

The RETIREE CENTER Newsletter



Hello Retirees,

Spring has finally arrived! As I write this, the office doors are open and birdsong fills the air. It's one of those perfect spring days—though I wouldn't mind if my allergies gave me a break. With the change in seasons comes a wave of activity on the WSU campus. This week, we hosted the All-U Campaign Kickoff breakfast and the Employee Recognition Ceremony. I always have the honor of speaking at the recognition event, where I welcome our new retirees and encourage them to connect with the Retiree Center. Each year, I try to capture what makes our retiree community so special. I'm consistently moved by the generosity, commitment, and heart you all bring to the university. I tell our new retirees that they're joining a truly remarkable group—one that stays actively involved and deeply invested in our shared mission. I also remind them (and myself) how lucky I am to work with and for all of you. I don't say it nearly enough, but please accept my heartfelt THANK YOU for everything you do!



We will be celebrating the Retiree Spring Luncheon on May 1st. This is another chance for us to recognize and welcome our newest retirees. We have 21 people joining the retiree ranks this year. I'm looking forward to seeing so many of you at the luncheon. As of this writing, we have 81 people on the list to attend. I'm optimistic we will hit 100 when all is said and done. About a week after the luncheon, we will be traveling to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater to see *Grease: The Musical*. That trip is sold out, but we have many other day trips planned for later this year and early 2026 (see details on [page 8](#)). We also have a fantastic line-up of Senior University classes on tap for the fall. Topics range from a Socrates Cafe-style discussion on taboo political topics, to a short course on the WSU Arboretum, to an exploration of the four strands of Romanticism. All three of these classes will be taught by current WSU retirees, one of them being a brand new retiree this year, Melanie Reap. Welcome to the illustrious cadre of Senior U instructors, Melanie! You can see all of the classes being offered in the fall on [page 4](#).

As a reminder, my hours decrease significantly during the summer months. I will be working ten hours per week during the months of June and July, mainly on Monday and Tuesday afternoons. I will still monitor email regularly and can make office visits by appointment if needed. I'm looking forward to some quality patio time with a good book and an iced coffee in hand. I will be back to 32 hours/week in August when things at the university and the Retiree Center start kicking into high gear. A few dates to keep in mind for fall: the Retiree Fall Social will be on Thursday, October 9th, Homecoming Week runs October 20-25, the Winter Social will be on Thursday, December 4th, and the Living History Premiere will be on Monday, December 8th. Lots of fun things to look forward to!

Big thanks to Bill Meyer for his wonderful guest column on Taylor Dietz, an exceptional WSU student volunteer. It's a great read, be sure to check it out. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter—and I'd love to see you at an upcoming class or event. Take care and see you soon! – Jess

RETIREE CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

To support the mission of WSU and enrich the campus community as well as the lives of retired staff, faculty and administration by providing institutional connections between the University and retirees who may wish to continue their intellectual and social participation in collegial life and service to the University.

NEWS AND NOTES

Advisory Board

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Director:
Jessica Kauphusman

Work Study:
Madison Berrier

RETIREE CENTER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The WSU Retiree Center Scholarship Committee has chosen the Retiree Center Scholarship recipients for academic year 2025-2026.

The criteria for the Retiree Center Scholarship are:

- Applicant must be a non-traditional student
- Applicant must be a full-time junior or senior
- Applicant must have at least a 3.5 cumulative GPA

The Scholarship Committee was thoroughly impressed by this year's group of twenty-nine applicants. Thanks to generous support from the Senior University Committee, which contributed funds from its revenue budget, we were able to award two \$1,000 scholarships for the upcoming academic year.

Our first recipient is Sarah Schmick, a Communication & Literature Teaching major set to graduate in Fall 2027. Sarah commutes daily from Rochester to Winona while juggling an intense schedule: she's working at a preschool, a country club, a student teaching program, and a restorative justice education initiative—all while taking 16 credits and preparing to start a third job. Her car has over 260,000 miles on it, and she is persevering through the recent loss of her father. Despite these challenges, Sarah has maintained an outstanding GPA at WSU. She is also a gifted writer, and her application stood out as heartfelt and deeply inspiring. This scholarship will make a meaningful difference for her.

Our second recipient is Elizabeth Tischler, an Art Education major planning to graduate in Spring 2026. Elizabeth was homeschooled and has never attended public school. In 2020, her family lost their home, and she now supports herself entirely without financial assistance from family. She works between 55 and 65 hours a week and has still earned a place on the Dean's List every semester. Elizabeth hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Art Therapy and work with students with special needs after graduation.

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to our Scholarship Committee members for their time, care, and thoughtful review of this year's applications. Their dedication helped us support two incredibly deserving students. I also want to extend my gratitude to those who have already contributed to our scholarship fund. As a reminder, you can designate a gift to the WSU Retiree Center Scholarship as part of your All-University Campaign donation. Every applicant this year showed both great merit and significant financial need. The more we're able to raise, the more students we can assist in reaching their academic goals.

2025-2026 RETIREE PARKING PASSES ARE HERE!

The 2025-2026 retiree parking permits are now available! You may stop in at the Retiree Center to pick one up. Since I am a 1-person office, I would advise you to call before coming to the Center to ensure that I am available to help you. If you live 30+ miles from campus, please let me know, and I can get a permit mailed out to you. Retirees with parking permits can park in all gold lots on campus. This is a fantastic benefit for you, but you do need to make sure to get a new permit each year...you may be ticketed if your car is displaying an expired permit. I will also bring the permits to the Retiree Breakfasts over the summer.

A FEW SAVE THE DATES

WINONA TOGETHER EVENTS

From Engage Winona website

Winona Together is a series of lively, free community gatherings designed to bring people together, strengthen civic engagement, and build resilience in our community. These events offer a welcoming space where you can meet your neighbors, enjoy fun activities, and gain a deeper understanding of the local services and resources available to support our community.

Each gathering is held at Peter's Biergarten, a vibrant, all-ages outdoor venue in the heart of Winona. Whether you're looking to connect with others, learn something new, or simply enjoy a sense of belonging, we invite you to be part of this uplifting experience.

Mark your calendar for this year's events (all second Tuesdays from 5-7 pm):

- Tues, May 13 – Kickoff: Connect and Belong
- Tues, June 10 – Gardening for Community
- Tues, July 8 – Reigniting Community Participation
- Tues, August 12 – Weaving Community Connections
- Tues, September 9 – Celebration: Leading with Lived Experience

Come as you are and join the conversation!



ENGAGEWINONA

RETIREE BREAKFASTS



YOU ARE INVITED

2025 WSU
Retiree Center Breakfasts

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR
GREAT CONVERSATION
A LIGHT BREAKFAST
AND ENGAGING SPEAKERS**

Breakfast Dates

April 15: All-U Campaign Kickoff
Kryzsko Ballroom
8-9:30am

May 13: Kryzsko Commons Solarium
Speaker: Patrick Clipsham

June 10: Kryzsko Commons Solarium
Speaker: President Ken Janz

July 8: Kryzsko Commons Solarium
Speaker: Scott Ellinghuysen

August 12: Kryzsko Commons Solarium
Speaker: Tania Schmidt

Sept. 9: Aboard the Cal Fremling
2 one-hour rides will be offered

May - August Breakfasts run from
9 AM-11 AM - RSVP Required

SENIOR UNIVERSITY FALL 2025 PREVIEW



Here is a look at the upcoming Senior University classes for Fall 2025. Classes will be held in person.
REGISTRATION will open soon!

CRIT: GENEALOGICAL RESILIENCE, INTEGRITY & TENACITY	Janis Martin	Thursdays August 28, September 4, 11, 18 2:30-4:00 p.m. \$40.00
HOT TOPICS THAT POLITICANS DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT	Richard Shields	Tuesdays September 9, 16, 23, 30, October 7 2:30-4:00 p.m. \$40.00
SENIOR U LITE: THE WSU ARBORETUM: MORE THAN JUST TREES	Melanie Reap	Fridays October 3, 10 1:00-3:00 p.m. \$20.00
THE ROMANTICISMS: FOUR STRANDS	Emilio DeGrazia	Wednesdays October 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19 2:30-4:00 p.m. \$40.00
EATING YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH	Kent Hansen	Thursdays October 16, 23, 30 November 6, 13 2:30-4:00 p.m. \$40.00

WSU COMMON BOOK 2025-26

Written by Andrew Higl

I am pleased to announce the WSU Common Book for the 2025-26 academic year! This upcoming year's book will be *Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law* by Mary Roach.

What's to be done about a jaywalking moose? A bear caught breaking and entering? A murderous tree? Three hundred years ago, animals that broke the law would be assigned legal representation and put on trial. These days, as New York Times best-selling author Mary Roach discovers, the answers are best found not in jurisprudence but in science: the curious science of human-wildlife conflict, a discipline at the crossroads of human behavior and wildlife biology.

Roach tags along with animal-attack forensics investigators, human-elephant conflict specialists, bear managers, and “danger tree” faller blasters. Intrepid as ever, she travels from leopard-terrorized hamlets in the Indian Himalaya to St. Peter's Square in the early hours before the pope arrives for Easter Mass, when vandal gulls swoop in to destroy the elaborate floral display. She taste-tests rat bait, learns how to install a vulture effigy, and gets mugged by a macaque.

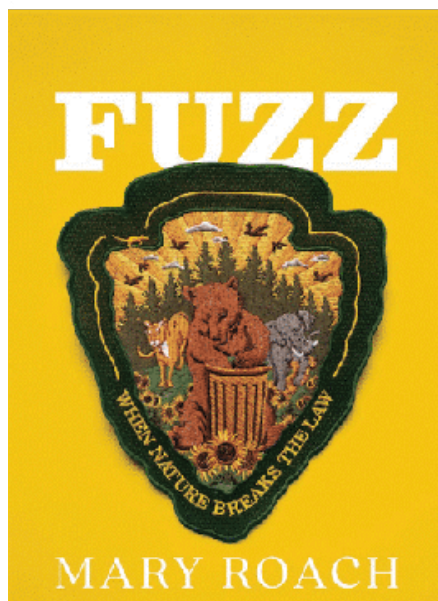
Combining little-known forensic science and conservation genetics with a motley cast of laser scarecrows, langur impersonators, and trespassing squirrels, Roach reveals as much about humanity as about nature's lawbreakers. When it comes to “problem” wildlife, she finds, humans are more often the problem—and the solution. Fascinating, witty, and humane, *Fuzz* offers hope for compassionate coexistence in our ever-expanding human habitat.

What I like most about the book is the infectious curiosity Roach brings to her research, and I believe we can learn a lot from Roach's insatiable desire to discover. Mary Roach is a New York Times bestselling author of a wide range of books, and we plan to welcome her to campus in the fall. In addition to an author visit, we are planning a series of “book club” discussions, a film series in the spring, and collaborations with local experts and organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service.

But we need your help in our mission to make this a great year of reading and collaboration! First off, we would love it if you could read the book and encourage others to join you. Second, we have a limited budget, and we welcome assistance in cosponsoring some of the programming we hope to have in conjunction with the book.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Please also let me know if you would like to collaborate on programming. I will be in touch with more details on fall programming, including the author visit and the “book club” dates.

Andrew Higl, PhD
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RETIREE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MINNESOTA MARINE ART MUSEUM VOLUNTEERING

Winona is so lucky to have a world-class art museum in its backyard. As a 501(c)(3) institution, the Minnesota Marine Art Museum relies on thousands of annual work hours by a generous corp of volunteers. Volunteering allows you an opportunity to share your talents with the community, connect with other people who share your interest, and support MMAM's mission. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available, including the following:

Greeters -Greeters play a significant role in helping make people feel welcome as they explore the museum. They serve as gallery attendants to keep visitors and artwork safe, answer questions and point out resources.

Family Program Assistants - Family Program Assistants work with children and families at the Museum's family programs, such as Toddler Tuesday and Second Saturdays. These volunteers help children with art projects, read stories, and help set-up and clean-up.

Docents -Docents are specially trained volunteers who facilitate tour experiences for visiting groups. Docents lead tour groups of all ages and backgrounds. They use inquiry, discussion and interactive strategies to help people make personal connections with the art. This position requires a ten-week training course offered every other winter. Docent classes are only held once every two years.

If you are interested in pursuing any of these opportunities, please contact Heather Casper: hcasper@mmam.org

JOIN THE WSU WELCOME CREW THIS FALL!

If you want to help welcome new students to WSU residence halls in the fall, please consider signing up for Welcome Crew.

Welcome crew is a group of students, faculty, staff and retirees that help our first-year students move into the residence halls. They do a variety of jobs; traffic control, directions, helping families move in (moving boxes) and dumpster duty. Move-in day for Fall 2025 is Thursday, August 21st!

Volunteers will be able to preference the building they want to work in, but may be moved if needed in other areas on campus. If you have a group or team that wants to work together, please make sure you put that on the form, and the move- in team will make sure you work together.

Sign up for Welcome Crew [here](#).

Volunteer Benefits:

- Opportunity to meet and welcome new students and their families
- Receive a free Welcome Crew T-Shirt
- Free lunch or dinner on the day you volunteer
- That warm fuzzy feeling you get when you help!

Once you are signed up, more information will come over the summer as the date approaches. Thank you for considering this opportunity to welcome our new students and their families to campus!



UPCOMING RETIREE CENTER DAY TRIPS

On Thursday, August 14th, the Retiree Center will be hosting a daytrip to the Orpheum Theater in Minneapolis to see a matinee performance of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast: The Musical*. This is an updated production with new sets and costumes!

We have secured great main-level seats for the show. Here is some information from the play's website:

"Be our guest at Disney's newly reimagined 30th Anniversary production of Beauty and the Beast, the breathtaking musical filled with the romance and grandeur audiences know and love. This enchanting and timeless tale has been brought to life like never before, with spectacular new sets and dazzling costumes. The show boasts the Oscar-winning and Tony Award-nominated score, including the classic songs "Be Our Guest" and "Beauty and the Beast."

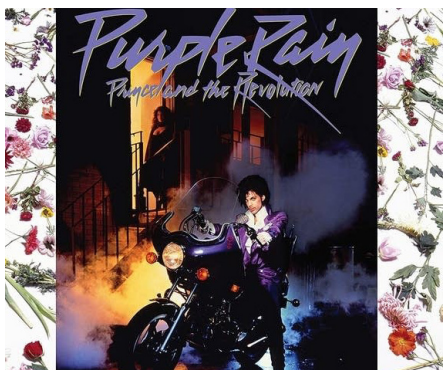
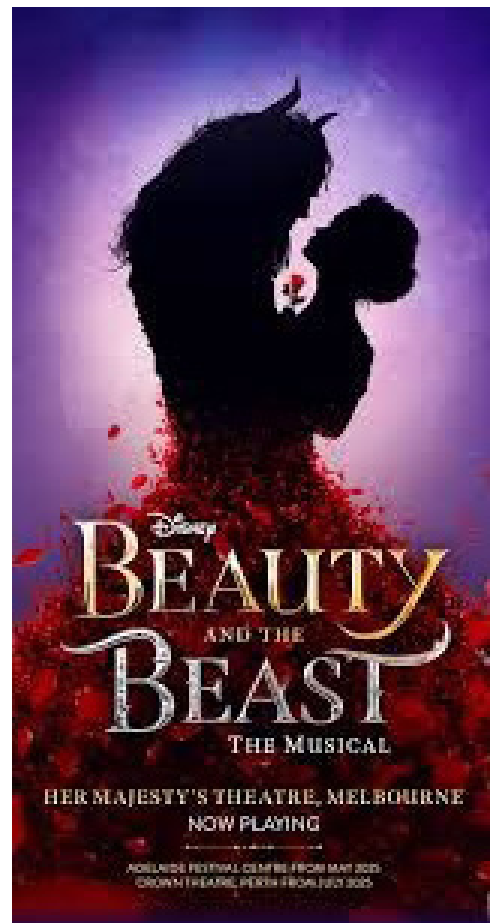
We will not be stopping for dinner on this trip. We would recommend eating a late lunch/early supper before we leave or packing something to eat on the bus. We will have snacks on the bus, and we will stop at Kwik Trip on the way back so that people can get more snacks if necessary.

Trip Itinerary:

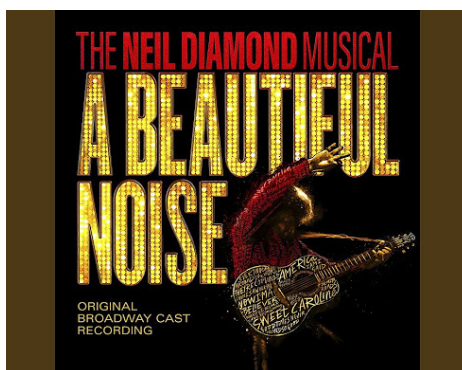
10:00 am – Board bus at Elks Parking Lot (4540 Service Drive, Winona)
12:15-12:30 pm – Arrive at the Orpheum Theater
1:00 pm – Showtime
3:45 pm – Board the bus for Winona
6:00 pm – Arrive at the Elks Parking Lot

The cost of the trip is \$100/person and includes your ticket to the play and the bus ride. This ticket price does not include a tip for the bus driver, so please bring a couple dollars if you want to leave the driver a tip at the end of the day.

Please register soon if you are interested!



October 22, 2025



Fall 2025



Spring 2026

Watch for emails from me with details about these upcoming trips! I am also planning a Vikings game day trip for this fall...details to come.

GUEST COLUMNIST - BILL MEYER

TAYLOR DIETZ- STUDENT VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Sitting on one of Winona State Landscape Arboretum's decision-making committees, an extraordinarily talented WSU student named Taylor Dietz, has found a voice for her passion for environmental activism. For the last year and a half, she has brought fresh ideas and her sense of volunteerism to the WSU Tree and Shrub Committee. At the same time Taylor has taken an active leadership role in the WSU student environmental club. Here, she and other students have taken on such projects as helping with the planting and maintenance of the colorful annual flower bed in the Children's Garden just south of Gildemeister Hall.

Taylor was born and raised in Fargo, North Dakota, the "Gateway to the West." Her love of ecology and forestry was set in motion when Taylor began helping her family as they set up a forestry business that included planting memorial trees. At the same time Taylor displayed her commitment to ecology by being chosen president of the Davies high school environmental club. Still, she found time for her love of running. Whenever she had the chance, Taylor enjoyed competing in track events at Davies high school.



Taylor Dietz

Proximity to her family in Fargo was an important factor in Taylor's decision to attend WSU. In addition, she was given the Winona State University's Presidential Scholarship. In order to receive this prestigious scholarship, she was required to hold a 4.0 GPA in high school and maintain a 3.5 GPA each semester in college. A final consideration in Taylor's decision to attend WSU was her boyfriend's decision to go to the same school. That's what really sealed the deal!

While at WSU, Taylor has pursued a double major in ecology and biology environmental science, while also working toward a minor in sustainability. During the past two summers she has worked as a forestry technician for the U.S. Corps of Engineers environmental section out of La Crescent, MN. Her many duties there included assisting in goose banding for the WI DNR, deploying acoustic bat monitoring for data collection, and planting and managing a Swamp White Oak seed orchard on Goose Island, LaCrosse, WI.

Since Taylor is about to graduate this spring at WSU, she is required to do a capstone research project in biology. She chose to research the obscure Great Indian Plantain in Garvin Heights with a fellow student. Great Indian Plantain is a plant in the sunflower family that can be found in Minnesota, often thriving in woodlands and growing up to eight feet. Bees are particularly attracted to this threatened plant. Taylor's research in Garvin Heights found the largest known recorded population of this native plant in the state of Minnesota and possibly in the upper Midwest. It is possible that this high population is due to an earlier planting of a prairie seed mix in Garvin Heights in 2005. Taylor is quick to acknowledge Dr. Neal Muldahl of the WSU biology department for helping generate her interest in this topic.



Marinara the Shrimp!

Taylor enjoys running, hiking, and scrapbooking in her spare time, but what really sets her apart from her college companions is one of her more curious interests. She is a shrimp aquarist and has about eighty shrimp. Her goal is to breed them back to their wild type which is a natural genetic variant. Many of her little friends are more transparent now than they were in their natural habitat. She doesn't plan to release them into the wild but would prefer to find a home for them with the biology department at WSU. By the way, Taylor does have a favorite pet shrimp that she calls "Marinara"!

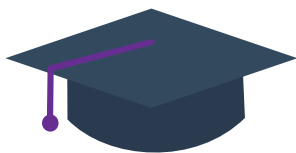
Taylor and her fiancé, who met in middle school, are planning on getting married this June. The two newlyweds will then be leaving the Winona area and heading to northern Arizona where Taylor just received a graduate assistantship at Northern Arizona University. There, she plans to study Environmental Science and Policy and research Aquatic Ecology. We wish them the best wishes in their future pursuits.

CALENDAR

May

RETIREE SPRING LUNCHEON

Thursday, May 1, 2025
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Kryzsko Commons Ballroom:



WSU COMMENCEMENT

Friday, May 9, 2025



RETIREE BREAKFAST

Tuesday, May 13, 2025
9:00-11:00 a.m.
Speaker: Patrick Clipsham
Kryzsko Commons - Solarium

MEMORIAL DAY



Monday, May 26, 2025

RETIREE CENTER DAY TRIP

Grease: The Musical
Chanhassen Dinner Theater
Wednesday, May 7, 2025
Sold out



June



Begins June 26, 2025
For more info: <https://www.grsf.org/>

We still have spaces available in Jane Carducci's Shakespeare in Performance Senior U course.
Register [here](#)!

WINONA STEAMBOAT DAYS

June 11-15, 2025



RETIREE TRAVEL

Tuesday, June 25-29, 2025
Montreal Jazz Festival
with Rich MacDonald



RETIREE BREAKFAST

Tuesday, June 10, 2025
9:00-11:00 a.m.
Speaker: WSU President Ken Janz.
Kryzsko Solarium



MINNESOTA
BEETHOVEN
FESTIVAL

JUNE 29- JULY 20, 2025

For more info: <https://www.mnbeethovenfestival.org/>

JUNETEENTH

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025

RETIREE CENTER CLOSED

CALENDAR

July

TIME TO ENJOY
SUMMER IN MINNESOTA!



RETIREE BREAKFAST

Tuesday, July 8, 2025
9:00-11:00 a.m.

Speaker: Scott Ellinghuysen
Kryzsko Commons Solarium

WINONA COUNTY FAIR

July 9-13, 2025



SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE SENIOR UNIVERSITY COURSE

Sundays; July 13 & 20, 2025

Class will meet for 2 hours prior to
performances and for 1 hour afterwards

Taught by Jane Carducci
GRSF Guest speakers each week



ALEXIS ROCKMAN: OCEANUS

On view: June 28, 2025 - January 4, 2026
Minnesota Marine Art Museum

August and Beyond



RETIREE BREAKFAST

Tuesday, August 12, 2025
9:00-11:00 a.m.

Speaker: Tania Schmidt

RETIREE CENTER EVENTS - SAVE THE DATES!

FALL SOCIAL - THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

WINTER SOCIAL - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

LIVING HISTORY PREMIERE - MONDAY, DECEMBER 8

WSU FIRST DAY OF CLASSES

August 25, 2025

WSU HOMECOMING

October 20-25, 2025



RETIREE BREAKFAST

Tuesday, September 9th
Aboard the Cal Fremling!



RETIREE CENTER TRAVEL

Islands of New England - Sept. 12-19, 2025
Utah's Mighty 5 Nat'l Parks - May 18-26, 2026
European Christmas Markets - November 2026



IN MEMORIAM



*Gary Grob
Head Baseball Coach
February 9, 2025*

IN REMEMBRANCE

*We honor and mourn our
University colleagues who
have recently died.
We recognize the richness of each life,
the gifts these members have brought
to many and the loss felt by family
and friends.*



*Carol Anderson
College of Education Dean
April 13, 2025*



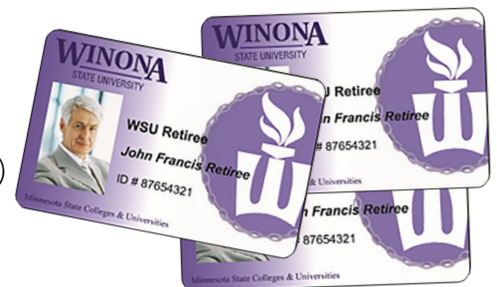
*Carolyn Kosidowski
Advising
February 22, 2025*



*Wayne Theye
Spouse of Naomi Theye
March 17, 2025*

THE PERKS OF BEING A WSU RETIREE

- Athletic Events: Free admission to regular scheduled campus athletic events
- Teaching, Learning and Technology Services: Free campus offered classes when space available
- WSU Fitness Center access at employee rate
- ID card for all retirees
- Free parking pass for all lots, must renew each year
- Printer, scanner and copy access at the Retiree Center (up to 10 pages)
- Notary Public Services available at no charge
- WSU Library privileges (Retiree ID card serves as library card)



This newsletter has been mailed to all retirees with a physical address on file and emailed to all retirees with an email address on file. You will continue to receive the newsletters via email unless you have requested to receive hard copies. If you would like to start receiving hard copies of the newsletter, please notify the Retiree Center by email – retiree@winona.edu or phone: 507.457.5565. Thank you!