

WESTERNCONNECT

THE ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE | A publication for alumni & friends of Western Technical College

February 2025 | Volume 22, Number 2



MacKenze Ramsey,
Dental Assistant Alumna
See story on page 4!

Greetings, Western Alumni & Friends!

We've had a beautiful fall on campus! This region truly shines with every season, from the vibrant colors of autumn to the peaceful, snowy winter landscapes. Each season offers something unique, reminding us how fortunate we are to experience such natural beauty.

In this edition of *Western Connect*, we're thrilled to share updates about exciting new developments on campus and celebrate the incredible achievements of our alumni. Recognizing your successes is always a joy, and we encourage you to stay connected with your alma mater. By sharing your stories, you provide current students the encouragement and confidence they need to pursue their goals. Your experiences inspire them to dream big and show them what's possible.



Stephanie Knutson

As we look to the future, we remain committed to fostering strong connections between our alumni and students. Your stories are a vital part of our community, and we love showcasing the amazing things you're accomplishing. Whether through mentorship, supporting student initiatives, or simply sharing your journey, you make a meaningful difference.

We'd also love to hear about what's new in your world! Please keep us updated on your personal and professional milestones. We look forward to continue sharing the incredible impact Western alumni are making in their communities.

Thank you for staying connected with Western. Your ongoing support means so much to us!

Warmly,



Stephanie Knutson
Alumni Relations Coordinator

Connect with us!



[westerntc.edu/alumni](https://www.westerntc.edu/alumni)

Western Connect is published twice a year for alumni and friends of Western Technical College.

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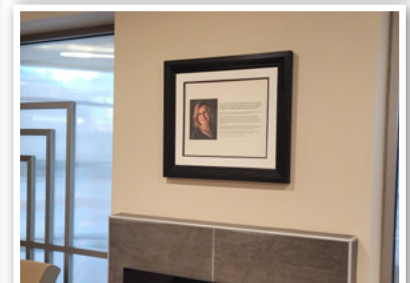


Introducing the Alumni & Friends Atrium and Legacy Lounge

We simply must showcase the newly completed **Alumni & Friends Atrium and Legacy Lounge**, a space designed to honor Western's alumni and celebrate our rich history. Located in the Coleman Building, this space fosters connections between past, present, and future students while symbolizing Western's enduring impact on the community.

The Legacy Lounge highlights our Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, recognized for their exceptional achievements, community involvement, and dedication to Western. It's an inviting space where alumni and students can gather, relax, and share experiences.

We encourage everyone—alumni, students, faculty, and staff—to visit the Alumni & Friends Atrium. Don't forget to stop by the new Foundation and Alumni Office adjacent to the space. This isn't just a walk down memory lane—it's a testament to the lasting relationships and collective accomplishments of the Western community.



Elevating the Art of Dentistry: The Story Behind Western's Expanded Functions Program

At Western, the Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary program is changing the landscape of dental care in Wisconsin. Combining innovative training, community impact, and student success, this program is empowering both alumni like MacKenze Ramsey and educators like Nicole Schmit to redefine what's possible in the dental field.

A Bold Step Forward

For MacKenze, a 2016 Western alum, the Expanded Functions program felt like the natural next step. After completing the Dental Assistant program, she landed a job at Rivertown Dental before even graduating. Rivertown quickly became her career home, where she thrived on its dynamic, collaborative culture centered on learning and servant leadership.

"I've always loved my job, but this program opens up new possibilities," MacKenze shares. "It allows us to handle reversible procedures like placing and adjusting fillings, making night guards, or removing sutures. It's about freeing up hygienists and dentists so we can all focus on what we do best." Nicole Schmit, who helped spearhead the program's implementation at Western, shares this passion for progress. "Expanded functions were just coming down the pipeline when I started here," Nicole recalls. "Once the legislation was finalized, we worked with WTCS (Wisconsin Technical College System) and other colleges to build the curriculum. By September, we had our first cohort ready to go."

The Training Process

The program's structure is designed for flexibility and impact. Over eight weeks of weekend classes, students like MacKenze complete classroom and laboratory work before advancing to patient experiences. They must meet rigorous competency standards before treating patients. Upon completion, graduates earn an Advanced Certificate, a credential that has already begun transforming dental practices.

For MacKenze, the program's flexibility was a key factor. "The weekend classes let me keep working while learning new skills," she explains. "Nicole and the team made sure everything was organized and practical, so we could apply what we learned immediately." Nicole emphasizes the program's adaptability. Running it under Western's Business and Industry Services allows for efficient scheduling and resource management. "It's



MacKenze Ramsey with instructor Nicole Schmit

"It's about meeting students where they are, whether they're just starting or have years of experience, we want to provide opportunities for advancement"

— Nicole Schmit

a material-intensive program," Nicole notes, "but this approach lets us reinvest fees into supplies and run the program whenever a class fills. It's unique but effective."

Pathways to Expanded Roles

Dental assistants or hygienists can enroll after they have completed at least 1,000 hours practicing as a dental assistant and hold the certified dental assistant credential (CDA) issued by the Dental Assisting National Board, Inc., or its successor. Alternatively, experienced assistants or hygienists that have completed at least 2,000 hours practicing as a dental assistant, as verified by the supervising licensed dentist, can take Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) exams in dental and general anatomy and health and safety to qualify. Those who don't pass can complete additional online courses. "It's about meeting students where they are," Nicole explains. "Whether they're just starting or have years of experience, we want to provide opportunities for advancement."

Community Impact and Innovation

The Expanded Functions program isn't just about advancing careers; it's about improving

access to care. MacKenze highlights the program's role in community initiatives like *Give Kids a Smile Day*. "It's amazing to see how much more we can do for patients," she says. "This program is helping us address real needs in our communities."

Facility renovations at the Health Science Center, where Western courses take place, are also paving the way for a brighter future. With the upstairs nearly finished and the basement slated for completion by mid-February, the college is set to host an open house to showcase its state-of-the-art spaces. "We're getting cutting-edge technology like 3D printers and a CBCT machine," Nicole shares. "These resources are game changers for dental education and patient care."

Transformative Experiences

For both MacKenze and Nicole, the program has been transformative. MacKenze's journey exemplifies resilience and the need for space to think and figure things out. After initially struggling in a business program and leaving

college, she returned to Western years later with a renewed focus. With the help of advisors, scholarships, and Rivertown Dental's support, she found her calling in dental assisting and later, expanded functions. Her desire to give back is palpable. "If we all do something little, it doesn't have to be a heavy lift," she says. MacKenze's own journey inspired her to help set up scholarships for like-minded Western students to help ensure others have the same opportunities she had. Nicole, too, finds fulfillment in empowering students. "This is just the beginning," she says. "We're already seeing the impact on patient care and efficiency. With our renovated facilities and talented students, the possibilities are endless."

Advancing Together

Western's Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary program illustrates the efficacy behind Western's method of innovation and collaboration. By bringing alumni like MacKenze and educators like Nicole together, the college is not only advancing dental care but also enriching the lives of its students and the communities they serve. With its focus on flexibility, excellence, and community impact, this program is setting a new standard for dental education in Wisconsin.



"I've always loved my job, but this program opened up new possibilities."

— MacKenze Ramsey

Western Way donations

Looking for ways to support Western students and our community?

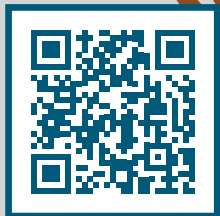
The Western Foundation works diligently to provide supportive funding to students as they are achieving their academic and career goals. Donating to the fund enables us to help students financially. During our last academic year, 550 students requested and were awarded some type of emergency funding. The average gift for these requests is around \$90.

Students face many unexpected challenges that hinder degree completion. We are dedicated to alleviating these financial barriers.

The Western Way fund supports:

- tuition assistance
- childcare support
- gas & grocery gift cards
- so much more!

Consider donating!

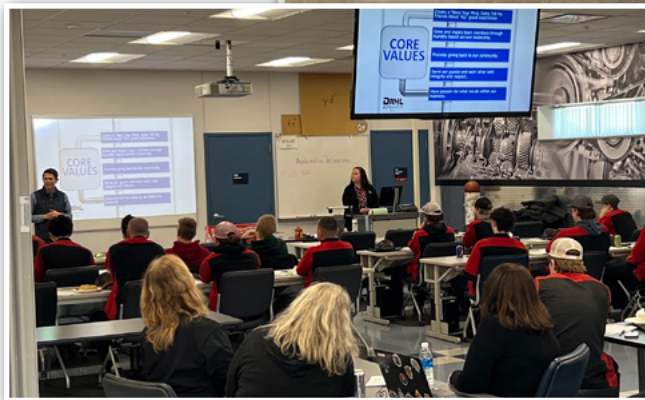


An Exciting Day at Western: Dahl Automotive Employer Spotlight and Ford F-150 Truck Presentation

Western recently hosted a memorable event celebrating its partnership with Dahl Automotive. The day brought together students, faculty, and industry professionals to highlight career opportunities and showcase an incredible donation—a 2023 Ford F-150.

The day began with an Employer Spotlight luncheon—students enjoy dining while connecting with representatives from Dahl Automotive. The session featured Dahl’s rich history, core values, and exciting career opportunities, giving students valuable insights into the automotive industry and fostering connections that could pave the way for their future.

Then came the big event everyone had been waiting for—the highly anticipated truck presentation! Excitement filled the auto bay as the 2023 Ford F-150, generously donated by Dahl Automotive, made its grand entrance. Fog filled the space, and “Eye of the Tiger” blasted through the speakers as the bay doors dramatically and slowly opened. Andrew Dahl, President of Dahl Automotive, drove the truck into the room, creating a thrilling reveal that left everyone cheering.



President Roger

Stanford expressed heartfelt gratitude for Dahl Automotive’s full support, emphasizing the importance of partnerships in advancing Western’s Automotive Program. Following the reveal, Andrew Dahl presented the truck keys to **Dean Mike Poellinger**, symbolizing Dahl’s commitment to empowering the next generation of automotive professionals.

The truck will play a vital role in the program, providing students with hands-on experience using the latest automotive technology. The day concluded with students exploring the vehicle and snapping photos, capturing a memory that perfectly highlighted the importance of collaboration between education and industry.

This event was a true celebration of collaboration and opportunity, showcasing the undeniable impact of partnerships between industry leaders like Dahl Automotive and Western. Together, we’re driving innovation and shaping the future of automotive education.



Congratulations to December Graduates— Welcome to the Alumni Association!

Congratulations to all December graduates and welcome to the Alumni Association! As a Western alum, you have access to several benefits, including career resources, shopping discounts, athletic event admission, and more!

We are so proud of your accomplishments and look forward to seeing you succeed in your chosen careers. Please keep us updated on your future successes!

Visit www.westerntc.edu/services-and-benefits to learn more.

Congrats!



PLANT A SEED CHANGE A LIFE

How can you make a difference? Where will your contribution have the most impact? One powerful way is by supporting students at Western. Contributions to Western's Foundation help students achieve their educational goals while transforming lives and communities.

With 75% of Western graduates living and working in the region, your support is a direct investment in the future. To learn more or donate, visit www.westerntc.edu/seeds. Together, we can plant the seeds of success for generations to come.

Western
Technical College
FOUNDATION

Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence: The Legacy of Western's Respiratory Therapy Program

This year marks a noteworthy milestone for Western's Respiratory Therapy Program—40 years of training compassionate, skilled, and highly qualified respiratory therapists. Since its 1984 inception, the program has been instrumental in shaping the future of respiratory care, improving patient outcomes, and supporting community health. The program's graduates played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing their expertise and dedication.

Over the past four decades, the Respiratory Therapy program has continuously adapted to meet the ever-changing demands of healthcare, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to provide comprehensive care in diverse settings. Students gain valuable clinical experience through rotations in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and outpatient clinics, working alongside seasoned professionals in real-world situations.

Embracing technological advancements, the program integrates cutting-edge equipment and simulation labs, equipping students to face modern healthcare challenges. The combination of theoretical knowledge, hands-on training, and exposure to the latest respiratory technology has established a legacy of highly competent therapists.

The success of the program is evident not just in its growth but in the lives it has touched. Hundreds of graduates now serve communities Western supports, and many have returned as instructors, furthering the program's legacy and commitment to healthcare excellence.

Last October, we celebrated this milestone with an on-campus event at the Union Market, bringing together current and former faculty, students, and alumni. The celebration reflected on the program's journey and continued dedication to respiratory care.



Welcome, Elizabeth Nesius: Western's New Dean of General Studies



Please give a warm welcome to Elizabeth Nessus, Western's new dean of the General Studies Division. With an impressive 17 years of experience in higher education, Elizabeth brings a deep commitment to student success and social justice to her new role.

Elizabeth joins Western from Rowan College at Burlington County in New Jersey, where she served as Interim Dean of Humanities, Business, and Social Sciences. Prior to that, she was the associate dean in the same division, leading initiatives that enhanced student pathways from pre-college through bachelor's degree programs. Her extensive background also includes leadership roles at Hudson Community College, where she focused on fostering belonging and equity for students from diverse backgrounds.

"I am excited for Elizabeth to join the Western team, bringing with her years of leadership experience at two-year institutions, including curriculum and academic support innovation," said **Rebecca Hopkins, Vice President of Learning** at Western. "Her work on creating positive supports for students of all backgrounds will be an asset here at Western."

Elizabeth's academic journey reflects her passion for learning and inclusivity. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Theology from the University of Notre Dame, a Master's in English from the University of Rochester, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Education and Social Justice at Lancaster University in the UK.

"I'm thrilled to join Western and bring my passion for social justice to this dynamic institution," Elizabeth shared. "I am eager to contribute to our shared vision, serve our students, and continue to foster an inclusive and equitable environment. Together, we can make meaningful change."
— Elizabeth Nesius

Honoring Public Service: A New Scholarship for Western Students

Western is proud to announce the establishment of the Recognition of Public Service Scholarship, generously funded by **Grant Mathu**, Western's Campus Community Safety Coordinator and La Crosse County Board Supervisor. This \$500 scholarship will provide essential support to students pursuing careers in public service—fields that form the backbone of our communities.

Public service holds a deeply personal significance for Grant, who serves on the La Crosse County Board and works daily to promote safety and well-being on Western's campus. Growing

up as the child of two public educators, he saw firsthand the transformative impact of service-oriented careers, as well as the challenges faced by those entering these fields. "I wanted to create a scholarship that supports students who are choosing careers that directly serve others," Grant explains. "This isn't just about financial aid—it's about showing students that their commitment to

"I'm excited to learn that a Western scholarship can be created through a relatively modest donation while still creating a meaningful impact."

— Grant Mathu

public service matters. It's a way of saying, 'Your community sees you, values you, and wants you to succeed.'"

The Recognition of Public Service Scholarship is open to Western students enrolled in programs such as Nursing, Early Childhood Education, Criminal Justice, Human Services, EMS, and Fire Protection Technician, among others. Applicants must maintain a minimum

2.0 GPA, and preference will be given to La Crosse County residents with a demonstrated commitment to community service.

Grant hopes this scholarship will inspire and encourage the next generation of public servants to pursue their goals with confidence. "Public service careers are vital, yet they can come with unique challenges," he says. "I wanted to dedicate some of the funds I earned as a board member to create a resource for students who are passionate about giving back to their communities."

The Recognition of Public Service Scholarship will be awarded for the 2024-2025 academic year. Students interested in applying can find



more information and submit their applications through Western's Foundation at westernnc.academicworks.com/donors/mathu-recognition-of-public-service-scholarship.

"Together, we can nurture the next generation of leaders and community advocates," Grant adds. "I'm thrilled to support these students and their incredible dedication to making a difference."

If you know a student pursuing public service at Western, encourage them to explore scholarship opportunities. Every application is a step toward creating a stronger, more connected community.

Western Alumni Association Board Gives Back with Annual Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army

Each year, the **Western Alumni Association Board** participates in a heartwarming tradition: bell ringing for the Salvation Army. This annual event is a highlight for the board, offering a meaningful opportunity to give back to the community while supporting a great cause.

Board members volunteer their time to raise funds for those in need, bringing a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose. From ringing the bells to chatting with passersby, the experience is both rewarding and impactful.

A big thank-you to all the volunteers who participated this year! The Western Alumni Association is proud to continue this tradition and looks forward to next year's bell-ringing event—a testament to the alumni board's commitment to community support.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW



We track down retirees to get an update on life after Western.

This issue, we had the pleasure of catching up with **Bob Marconi**, Western's former automotive instructor and associate dean of Integrated Technologies.

What have been some of the highlights of your adventures and daily pursuits since retiring?

We've taken some great trips, like spending a few weeks in South Padre Island during the winter. I've also deployed with the Red Cross to assist in hurricane-affected areas and supported Afghan refugees when they were at Fort McCoy.

Have you discovered—or rediscovered—any hobbies since retiring? How have they enriched your life?

I've continued working with bees, which I find both fascinating and challenging. Maintaining a few hives keeps me engaged and connected to nature. I've also returned to fishing, which I loved when I was younger. It's been refreshing to make time for it again.



How do you stay active and fulfilled in retirement?

We have four grandchildren, ages five to nine, who bring so much joy into our lives. Thankfully, they live close by, so we get to spend a lot of time with them. For fulfillment, I stay busy volunteering—helping at my church, assisting family and neighbors with projects, and contributing to the Red Cross.

What do you miss most about your time at Western?

I miss the students and the people I worked with—their energy and dedication. I also miss being part of Western's mission to support student success. There was a real sense of collaboration and purpose as everyone worked together to meet the students' needs.

As associate dean of Integrated Technologies, what achievements are you most proud of?

One of my proudest moments was overcoming the challenges in 2015 to create functional and inspiring spaces for the ITC programs. It was incredible to see how faculty and staff came together to make it work. To this day, I'm amazed at the results and how proud everyone was of the ITC's final transformation.

What was the biggest challenge you faced during a time of rapid development as associate dean?

The limited space for some programs was a significant challenge. Creating functional lab spaces in smaller areas required a lot of creative problem-solving. Thankfully, the faculty and staff worked tirelessly to make it happen, ensuring students had the hands-on experiences they needed for their careers.

Do any student success stories stand out to you?

Absolutely. I often run into former students, and it's rewarding to see how far they've come. Some have started their own businesses, others have achieved great success in their fields, and



a few have even returned to Western as teachers. Seeing their accomplishments reinforces why our work mattered.

What advice would you offer to students or professionals about balancing work and personal life, especially when planning for retirement?

There never seems to be enough time to tackle everything during a busy work year, but prioritizing family is so important. Looking back, I realize I could have done better at maintaining balance. Missing family moments comes at a cost, so my advice is to keep family first and cherish those experiences.



We are grateful to **Bob Marconi** for sharing his journey and reflections with us. His dedication to Western's mission and his continued commitment to helping others is an inspiration. Bob's story reminds us of the enduring connections within the Western community and the impact of those who have shaped its legacy.

Stay tuned for the next edition of "Where Are They Now?" as we catch up with more members of the Western family.

Refer a student to Western

Do you know someone looking to pursue an education? We'd love your help identifying the next generation of Cavaliers.

Refer a student by clicking "Request Info" at www.westerntc.edu.

Indicate you're filling out the form for someone else by checking the box at the top of the form. After submitting the form, one of our admissions coaches will reach out to the student.



Save the date: Western Scholarship Golf Outing

Mark your calendars! **The Western Scholarship Golf Outing** is set for May 21, 2025, at Cedar Creek Country Club in Onalaska, Wisconsin. This annual event combines fun and philanthropy, with proceeds supporting student scholarships.

Form your team or sponsor the event and help change lives through education. Visit www.westerntc.edu/golf to register. Let's come together for a day of golfing and giving back, making a lasting impact on our students' futures.



May 21, 2025 | Cedar Creek Country Club, Onalaska, WI

March is Free Application Month at Western!

All month long you can apply to Western for free! Plus, we're highlighting a variety of programs and hosting special events throughout March. For the most current info, go to www.westerntc.edu.

Foundations and Early Childhood Education Open House

Learn more about our Foundations of Teacher Education and Early Childhood Education programs.

Date: Tuesday, March 18

Time: 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Location: La Crosse Campus, 3rd floor Coleman Center

IT Career Exploration Night

Find out more about the variety of Information Technology programs offered at Western.

Date: Tuesday, March 25

Time: 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Location: La Crosse Campus, Integrated Technology Center

Tomah Location Showcase

Western's Human Services and Medical Assistant programs start and finish right in Tomah! Join us for our showcase event to learn more:

Date: Monday, March 10

Time: 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Location: 120 East Milwaukee St., Tomah

SCHOLARSHIP

Are you or someone you know planning to attend Western?

Check out the Western Foundation scholarships:
www.westerntc.edu/scholarships

Many are available!



Western Technical College and the Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation: A Legacy of Generosity and Innovation

Western Technical College is excited about starting a new chapter in its longstanding and celebrated partnership with the Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation). Thanks to the Foundation's continued generosity, Western will soon open the **Wanek Center of Innovation** in June 2025. This groundbreaking facility will shape the future of advanced manufacturing education that will benefit students and the larger Western Wisconsin community.

The Wanek Center of Innovation transforms the old Business Education building into a modern, high-tech hub for robotics, automation, and manufacturing. The new center will provide hands-on programs in Cyber Security, Web and Software Development, Data Analytics, Robotics, and more, all designed to prepare students for the cutting-edge jobs of tomorrow. Each year, over 1,000 students will benefit from this state-of-the-art facility through its credentialed programs, partnerships with K-12 schools, and community events.



opportunities through the Mobile Skills Laboratory. The Foundation's 2022 donation led to the Joyce Wanek Center for Art and Design, which further established their commitment to furthering educational excellence in the region.

"This Center is the culmination of years of collaboration, generosity, and a shared vision for the future of education," said **Josh Gamer**, Associate Vice President, Workforce Partnerships and Innovation at Western. "From our first trip to Germany with local high school leaders in 2017, we knew we needed to evolve our programs to meet the growing demand for technology skills. With the Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation's support, we've created new programs, built high school partnerships, and introduced advanced automation technologies. The Wanek Center of Innovation is the next step in making sure Western stays at the forefront of education and training, as we fully prepare students for great careers in manufacturing and beyond."

Beyond supporting Western's programs, the Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation has made a meaningful impact on the entire community. Their contributions have enhanced educational access and

opportunities, allowing students to gain valuable skills that align with the needs of today's industries. The Foundation's dedication to workforce development creates a stronger pipeline for K-12 students to move into technical education to prepare them for high-demand, high-skill jobs. Initiatives like the Whitehall Regional Emerging Technology Laboratory and partnerships with local schools like Luther High School offer hands-on learning experiences that set students up for success.

"We are incredibly proud to partner with Western Technical College to advance our shared mission of fostering educational excellence through K-20 partnerships and industry collaboration. The Wanek Center of Innovation represents a landmark achievement in our ongoing mission to advance education," said Ron Wanek, Founder and Chairman of Ashley Furniture Industries. "By working together, we are providing students with unparalleled education opportunities that equip them with the skills and competitive edge necessary for the future."

Through the generosity of the Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation, the Wanek Center of Innovation is more than just a facility—it's a symbol of Western's ongoing commitment to education, workforce development, and the betterment of the community.



"The Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation's generosity has been a cornerstone of our growth and success," says **Roger Stanford**, President of Western Technical College. "Their support has allowed us to do so much—from enhancing our programs to building stronger pathways for K-12 students and providing top-tier training for the workforce. The Wanek Center of Innovation is their latest gift, and it's going to make a lasting impact on our students and the entire region. We couldn't be more grateful."

The Ronald and Joyce Wanek Foundation has been a key partner for Western since 2017, making major contributions that have transformed the college and its programs. With their support, Western launched the Ashley Automation Lab, expanded its robotics program, and created dual credit

Western Unveils Cavalier Strength Center: A New Era of Wellness and Athletics

Western recently unveiled an exciting transformation in the heart of its Wellness Center: the newly renovated **Cavalier Strength Center**. Designed with accessibility and student well-being in mind, this refreshed space now offers a wider array of high-quality strength training equipment in a welcoming environment tailored for serious training and fitness enthusiasts alike.

In a continued effort to break down barriers for students, the Wellness Center eliminated its membership fees, ensuring that every Western student has access to essential resources that promote physical, mental, and social health. Wellness and Athletics Manager **Ryan Monroe** highlighted the focus behind the renovation: “We wanted to follow industry trends, student desires, and maximize every square foot of our facility. Our members’ most used area was the strength training section, but we knew our previous layout had limitations in meeting that demand.”

The newly christened Cavalier Strength Center now boasts rubberized flooring designed specifically for strength training, along with four brand-new squat racks equipped with top-of-the-line barbells, bumper plates, and benches. The upgrades don’t stop there—students will find an expanded range of dumbbells, kettlebells, resistance bands, and specialized strength machines to accommodate a variety of workout styles.

Western Powerlifting Coach **Jordan Beenken** shared his excitement about the updates: “This project offers new opportunities for all Western students to explore strength training with high-quality equipment. The additional space allows students to complete workouts more efficiently, fitting better into their busy schedules. Our student-athletes now have

enhanced opportunities to grow and develop as a team through more organized workouts.”

More than just a fitness center, the Wellness Center serves as an important hub for both student wellness and athletic performance. Monroe explained that the renovation aligns with the college’s broader goals: “Our five-year strategic plan focuses on removing barriers, aligning resources, and offering targeted programs to boost student engagement. By renovating the Cavalier Strength Center, we can better serve our students while also providing stronger support for our athletic teams.”

In line with this commitment to enhanced student engagement, Western Athletics also recently announced the launch of two new sports: Clay Target and Powerlifting. Monroe noted that the decision came from a need to align athletic offerings with available facilities and student interest: “One of our previous challenges was the lack of adequate facilities to support our teams.

With strong feedback from students, we prioritized improving our on-campus facilities to better align our sports offerings and increase participation.”

While the Wellness Center is free for all Western students, it’s also open to retirees and alumni at a discounted rate—\$30 per month. Beyond individual fitness, the

center plays an integral role in athletic training, serving as a practice space for volleyball, baseball, and other sports performance programs.

The Wellness Center’s doors are open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. Whether you’re a current student, an alumni member looking to stay active, or simply curious about the new offerings, the Cavalier Strength Center is ready to welcome you into a vibrant community of wellness and strength.

Ready to get back into a fitness routine? Visit the Wellness Center today and take advantage of the latest upgrades designed with you in mind!



Wellness Center | Administrative Center, Lower Level | 111 7th Street North | La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: 608-785-9443 | Email: wellnesscenter@westerntc.edu | www.westerntc.edu/wellness-center

In Memoriam

Dale P. Anderson 10/17/24
1997 Diesel & Heavy Equipment Technician

Audrey A. (Stockfish) Banach 9/19/22
1974 Interior Design

Ronald L. Bias 2/3/24
1973 Welding

Michael Deal 10/14/24
1971 Foods - Institutional

Duane Deml 11/20/24
1973 Refrigeration Servicing

Connie M. Devine 11/14/24
1986 Interior Design

Stephen S. Dickow 11/16/24
1985 Electronic Servicing Tech

Jefferson Gallaher 9/9/24
1975 Power - Electrical

Joshua S. Hanson 10/25/24
1999 Police Science Technology

Dona R. Houser 9/10/24
1974

Clinton R. Jorgensen 9/14/24
1994 Nursing

George R. Kaczorowski 9/17/24
2001 Accounting

Patrick R. McKenzie 8/24/24
1985 Marketing, Retail Management

Timothy A. Rhyme 11/23/24
1985 Farm Operations

John M. Ross 11/10/24
1972 Welding

Stephen W. Sagen 9/21/24
1975 Mechanical Design Technology

Jeanne I. Steuck 9/23/24
1976 Ward Clerk

Dennis Terpstra 9/5/24
1977 Electronic Servicing

Robin E. Thompson 11/29/24
1977 Bio-Medical Electronics

Arlene M. Wiese 10/31/24
1983 CIS Programmer/Analyst
1984 Accounting

Wayne J. Young 9/29/24
1976 Welding
1977 Wood Tech

Ole A. Yttri 6/13/24
1990 Accounting

Western Retirees & Staff

Tina M. Connelly 9/26/24

Glen W. Skewes 10/19/24

March application drive!

Apply to Western for FREE in March!

With Spring just around the corner, Western is gearing up for its annual application season, and here's the exciting part—we're waiving the \$30 application fee throughout the month of March! High school juniors can get a head start by applying early for the Fall of 2025.

The \$30 application fee will be
WAIVED all month long from
Saturday, March 1 – Monday, March 31.

**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

Visit Western's Campus!

Schedule a visit with us at: westernnc.edu/visit

OR

Make an appointment with one of our admissions coaches at: westernnc.edu/admissions-coaches



Tell us your story!

Keep current with changes in contact information and tell us what you've been doing since graduation. New job, baby, marriage, or honor? We'll print it in an upcoming edition of *Connect*. Include your email address and the classnote will be sent to you before publishing.

Mail to: **Western Technical College, Alumni Office, 400 7th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601**
 or complete online at: westerntc.edu/stay-connected

Name _____
First M.I. Last

Name at Graduation (if different) _____

Program _____ **Yr.** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Cell _____ **Landline** _____

Email _____

Employer _____

Job title _____

Spouse _____

Spouse is a Western Alum Spouse program/graduation year _____

Additional news for college publication: _____

YES! I would like to continue to receive a printed copy of the *Western Connect* newsletter.

An electronic copy is preferred.

Western Alumni Association

Western Technical College, Alumni Office, Coleman Center Room 111
 400 7th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601

alumni@westerntc.edu 608-789-6083 westerntc.edu/alumni

Remember When...

Do you recognize anyone from this photo? We would love to hear from you!



Do you have a photo to share? Contact the Alumni Office at 608-789-6083 or alumni@westerntc.edu