

UWP Richland students, staff want to save their campus

Petition to Regents; Facebook group formed

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RICHLAND CENTER — A Richland County supervisor created a group on Facebook with the intent of developing interest in improving enrollment at UW-Richland.

The group, "Save our UW-Richland Campus," was started by Shaun Murphy-Lopez in reaction to steeply falling enrollment at the two-year UW campus located in Richland Center. According to UW System statistics, enrollment over the last eight years has fallen from approximately 450 students to 65 students at the college.

The education committee of the board of supervisors has passed a resolution asking UW-Platteville, which oversees recruiting at UW-Richland, to return a full-time enrollment recruiter to be based in, and work solely out of, UW-Richland.

When enrollment was around 450 students, UW-Richland had an on-campus recruiter. About eight years

ago UW-Richland had that recruiter moved to the UW-Platteville campus. Enrollment has fallen dramatically ever since.

UW-Platteville interim chancellor Dr. Tammy Evtovich has said that the university system has an enrollment plan in place for UW-Richland, but she has not specifically addressed returning a recruiting employee full-time to the UW-Richland campus.

UW-Platteville oversees the Richland and Baraboo/Sauk County campuses. Both of the smaller campuses are seeing sharper declines in enrollment compared to UW-Platteville.

Richland County is currently facing an operational budget shortfall between 2024-2027 of \$4.59 million. A combination of cuts to departments, increased fees and local taxes and an operational

referendum have been identified as the best way to approach finding the money to stem the budget shortfall.

County Board chair Marty Brewer has said he has concerns with the county's ongoing operational costs to maintain buildings on the UW-Richland campus that are not being fully utilized due to the enrollment crisis. The county owns the UW-Richland campus and buildings, which were first developed as the normal school teacher's college was assimilated into the UW-System in 1967. The UW-System has a perpetual lease on the campus with 20 years remaining.

UW-Richland has become a part of the Richland Center and county community. The university offers full educational plans for students and has been host to countless foreign students throughout the years. The college has an

athletic program that's not fully being used because of the sharp decrease in enrollment.

"Save our UW-Richland Campus" has gained 382 members as of Tuesday morning. A petition to help the campus — seeking input from other state legislators — has more than 1,000 signatures according to a post by Murphy-Lopez on the Facebook page.

The "about" section of the

page, written by Murphy-Lopez includes, in part:

"... Due to many factors beginning with the regionalization of the UW Colleges and progressing to the current branch campus model, UW-Richland was slowly dismantled through lack of financial support, eliminating the position of Dean, drastically reducing faculty and staff, having no marketing or strategic plans, eliminating the international coordinators

and discontinuing Continuing Education and youth programming.

"The Community is now disheartened and upset. UW System is proposing to end all in-person instruction on July 1, 2023. This will mean our college students will have to move away from Richland County, and we will lose our connection to the national and international student community. There is tremendous
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First fatal crash of '22

► **CRASH** from page 1
reached the vehicle they saw the driver was still inside and was dead, the Sheriff's Office said.

The Sheriff's Office said Dinger was driving north on 78 Wednesday overnight or morning when his car crossed over the southbound lane hit the guardrail, traveled behind the guardrail and went airborne before landing in the river.

Blanchardville and Argyle Fire and Blanchardville EMS assisted at the scene.

The crash remains under investigation. Dinger is Lafayette County's first traffic fatality this year.

Graduations Saturday

► **UWP** from page 1
ninth president of the UW System June 1. He previously served as the chairman and CEO of the law firm Foley and Lardner LLP. Rothman earned his bachelor's degree from Marquette University and his law degree from Harvard Law School.

The College of BILSA senior speaker and valedictorian is Ryan Erickson, an agricultural education major, from Barron. Dr. Louis I. Nze-gwu, professor emeritus of the School of Business, will serve as the ceremony's marshal.

Grace Trenkamp will deliver the senior speaker address for the College of LAE, which includes associate degree and master's degree candidates. Trenkamp is an environmental science and conservation and theatre double major from Preston, Iowa. Dr. Rosalyn Broussard, professor emerita of political science, will serve as the ceremony's marshal. The valedictorian is Bailey Watson, a history major from Brodhead.

The commencement ceremonies will conclude with the College of EMS. Brendan Weber, a mathematics in secondary education major from Potosi, is the senior speaker. Dr. Joanne Wilson, provost emerita, will serve as the ceremony's marshal. Justin Penkalski, a software engineering major from Franklin, is the valedictorian.

Since 1866, UW-Platteville has provided affordable and accessible education to students of Southwest Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and other parts of the country and world. Nearly 60,000 students have earned UW-Platteville diplomas.

For more details about commencement, visit <https://www.uwplatt.edu/commencement>.

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