



# A. S. Connection

Connecting Academic Staff to Useful Information

Spring 2021

## WHAT'S OPEN ON CAMPUS

UWM may feel like a ghost town these days. A handful of its community is on campus at any given time as others work remotely. After many months of working remotely, it's difficult to remember what life was like for UWM staff before the pandemic. Beginning in the fall, campus slowly started to open but with so much of campus still being unavailable, it's hard to know what is available to UWM's community to enjoy! Here are a few perks you can enjoy as UWM Staff members as we cycle into the spring semester.



Golda Meir Library: Just because you may be stuck at home does not mean that you can't spend your free time escaping into a good book or movie! The Golda Meir library stacks may not be open for the public to browse, but the catalog is available online and you can submit requests that way. Once items are available you will receive an email that they can be picked up at the Main Circulation Desk. This also includes the catalog's vast collection of nonfiction books, research materials, and music. Distinctive collection departments such as the American Geographical Society Library, Archives, and Special Collections are also open on an appointment basis.

For more information, take a look at the UWM Libraries website: <https://uwm.edu/libraries/>

Klotsche Center: Staying in shape during the pandemic has been a challenge for us all, especially with the initial shutdown of all public gyms and other athletic facilities. Luckily, the UWM Klotsche Center has reopened and is available to UWM staff, students and faculty. The Klotsche Center is doing its best to be safe for its visitors by practicing social distancing between machines and requiring masks. Some of its perks have been temporarily removed, such as the use of daily lockers as opposed to on a subscription basis, but there are still options for those who wish to attend and enjoy a nice workout.

You can explore more about the Klotsche Center's new operating procedure here: <https://uwm.edu/urec/>

UWM Union Cinema: A staple of the Milwaukee community for its programming of classic and new films from all over the world, the UWM Union Cinema is unfortunately not open to the public at this time. However, it has

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## UNIVERSAL DESIGN TIP

New Accessibility Tool for Canvas - UDOIT

UWM introduced a new Canvas accessibility checker in October this year. UDOIT is a new tool in Canvas that identifies errors and provides helpful suggestions for improving the accessibility of Canvas courses. UDOIT scans the Canvas course content including announcements, assignments, syllabi, files and modules. It then provides a report with the 21 issues it checks such as alternative text for images, headings issues, video captions, and color contrast and offers suggestions on how to fix them. There is also a UFIXIT button that will sometimes appear in the report that you can use to automatically fix some accessibility issues.

For more information on how to use this function in Canvas see the introduction page at <https://kb.wisconsin.edu/dle/page.php?id=106264>.





### Continue reading "What's Open On Campus"

begun a new virtual screening calendar, which promises just as much unique and entertaining world cinema as it did before—with titles that can't be found on other streaming platforms. Expand your mind with some of the international features and documentaries they are screening, enjoy the work of underground artists local to the Milwaukee area, or enjoy a new restoration of a classic film.

Film schedule and how to register to view the screenings available here: <https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/events/category/union-cinema>

**Campus Cuisine:** The restaurants around campus are staples to the UWM community, but nothing hits home like one of the UWM Union's delicious wraps and quesadillas, or a piping hot cup of coffee from the several Grind locations on campus. As of the fall semester, a handful of the UWM Grind locations as well as some of the restaurants opened with limited menu options. By combining some of these menu items into the UWM Flour Shop and Union Station, UWM food services has ensured the UWM community can get their fix on some of these classic menu items in a safe distanced manner. Designated eating areas with tables that are spaced out for safety reasons give diners a comfortable experience and a phone app known as GET is available for ordering. Diners can even order their food a few hours ahead of time and set a pick up time so that they don't have to worry about spending their lunch hour waiting for food to be prepared!

More information is available here: <https://uwm.edu/dining/locations/student-union/>

**Events:** Campus can seem a little lonely these days. Part of the UWM appeal is taking a stroll through the student union before or after work, or during breaks, and see the place buzzing with cultural dances, fairs, poster sales, baked good sales, and flyers announcing the many different events that the university has to offer. One might step into the union and think these events are done for with the social distancing restrictions on campus. Truthfully, though, many have just moved to a virtual environment. With seminars, lectures, planetarium programs, concerts, and movie watch parties, UWM has done its best to keep its community alive amid the pandemic. Plus, for those who do prefer an in-person experience, there are a small number of events you can attend, such as the Migrating Gestures Exhibit in the UWM Union.

For more information on virtual and in-person events happening on campus, check out the UWM events page here: <https://uwm.edu/events/>

In all, UWM is by no means closed. You can be a part of its historic community and show your support for the university in many ways. This is our university and our community. It is up to us to keep it thriving even in these difficult months and up to us to dictate its future as we embrace a new decade.

## A Look Back AT UW-MILWAUKEE

### 25 YEARS AGO - 1996

Despite being a presidential election year, there was relatively little political news aside from several interviews and campus visits by Congressman Tom Barrett. The biggest news of the fall was the renovation of the Union, complete with the addition of the Terrace and, of particular interest to the student paper, a Taco Bell and Burger King. Students complained about tuition increases to \$1550 dollars per semester for a full course load.

### 50 YEARS AGO - 1973

Student and faculty strikes from the previous summer over the Vietnam War were still being litigated by discipline boards when new protests arose over the invasion of Laos. Famous guests on campus that year included Muhammad Ali and George McGovern. The governor's proposal to merge the UW and Wisconsin State University systems was roundly rejected by the regents of both systems. The Spanish Speaking Outreach Institute (now the Roberto Hernandez Center) continued its first academic year while the Center for Afro-American Studies became a degree-granting department.



## Reflections **WITH BETTY WARRAS**

### **In which unit does she work?**

Betty has worked for over 15 years in the Graduate Programs Office of the College of Engineering & Applied Sciences. In fact, someone introduced her as "Betty is the Graduate Programs Office" since for a long time she was the only person who managed the operations of this office.

### **How did she start at UWM?**

She is one of the few who "never left" UWM. Betty graduated from UWM with a degree in elementary education in the mid 70s, when there was glut of teachers. After she was unemployed for 3 months, she started at the Cashier's Office where she stayed for 3 years. She moved to the Personnel office, to Secretary of the University (when it was in Mitchell Hall), to Human Resources (when it was in Sandburg). After ten years in HR, she needed a change and opted for a "voluntary demotion" as a technical typist (even though she had no "technical" skills) to the downtown Civic Center and eventually into the Plankinton location. That job morphed into assisting the Director, Marilyn Miller, with the administration of the GEST program---a gateway for high school students to pursue engineering, hopefully, at UWM. Then she worked with three different Chairs of Civil Engineering, with the third being Professor Al Ghorbanpoor, who became Associate Dean and offered her the advisor position in the Graduate Programs Office where she has been ever since.

### **What does she enjoy about her job?**

She loves the problem solving, especially helping new students with academic, immigration, or personal issues. If she can't help, she refers students to the appropriate office or personnel who can assist. Students need help to get started and international students even more so, since they have additional concerns. With some of the students, she has kept in touch over the years when they land good jobs or start families.

### **What project has she been most proud of?**

She initiated and maintains an ongoing report with the thesis titles of all graduate students. This report comes in handy several times a semester for a variety of uses, including tenure reviews of faculty.

### **What is most challenging about her job?**

She has to explain to faculty, staff, and students that certain processes are time consuming but required and require multiple steps to completion. A good example is the Request for Exception: why it is required, where is the form, how it is submitted, and how to get it processed.

### **What advice does Betty have for academic staff?**

"Don't say 'It's not my job.'" Our goal as university employees should be to help whenever possible. We can all learn something new. "Even if you don't find the information that the person needed, you should follow up with any leads you found. People appreciate that you tried to help them."





## GIVING BACK DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for organizations that rely on volunteers to implement their programs. Many have reduced or eliminated volunteer programs for the duration of the pandemic. Others have shifted to virtual volunteer projects.

Despite the limitations, there are many ways to get involved!

UWM's Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership and Research (CCBLR) continues to organize service opportunities. They staff the Hope House (every Tuesday and Thursday) and The Gathering (Friday mornings). These sites have been vetted to ensure CDC guidelines are followed for in-person service. To sign up just use the links above to learn how to secure your spot.

There is a particular need for volunteers for the Virtual Tutoring Project. CCBLR had 1,000+ kids in grades K-12 sign up, and they could only match about 400 of them with a tutor. Here is the link with more information.

At the UWM Food Pantry, volunteers are needed to help stock and pack bags for the bagged grocery giveaway - and to hand out bagged groceries on Thursdays when the pantry is open.

All training will be provided on the day you volunteer! All shifts take place in the 8th Note Coffeehouse on the ground floor of the UWM Union (across from the information desk). Email [foodassist@uwm.edu](mailto:foodassist@uwm.edu) if you are interested in volunteering. The need and demand are great.

Is sustainability one of your passions? Sign up for the new Panther Pails program! The pandemic has drastically reduced the food scraps on campus that support UWM's composting operations. You can help by bringing your food scraps from home. In addition to reducing waste and methane emissions from local landfills, composting can improve soil health. Your food scraps will enrich UWM's gardens, which in turn provide produce for restaurant operations and the food pantry.

Stay tuned for additional volunteer opportunities in the spring to support campus gardens and green infrastructure! All programs will be set up with safety protocols.

In addition to all these opportunities, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County maintains a list of volunteer opportunities in the community, both virtual and in-person.

If you aren't currently in a position to donate your time, there are still ways to help meet the need.

If you would like to support the Food Pantry, there are several ways to contribute:

- Donate through the UWM Foundation: Head to [UWM.edu/give](https://uwm.edu/give), click "Give Now", select "View All Giving Opportunities" and search "Food." This ensures your donation goes directly to us!
- Donate physical goods in a bin on campus (new bins will be placed outside of 8th note soon!)
- Donate via the Amazon wishlist [here](#)!

CCBLR is also organizing a book drive to help out the Literacy Link Program, which allows people who are incarcerated to read to their kids. A recording is made of the parent reading a book to their child, and the child is sent a hard copy of the book and the recording. This Program is at the House of Corrections justice system involved families.

If staff want to donate a book, they can purchase any of the books listed below through Amazon or other booksellers and have them sent directly to the CCBLR office (UWM CCBLR, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd Room G28, Milwaukee 53211) or they can drop the book off at the CCBLR office Monday-Thursday between 10:00am-3:00pm. The books will be delivered in mid-February.

- *We're All Wonders* by RJ Palacio
- *First Day Critter Jitters* by Liz Climo
- *The Catman of Aleppo* by Karim Shamsi-Basha
- *Our Little Kitchen* by Jillian Tamaki
- *Counting Kindness: Ten Ways to Welcome Refugee Children* by Hollis Kurman
- *Going Down Home with Daddy* by Kelly Starling Lyons
- *The New Neighbors* by Sarah McIntyre
- *Josie's Lost Tooth* by Jennifer Mann
- *Small in the City* by Sydney Smith
- *The Breaking News* by Sarah Reul
- *I am Enough* by Grace Byers







## INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY IN TEAMS AND COLLABORATE ULTRA

There are several ways to make Teams meetings and Collaborate Ultra classes more inclusive to all participants. Below are some tips and best practices for participants:

- Turn on your video when speaking.
- Mute your audio when not speaking to avoid unnecessary background noise.
- Avoid multiple people taking the floor at once and signal speaker changes clearly.
- Identify yourself before commenting to make discussions easier to follow without sound cues.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- If there is a sign language interpreter, make sure to pin their screen on to the shared screen.
- Record and share meetings so all participants are able to review what was being discussed and to go over specific segments that they might have missed the first time.



For more information on accessibility in Teams, consult [their information page](#). For more information on the accessibility of Collaborate Ultra, consult [their information page](#).

## LINKEDIN LEARNING: A FREE CAREER-BUILDING RESOURCE FOR UWM EMPLOYEES



Did you know that you have access to thousands of learning experiences on a wide range of topics, all for free? UWM offers LinkedIn Learning for all faculty, staff, and students. Are you interested in learning how to make pivot tables in Excel or use SharePoint more effectively? Have you always wanted to learn some basic coding or web design? Or maybe you need to improve your public speaking or want to take a leadership course to advance your career. If so, you're in luck! There are over 15,000 online, self-paced courses to help you learn about a wide range of topics, broken down broadly into categories of "Business," "Creative," and "Technology". When you complete a course, you can receive a badge to add to your LinkedIn profile as documentation that you've learned this new skill.

To get started, go to [UWM's LinkedIn learning page](#) and click the LogIn button to log in with your Panther ID and password.

If you have a LinkedIn account, you can link it to your UWM account. If not, or if you don't want to link it, you can still access the courses but won't be able to display badges on a LinkedIn profile.

Once you're logged in, type in keywords of something you're interested in or browse the many different topics and courses. Enroll and complete them at your own pace. You can also save courses that look interesting and come back to them later, or complete an entire learning path on a topic to gain more in-depth knowledge.

Take advantage of this free, easy way to give your career (and your indefinite portfolio) a boost!

The A.S. Connection team consists of the following members of the Academic Staff Communications Subcommittee:

Shiraz Bhatena, Jean Creighton (Co-Chair), Melody Harries, Gina Lukaszewicz, Nicole Palasz, Mingyu Sun, Beth Traylor (Co-Chair) and Derek Webb.

If you would like to join this committee, please contact Jean Creighton at [jcreight@uwm.edu](mailto:jcreight@uwm.edu).