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UW-La Crosse: a profile

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse continues to position itself among the country's elite public universities. The university is the state's top-ranked public higher education institution by the *U.S. News & World Report* for Best Regional Universities in the Midwest. It has been ranked among the top Midwestern public institutions for more than two decades.

The student body of nearly 10,500 from 44 states and 25 countries is impressive. UWL's retention rate is an outstanding 84% and the current six-year graduation rate is 73%, well above the national average.

UWL offers 102 undergraduate academic programs in 30 disciplines, 30 graduate programs, and 2 doctoral programs. A 19:1 student-faculty ratio means small classes, with an average of 29 students. 78% of full-time faculty hold doctoral or terminal degrees. Students learn directly from professors, including the recipient of the 2021 Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award - a distinction given to just two instructors across the UW System.

The university is organized into three academic colleges and two schools: the College of Business Administration, College of Science and Health, College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities, the School of Visual and Performing Arts (housed within the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities), and the School of Education. Teacher education is a campus-wide commitment. Descriptions of the departments and programs within the colleges as well as general information, college curriculum requirements, and any requirements that apply to specific colleges can be found in the undergraduate (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/>) and graduate (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/>) catalogs or through UWL's Academics (<https://www.uwlax.edu/info/academics/>) page. Descriptions of pre-professional programs are included in the College of Science and Health. Wisconsin teacher licensure information is included in the School of Education section.

The university's intercollegiate athletic teams, the Eagles, compete in 21 sports, predominately in the NCAA Division III, and as of March 31, 2022, have earned 71 national titles, 37 since 2001. The university is proud of the Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex, a \$16.6 million athletic complex completed in 2009 and funded entirely by private donations. The site is home to the annual WIAA State High School Track & Field Championships and has hosted the NCAA III National Track & Field Championships numerous times – most recently for the 2018 NCAA III Men's and Women's Track & Field Championships.

The campus lies in a residential section of the city of La Crosse (population 52,680, metro 139,627). La Crosse is a major point of interest on the Great River Road that winds north and south through 10 states along the Mississippi River. The city is nestled on the east bank of the river below towering 500-foot bluffs separated by steep-walled ravines known as coulees. See more about the city and area at Explore La Crosse (<http://www.explorelacrosse.com/>).

UWL offers much to western Wisconsin by hosting cultural events, regional and national conferences, and prominent speakers. UWL works cooperatively with other area education and medical institutions to foster cutting-edge health care in the region, as well as a state-of-the-art health research and education facility.

The university's history dates back to 1909 when the La Crosse Normal School opened its doors as a teacher training school. It became a state teachers college in 1927, a state college in 1951, and a state university in 1964. The university became part of the University of Wisconsin System in 1971. Discover more at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (<https://www.uwlax.edu/#welcoming>).

Freedom of thought and expression

The mission of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is to provide “a challenging, dynamic, and diverse learning environment in which the entire university community is fully engaged in supporting student success.” In pursuit of this mission, UWL encourages and protects diverse perspectives, the free flow of ideas, and open discussion among students, faculty, staff, and other members of the campus community. Constructive engagement with differing perspectives in a climate of free inquiry is essential to the pursuit of knowledge. UWL is committed to providing all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn.

Encountering new, different or opposing perspectives can be challenging and uncomfortable; this is a necessary feature of the UWL educational experience. Thus, all members of the campus community are encouraged to engage with diverse viewpoints in a manner that affirms our community and furthers our mission, to be thoughtful when participating in the exchange of ideas, and to hold themselves accountable for the impact of their expression on others.

For more information and resources, please see the UWL Civil Discourse and Free Speech (<https://www.uwlax.edu/chancellor/civil-discourse-and-free-speech/>) web page, and the University of Wisconsin System Regent Policy Document 4-21, Commitment to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/commitment-to-academic-freedom-and-freedom-of-expression/>).

Civil rights

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunity regardless of race, sex, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital, parental status, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Pursuant to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin is prohibited. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability. Equal educational opportunity includes: admission, recruitment, extracurricular programs and activities, housing facilities, access to course offerings, counseling and testing, financial assistance, employment, health and insurance services, and athletics. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is unlawful and contrary to the fundamental standards of a university community. All grievances, questions or requests for information should be referred to the Office of Equity & Affirmative Action (<https://www.uwlax.edu/equity/>), 145 Graff Main Hall.

Accommodation of religious beliefs

It is the policy of the Board of Regents that students' sincerely held religious beliefs shall be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements. Pursuant to UWS 22 (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/22/), the claim of a religious conflict should be accepted at face value, and any student with a conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance must be given an alternative means of meeting the academic requirement. The student must notify the instructor within the first three weeks of class (within the first week of summer session and short courses) of the specific days/dates for which the student will request relief. Instructors may schedule a make-up examination or other academic requirement before or after the regularly scheduled examination or other academic requirement. Complaints may be filed with the Office of Equity & Affirmative Action (<https://www.uwlax.edu/equity/>).

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Ongoing efforts are being made to ensure that facilities and programs are accessible to all students with disabilities. All students must identify and present documentation (no older than three years) of their disabilities to the ACCESS Center in order to receive ongoing accommodations.

Direct student services to those with physical, sensory or learning disabilities/ADHD include, but are not limited to: classroom note takers, tutors, class preregistration, taped textbooks, academic advising, individual/group counseling and equipment loan. Specific requests for assistance or information should be directed to the coordinator of the ACCESS Center (<http://www.uwlax.edu/access-center/>), 124 Wimberly Hall.