

## Winter To-Do List Offers Plenty of Options

It is no secret that Madison has a well-deserved reputation for a “lively” winter weather environment. During 2008, this “lively” weather produced a whopping 100 inches of snow, and this year has already brought Arctic-style snow and ice, along with frigid temperatures and wind chills.

But the snow and cold need not trap students in their classrooms, residence halls, and apartments during the early weeks of spring semester. Although video game consoles and hanging out with friends remain popular forms of entertainment, the close connection between the campus and the city ensure opportunities ranging from low-priced sporting events and live music, to engaging speakers and theater performances. Those who are hearty enough to venture outside can also enjoy the beauty of a Wisconsin winter.

“This campus, along with the surrounding community, is one of the most active and dynamic places in the country,” says Dean of Students Lori Berquam. “There is no better place to be a college student. At any given time, there are literally thousands of things to do and ways to get involved.

“I’d urge every student to use this semester to do something they’ve never done,” she adds. “Parents can help encourage students to break out of their comfort zones and make these connections.”

**Badger Parent** recently surveyed students and staff about winter entertainment. While by no means all-inclusive, this list includes a variety of opportunities your student may take advantage of during the winter months. Ask your student how he or she is handling the weather and getting involved this semester. If you sense that your student is getting “cabin fever,” sharing these ideas with him or her may spark an interest.

**On campus.** Students suggested picking up copies of free newspapers such as the *Badger Herald*, *Daily Cardinal*, *Isthmus*, and *Onion* to see listings of local events.

“Keep your eye out for different indoor activities, like performances, music, or university-sponsored events to get enough variety in your recreation diet as to not go stir crazy,” advises UW–Madison student Kiera Wiatrak. “And plan in advance, because if it’s 8 or 9 p.m. on a cold Friday night and you don’t have any plans yet, you’re probably not going to be

able to motivate yourself to leave home.”

No discussion of “things to do” on campus would be complete without a mention of the Wisconsin Union. Through the Wisconsin Union Directorate, more than 1,000 activities, ranging from art shows to films and outdoor programming to volunteerism, are held each year. For an events list, visit [www.union.wisc.edu/events](http://www.union.wisc.edu/events).

UW–Madison frequently ranks highly on lists as diverse as the most CEOs listed among S&P 500 companies and number of volunteers to the Peace Corps. Berquam says that students begin the journey to leadership or service by participating in one of hundreds of student organizations, running the gamut from Action in Sudan to the Zero Gravity Team. For a full list of these organizations, visit [soo.studentorg.wisc.edu](http://soo.studentorg.wisc.edu). Additionally, students can learn more about opportunities in volunteerism and community service through the Morgridge Center for Public Service at [www.morgridge.wisc.edu](http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu).

Although many groups and programs kick off near the start of the semester, new members and volunteers are always welcome.

An abundance of art and culture can be found both on campus and just a few blocks away. The Chazen Museum of Art is UW–Madison’s flagship art museum, but Memorial Union and the School of Human Ecology, among others, house galleries. The School of Music offers many free performances for students.

Theater also abounds, with University Theatre offering student tickets for as low as \$14. The Wisconsin Union Theater also offers big-name entertainment on campus.

**In Madison.** Every student should take advantage of the Overture Center for the Arts, located halfway between campus and the Capitol. The mammoth white building on State Street showcases gallery space, performances, and world-class architecture. The center’s complex also houses the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art with its striking glass “prow,”



Students build a snowman on Bascom Hill during a winter snowstorm.

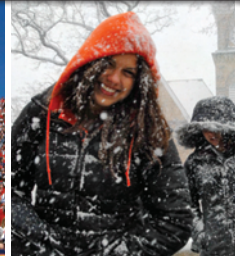
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## Winter To-Do List *(continued)*

which juts out onto Henry Street. Admission is free.

For unique options for dinner and a movie, students can try Robert Redford's Sundance Cinemas. Showing independent and art-house films, the theater is a short ride from campus at Hilldale Mall.

"Sundance is very cool," says Wiatrak. "The seats are nicer, and the atmosphere is different than a normal movie theater. Plus they show independent movies, which add new depth to mainstream cinema."

Some of the best things to do and see can be found on State Street and around Capitol Square, advises Gwen Evans, a staff member in University Communications and author of *Madison: The Guide*. State Street offers a mile-long stretch of restaurants, coffee shops, galleries, and retail businesses.

For museum buffs, she suggests stops at both the Wisconsin Historical Society on Library Mall and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum across from the

Capitol. She also encourages a tour of the State Capitol, where, she says, "You'll see the chambers of the Legislature and the Supreme Court, among other things. Recently restored, the building is amazing."

**Outdoors.** Madison consistently makes "best of" lists of national magazines ranking the most fit or the best outdoor cities. Winter sports are abundant.

The Hoofers Outing Club, an arm of the Union, provides many organized activities to prevent cabin fever, including ski and snowboarding trips. The Division of Recreational Sports also sponsors many winter sports activities, including intramural hockey and ice skating.

Lastly, no UW–Madison student experience is complete without sledding down Bascom Hill or one of the hills overlooking Lake Mendota.

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## Counseling Is Key For Students Facing Mental Health Problems

Coping with winter can be challenging, both physically and mentally. For college students grappling with depression or anxiety, access to mental health counseling can mean the difference between failing and acing an exam—or between staying in school and dropping out.

Fortunately, University Health Services' (UHS) Counseling and Consultation Service is only a phone call away for UW–Madison students. UHS has one counselor for every 1,492 students and responds promptly to student needs.

UHS operates a 24-hour crisis phone line, and students with the most urgent needs receive appointments the same day, or the following morning if they call after hours. Other students typically see a counselor the day after they call, says Bob McGrath, a clinical psychologist and director of the counseling service.

"A lot of mental illnesses emerge at this age," says Dr. Sarah Van Orman, UHS director. "So this is the place to have the resources."

An increased demand for the counseling services is expected as more veterans enroll in college, and because faculty, staff, and student awareness has grown following the tragedies at Northern Illinois and Virginia Tech, in which troubled students

went on shooting sprees. But, Van Orman says, violence is not the typical response from students who are struggling with depression or anxiety. "The most common outcome," she says, "is them dropping out of school or not doing well. If we know that we can get students in [for counseling] and get them into the right kinds of treatment, they're going to do better, and they're going to stay in school."

The start of the every semester can be "intense" for UW–Madison's counseling services, McGrath says, but he adds that the challenges of the work are outweighed by the rewards. "Now and then you get a letter from someone from five years ago that says, 'You helped me make it through.' "

### Who Needs Help and Why

- 9 percent of UW–Madison's 42,041 students seek counseling services
- Two-thirds are female; just under half are seniors or graduate students
- Most-common problems: depression and anxiety disorders

Data from 2007–08. Source: University Health Services

For more information about University Health Services visit [www.uhs.wisc.edu](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu).





## Credit Load

Most undergraduate programs require 120 degree credits, which can be completed in eight semesters by taking 15 credits each semester. Some programs require a few more credits.

A full-time student carries a minimum of 12 credits, up to a maximum of 18 credits, for the same tuition fee. A part-time student may enroll for 11 or fewer credits at the beginning of the semester, and pays fees according to the number of credits taken. Students with a grade-point average of 3.0 or above in the semester prior to registration may take a maximum of 20 credits. No student is ever allowed to exceed 20 credits.

UW–Madison encourages, supports, and expects students to graduate on time. Below are some tips taken from the *Undergraduate Catalog* outlining how students can ensure timely progress toward a degree.

Consult an advisor before each registration period, or at least once annually, to discuss an academic plan and career goals.

Choose a major area of study as early as possible, have a plan, and make consistent progress toward degree requirements. For most programs, declaring a major by the end of the second year is essential. Formally enroll in the desired major as early as the major program allows. If changing a major, or if not admitted into a major program, explore options with an advisor.

Make the most of course schedules. Take required courses as early as possible and be flexible about course times, including taking advantage of sections scheduled early or late in the day.

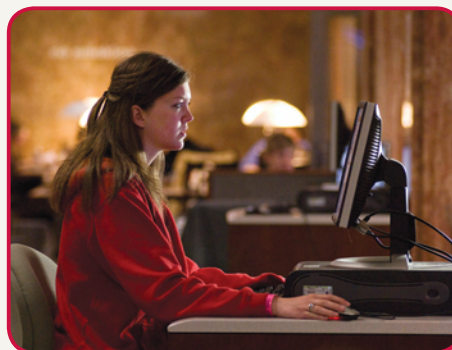
Find out the number of credits required by the degree program. Credits may be taken in fall, spring, and summer semesters. The annual total should equal at least 25 percent of the total credits needed.

Make sure that courses count toward the fulfillment of general education, major, and degree requirements; limit elective credits to the number the program allows.

Work hard to learn as much as possible to get satisfactory grades. Repeating a course is costly in terms of time and money.

Plan on studying an average of three to four hours per week, per credit. Taking 15 credits per semester requires 45 to 60 hours of study per week outside of class. Make the most of the Wisconsin Experience by spending time on activities outside of class that enhance the learning experience.

Stay in school. Part-time enrollment is better than stopping altogether, but remember that part-time status may impact insurance coverage and/or financial aid.



A student checks her e-mail account using one of many public computers in the Memorial Library.

## Parents Enrichment Fund Focuses on Library Needs

Each year, the University of Wisconsin Foundation organizes an effort to support the Parents Enrichment Fund. The mission of the UW Foundation, the fundraising arm of UW–Madison, is to engage those who care about the university and welcome ways to support teaching, research, and outreach programs.

In recent years, the focus of the Parents Enrichment Fund has been the campus library system, a resource that, despite changes in technology, is increasingly popular and important to the success of each student. The library staff has dedicated the funds raised to address issues brought to light by students. Examples include longer library hours for safe study, additional technology for use of personal and rented laptops, and modern, comfortable spaces for group work or quiet reading and writing.

Current students who work at the UW Foundation will soon be calling parents to discuss this important effort. These students are a great resource for connecting with campus, and they will enjoy talking with you about current events, your son or daughter, and the Parents Enrichment Fund–Libraries.

## Scholarships and How To Find Them

Every year at the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA), one of the most common questions asked by parents of incoming and continuing students is, “How do we find information on scholarships at UW–Madison?” The question is simple, but the answer can be complicated.

The very few campuswide scholarships that are available do not require an application. Potential recipients are identified from admissions materials. Award recipients are selected based on academic achievements; some also have a financial-need component.

The remaining scholarships are available through individual schools, colleges, and some departments on campus. Each has its own application, selection process, and deadlines. Your student should contact the school, college, and/or department where he or she is majoring or intends to major to obtain complete information on what is available and how to apply. The best time to look for scholarship information for the following academic year is during November, December, and January. Most application deadlines fall in January and February.

UW–Madison is working on a Common Scholarship Application (CSA) for incoming and continuing students. The CSA will be a “one-stop” Web site where students can apply for all scholarships they may be eligible to receive by filling out the appropriate form(s) online. More information will be available as the implementation of the CSA approaches within the next year or so.

Information about other scholarships is available online. Two of the best sites with free scholarship information are [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)



and [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).

Finally, if your student plans to apply for need-based financial aid for 2009-10, he or she may do so anytime after January 1, 2009. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The earlier the application is completed, the more likely it is that funds will be available. Keep in mind, though, that it's best for your student to wait until your 2008 tax returns are completed because the FAFSA asks for this information.

For more information about financial aid or scholarships, visit [www.finaid.wisc.edu](http://www.finaid.wisc.edu), call 608-262-3060, or e-mail [finaid@finaid.wisc.edu](mailto:finaid@finaid.wisc.edu).

## Study-Abroad Blogs

If your student is thinking about participating in a study-abroad program, encourage him or her to check out the Badgers Abroad Blog at [www.badgersabroad.wisc.edu/blog/](http://www.badgersabroad.wisc.edu/blog/).

Reading the postings can be a great way for prospective study-abroad students to gain insights about living in another culture.

Administered by UW-Madison's Division of International Studies, the blog features students, faculty, and alumni who are currently studying and working overseas. Study-abroad correspondents document and share their experiences with the campus and community.

Using the blog, your student can hear directly from classmates about exciting opportunities for undergraduates. Destinations for the spring 2009 study-abroad correspondents include France, Belgium, Chile, Australia, South Korea, Spain, and England.

For more information about study-abroad opportunities, visit [www.studyabroad.wisc.edu](http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu).

## What Is Service Learning?

You may have heard your student talking about "service learning," a concept that has gained traction in recent years and is now viewed as an essential aspect of the Wisconsin Experience.

In the more than 50 service-learning courses now offered at UW-Madison, a service component is integrated into the learning objectives.

Students in these classes have the chance to work with a variety of people and social issues. To help students reflect on what they are learning from these experiences, professors may require that they keep journals, for example, or create presentations to share with classmates. Although requirements vary, on average, students are expected to devote 20–25 hours of service outside the classroom.

Service-learning courses offer students many benefits: they enhance academic learning, reduce stereotyping, foster connections to the community, and strengthen problem-solving, professional, and interpersonal communication skills. The courses also offer real-world experience in academic major or career areas that students are considering.

For more information, visit the Morgridge Center for Public Service at [www.morgridge.wisc.edu](http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu). For a list of service-learning courses, visit [www.registrar.wisc.edu/timetable](http://www.registrar.wisc.edu/timetable).

## Dean's List/Hometown News

Students who achieve at a high level academically are recognized by the dean at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Schools or colleges typically require students to rank in the top 10 percent of their class or achieve a grade point average of 3.75 or higher in order to receive this honor.

If your student made the Dean's List for the fall semester, keep an eye out for notice in your local newspaper. University Communications regularly sends out notices of Dean's List honorees, as well as graduation announcements, to local newspapers across the state and country. In addition, UW-Madison also regularly distributes announcements of student awards and honors.

Announcements are typically sent to the largest circulation newspaper in the student's home zip code and take six to eight weeks to process. For more information, or if you have questions, call 608-262-8287.



### Key Dates

#### March 9

Fourth-quarter housing payments due

#### March 14–22

Spring Recess

#### March 27

Last day to drop classes

#### March 30

Enrollment begins for summer courses

#### April 2009

Visit Your Student Month

#### April 5

Enrollment begins for fall 2009 semester

#### April 18–25

All-Campus Party

## Spring Break (March 14–22)

Although it seems like the semester just began, Spring Break is just around the corner. Many students are already making plans—and not all are jetting off to sun-soaked beach destinations. Many will head home, work, or take a volunteer or service trip.

Especially during these economic times, most students are planning an inexpensive, relaxing week away from campus, according to Susan Crowley, director of prevention services at University Health Services (UHS). “Spring Break can be a period of renewal,” she says. “It can be a great opportunity to read, catch up on sleep, or exercise. You don’t have to travel far away to do those things, and most students don’t.”

If they are not home working or relaxing, many students choose to participate in service-oriented trips.

**Badger Parent** surveyed parents about how their student has spent past spring breaks. “My daughter spent her first spring break in Virginia building a Home for Habitat,” says one parent. “I was very proud of her decision, and it proved to be a great learning experience for her.”

Another parent said that her son participated in a service-learning trip to New Orleans. “I got over not being able to see him for the week of Spring Break relatively quickly after he told me what a life-altering

experience he had in New Orleans,” she recalls.

To learn more about service-oriented trips visit [www.union.wisc.edu/Altbreaks/](http://www.union.wisc.edu/Altbreaks/).

If your student is planning to travel, here are some safety tips to consider:

- Make sure that you (or other friends or family members) know details about where your student will be vacationing, including departure and return times. Ask that your student call upon arrival and return.
- Carry the minimum amount of cash and credit cards or bank cards.
- Have an honest conversation about alcohol. Recommend that your student learn about the alcohol laws of his or her destination. Encourage responsibility and moderation.
- Travel together and stay together; always use the buddy system.
- Remind your student to remain aware of surroundings and use common sense. Emphasize safety on balconies, being careful about sun exposure and dehydration, locking the hotel room door, and not swimming alone.

To learn more about spring break safety visit [www.safeu.wisc.edu/protect/spring-break.html](http://www.safeu.wisc.edu/protect/spring-break.html).

## *The First-Year Experience*

### Spring-Semester Transitions

Your student will face a new set of transitions and challenges during the spring semester. The tips outlined below will help you respond to these transitions in a supportive way.

As your student continues to mature and evolve into an adult, keep listening, encouraging, and coaching. If your student struggled with academics first semester, encourage him or her to access campus resources. House Fellows, in-hall tutors, study groups, and tutoring services such as the Greater University Tutorial Services (GUTS) are all excellent resources that are easy to access. Also, encourage your student to get to know his or her teaching assistants and professors and to take advantage of office hours. If your student had trouble finding his or her social niche last fall, encourage him or her to continue reaching out and making friends in classes or in the residence hall, join a student organization, or participate in recreational sports.

Many students begin to consider a major at this point. Keep in mind that only a few academic areas require a student to declare a major during freshman year in order to finish in four years. Many students change their minds and their majors at least once. Don’t feel discouraged if your student is undecided or changes direction. Cross-College Advising Service offers a wealth of useful

information for students who are undecided or considering changing majors. Parents play an important role in helping students self-explore. Wren Singer, director of the Center for the First Year Experience, advises that the best questions you can ask your student are: “What classes do you like? What are you good at? What out-of-class learning experiences might give you clues about an interesting major?”

In March, students will receive an e-mail that includes earliest summer and fall enrollment appointment times. Encourage your student to plan ahead and make an appointment with an academic advisor to discuss course selection well before his or her assigned enrollment time. Even though some students are not required to see an advisor to register, it is always helpful to consult with advisors, either through group advising sessions or by meeting one-on-one, when making course decisions. Parents are discouraged from contacting advisors and actively selecting courses for their students.

It’s not too early to start asking your student about plans for the summer: will he or she return home, get a job or internship, or stay in Madison to take classes? These questions will help your student plan ahead and consider different options, and can influence your own summer planning.





## Did you know?

### Five Great Library Services for Your Student

- The E-Resource Gateway takes students to 500 online databases that index journal articles on every subject. The gateway, in fact, provides more access than Google. Students can use the gateway from home (with their NetIDs) or from campus.
- UW System Search, available from the MadCat library catalog, allows a student to search and request books from any other UW library (UW–Milwaukee, UW–Oshkosh, etc.). The books are then delivered free to any UW–Madison library the student chooses.
- Free three-day laptop checkouts are available from

many campus libraries. Some libraries will also lend out other technical equipment, such as digital cameras, video cameras, and voice recorders.

- The Open Book Café in College Library is the place to grab a quick cup of coffee or snack. It has comfortable group-study areas, computers, and even a collection of new DVDs and video games for checkout.
- Students can chat online in real time with a research expert by using the Ask-a-Librarian chat service, which is available most days of the week from 8 a.m. to midnight.

For more information, visit [www.library.wisc.edu](http://www.library.wisc.edu).

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