BADGER Parent

A Newsletter for Parents & Families of UW–Madison Students

April 2009

A Liberal Arts Degree and Today's Job Market

In a difficult economy, many students and parents are thinking about the best ways to put a UW–Madison degree to use in today's job market, and which majors or programs might be the most marketable during a recession.

"We sometimes have concerned parents asking what students are 'qualified for' with a liberal arts degree, and whether or not their students will be employable once they graduate, especially given the challenging economic climate," says Patti Lux-Weber, Parent Program coordinator.

Campus experts urge students to find an area of study that is a good fit as a pathway to a satisfying career.

While it may seem that choosing the "right" major is key to getting a good job, long-term professional success will be influenced by acquiring the right skills for a rapidly changing workplace, says Nancy Westphal-Johnson, associate dean of Letters and Science, the university's largest college.

Students can gain much from a liberal education, which generally is described as a course of study intended to provide general knowledge and intellectual skills in a specific area of interest, as opposed to occupational and technical skills. This approach to learning helps students become creative thinkers, allowing them to be passionate, self-motivated learners who are tolerant and globally knowledgeable. Students with a liberal education are not limited by specialization, but are adaptable to change and open to new opportunities.

Westphal-Johnson notes that some parents instinctively advise their students to go into traditionally safe and secure fields. But the current economy has shown that few sectors are immune to cuts, and that it is equally useful for students to acquire life skills, regardless of major.

For example, few history majors ultimately work as historians. But they do become proficient in writing, research, and reasoning, along with developing an understanding of and appreciation for diversity. This makes then well suited for the 21st-century economy. It is important for students, regardless of major, to acquire good communication skills and gain professional experience prior to graduation.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) recently surveyed employers about what traits they look for the most as they recruit for new employees. These traits include being able to:

- Work well in teams—especially in diverse situations
- Understand science and technology and how these subjects are used in real-world settings
- Write and speak well
- Think clearly about complex problems
- Analyze a problem to develop workable solutions
- Understand the global context in which work is now done
- Be creative and innovative in solving problems
- Apply knowledge and skills in new settings
- Understand numbers and statistics through analytical reasoning
- Demonstrate a strong sense of ethics and integrity

In May 2008, 6,100 students earned bachelor's degrees at UW–Madison, in more than 137 majors.

Specifically, employers look for potential hires who have "gained critical thinking and analytical skills, the ability to apply knowledge to new situations, the ability to work with others from a wide range of backgrounds, and knowledge about the world in general," says Aaron Brower, UW–Madison's vice provost for teaching and learning.

Brower recalls learning from one employer that he first looks at the grades of a UW–Madison student to determine that the student was academically successful during college, but with further review pays close attention to the details of what the student accomplished while in school. Accomplishments may include internships, study abroad, service, research, and leadership activities, as they are a testament to the student's ability to apply the knowledge they have acquired.

"A degree from UW–Madison seems to be the litmus test for indicating that the candidate is qualified, but other experiences are clearly valued as well," Brower adds. He encourages students, regardless of major and field, to seek out those out-of-classroom experiences that allow them to become active learners.

The Letters & Science Career Services is a great resource for students with questions about majors

The Parent Program is here for you.

www.parent.wisc.edu
parent@uwmad.wisc.edu
608-262-3977
877-262-3977

Professional Staff:
Nancy Sandhu
Patti Lux-Weber

Student Interns:
Julie Bohl
Nikki Schneider
Kim Mueller

A Liberal Arts Degree (continued)

and employment. L&S Career Services offers skill assessments, podcasts, e-recruiting, preparation for interviews, current information about the job market and the economy, and more. To learn more about their services, visit www.lssaa.wisc.edu or call 608-262-3921. Students who are interested in exploring different majors and career options should contact the Exploration Center (www.ccas.wisc.edu). The Exploration Center offers individual appointments with professional career advisors, workshops, standardized career assessments including the MBTI and the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS), computerized career guidance, a career library of over five hundred books, and more. For more information visit the Exploration Center Web site, or call 608-265-4497.

"While it may seem that choosing the "right" major is key to getting a good job, long-term professional success will be influenced by acquiring the right skills for a rapidly changing workplace."

Madison Initiative for Undergraduates Promises Quality, Affordability

Chancellor Biddy Martin recently launched the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates, a major effort to preserve the quality of a UW–Madison education and improve its affordability.

The initiative, which must be approved by the UW System Board of Regents, proposes a supplemental tuition charge to improve the quality and long-term value of an undergraduate education while ensuring that affordability will no longer be a significant barrier to getting a UW–Madison degree.

"Both cost and quality are important to our students and their families," says Martin.

The chancellor notes that UW–Madison students are having increasing difficulty getting access to needed courses and majors and to vital student services. In addition, the chancellor emphasizes that the university's current unmet financial need is $20 million a year.

"With the funding from the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates, we will add faculty and instructional support, student services, and need-based financial aid," Martin says. "For every dollar of tuition revenue we use for financial aid, we will raise at least $1 from private sources."

The funding comes from a supplemental tuition charge for UW–Madison students to be phased in during the next four years.

In-state students will pay a supplemental tuition charge that grows cumulatively by $250 per year over a four-year period. Out-of-state students will pay a supplemental tuition charge that grows cumulatively by $750 per year over the four-year period.

To ensure affordability of the opportunity to attend UW–Madison, in-state and out-of-state students who are eligible for need-based financial aid and whose families earn $80,000 or less will receive grants to offset the supplemental tuition charge.

When fully implemented, UW–Madison tuition —both in-state and out-of-state—will remain in the lower half of the Big Ten.

Money from this tuition adjustment will also go toward restoring about 75 faculty positions and additional instructional support that had to be eliminated in recent years, a move that will provide needed access to in-demand majors and gateway courses, such as those in biology, math, chemistry, Spanish, and economics, says Gary Sandefur, dean of the College of Letters & Science.

Providing better access to these courses improves student progress and ensures that they graduate with the knowledge, abilities, and skills they need for a range of careers.

The funding will also encourage curricular and teaching innovations, including technology-assisted learning, and provide a more integrated learning experience.

The Madison Initiative for Undergraduates funding will also strengthen important student services, including career counseling, first-year interest groups, peer mentoring, disabled student services, service-learning projects, and expanding internship opportunities.

"Parents and students expect us to provide an exemplary undergraduate education and prepare students for an increasingly complex world," Martin adds.

The chancellor is seeking feedback on the proposal. For more details or to send an e-mail message about the initiative, visit http://MadisonInitiative.wisc.edu.

Spring Safety Reminders

As weather improves during the spring, students will most likely be out and about at night on campus and in downtown Madison.

The Offices of the Dean of Students (ODOS) reminds parents to check in with their students about basic ways to stay safe, including:

- Use SAFE Nighttime Transportation Services and stay up to date on the latest safety information by visiting the Safety Web site regularly (www.safeu.wisc.edu).
- Never walk alone, particularly at night.
- Carry a cell phone and dial 911 for help.
- Lock doors, even when you are at home.
- If you choose to consume alcohol, do so in moderation

The campus safety task force welcomes feedback—either suggestions or areas of concern—from parents and students about safety issues via e-mail to dean@odos.wisc.edu.

For more information about safety at UW–Madison, visit www.safeu.wisc.edu/.

Commencement Ceremonies, May 15-17

Spring Commencement takes place May 15–17 at the Kohl Center. Five ceremonies, divided according to degree and major, will be held within the three-day span. Each ceremony will last about 90 minutes. Students can find out which ceremony to attend at http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/commence. All ceremonies are open to the public, and tickets are not required.

To reserve hotel accommodations, visit the Greater Madison Convention and Visitor's Bureau (GMCVB) Web site at www.visitmadison.com.

Dates for future commencement ceremonies:

- Winter 2009: December 20, 2009
- Spring 2010: May 14–16, 2010
- Winter 2010: December 19, 2010

Warning: Sublet Scams

UW–Madison's Campus Area Housing Office is warning students about a recent upsurge in rental scams in Madison. Students trying to find someone to sublet their apartments are especially vulnerable. Here are a few tips to identify scams:

- The message will come by way of "BCC" or blind-copy.
- The grammar and spelling will usually be poor.
- The e-mail will not say anything specific about the apartment—only very broad terms will be used.
- The scammer will offer to send more money than required. The money will be sent in a cashier's check, which the student cashes at a financial institution, wiring back the excess money. A few days later the bank will learn that the check is bad and will seek to recoup those funds from the student—including the money sent to the scammer.

If your student has questions or is not sure if a message is legitimate, he or she should forward the message to campusareahousing@uwmad.wisc.edu.

Recognizing Phishing Scams

The Campus Security Office is promoting an awareness campaign to help recognize phishing scams. Please remind your student that UW–Madison does not ask students to reveal personal identity information (social security numbers, passwords, etc.) via e-mail. Parents should not respond to e-mails that appear to come from UW–Madison, asking for a credit card number to pay tuition or fees. (Note: you can submit this information through the university's secure Web site, but do not provide it via e-mail.) For more information, and to view the campaign video, visit: http://www.cio.wisc.edu/security/scams.aspx

Taking some things home early will help your move-out go more smoothly.

Summer Storage Options and University Housing Move-Out

University Housing offers limited storage space for students who will be returning to residence halls in the fall. These students should talk with their House Fellows, who can help make arrangements for storage with building supervisors, space permitting.

There is another option for summer storage or for shipping: University Housing has established a connection with Lazybones, Inc., a company that specializes in summer storage, moving, and shipping. Students who are returning to University Housing in fall can have Lazybones store their possessions over the summer and deliver them into their new rooms in the fall. This will make move-in easy; once they arrive back on campus, students will just need to unpack. Students who are not returning to University Housing can have Lazybones pick up their boxes and ship them to a specific destination. To use the Lazybones service, students will need to place an order online for a pick-up appointment. For more information and to sign up visit: www.lazybones.net.

Remember that students must vacate their rooms within 24 hours of their last final, and may not stay later than 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 16. University Housing highly recommends that students move their belongings out before May 15, as this is the first day of commencement and traffic will be heavy. If your student is planning a trip home soon, or if family members are coming

to visit, encourage your student to pack up items that are no longer needed, making the move-out process at the end of the semester easier. Also, FedEx or UPS can provide door-to-door service, and items can be shipped to a home address. For more details about University Housing move-out, visit: http://www.housing.wisc.edu/assignment/moving/.

What Happens to Wiscard Balances?

Three debit-card accounts are available to your student on his or her Wiscard UW–Madison's official ID card. Here is what happens to fund balances at the end of the academic year.

- Campus Cash account: This account automatically carries forward from semester to semester. The Wiscard program reserves the right to close an account that has been in active for 12 months.
- Union Meal account: The remaining balance is automatically transferred to the Campus Cash account.
- Housing Food: Balances of less than $20 are automatically transferred to the Campus Cash account. Refund checks for balances greater than $20 are automatically sent to the mailing address listed on the My UW portal four to six weeks after the residence halls close.

Students who wish to permanently close one of these accounts and receive refunds for the Campus Cash and Union Meal accounts, should make the request at the Wisconsin Union Cashier's Office (608-263-1964 or 608-262-1667; hours are Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.). The account closing is subject to a $10 administrative fee, and refunds will not be issued unless the account balance is greater than $2 after the administrative fee has been deducted. A refund check will be mailed to the cardholder within three weeks.

Students can check their balances or manage Wiscard accounts by visiting http://www.wiscard.wisc.edu.

An undergraduate student receives a physical examination at University Health Services.

Summer Health Services

Students who are staying in Madison for the summer—but not taking classes—may want to consider paying the Student Health Fee to have continued access to University Health Services (UHS).

UHS is open Monday through Friday this summer, with the same hours as the academic year, and offering the same services to meet basic clinical, pharmaceutical and counseling needs.

The Summer Health Fee is a one-time payment of $76 that grants eligibility for UHS visits between Saturday, May 23, and Monday, August 31.

Students covered by the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) have access to UHS without paying the summer fee.

As a reminder, access to UHS is not a substitute for health insurance, as it is only open weekdays and does not provide emergency care.

For more information about UHS or insurance options, visit www.uhs.wisc.edu or call 608-265-5600.

May 8
Last day of class

May 10
Exams begin

May 15-17
Commencement Weekend

May 16
Exams end

May 17
University Residence Halls close

June 15
Summer session begins

June 19
Summer tuition due

The First-Year Experience

Student Finances: Checking In

When it comes to financing college education, all families have unique circumstances and approaches. Students may be expected to contribute anywhere from zero to 100 percent of their tuition, room and board and living expenses, or assume the repayment burden of student loans.

Campus experts urge open lines of communication between students and parents regarding finances. The summer can be a particularly good time to assess how financial arrangements worked for the first year, and whether or not they should be adjusted for the future.

- Start by asking: Was it difficult to get through the first year with the amount of money available? If so, why? What changes, if any, need to be made for next year?
- Ask your student to consider part-time work. A ten- to fifteen-hour per week job commitment will not only provide extra income for your student, but also may be a valuable out-of-class experience. If your student had a part-time job, were grades affected? If grades were lower than expected, could that be due to working too many hours?
- If finances fell short, the Financial Aid office can be an excellent resource for students and families to turn to for additional advice.

Having these discussions will help your student start working toward financial independence, with the goal of even greater self-sufficiency as graduation approaches.

For more information about financial matters and resources available on campus, visit the Parent Program Web site or contact Parent Program staff.

Football Lottery Process

The UW Athletic Department has announced student football season tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis for the 2009 season, replacing the lottery system that has been in place in recent years. Student season tickets will be $133 for all seven home games.

All full-time undergraduate students (continuing students, incoming freshmen, transfer students, and Connection students) can begin purchasing their student football season tickets on Monday, June 22 at 8:30 a.m. CT exclusively online at www.uwbadgers.com.

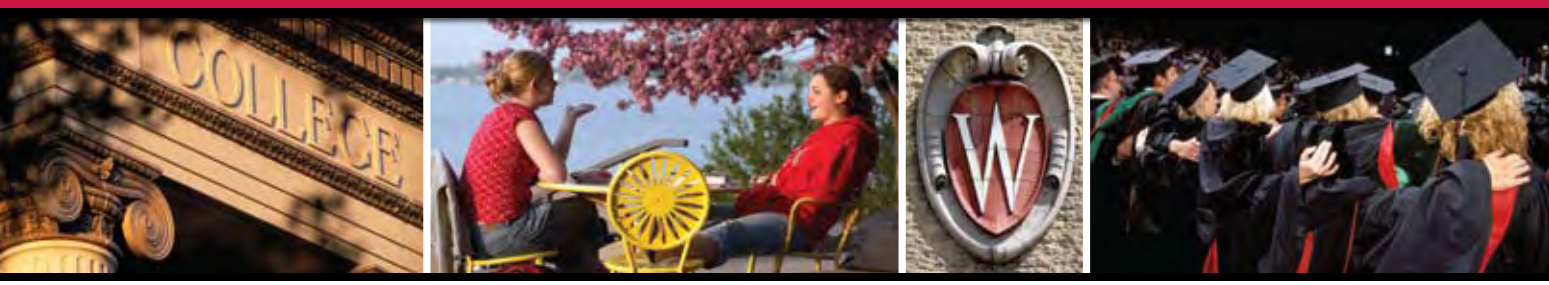
All full-time graduate and professional students (returning graduate and professional students and incoming graduate and professional students) can begin purchasing their tickets on Monday, July 6 beginning at 8:30 a.m. CT at www.uwbadgers.com.

Because the undergraduate sale opens two weeks prior to the graduate student sale, a total of 1,700 tickets will be held for graduate and professional students (this figure is based on historical sales data). In the unlikely event that any graduate and professional student season tickets remain unsold after 4:30 p.m. CT on July 10, any full-time undergraduate, graduate or professional student who has not yet purchased tickets for 2009 would be eligible to buy these unsold tickets beginning at 8:30 a.m. CT on Monday, July 13 until they are sold.

Student football season tickets have sold out in each of the past 16 seasons. Students should watch for other students selling tickets in residence halls or on ticket sales sites in the event that they don't obtain season tickets.

Full details about student tickets and the sales process are available at uwbadgers.com.

On Wisconsin!



Did you know?

The League of American Bicyclists has named the University of Wisconsin–Madison a silver award-winner in its Bicycle Friendly Business program.

Bicycling is a strong component of the university's alternative transportation program, UW Commuter Solutions. This program emphasizes the university's mission to make walking, biking, taking the bus, or van- or car-pooling attractive transportation options for students, faculty, and staff.

Additionally, the City of Madison has been recognized as one of the Midwest's most bike-friendly cities, boasting over 100 miles of bike paths.

Produced by the Parent Program and University Communications.
Funding provided by the UW Foundation.
Photos by University Communications.

PARENT PROGRAM
University of Wisconsin-Madison
716 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53706