

## COMMENTARY

# More need to be educated about UW-Fox Valley option

When my son was deciding where to go to college, he eventually narrowed his choices to the University of Wisconsin and its many campuses throughout our fair state. He applied and was accepted to UW-Stevens Point and UW-Eau Claire, among others, but decided to start his college career at UW-Fox Valley.

Now the high school my son attended is known for its rigorous academics but it also has a reputation for being a bit elitist and exclusionary, so when my son would share with his peers his intention to pursue his education locally, the private school and Ivy League hopefuls around him implied that somehow, UW-Fox wasn't a "real school" — it's just where you end up when no one else will have you.

I can assure you, nothing could be further from the truth. The University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley is a university in every sense of the word. Let me count the ways.

More bang for the buck. UW-Fox has the lowest cost in the entire UW System, while at the same time offering the highest-quality education, highly qualified professors and classes small enough for you to be more than just a number — small enough to garner one-on-one time with your instructors, who actually know your name.

All credits are transferable to other UW schools and it's possible to obtain a bachelor of science degree in some dis-

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It's right here. No room and board to pay, and whether your offspring chooses an apartment or another couple years at home, both are less expensive than a dorm room and a meal card. Hey, I'll do his laundry for another couple years if it means less student loans to pay back.

In fact, the majority of UW-Fox students come from the Fox Cities and surrounding area. UW-Fox does all its recruiting right here in our own Happy Valley.

Add to this Accelerated Learning Programs (five-week semesters as opposed to 15-week), evening classes geared toward adults interested in furthering their education or finally getting a degree, and the Alternative Careers in Teaching program, which offers those of

us with existing degrees the chance to get a teaching license in math or science and you have opportunities that apply to just about everyone.

So many things for the community to take part in and all of them are free or charge a nominal fee. The Barlow Planetarium has been a favorite of both my kids since they were very little. I introduced my son to the wonder that is Pink Floyd at one of its spectacular evening laser shows.

For those of you who aren't children of the '70s, they have legitimate science-type stuff, too. The Weis Earth Science Museum is a budding geologist's dream and, right this very moment, there's an absolutely astonishing exhibit at the Aaron Bohrod art gallery.

This, on top of the UW-Fox concert band, UW Scholars speaker series and the wonderful and consistently overlooked productions produced by Susan Rabideau in the UW-Fox theater. The theater will finally get its due when the last million dollars is raised and the new Communication Arts Center is completed, hopefully before the end of the decade.

The Arts Center will truly be an educational facility, with

classrooms and a state-of-the-art theatre that will benefit the whole of the Fox Valley and make the arts accessible to all, including all the local nonprofit arts groups that are so dear to my heart and have no affordable venues. It will be a place for the common folk, us

groundlings, if you will, to immerse ourselves in some of that culture.

To sum it all up, we have an unheralded, undervalued gem right in the heart of our fair cities. It is neither an "extension" nor a "center." It's the University of Wisconsin-Fox

Valley and I'm proud that my son attends.

Oh, by the way, my son still sees some of the Ivy League hopefuls he went to high school with. He runs into them in the halls of UW-Fox.

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