any questions that a student has about their writing or about the whole writing process in general. Tutors can also be a really great sounding board for students to voice their ideas, while receiving suggestions on how to go about getting started with their writing.

A student can request a tutoring session with a writing tutor by stopping in the Writing Center, which is located in Room

3212, and scheduling an appointment. Students can also walk in during the center's open hours, or they can email Writing Center Coordinator Erica Wiest.

If students have any additional questions, or would like to learn more about the Writing Center they should contact Wiest at [erica.wiest@uwc.edu](mailto:erica.wiest@uwc.edu). Do not let the fear of having to write a paper or essay get to you, instead stop in the Writing Center and give it a try.





Lue Thao picks cucumbers grown in the aquaponics system that Professor Mark Schmitz oversees. The system also produces tilapia and a variety of other vegetables. Photos by David Hesketh

# Aquaponics: Seen as the future of agriculture

By David Hesketh

Imagine a food-producing system that doesn't require enormous fields to grow its produce and causes almost no water pollution while delivering fresh vegetables and healthy fish year-round that, theoretically, could be grown in space. You need imagine no more. Welcome to the wonderful world of aquaponics.

If you've heard of aquaponics, you probably think of it as plants that grow on fish poop. But there is so much more to this system of food production that could almost literally swim circles around any comparable alternative.

There need to be three main components in order for all of this to work: The fish, the plants, and the lesser-known, but equally important, bacteria.

"The system is designed with all three living components in mind, and they're all benefiting from each other," explained Professor Mark Schmitz. Schmitz started working with aquaponics in 1998 while he was in graduate school. At UW-Sheboygan, the aquaponics system has been running for three years. "It's like its own mini ecosystem," said Schmitz.

However, the main component of this system, the fish waste, isn't useful to the plants as is.

The waste must go through several filters before it can perform its intended function as "free fertilizer."

The waste begins its journey of metamorphosis by traveling from the fish tank through a plastic pipe and into the clarifier and mineralization tanks. The clarifier filters out the largest chunks of feces from the smaller, more-manageable portions. The mineralization tank then uses bird mesh to trap the rest of the solids until they break down into a size that the bacteria, which is what the feces will meet on its next stop, can convert.

Ammonia, which is what fish waste mostly contains, doesn't help plants very much as a fertilizer, and it needs to be converted into something more useful. That's where the next tank comes in, the degassing tank. This degassing tank's main function is to house the bacteria that convert the ammonia into nitrate, which is a better fertilizer. With this purpose in mind, the tank is filled with bio-balls: Little hollow circles that look like gears that are designed to serve as a friendly surface for the bacteria to settle on.

The nitrate then travels on the last leg of its journey to the raft tank, which is what holds

the plants. It's called a raft tank because of the way the plants are held in place. A large rectangular Styrofoam mat, with a dozen or so 2-by-2-inch squares cut out of it, is placed in a similarly shaped water-filled tank. It floats like a raft (hence the name). The squares are then filled with cucumber or lettuce seeds enclosed in soil.

After the water has delivered the nitrate to the plants, it returns, with the help of a pump, to the fish tank to repeat the process all over again. The plants filter the nitrates out of the water, keeping it clean, and the pump keeps everything moving and fresh.

The fact that there is almost no water pollution involved isn't the only benefit of aquaponics over traditional farming. "You're growing them year round, without herbicides, pesticides, or potentially harmful chemicals," explained Schmitz. "Often times they [the produce] are packaged with the roots intact, so their shelf life is much longer because they're essentially still living."

Even the fish serve a greater purpose than providing the waste that is so necessary for all this to work. After about nine months, their usefulness for the aquaponics system is expired and they

are promoted to test subjects for the Lakeshore Technical College culinary department.

And so, with some fish, a little water (that you don't need to replenish), a couple of 500-gallon tanks and some friendly neighborhood bacteria, you receive a dozen or more delicious fish and vegetables year-round that you can either enjoy yourself or sell for a premium price.

Wisconsin is at the forefront of the aquaponics frontier, with local organizations such as Future Farms and Growing Power garnering national attention for their locally grown produce from large-scale aquaponics systems. Schmitz attributes our unpredictable winters for the comparably consistent system's popularity.

Aquaponics is not without flaws: Because the system requires a very warm, humid environment, heating on even a small scale can get expensive.

However, naturally and locally grown vegetables have spiked in popularity, and as long as they continue to grow, aquaponics will as well. Schmitz is optimistic, "as people become more health-conscious and aware of what they're eating, it's only going to create a bigger demand" he said. "It's really seen as the future of agriculture."



Left: Plants grow in squares of soil that float on Styrofoam mats. Middle: The system includes tanks for fish, as well as clarifier and mineralization tanks. Right: Bio-balls serve as a friendly surface for the bacteria.