Third-party insurance billing

Though tuition may be frozen for the next couple years, health care costs are anything but. In fact, they continue to outpace inflation, putting enormous pressure on UW-Stout Student Health Services to maintain quality facilities and services on a budget funded entirely by student fees.

"Medical care isn’t cheap," noted Janice Lawrence-Ramaeker, director of Student Health Services. "For health services on campus to survive in the current economic environment, we have to look at creative ways to increase revenue beyond student fees. At the same time, we need to remove health and financial barriers, so our students can be successful."

(See Insurance, page 3)

Harvey Hall construction delayed

The classrooms and offices of Harvey Hall have stood empty since winter break in the expectation that construction crews would now be on site, but the renovation could not proceed until the university received a contractor bid date from the Wisconsin Division of Facilities Development (DFD). Last week, the DFD supplied the date.

The original schedule called for construction to begin this month and be substantially complete by September of 2015, but the delay means construction will not start until July of this year, and it will not end until early 2016.

(See Harvey, page 6.)
Welcome

Bill Bartko joins Physical Plant as a custodian lead. Before joining Stout, Bill worked for many decades in the trades as a drywall contractor. The Menomonie native has two married daughters: Kelly Bundy and Kari Abrahamson. He spends most of his spare time at the gym or with his favorite Springer Spaniel—Hobo.

Rochelle Boos joins Student Health Services as a Licensed Practical Nurse. Before Stout, she worked at Marshfield Clinic and, most recently, at Mayo Clinic-Red Cedar. A long-time Menomonie resident, Rochelle was born in Marshfield, grew up in Spencer, and lived in both Wisconsin Rapids and Osseo. She attended Mid-State Technical College in Marshfield for Medical Assisting/Phlebotomy and CVTC for Practical Nursing. Rochelle has two children, Caleb (20) and Cortni (16). She loves photography, crafts, gardening, and boating.

Andrea Flug, custodian, joins Physical Plant after several years at St. Croix Casting, where she worked as the finishing department lead. Andrea is originally from Baldwin but now lives in Wheeler with her husband, Travis—a maintenance supervisor at Reacore, daughter Michaela (8), and son Peyton (3). When not keeping the North Campus spotless, Andrea enjoys gardening, baking, camping, and spending time with her family.

Matt Nordehn-Peterson, Milnes-Chinnock hall director, is a Forest Lake, MN, native. He studied Art Education at Stout and got to know residence life first hand as a resident advisor (RA) for four semesters. A runner and biker, Matt likes to stay active and be outside. He also likes to volunteer his time for good causes and to stay connected to the community.

Whitney Schmeling, Hansen-Keith hall director, knows the campus community well—having earned both her undergraduate degree in Psychology and her master’s in Training and Development from Stout. She also knows a thing or two about residence life. As a student, she lived on campus and served as desk service manager at HKMC. After graduating, she went on to serve as a hall director at Washington State University. “Outdoorsy” by nature, Whitney enjoys fishing, hiking, and camping, as well as cooking.
Insurance (continued from page 1)

To face the challenges, UW-Stout—like many public and private universities across the country—hopes to supplement student funding by tapping into the private insurance that already covers most students. However, because dealing with insurance is labor intensive, Stout will engage a third-party vendor to manage claims, leaving staff free to focus on student wellness.

“Third-party billing seems to be a good fit for Stout, especially as we move toward mandatory health insurance,” Janice said.

She went on to explain that, like a growing number of universities, UW-Stout may soon require students to either provide proof of insurance or purchase a plan made available through the university. “Both the Stout Student Association and the Chancellor’s Council recommend the university mandate insurance for all students,” Janice said. “The recommendation was sent to System for the Board of Regents to okay.”

Assuming mandatory insurance is approved, Janice expects Stout to offer better coverage than most other universities—but at a fraction of the cost. “We’re well prepared. While other universities offer Bronze-level insurance for about $2,300, the plan we expect to offer will be between Gold and Platinum, but it would only cost students about $1,440 a year at today’s prices.”

Bronze is the most-basic category of Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) insurance plans and covers major medical expenses. Platinum offers the best comprehensive coverage.

If mandating insurance coverage sounds extreme, consider that the university already requires international students to have health insurance and that about a third of our other students don’t have any insurance. The affordable insurance offered through Stout will help provide peace of mind and maintain the health of that significant percentage of the student body.

It may do the same for the underinsured, too. “Some of our insured students have such high deductibles that you might equate it to being uninsured,” Janice said. “I’ve seen students with deductibles as high as $10,000. With deductibles like that, people are unlikely to seek medical care.” By offering affordable insurance, the university will enable many students to switch plans and significantly improve their health coverage. (Continued, page 5.)

Q: On average, how many students and others attend Thursday Night Out events?
   • 66
   • 86
   • 106

A: 106

Classified Employee Appreciation Award

Rich Lundequam, custodian, has been named Classified Employee Appreciation Award Recipient for October.

The individuals nominating Lundequam stated:

“We have a high-traffic building and Rich is always working to keep the public and secured areas clean. He really shows he cares about the campus and his job. The building condition becomes personal for him, and we really appreciate all of his efforts and positive attitude.”

Nancy McClain discusses services with a student
Good news

University Centers Director Darrin Witucki recently became a Certified Auxiliary Service Professional. Darrin earned the certification thanks to his extensive knowledge of leadership, operations, marketing, and student development—knowledge that translates into, as Darrin puts it, “helping students succeed and develop.”

Dining ranked above the industry average in every category of the most recent NACUFS survey of college food services.

Several student-athletes and staff from Athletics, Dining, and Police & Parking took the Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Wisconsin, helping raise over $55,000. At right, Health & Safety’s own “escaped con,” David Kyle, led Police Chief Lisa Walter and others on a wild chase that ended in the icy waters of Tainter Lake.

The Holiday Hooplah raised 150 donations for Stepping Stones Food Pantry and was a smashing success thanks to the holiday spirit of the UW-Stout community, including representatives from Urec, University Police, Student Health Services, and the Qube.

Housing Director Sandi Scott Duex and SLS Executive Director Scott Griesbach had an article published in Perspectives, the UMR-ACUHO magazine. “If You Build It, They Will Come: Understanding the Housing Design and Construction Process” appeared in the magazine’s winter edition.

The Journal of Community Informatics published “Bridging the Digital Divide in Dunn County, Wisconsin: A Case Study of NPO Use of ICT,” by former AmeriCorp Vista Coordinator Liz Bogner, Assistant Professor Kevin Tharp, and Mary McManus. The study developed from Liz’s Involvement Center assignment, which was continued by Tyler Schroeder and Michael Schiel.

The General Services building’s new roof and insulation will save about $24,000 a year in energy costs, paying for themselves in 6 years.

Recent Stout grad and star runner Tim Nelson (at left with Athletic Director Duey Naatz) received the prestigious NCAA Top 10 Award during the NCAA Convention in San Diego. The award recognizes student-athletes for their successes in athletic competition, the classroom, and the community. Duey noted, “This is awesome for Tim, UW-Stout, Menomonie, and the WIAC.”
The vendor Student Health chose to manage insurance claims specializes in university health centers, which will streamline implementation. They are already negotiating contracts with major insurance carriers and helping Stout’s medical professionals receive accreditation with those carriers. Becoming in-network providers will maximize the number of students who can take advantage of their insurance coverage and decrease out-of-pocket medical expenses.

The vendor will also advise Student Health on setting rates and negotiate with carriers when payment issues arise.

Although receiving reimbursements from insurance should keep primary care going strong, it will not fund other services that Student Health routinely provides to support student wellness. “We can only bill insurance companies for actual health procedures and services,” Janice said. “So we’ll continue to rely on the student fee to maintain health promotions and other important services that insurance doesn’t cover.”

The student fee will also help Student Health Services care for uninsured and underinsured students until the regents approve mandatory insurance coverage.

“There’s still a lot that has to be done before we implement insurance billing. We found the right vendor and started the accreditation process, but we still need to work out details with System, sign contracts, and put the processes in place,” said Janice. “But if things go as expected, we hope to roll it out to students in the fall.”

Parking Services and the Sustainability Office are encouraging faculty and staff to join a vanpool for their daily commutes. Vanpools are groups of 8 to 15 commuters sharing a van owned, insured, and serviced by the Wisconsin Vanpool Rideshare program. Joining a vanpool slashes your commuting costs, reduces wear & tear on your vehicle, and enables you to relax on your way to work. For more information, refer to Vanpool.
Harvey (continued from page 1)

Although the delay will keep students out of the building for an additional semester, there is an upside: The postponement coincides with the DFD’s shift from requiring *multiple* “prime contractors”—each contractor bidding for a specific aspect of the project, such as plumbing—to requiring a *single* prime contractor that is responsible for the entire project.

In other words, thanks to the delay one contractor will win the bid and manage the renovation, ensuring that the disparate crews (abatement specialists, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.) coordinate their work. Without the delay, the contractors would have worked more or less independently and without the oversight afforded by a single prime contractor.

Vice Chancellor Lyons pointed out that “the project will be better managed by a single prime contractor—at less expense, and that’s not a bad thing.”

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**Traditional, yet progressive**

Built in 1916, Harvey Hall is the second-oldest building on campus and showing its age. On one hand, the building maintains its period charm, but on the other, it fails to meet the expectations of the modern student or educator.

Obviously Harvey Hall could use a face lift and new infrastructure, but the interior layout is also crying out for renewal. Over the years, the building suffered through a few interior modifications—like the subdivision of larger spaces and the addition of drop ceilings to hide tacked-on ductwork—that met short-term needs but masked some of the hall’s character and no longer make sense.

With this major renovation, we get the chance to correct the half measures of the past and prepare for the future. We will celebrate Harvey Hall’s centennial by unveiling a building that exceeds 21st-century standards but keeps its character. The integrity of this historically significant building will be preserved, but the classrooms, offices, and meeting spaces will be modernized. Plus, the out-of-date infrastructure will be replaced with state-of-the-art communication, electrical, plumbing, and heating and cooling systems.

In the end, the revitalized Harvey Hall will be as modern and sophisticated as Jarvis Hall—but with as much old-Stout charm as the Bowman clock tower.

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*John Paulus* opens a tin of Cold-War “Survival Bisquits” long stored in the McCalmont Hall crawlspace. The bisquits, preserved with propylene glycol, taste almost as good today as they did in 1962.