



University of Wisconsin
Whitewater

CONNECTIONS: The Wisconsin Idea

Stories and News from The School
of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education

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**University of
Wisconsin-Whitewater
Continuing Education**

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Travel Out West, Earn College Credit

The National Parks can be your classroom this summer.

Do you know a student who wants to stay on track to graduate but also wants to travel this summer? [Continuing Education](#) offers a unique opportunity for them to do both. In partnership with the [Department of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science](#), two courses exploring the natural history and environmental change in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks will take place this summer. Students prepare for travel by learning online, then travel from UW-Whitewater to the National Parks, stopping at locations en route like the Black Hills, Badlands National Park, Devils Tower, and Wind River Reservation. During travel, students will also learn about the cultural history of the regions and explore philosophies of conservation and resource use.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for students to get hands-on experience off campus," said John Frye, [associate professor and course instructor](#). "Seeing the effects of environmental change like wildfires and flood damage firsthand makes more of an impact on student learning than just studying in a classroom." For many students, traveling on this course is their first time outside the Midwest. It is an opportunity to develop skills beyond the scope of the course, like teamwork, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving.

In addition to field work, Frye invites many guest experts to meet with students. These include Native American artists, park rangers, and conservation practitioners. One special guest is Tyler Brasington. Brasington is a 2017 graduate of UW-Whitewater, and is now a bear management ranger in Grand Teton National Park. "Tyler's work is critical to the human-wildlife interface in the Park," said Frye. "It's great for our current students to see him talk so passionately about his work



in the place that he does it. It also shows them what they might be able to do with a UWW degree."



[The National Parks Travel Study courses](#) are open to all UWW students, including incoming freshmen and transfers. It is also open to those from other institutions. Space is very limited and instructor consent is required.



Special Olympics Returns to Campus in June

You have the opportunity to participate in this exciting event by serving as a volunteer.

UW-Whitewater is honored to welcome [Special Olympics Wisconsin](#) (SOWI) athletes and coaches to campus for the State Summer Games. For the second consecutive year, [UWW](#) will host five sports as they culminate their seasons: track and field, cornhole, powerlifting, tennis and soccer.

Thousands of athletes, coaches, spectators and supporters will be on campus June 6-8, and [volunteers](#) will be critical to the success of the event. "We work closely with University departments like Athletics and Police Services, SOWI staff and city and community groups to ensure a safe and satisfying experience for all," said Morgan Anderson, Director of Continuing Education Services "but volunteers in all roles are especially essential."



No experience is required (unless specified) and SOWI will provide training before volunteer shifts. People ages 13 and over can volunteer by themselves and those 12 and under can volunteer with a chaperone. Shifts last four to six hours, and include tasks such as set-up and tear down, escorting athletes, scorekeeping, and timing.

"Volunteers benefit from their time at State Summer Games as much as the athletes they're serving," Anderson said. "It really is a high-quality and impactful event for everyone involved."

Please visit the [website](#) for more information on volunteering and to sign up for available slots.



Tour the Prairie and Gardens, Learn About Sustainability and History

Join us for free guided tours during the most beautiful time of year on campus.

For nearly 10 years, Continuing Education has partnered with the [UWW Sustainability Office](#) to provide guided tours during the summer and early fall months. We return this year with six tours, all led by Wes Enterline, Sustainability Coordinator and student interns.

[Four tours](#) will be held in the UWW Nature Preserve, more than 100 acres of native prairie and woodland that border the northeastern part of campus. These tours highlight the native flora and fauna in the preserve, and plans for future restoration and preservation. In August, [two tours](#) will explore both natural and historical aspects of the campus. Participants will visit campus gardens, arboreta, and landscapes, learn more about the sustainability practices we employ. In addition, stories and photos from our 156-year history will be featured and participants will have opportunities to share their own connections to UWW's past.

All tours are free and open to all. [Registration](#) is required.



Students Highlight Research at the State Capitol

Students and their faculty advisors from the Whitewater and Rock County campuses shared their research findings at the 20th annual [Research in the Rotunda](#) on March 6. Seven posters representing the work of nearly 20 Warhawks were displayed on topics such as gas sensors, virtual cadaver software, college students with disabilities and mayfly DNA. Governor Evers, legislators, UW regents, and other leaders met with researchers to learn more about their projects.

The [Undergraduate Research Program](#) is a high impact practice that gives student the opportunity to apply their knowledge outside the classroom and dive deeper into their field of interest. URP connects students with faculty mentors to provide an enriching research experience.



Student Spotlight: Cara Craig

Recent graduate is part of the change she wanted to see in her field.

After teaching in early childhood education (ECE) for 27 years, Cara Craig was looking to take a step forward in her career. She was yearning for a change, but more importantly, she was seeking change in the ECE field. In sharing her challenges and aspirations with friends and family, she learned of a new graduate program in development at UW-Whitewater: the [Masters in Early Childhood Education Policy \(ECEP\)](#).



Launched in 2022, the ECEP graduate program prepares professionals to work with schools, government agencies and organizations to advocate for and address solutions in early childhood education. “The inequities of the ECE system can be profound for students, families, and teachers,” Cara said. “We need to change if we are going to bring equity for young children,” she said. “This empowering program will help change ECE for the better.”

The program is coordinated by professor Lucinda Heimer, and is fully online, allowing students to continue in their professional roles while developing their skills and engaging with each other. “The professors teaching in the program, including Lucy, are true leaders in the field,” Cara said. She made profound connections with classmates and faculty, and through them, found her own voice. “My influence and empowerment have expanded by working with them.”

Cara began her career as a teacher in a private school, and upon graduating in December 2023, landed a new role as Home Visitor at Head Start. In this position, she is putting her expertise to use for the people who really need it. “I have ten families on my case load, and all of them are English Language Learners and 80% of them are immigrants to the U.S.” she shared. She is also a fellow at two policy councils, Teach Illinois Plus and Advance Illinois, where she has weekly conversations with policy makers. Most important to Cara is that the ECEP program carried her into her path of advocacy. “This program helped me see that I HAVE this expertise.”

Learn more about how Cara and her fellow ECEP graduates are addressing the early childhood education crisis [here](#).

News and Upcoming Events:

The Department of Special Education, home to several programs that meet emerging needs of students, teachers and the workforce, was recently recognized with the [Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents Teaching Excellence award](#).

New! Continuing Education Services is offering wrap-around care before and after [College for Kids](#) on the Rock County campus this summer. Drop off as early as 8am and pick up as late as 4:30pm. Care will be filled with hands-on activities including 3D pens, Lego challenges, games and outdoor time.

Many future Warhawks have their first experiences on campus by participating in youth camps and clinics. Read about one alum’s journey [from band camp to the boardroom](#).

Nearly 70 [camps and clinics](#) are scheduled for the Whitewater and Rock County campuses. From athletics to art, music to STEM, there’s something for everyone, but spots are filling fast. Join us this summer to *Learn and Play the Warhawk Way!*



Are you thinking of a career advancement or change? Continuing Education offers [advanced career training programs](#) that lead to professional positions in high demand fields like [medical assistant](#), [residential electrician](#), and [veterinary assistant](#). Looking for individual classes? We have those too. Hundreds of flexible, affordable [online classes](#) with start dates each month, with titles like [Project Management Fundamentals](#), [Discover Sign Language](#), and [Genealogy Basics](#) will help you meet your career, educational, and lifelong learning goals.