

**Profile of
We Are Falcons
University of Wisconsin–River Falls
2020 Regents Academic Staff Excellence Program Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- The We Are Falcons program began in summer 2017 as a campaign to showcase what it means to be a Falcon and what UW-River Falls cares about as a university, including developing productive, creative, ethical, and engaged citizens with global perspectives.
- Individuals from 10 functional areas formed the We Are Falcons committee, chaired by the Student Involvement Office staff.
- The academic staff involved designed a diverse set of activities and communication tools to engage students, such as student video testimonials, an interactive website, a series of events dedicated to each value, and a branded identity for the program used in all communications and on giveaway items.
- The program promotes discussions on important topics such as bias, mental health, and preventing sexual assault and hazing, while helping promote strategic priorities such as undergraduate research and international education.
- The program is grounded in the university’s mission and the following six core values:
 - Student centeredness
 - Academic excellence
 - Inclusiveness
 - Innovation
 - Global engagement
 - Integrity
- In 2018, 200 UW-River Falls students chose to participate in the We Are Falcons video, which the Chancellor debuted at the campus-wide fall meeting.
- 2018 was also the year the We Are Falcons program became recognizable. Marketing efforts were intentionally planned and giveaways from departments across campus displayed the We Are Falcons logo. Stickers, mugs, distinct red posters, and socks made by a local alum created a buzz around the campaign.
- The Student Involvement Office began to host sessions during all new student registration programs called We Are Falcons. These program sessions require new students to 1) explore their own values, 2) identify how their values affect the way they show up in their major and get involved on campus, and 3) take steps to connect with other students about their values and story.
- Broadening the effort further, graduate interns from the Student Involvement Office, the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Center, and the New Student and Family Programs Department created a new program called We Chat. Topics each month explore concepts that allow students to challenge their beliefs, perspectives, and biases in a welcoming environment, fostering growth and a greater sense of community.
- The We Are Falcons program is an example of how UW-River Falls is committed to living out its mission and core values, helping its entire community to know them, reflect on them, and apply them in their choices and actions.

In the words of colleagues:

- “From being a slogan printed on socks proudly donned by students across campus, to tying together the overall message of Chancellor Dean Van Galen at our spring opening meeting, it is clear that [the We Are Falcons program] is fulfilling its mission of uniting and binding our campus community through our shared values.”
—Sara Peters, Assistant Director, New Student and Family Programs, UW-River Falls
- “Because of the We Are Falcons program, there is a more robust and visible culture of excitement, inclusion, compassion, and evidence of authentic community here at UW-River Falls that [the We Are Falcons program] has wholeheartedly and boldly cultivated.” —Ann E. Lawton, Lecturer, Art Department, UW-River Falls