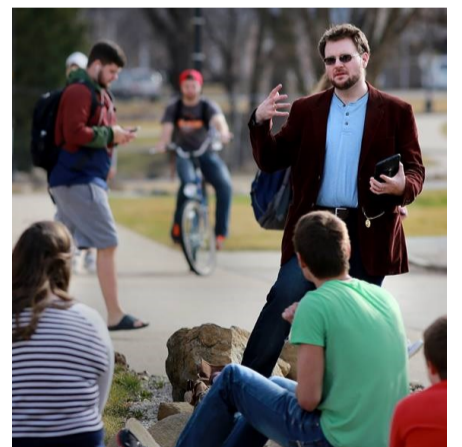
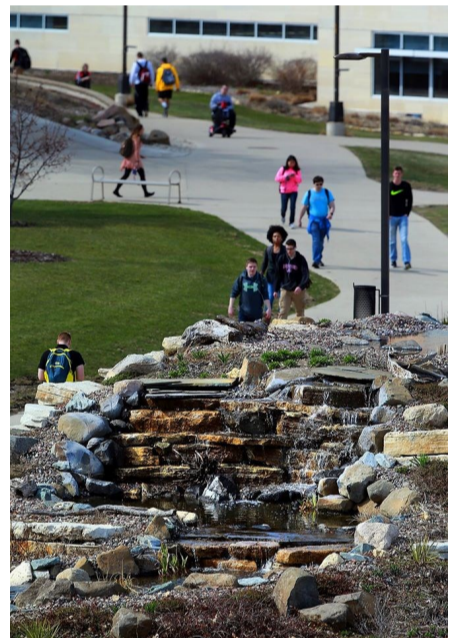




UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**WHITEWATER**

**CARE RESOURCE GUIDE**

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF  
HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS  
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



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As faculty and staff, you come into contact with many students on a daily basis. You are on the “front lines” and thus are in an excellent position to observe students, identify those who may be in emotional distress, and offer assistance.

You may be the first (or only) person who recognizes that a student is not functioning well, either academically or personally. What can you do when you suspect a student may need help? How involved should you be? What is your appropriate role? Where and when do you draw healthy boundaries? When do you need to consult with someone else?

While you are not expected to assess and treat students who may be experiencing mental health challenges, you are in a position to recognize troubling or distressed behavior, and may be the best person to direct the student to the most appropriate resource. Reaching out to students is a powerful gesture which not only helps students personally but may also enhances their academic success.

This booklet is designed to acquaint you with the resources on campus that can assist you in helping students in distress and guide you in making referrals to helping professionals. In addition, there is a section outlining suggestions for dealing with specific types of behavioral challenges.

## **ABOUT CARE TEAM**

### **CARE Team**

The Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation Team, known as the CARE Team, is a group of staff members from various departments who meet regularly to assist students experiencing difficulty and to help ensure the safety of our campus.

### **What Does the CARE Team Do?**

CARE Team members meet on a regular basis to do the following:

- Review critical campus incidents
- Develop intervention strategies to assist students in crisis (faculty/staff as needed with HR)
- Develop protocols and proactive ways to address recurring student issues
- Discuss campus trends that may impact student safety, services, programs and general campus life
- Make recommendations to campus staff or faculty as appropriate

The group places a high priority on balancing a person’s right to privacy with the university’s duty to respond to people experiencing difficulty or expressing at-risk behavior. The CARE Team’s primary objective is to connect students with the support and resources they need to be healthy and productive members of our campus community. Though the team’s primary focus is assisting students, assistance is provided for faculty and staff members when needed.

### **The CARE Team consists of:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Dean of Students                                       | Chief of Police Services                  |
| CARE Team Case Manager                                 | Director of Athletics                     |
| University Health & Counseling Services Director       | Associate Director for University Housing |
| University Health and Counseling Services Case Manager |   |
| Center for Students with Disabilities Director         |   |
| Human Resources Representative (when applicable)       |   |

Additional members of the campus community may be included on the CARE Team as needed.

## REPORTING A STUDENT OF CONCERN

For more information about the CARE Team, to ask a question or to express a concern about someone in the campus community, you may contact the Dean of Students Office during regular business hours (7:45am – 4:30pm). You may also report a concern about a particular student, faculty or staff member by using the online reporting form which can be found on our website under *Report a Concern/Incident*.

Website: <http://www.uww.edu/dean-of-students/student-resources/care-team>

**You are encouraged to contact the team if you are concerned about a student, friend or colleague for any of the following reasons:**

- Dangerous or disruptive behavior
- Threat or talk of suicide or self harm
- Management of loss or grief
- Alcohol or drug concerns
- Extended class absence or concern that a person is missing
- Mental health issues (e.g. anxiety, panic, depression or self-injury)
- Relationship violence
- Medical or health issues
- Detachment from reality
- Assault or sexual assault

## HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS: GENERAL GUIDELINES

**Observe**—A first important step in assisting a student is to be familiar with the symptoms of distress. Pay close attention to direct communication, as well as implied or hidden feelings. Focus on the observable behaviors and how they are impacting the student's life.

**What to do**—Reaching out to a student and letting them know you are genuinely concerned about them may have a profound effect. Acknowledge to the student that you notice they are struggling and their behaviors have changed. Let them know you are willing to look at options that can help them, which may include contacting the CARE Team.

**Initiate contact**—Don't ignore strange, inappropriate, or unusual behavior. Talk to the student in question privately, in a direct and matter-of-fact manner, indicating your observations and concerns. Be sure to focus on the behaviors that were displayed and express your concern about how they are impacting the student.

**Early feedback, intervention and/or referral can prevent more serious problems from developing.**

**Offer support and assistance**—Your interest, attentive listening and concern may be pivotal in helping the student know you are concerned about them. Avoid criticisms or sounding judgmental. Allow the student time to respond and acknowledge their perception may be different. Summarize the essence of what the individual has told you as a way of clarifying the situation. Validate feelings while also encouraging positive action by helping the student define the problems and generate coping strategies.

**Refer**—Know your limits as a helper and only go as far as your expertise and resources allow. When a student needs more help than you are able or willing to give, a referral is appropriate. You may refer to the Dean of Students Office, the University Health & Counseling Service, the Center for Students with Disabilities or other campus offices.

**The following may be helpful in making an individual referral to University Health and Counseling Services:**

- Talk to the student about the services and procedures of UHCS. An initial appointment can be made in person on the second floor of the Ambrose Health Center or by calling (262)-472-1305. It is helpful to let the student know that services are confidential and free to enrolled students.

- It is important to provide the individual with a sense of control about their decision to follow your recommendation. In most cases, encouraging the student to initiate their own appointment with Counseling Services is preferred. Sometimes, however, offering the use of one's phone or walking the student over to UHCS may be beneficial, if you sense the student would benefit from the support of you accompanying them.
- In rare cases, a student may be in an acute crisis in which they demonstrate behavior that elicits serious and immediate concern about personal safety (either the student's or your own) or the student's ability to function (impaired reality testing or judgment). In such acute cases, you are urged to make telephone contact with either campus police and/or local law enforcement. If you are unsure if the situation warrants this, a consultation with a counselor or with police services can help determine if emergency treatment is needed.
- It is important to follow up with a referral to the CARE Team after you walk a student over to counseling services. Additional support and connection to services may be needed to help the student move forward in a healthy and safe manner.

## **ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY**

UHCS Staff are required by law, and professional ethics, to protect the confidentiality of all communication between therapist and client (except in cases where harm to self or others is indicated). Consequently, the Counseling Services staff cannot discuss with others the details of the student's situation, or even indicate whether the student is being seen in therapy without the student's signed consent. It is suggested that you ask a student directly if they have followed up on your recommendation to make contact with UHCS.

## **WHEN COUNSELING MAY BE NEEDED**

### **Harmful Statements or Behaviors:**

- Overt references to suicide or statements of helplessness or hopelessness
- Indications of persistent or prolonged unhappiness
- Extreme risk-taking behavior

### **Unusual Behavior or Marked Change in Behavior:**

- Disruptive or threatening behavior in classroom or residence hall
- Listlessness or frequently falling asleep in class
- Changes in appearance, including weight and hygiene
- Extreme mood changes or excessive, inappropriate display of emotion
- Sudden withdrawal from people or excessive sleep
- Hyperactivity, chronic irritability, or excessive anxiety
- Confusion, disorientation, or bizarre behavior

### **Trauma or Crises in Relationships:**

- Break-up or change in relationship status
- Loss or illness of a family member or close friend
- Conflict with roommate, friend, or family
- Victim of assault

### **Problems with Academic Performance:**

- A new onset of poor academic performance or preparation
- Repeated requests for special accommodations
- Test or speech anxiety
- Confusion over low performance

### **Substance Abuse:**

- Evidence or excessive use of alcohol or other drugs
- Impaired daily functioning secondary to substance use (e.g. not attending classes, not going to work)

The above list outlines behavioral changes or stressful events in students' lives which may warrant counseling. The following sections address specific types of behavioral concerns you may find when working with students.

**It is critical to remember that while you may be a key source of support to a student, you cannot be expected to do it all.** When you feel particularly concerned about a distressed student, you can refer them to the CARE Team or consult with other campus services as appropriate.

## **THE DEPRESSED STUDENT**

### **Signs and Symptoms**

A student experiencing depression is likely to exhibit some of the following symptoms:

- Sadness, tearfulness
- Trouble concentrating or remembering
- Loss of interest in schoolwork or usual activities
- Physical symptoms:
  - Changes in appetite
  - Difficulty sleeping
  - Low energy level
- Guilt or anger at themselves
- Suicidal thoughts
- Feeling of hopelessness or helplessness
- Feelings of worthlessness or inadequacy

### **Facts about Suicide**

**It is important to take all suicidal comments seriously and to make appropriate referrals**

- College students have higher suicide rates than non-college people of the same age
- More men commit suicide; more women attempt
- There are more attempts at the beginning and end of the semesters
- Talking about suicide will not plant the idea in a person's mind, but will probably relieve some of the tension they are experiencing
- Feeling isolated increases the likelihood of suicide
- The more developed the suicide plan, the greater likelihood for suicide

### **Helpful Responses**

- Reach out and encourage the student to talk about their feelings
- Tell the student about your concern for their wellbeing
- If suicidal, refer student to UHCS (262)-472-1305, University Police (262)-472-4660 (911 in case of an emergency), or the CARE Team at (262)-471-1533
- Frequent contact, even for a few minutes, begins to relieve feelings of isolation (encourage the student to be in contact with family, friends, counselors)

### **Less Helpful Responses**

- Saying "don't worry," or "everything will be better tomorrow."
- Becoming overwhelmed by the student's problems. This may only provide evidence that the student should feel helpless.
- Assuming too much responsibility for the student's problems
- Trying to ignore or minimize their feelings

## THE STUDENT IN POOR REALITY CONTACT

This student may have trouble distinguishing fantasy from reality. To some extent, the person may appear confused or illogical.

You may notice the student's speech jumps from one topic to another with little or no logical connection between topics. This student may also pay a great deal of attention to some unimportant detail that is being discussed, or may be generally scattered and incoherent. This student may coin new words and expect others to understand their meaning or may put words together because they rhyme, not because they make grammatical sense.

The student may have an inappropriate or inconsistent emotional response. For example, the student may overreact to their feelings, or be very "flat" emotionally. Many times the person knows their emotions are inappropriate, but just feels overwhelmed and cannot control them.

Someone in poor contact with reality may experience themselves as especially powerful or important, or may believe that people are attempting to harm or control them in some way. The student may also feel that certain actions have special meaning for them (e.g. - when people in a small group begin to laugh, then they are laughing at them).

This student may experience hallucinations, although usually auditory.

### Helpful Responses

- Respond to them with warmth and kindness, but also with firmness
- If you are comfortable in doing so, remove extra stimulation from the environment and meet with them in a quiet atmosphere
- Recognize their concerns and state that you can see they need help
- Acknowledge their feelings or fears without supporting the misperceptions (e.g. - "I understand how you think they are trying to hurt you and I know how real it seems to you, but I don't hear the voices.")
- Reveal your difficulty in understanding them ("I'm sorry, but I don't understand. Could you repeat that or say it in a different way?")
- **Know your boundaries and refer to CARE Team for additional interventions and campus resources**

### Less Helpful Responses

- Arguing, disputing their illusions, or trying to convince them of the irrationality of their thinking - it just makes them defend their position (false perceptions) more
- Playing along (e.g. - "Oh yeah, I hear voices...see the devil!")
- Encouraging further revelations of delusional thinking. It would be more helpful to switch topics and divert focus from delusions to reality
- Demanding, commanding, or ordering them to do something or change themselves

## THE AGGRESSIVE STUDENT

Aggression can take many forms, from very subtle passive acts to violent outbursts. It often results when a student perceives a threat, feels frustrated and/or out of control. Some aggressive people express hostility immediately without regard for their circumstances or the people around them. Others deny their anger and frustration until their hostility builds to the point of an explosive outburst.

It is important to remember the student is generally not angry at you personally, but is angry at their world and you are their available target of pent-up frustrations.

Overall, dealing with an aggressive student will be handled best by maintaining firm, consistent and calm control in the situation.

### **Helpful responses**

- Allow the individual to express their anger, and tell you what is upsetting them
- Tell the student that you are not willing to accept abusive behavior (e.g. “When you yell at me I cannot listen.”) If you need to, explicitly state what behaviors are acceptable
- Stick to the limits you set
- If the person begins to get too close to you, tell them to please move back
- Reduce stimulation. If you are comfortable doing so, invite them to your office or another quiet place. If you sense a threat, arrange for a colleague to be nearby
- Rephrase what the individual is saying and identify the individual's emotions
- Get help if necessary (supervisor, colleague, police)

### **Less Helpful Responses**

- Arguing
- Pressing for explanations about their behavior
- Looking away and not dealing with the situation
- Physically restraining or grabbing the student
- Making threats, dares or taunts

## **THE ANXIOUS STUDENT**

Most of us have all experienced anxiety in response to a perceived stressful situation. Anxiety generally becomes heightened as the situation becomes more vague and less familiar.

A panic attack is an overwhelming sense of dread and fear, and is the extreme result of feeling anxious. Some of the components of general anxiety and panic attacks are rapid heart palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, choking, dizziness, sweating, trembling or shaking, or cold/clammy hands. The student may experience feelings of worry or fear and may anticipate some misfortune. They may complain of poor concentration, being on edge, being easily distracted, memory problems, and/or fitful sleep. The student may also state unreasonable high self-expectations, and be very critical of their present performance. This student may constantly think about and discuss their problems and possible solutions, but be too fearful to take action.

### **Helpful Responses**

- Let them discuss their feelings and their thoughts
- Help them, if possible, define their stressors and their effective and ineffective coping strategies
- Encourage them to break down tasks into workable steps to feel less overwhelmed
- Relaxation techniques, deep breathing, meditation, and enjoyable exercise (e.g. walking) can all be helpful in reducing anxiety. Encourage them to engage in these behaviors or to seek professional help to learn these and other coping strategies.
- Be clear and explicit about what you are expecting from them, and what you are willing to do. It may be helpful to have them repeat what you have said to ensure they understand.



### **Less Helpful Responses**

- Taking responsibility for their emotional state
- Trying to solve individual problems as if they were your own
- Becoming anxious or overwhelmed along with them

## **THE DEMANDING STUDENT**

Any amount of time and energy may simply not be enough for some students. Such students often seek to control your time and unconsciously believe that the amount of time received is a reflection of personal worth.

### **Helpful Responses**

- Set clear and precise limits with the students and stick to limits no matter how much they protest
- Let the individual make their own choices, clarifying the logical consequences of such choices
- Refer the student to other students in class, their friends, or campus/community resources

### **Less Helpful Responses**

- Taking responsibility for the individual
- Letting the student “trap” you into solving more and more of their life problems
- Allowing the student to use you as a sole source of support

## **THE SUSPICIOUS STUDENT**

Often times these students appear tense, cautious, mistrustful, and lonely (lacking healthy peer to peer interactions). These students tend to interpret a minor oversight as significant personal rejection and often overreact to insignificant occurrences. They see themselves as the focal point of others’ behavior and everything that happens may seem to be interpreted in a suspicious light. Usually they are over-concerned with fairness and being treated equally. They project blame onto others and will express anger in indirect ways.

### **Helpful Responses**

- Send clear, consistent messages regarding what you are willing to do and what you expect
- Express “reserved compassion,” being mindful that a suspicious student may have trouble with closeness and warmth

### **Less Helpful Responses**

- Being overly warm or nurturing or assuring them you’re their friend. Let the student know that you can still be concerned without being close to them
- Trying to flatter them or be cute or humorous to try to relieve your own anxiety. This will probably distance them from you

## GENERAL TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STUDENTS EXPERIENCING BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES

- Request to see the student outside of class
- Briefly describe your observations and perceptions and express your concerns directly and honestly
- Listen carefully to what is troubling the student and try to see the issue from their point of view without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing
- Strange and inappropriate behavior should not be ignored. The student can be informed that such behavior is distracting and inappropriate
- Your receptivity to an alienated student will allow them to respond more effectively to your concerns
- Involve yourself only as far as you are willing to go
- At times, in an attempt to reach or help a troubled student, you may become more involved than your time and training permits. Extending oneself to others always involves some risk, but it can be a gratifying experience when kept within realistic limits
- If you have concerns about a student's emotional state, call University Health and Counseling Service (262) 472-1305 for consultation
- If you have concerns about a student's disruptive behavior or discipline concerns, contact the Dean of Students Office (262) 472-1533
- If the situation is an emergency and anyone's safety is in danger, call 911 immediately. For non-emergency situations you may call University Police Services (262) 472-4660
- If you believe a student may need a coordinated response, or you don't know how to proceed, contact the CARE Team

### Calming Down a Disruption

If a student does become disruptive, some of the following strategies may help to de-escalate the situation.

- Maintain a calm, soft voice. When you use a quieter voice, the disruptive student will need to become quieter in order to hear you. Your "being in control" may defuse the situation
- If possible, walk around your classroom and change where you stand to give presentations. Your presence in a different part of the classroom may ease a disruption
- You may need to directly tell a student they have contributed enough for that day and you need to hear from some other students
- If possible, shift the topic and/or activity. When a student is "worked up" about one topic, moving to another may calm the situation or at least catch the student off guard

Do not challenge or belittle a student who is being disruptive. **Your goal at this point is to de-escalate the situation.** You can always follow up with the student later

### When Things Don't Calm Down

If a student will not stop being disruptive, you have a responsibility to maintain the environment for all of the other students. In this case, consider these options:

- You have the right to ask the disruptive student to leave the class that day. (Any longer than a one-class suspension will need to be sanctioned via the campus misconduct process in the Dean of Students Office)
- If a student will not leave after you have asked, you may call 911 and have the police remove a disruptive student
- If a student is making threats of harm to self or others, call 911 immediately

"Disrupting or obstructing a university-run or university-authorized activity" is a violation of the UWS Chapter 17 code of conduct and you may refer the student for disciplinary action by calling the Dean of Students Office at (262) 472-1533.

## **After the Disruption is Over**

Whether the disruption in your classroom has been large or small, it is important to have a follow up conversation with the student about their behavior after class.

Find a time to speak with the student in private about what happened in the classroom. It may be helpful to address the following topics:

- Give them the opportunity to explain why they were disruptive
- Re-clarify your classroom expectations and remind them of potential consequences
- Make a plan to address the behavior together in the future
- If you are uncomfortable having the conversation alone with the student please consult with another faculty member, Department Chair, Dean, or the Dean of Students Office to ensure someone is present with you
- Document and refer. Document the date and time that the disruption occurred and any steps taken to address the disruption

Refer disruptive students to the Dean of Student Office or the CARE Team. We are available to help faculty and staff manage behaviors and provide any support and consultation that you may need. The Dean of Students phone number is 262-472-1533 and the CARE team reporting form can be found on the Dean of Student website under "Report a Concern/Incident – CARE Team Reporting Form".

## UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—WHITEWATER CAMPUS RESOURCES

### **CARE Team Case Manager – (262) 472-1533**

The Case Manager is a university staff member who is also a member of the CARE Team. The Case Manager works directly with students to help them resolve their personal crises, concerns or difficulties. The Case Manager is not a counselor, so he will not provide counseling services. However, he can help you decide which resources may be best to resolve your individual issue and put you in contact with a variety of people who can help.

### **Dean of Students Office – (262) 472-1533**

The Dean of Students Office helps students with a variety of concerns related to their student status and issues on campus. This office can provide you with information about applying for medical withdrawal, filing a campus complaint, reporting an instance of harassment or sexual assault, or navigating other concerns you may have related to our campus environment.

### **University Health and Counseling Services – (262) 472-1300 Health Center, (262) 472-1305 Counseling**

University Health and Counseling Services (UHCS) provides comprehensive, low-cost health services for students. UHCS does not offer emergency medical care. Mental health services are free of charge for students and counselors are available for crisis intervention from 8am-4:30pm Monday through Friday. You may call or walk-in to make a crisis appointment.

### **Winther Counseling Lab – (262) 472-2842**

Winther Counseling Lab provides free, confidential counseling services for UW-Whitewater students and to the public. Winther is staffed by graduate students in the Counselor Education program who are supervised by licensed Counselor Education faculty members. Winther is open only during the academic year and does not provide emergency services.

### **University Police – (262) 472-4660**

The University Police provide law enforcement, safety and educational services on campus. University Police Officers are available 24-hours a day if you need to report a crime or emergency. Dial 911 if you feel your safety is threatened or to report an emergency. The phone number listed above is for non-emergency concerns.

### **Center for Students with Disabilities – (262) 472-4711**

The Center for Students with Disabilities mission is to be partners in creating an accessible learning community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the educational experience.

### **Office of Residence Life – (262) 472-5275**

The office of Residence Life has many staff members who can assist you in resolving issues related to campus housing. Additionally, each residence hall has live-in staff members who are available to discuss a variety of issues related to your living environment, including roommate conflicts and ways to get involved on campus. Contact your Resident Assistant (student staff) or Complex Director (professional staff) directly if you wish to meet with someone in your residence hall.

### **Whitewater Student Government-Sponsored Legal Services – (262) 472-1471**

The Whitewater Student Government contracts with lawyers who provide free legal advice for students. The lawyer is available to meet privately with students to discuss their concerns but will not provide representation. You may contact Career & Leadership Development at the number listed above or in person in University Center 146 to schedule an appointment.

## OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

### **24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line—(800) 365-1587**

This mental health crisis line is staffed by Walworth County Human services. If you are having a mental health emergency and need assistance you may contact this phone number. You may also wish to contact a residence hall staff member or University Police staff member to assist you in an emergency mental health situation.

### **Association for the Prevention of Family Violence – (262) 723-4653**

This 24-hour line provides free and confidential services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment and stalking as well as their affected family members.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – (800) 273-8255**

This 24-hour crisis line is free and available to anyone who is in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis. Your call will be routed to the nearest mental health crisis center to your location. You may contact this number for individual assistance or for a loved one.

### **Crisis Text Line**

Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via the medium people already use and trust: text. Here's how it works:

Text START to 741741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis.

A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly.

The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment

### **Whitewater City Police—(262) 473-0555**

The Whitewater City Police provide law enforcement and safety services for local community members. Any off-campus location is part of the Whitewater City Police's jurisdiction. Dial 911 if you feel your safety is threatened or to report an emergency that needs immediate response. The phone number listed above is for non-emergency concerns.

### **Jefferson County Human Services – (920) 674-3105**

Jefferson County Human Services can assist Jefferson County community members with issues related to mental health, substance abuse, family, parenting, hunger and access to state-funded programs. Part of the UW-Whitewater campus is located in Jefferson County. If you have questions about where you are located, you may contact the Dean of Students Office at (262) 472-1533.

### **Walworth County Human Services – (262) 741-3200**

Walworth Human Services can assist Walworth County community members with issues related to mental health, substance abuse, family, parenting, hunger and access to state-funded programs. Most of the UW-Whitewater campus is located in Walworth County.



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**WHITEWATER**

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