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4+2=college diploma

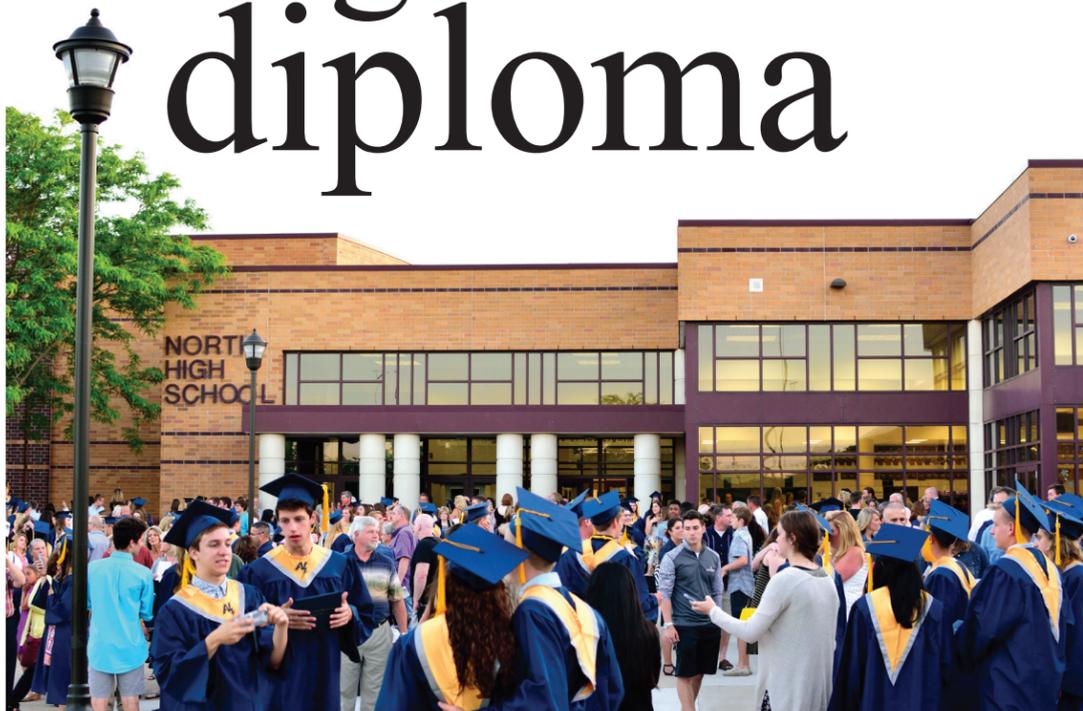
Students in “four year” colleges more likely to need six, statistics show

By Mariya Todorova

Planning on attending a four-year college after high school? Well, it turns out that so called “four year” colleges might be more accurately named “six year colleges.”

Statistics show it is far more likely for a student to graduate from a “four year” college in six years, rather than the perceived norm of four. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education’s collegecompletion.chronicle project, which seeks to help students navigate the complex subject of which colleges do the best job of graduating their students, the U.S. average for students completing their university of choice in four years is 33 percent. Graduation rates increase to nearly 58 percent for those students who take six years to earn a diploma.

There are a lot of factors and directions that contribute to whether or not someone graduates from college, and how long it takes them: whether the college they choose is the right fit; the type of college it is, whether their journey began at a technical school or a traditional “four-year” university; the type of



Appleton North’s class of 2016 congregates outside of North High School after the graduation ceremony. Photo courtesy of LJ Haag.

By the numbers
Check out the graduation rates of Wisconsin public and private schools: <http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com>

degree one might be aiming for. But one of the most important factors to keep in mind when exploring which colleges to attend, says one local expert, is to look at the graduation rates and retention rates of the schools you are considering.

Dr. Dale Hanson, director of Instructional Technology/Career and Technical Education for the Appleton Area School District, has a keen interest in graduation and retention rates --

he wrote his doctoral thesis on the topic.

“I would consider the following,” he said. “Do I really know what I want to major in at the selected school? If so – will this school be able to support exactly what I am looking for in an education? What is the school’s graduation rate? These may vary by institution. I would also consider that it is hard to graduate if a student does not enter with a solid plan and goals.”

Statistics from collegecompletion.chronicle show that in Wisconsin, 29 percent of students graduate within four years -- four percentage points lower than the national average -- while 59 percent graduate with-

in six years -- slightly higher than the national average.

But the statistics vary greatly depending on schools. Public schools in the University of Wisconsin system run the full range -- from UW-Madison’s top-of-the-list rate of 55 percent in four years, and 83 percent in six years, to UW-Parkside’s 9 percent in four years and 31 percent in six years. Nearby UW-Green Bay shows graduation rates of 20 percent in four years, and 46 percent in six years. UW-Whitewater, another choice popular among North students, shows 28 percent graduating within four years and 55 percent graduating within six. UW-

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Important college lessons from North grads

By Erik Bakken

Each month, the Noctiluca has published advice for the college process tailored to each class at North. While academic advice is useful, some of the best advice can come in the form of testimonials from students who have graduated from Appleton North and have gone through a similar process.

Throughout this issue, the Noctiluca investigative enterprise staff will highlight North graduates and their decisions that

went into choosing a college, whether their choices led to a private university, public university or a technical college. These features on North graduates, compiled over the school year by investigative team members, aim to provide information for all classes for what to expect when going to college and what to keep in mind when applying.

Every student who graduates from North leaves on a unique path and it’s important to realize the opportunities that are available after graduation from high school. Seniors this year will join the ranks of the students featured in these pages, embarking on their own exciting journeys in a myriad of studies, professions and regions.

Also in this issue, the investigative team highlights pertinent issues such as poverty at North and events during the end of the 2016-17 school year.



Erik Bakken is the Investigative Editor for the Noctiluca.

Difficult decisions: Changing college plans in senior year

By Ally Price

With thousands of colleges in the United States alone, choosing one to attend can seem like a daunting task. While the decision process may be easy for some, for others like Appleton North graduate Lauren Farina, it isn’t as simple as it seems.

Farina, currently a freshman at the University of Minnesota, hadn’t always planned to become a Gopher.

“I was accepted to Northwestern University in the late fall,” said Farina about her application process. “At that point, I thought that it was the school for me and that I had my future plans in order. I ba-



Appleton North graduate Lauren Farina (middle) and friends pose by the popular Minnesota Gopher statue on the Twin Cities campus. Photo courtesy of Lauren Farina.

sically stopped thinking about college for a few months.”

While Farina had been fair-

ly certain of her plans after getting her acceptance from Northwestern, she started to

reconsider her plans later that year.

“I began to reevaluate what I wanted to study and what I wanted to gain from my years in college,” said Farina. “When I thought of Northwestern, all I could think of was a class of academically driven and confident individuals who had definite plans for their futures. Whenever I tried to think about the fall, all I felt was a feeling of panic and uncertainty. It was at this point that I began thinking of my other options.”

Because she had applied to multiple schools in the fall, Farina had been accepted

See Price, page 2

Take a look at the members of the investigative team, pictured on page 7.

Saving money: Transferring from a regional university

By Sophie Mariano

Brandon Books, a 2016 Appleton North graduate, is getting ready to finish his first year at UW-Fox Valley this spring. He chose the path that many other North grads pursue, attending the Fox for two years before transferring to another school to finish up their college career. However, Books has recently decided to take a fairly different approach, as he is hoping to attend UW-Madison next fall, after just one year at UW-Fox.

When asked why he chose the Fox, Books replied with one word: "Money." Books is working full time, about 25 hours per week, and with that and the money he is saving by attending UW-Fox, he should be able to afford tuition at Madison and even have some money left over for housing. He shared that, "Looking at finances, there was no reason to look anywhere else." It's true that many high school graduates struggle with the financial burden of college, and attending a two-year university to get general education credits is a way to save money. In fact, "There are banners hanging



Brandon Books, a former Appleton North student, stands outside the fieldhouse at his college, UW-Fox Valley. Photo courtesy of Brandon Books.

around that say 'You save so much money here!' It's their claim to fame."

While the transition to college is tough for some, Books seems to be comfortable. The class sizes at UW-Fox are similar to what they were at Appleton North, and while, "It's definitely different in terms of schedule but my classes didn't feel all that different." In high school, everyone is on the

same schedule, but now he is on a different schedule than his high school friends, and even his fellow college peers. When you add his full time job in that equation, scheduling is a difficult concept. Another notable difference Books experienced was with one of his professors. "I had a hard time talking with one of my teachers, which was a lot different." He talked about how the teachers at North are

very accessible and willing to give their time, and that is not always the case in college.

When asked about his plans for the future Books admitted he isn't thinking too far ahead. There are roadblocks, and plans change. Books is used to changing his plans. Last spring, he was fully expecting to attend Fox Valley Technical College. However, at orientation, he decided it wasn't a good fit, and he switched to UW-Fox Valley before the start of the fall semester. Something about the atmosphere made him change his mind.

There isn't as much of an emphasis on general education classes, and, "At the Tech, you go, and then you go to work. At UW-Fox, you go, and then you move onto another school."

Books wanted to have a school with a larger focus on continuing education. "The Fox isn't fully a university atmosphere, but it's closer than the tech."

Another change of plans for Books has been deciding to transfer a year early. He is currently in the process of applying to UW-Madison and hopes to attend there next fall. Books is hopeful and is eager to live

on a college campus, saying, "It's hard to watch friends go off and live in the dorms, so much of the college experience seems to be living with other people."

Books hopes to continue his education at Madison and receive a degree in computer science. He may choose to go to graduate school or receive another degree in mechanical engineering, but for now he is still thinking fairly short term. His first goal is to get accepted to Madison.

When told about the statistic of North grads who do not finish college, Books seemed surprised at first, but then seemed to understand how it could be possible. He believes that money is a huge issue for many people, and it could be one of the factors in the statistic. He did know of one student who failed out of college due to drugs, which could be another serious and separate issue in the Fox Valley. In general, Books is happy with the path he chose, saying, "At the moment I don't know if I would do it again, but I think I'll be happy about it next year when I see how much I've saved."

Todorova, Diploma, from page 1

Oshkosh has an 18 percent graduation rate within four years and 54 percent within six.

Generally, private schools boast higher four and six year graduation rates than their public counterparts. The national average for private schools is 53 percent of students graduating in four years, and 65 percent graduating in six. In Wisconsin, 48 percent of students at private schools will graduate in four years, and 64 percent will graduate in six. At Lawrence University, which tops collegecompletion.chronicle.com's list for private schools in Wisconsin, graduation rates are significantly higher than the national average, with 69 percent graduating within four years and 82 percent graduating within six.

Dr. Hanson says not to let the numbers scare you, but to do your homework so you can make an educated decision about which colleges do the best job of graduating their students. "I would say that it is excellent to be able to enroll in a college for further education. However, getting into college and graduating from college are very differ-

ent, and many factors will play into whether or not you graduate."

The percentage of North students enrolling in college is only one measure of college success. According to Dr. Hanson, "For the 2016 graduating class – 71 percent of students went on to either a two or four year college. The average rate for the past three years was 76 percent of students who went on to either a two or four year college."

The percentage of North students who then go on to graduate from their college of choice is predictably lower than the number enrolled. Dr. Hanson says graduates from the Appleton schools tend to follow the state averages of 29 percent who graduate in four years and 59 percent in six years: "The three Appleton high schools are within a very few points of the state average," he said.

Overall, Dr. Hanson has a message for those who are planning on attending a university, whether for four years, six years, or somewhere in between: "It is a given that you will be challenged educationally and personally while in college so it is very important to keep your eye on what exactly you are trying to accomplish in getting your degree, then to focus on the goal of graduating."

Price, Farina, from page 1

to multiple schools besides Northwestern, such as the University of Minnesota. When looking at her options, she considered factors such as cost and academics, but the most important thing to her was the campus atmosphere. She wanted to feel like she belonged at whatever school she ended up attending.

"Minnesota and Northwestern are fairly equivalent in academics but Northwestern is vastly more expensive. I could justify the cost if it was a school that I desperately wanted to attend, but it wasn't," said Farina. "Ultimately the decision came down to where I felt comfortable. My first impression of Northwestern was one of awe and apprehension, a sort of 'elite' school. On the other hand, my first impression of Minnesota was more relaxed and comfortable; it was a campus I could actually see myself being a part of."

After thinking about what she truly wanted to gain from her college experience, Farina decided in the spring that she



Farina (second from right) attends a University of Minnesota football game with friends. Photo courtesy of Lauren Farina.

would attend the University of Minnesota. She declined her acceptance from Northwestern and enrolled at Minnesota.

"As soon as I changed my enrollment, that panic and uncertainty that I had been feeling earlier dissipated," said Farina. To her, the name or reputation of the college wasn't as important as her sense of belonging and the atmosphere. "I'm sure that I would have settled into Northwestern and would have been just as happy there, but part of me was convinced that I belonged at Minnesota. I can honestly say that I have not regretted my decision at all."

At the University of Minnesota, Farina is currently

in the College of Biological Sciences pursuing dual degrees in Biology and Genetics. While she is working hard at her education, she still finds time to do things that she enjoys, part of what attracted her to the campus in the first place.

"The hardest part for me was learning to manage my time all on my own," said Farina about her personal experience at college. "It's important to set up a schedule for homework and studying and be careful not to fall behind or skip classes. Also, balance schoolwork with fun. Don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and try new things."

New experiences: Attending a public university

By Ally Price and
Sophie Mariano

College is expensive. One major difference between high school and college is that in college, students pay for their classes. With classes being so expensive, many high school graduates look to public schools for an affordable option.

Talia McLeish and Marit Bakken are two North graduates who chose public universities to continue their education. McLeish is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota and Bakken is graduating from Iowa State this spring. Both students considered many factors when choosing a college, but ended up going to public

schools for a college diploma at a reasonable cost.

“The financial impact of going to college also is a huge component, and sometimes it’s hard to justify spending so much money for a diploma,” said Bakken.

Part of what makes both students so successful in their respective colleges is the planning they put in beforehand.

“I did a lot of planning for college my senior year of high school. I did research on what scholarships were offered, what clubs I wanted to join, what housing was offered, what the Honors program had to offer,” said Bakken, when sharing her experience preparing for col-

lege.

While a lot of the planning occurs after choosing a school, there are certain things that students can do throughout high school to help themselves succeed at college.

“I made all the packing lists, read all the ‘bad roommate’ prep books, and looked over all of my future course descriptions, but the planning that ended up helping me the most was taking as many AP tests as possible and saving as much money as possible,” said McLeish. “Coming in with more college credits allowed me to register for classes earlier which not only allowed me to get into fast-filling courses but I’m able to graduate a semester early because of it.”

When making these tough decisions, both students had to learn to be flexible. Whether choosing between two schools or not getting into their top choice, they realized that plans are not concrete.

“I’m horribly ashamed to admit that I almost became a Badger,” said McLeish. “I was going crazy choosing between UMN and UW, knowing I wanted a big school but wasn’t sure if I wanted big city or big college town. Ultimately I de-



Talia McLeish at a University of Minnesota football game with her mom. Photo courtesy of Talia McLeish

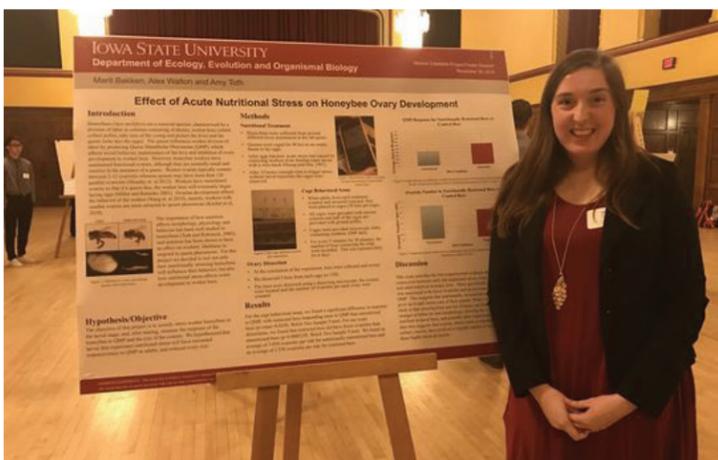
ecided to go to Minnesota to do something different than my parents had done and to get out of my comfort zone.”

“I was not originally planning on going to Iowa State, but after I didn’t get into my first choice school I realized that I had to change my life plan,” said Bakken. “Although it definitely hurt not to get into the school of my supposed dreams, it actually was a blessing in disguise.”

Despite initial doubts, both students ended up happy with their decisions. “I could NOT be happier! The Twin Cities are incredible, I love the campus culture here, and I haven’t regretted my decision once,” said McLeish.

Because the transition from an average-sized high school to a large public university offers many new opportunities, students must learn to plan in order to not get lost in the excitement.

“College is the most accurate example of ‘work hard, play hard’ I have ever experienced. Everyone says it’s the most fun years of your life, and it is, but it is also incredibly difficult to find the balance,” said McLeish. “Freshman year almost got the best of me in that regard, but I know that my future career is the number one priority, so I was able to turn it around. If I was able to bounce back, then anyone can!”



Marit Bakken presents her honors capstone project about nutritional stress on honeybee ovary development. Photo by Emily Hammer

Far from home: Attending an East Coast private university

By Gabi Lacayo

To some, being away from home after high school sounds terrifying. Others, however, expand the distance in pursuit of their education and personal growth for the next four or more years of their life.

Christian Bakken, a 2012 Appleton North graduate, traveled east to Washington D.C. in order to attend Georgetown University, a private university. Bakken graduated college in 2016 with a major in International Political Economy from the School of Foreign

Service, and now has a career as a tax economist.

Appleton North 2015 alumna Isabel Edmonds made the decision to attend a private university across the country, heading to Sarah Lawrence College, a liberal arts school in New York. She is currently a sophomore interested in Art History.

One question high school students often have for the future is: how will I adapt socially and survive the heavy college workload? But the questions are only made more prominent with the unfamil-

ilarity of a new college state. Bakken and Edmonds emphasized that getting involved in college right away made it easier for them to adapt being so far away from home. Not only was this a healthy transition socially, but also led them to have one less thing to worry about with their academic studies since they knew other peers outside of class.

Like most students, Bakken saw the difference between high school and college right away.

“It was difficult to get used to having most of the grade based off of subjectively-graded papers and finals, competing against other students who were mostly the top of their high school classes, without the chance to make up for a bad test/paper with extra credit or small assignments,” he explained.

He started planning right away, since before his senior year of high school. “Laying out the requirements early made it much simpler for me to register for classes for my first year,” Bakken said.

By taking required classes early, he had more free time



Christian Bakken in Cappadocia while studying abroad with Georgetown University. Photo courtesy of Christian Bakken

his sophomore and junior year to take internships, which led to the job he has now in the D.C. area.

Georgetown was able to provide him unique opportunities not found in Appleton. This is one reason why Edmonds chose to attend Sarah Lawrence as well, saying, “I liked the programs it offered and its proximity to the city.”

Edmonds said Appleton could not provide as good of a chance at a job in a museum after studying Art History as New York could provide, especially having the MoMa nearby.

Being prepared for life so distant from home definitely made the journey in a new environment a much better experience, both Bakken and Edmonds said. However, one needs to be mentally willing and truly eager to be able to take on an experience like this. Although the change seems like an intimidating move, it can definitely be the right one with preparation and enthusiasm for something fresh for those who seek it, they said.

“I was excited at the prospect of a change of setting,” Edmonds said.



Isabel Edmonds at a cross country meet with Sarah Lawrence College. Photo courtesy of Isabel Edmonds



Lauren Farina

Graduated: 2016
Attends: University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
Pursuing degrees in Biology and Genetics. Plans on attending either Nursing School or Medical School.

”

“Balance school-work with fun, don’t be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and try new things.”



Talia Meleish

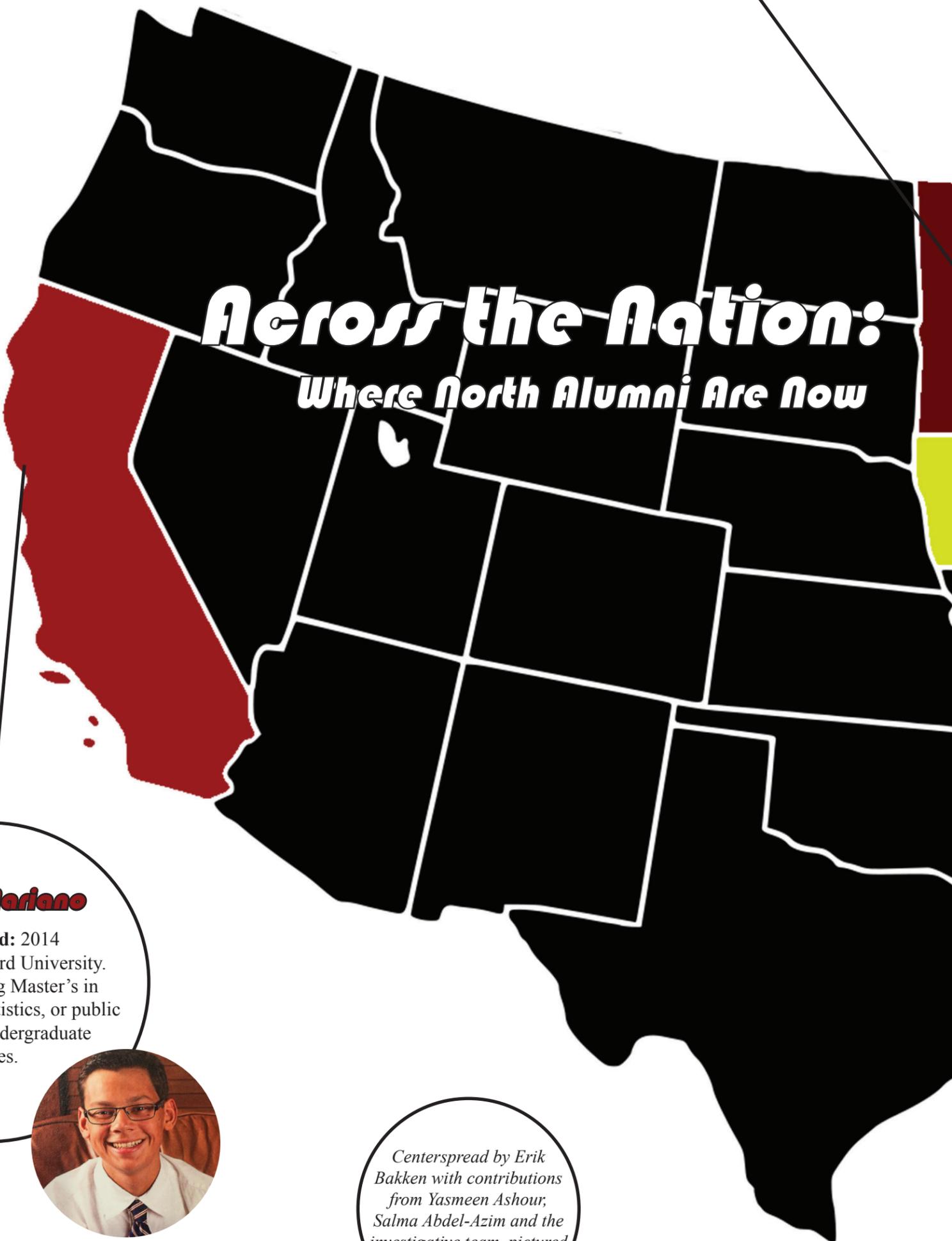
Graduated: 2015
Attends: University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
Plans to graduate early with a major in Health Services Management, minors in Public Health and Gender, Women, and Sexuality studies.

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“Coming in with more college credits allowed me to register for classes earlier [and] graduate a semester early because of it.”

North graduates attend colleges of all types across the nation. These eight alumni are highlighted to represent the diversity of paths possible after graduation.

Across the Nation: Where North Alumni Are Now



”

“I transitioned pretty quickly to college I think. I was definitely nervous when I first arrived, but after the first day I’d say I was pretty settled.”

David Mariano

Graduated: 2014
Attends: Stanford University.
Plans on getting Master’s in epidemiology, statistics, or public health after undergraduate studies.



Centerspread by Erik Bakken with contributions from Yasmeen Ashour, Salma Abdel-Azim and the investigative team, pictured on page 7

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“At the Tech, you go, and then you go to work. At UW-Fox, you go, and then you move onto another school.”



Brandon Books

Graduated: 2016
Attends: University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley.
Plans to transfer to University of Wisconsin-Madison after two years in the Fox Valley.

”

“My major was one of the reasons I chose ISU; Animal Ecology offers a unique opportunity to prepare for vet school while focusing on wildlife... which was perfect for what I wanted to do.”

Marit Bakken

Graduated: 2013
Attended: Iowa State University.
Graduated with Bachelor’s in Animal Ecology. Will attend University of Wisconsin-Madison for Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and Master’s of Public Health.



Olivia Lacayo

Graduated: 2016
Attends: University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley.
Plans to transfer to University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh for a Bachelor’s in Social Work.



”

“I, once again, was a freshman who didn’t know what was expected. Do I wait outside the room until my professor showed up? Do I raise my hand when I have a question?”

”

“I liked the programs [Sarah Lawrence] offered, and its proximity to the city.”



Lacey Edmonds

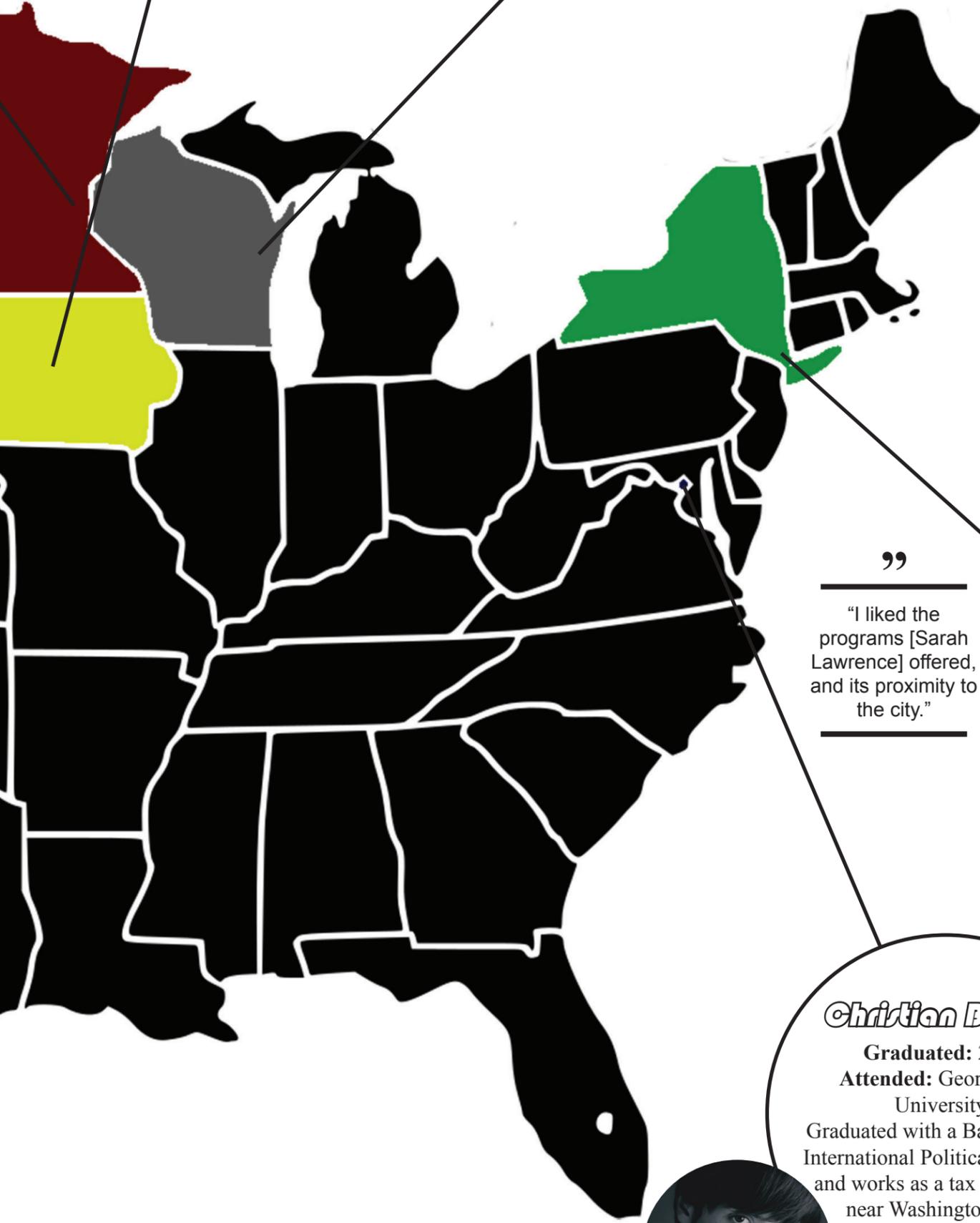
Graduated: 2015
Attends: Sarah Lawrence College.
Plans to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in Art History.

”

“I made a group of friends early on and had... little issue with adapting socially freshman year despite the very different atmosphere and distance from home.”

Christian Bakken

Graduated: 2012
Attended: Georgetown University.
Graduated with a Bachelor’s in International Political Economy and works as a tax economist near Washington D.C.



Construction on JJ to affect student traffic

By Erik Bakken

Construction affecting North students has begun on a new set of intersections between County Highway JJ and Appleton North parking lot entrances. This construction aims to improve traffic flow on the north side of campus, but will decrease access to North's parking lots during construction.

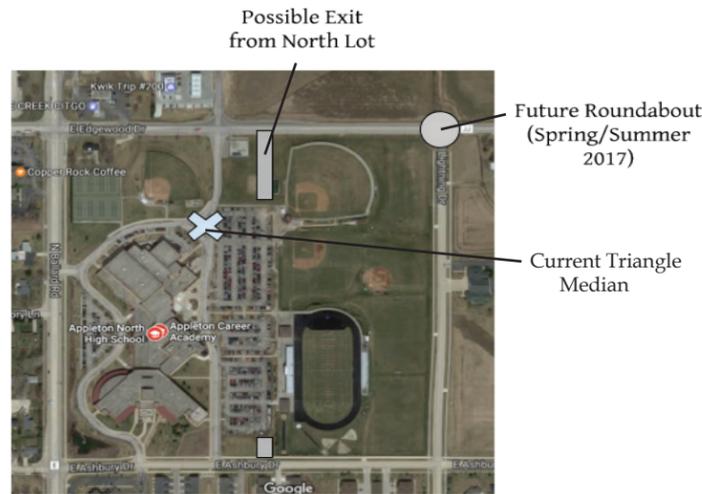
According to Mr. Huggins, the need for new intersections on Highway JJ was assessed by a corridor study that was conducted to predict the traffic issues that could arise with new development along Highway JJ. With traffic coming from North, Kwik Trip and growing neighborhoods behind the high school, it was determined that construction was required to minimize danger for students entering and exiting school grounds.

"There are multiple problems with the current North exit [onto JJ]," said Mr. Huggins. "Because the multiple lane intersection has no crosswalks or stoplight, there is reason for concern about safety." Once Kwik Trip was built, concerns about the North-JJ exit were amplified as the intersection experienced traffic of both drivers and pedestrians.

In order to improve the



A road sign warns drivers on Highway JJ of approaching construction near North. Photo by Olivia Molter



Proposed changes to North roadways and parking lots. Construction is set to start in spring 2017. Graphic by Alex Wormley and Erik Bakken

traffic flow at the Kwik Trip intersection, several changes have been proposed.

First, a new roundabout is planned for the intersection of Highway JJ and Lightning Drive, the street behind North's athletic fields. This roundabout is particularly important for traffic flow, as students might only be able to turn right

out of the North-JJ exit and must complete a loop of the roundabout instead of turning directly left over several lanes of traffic.

Additionally, the direct entrance to Kwik Trip will likely be closed off, removing direct vehicular traffic between North and the gas station. These steps are intended to simplify the

North-JJ exit and decrease potential danger for traffic on JJ and coming from North.

Also, a possible new exit for the north lot between the North-JJ and Lightning-JJ intersections is being considered to decrease the line-up of cars at the end of the school day at the North-JJ exit. Additional bike lanes and sidewalks may also be employed to streamline traffic.

While the majority of the construction is planned for the summer, the tail end of the 2016-17 school year will likely be affected.

"By planning the construction for spring of this school year and into the summer we can avoid affecting the end of one school year and the beginning of another," said Mr. Huggins.

Spring was chosen as the most strategic time for beginning construction because of concerns about new drivers who got licenses over the summer being required to take a different route to and from the parking lots in the morning. Specific plans for rerouting students during construction are listed on the right, and students should be prepared to make changes to their before and after school routes if necessary.

CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

April 24 to May 15: Outagamie County will construct the stormwater pond. Possible daytime restrictions may occur on County JJ.

Early May 8 to June 8: Outagamie County will close the intersection of County JJ & Lightning Drive to reconstruct the intersection and approaches. County JJ through traffic will be detoured via Ballard Rd, I-41 and County N. Access will be maintained to the Appleton North HS driveway and the gas stations.

June 8 to early July: The County will close and reconstruct the remaining segment of County JJ from the school driveway west to Ballard Road. No access will be possible to these driveways.

Early July to August 15: Installment of concrete pavement, curb & gutter, and sidewalks.

August 15 to early September: The County will finish construction and landscaping. All roadways are planned to open for the Labor Day weekend and be open for the first day of school.

North parking lot frustration yields new options for change

By Alex Wormley

North's student parking lot can be a hassle for both student drivers and parents picking up students. With everyone in a rush to get home after a long day, the school parking lot is prone to accidents. Mix in pedestrians, inexperienced drivers, and icy winter conditions, and it's easy to see how the school parking lot is a headache for all.

There are about 750 parking spaces, including the center staff lot, for students, and dozens of parents picking up students on the backside of school. Before and after school are the worst times for traffic.

The most frustrating thing about the school parking lot for junior Kari Brekke, who was involved in an accident this fall, is "how long it takes to leave school every day."



Nearly every space is taken up in North's parking lots. This leads to congestion before and after school. Photo by Olivia Molter

Most of the accidents that happen on campus are minor, usually due to unsafe speeds for the given conditions. Students running late to class can feel pressured to drive just a little bit fast or turn a little sharper, which can have unfortunate consequences. "Some-

times it's experience," said Mr. Huggins, "but in many cases it's attention or feeling rushed."

"When visibility is low and the roads are icy or snowy, simply getting out of the parking lot itself is a hazard," said Brekke.

However, there is hope on the horizon for frustrated drivers.

"We can always do better with traffic," said Mr. Huggins.

North, AASD, and the City of Appleton are working together to try and find solutions to the traffic problem. Last year, the light at Ashbury and Ballard was put in to help ease traffic at dismissal for those exiting from the south lot. This spring, a roundabout is being put in at Lightning Drive and County Highway JJ to assist with those exiting from the north parking lot.

On school property, however, three additional solutions are being explored by Principal's Cabinet and the school district. An additional exit onto Highway JJ from the north lot and one from the south lot onto Ashbury would

add two additional ways out of the school, directly from the parking lot, allowing students to bypass parents in pick-up lanes. Near the north parking lot is a triangle, noted on the satellite image above with an 'x', where three streets merge. It has been proposed to remove this triangle and to replace it with a better solution.

For now though, administration advises students and parents alike to slow down and be attentive while driving in the school parking lot. Make sure you have plenty of time to get to school in the morning and take your time leaving after school. Mr. Huggins would also like to remind pedestrians to use marked crosswalks.

All accidents in the school parking lot, no matter how minor, should be reported to the School Resource Officer, Officer Enriquez.

The Noctiluca Investigative Team:



Members of the Noctiluca Investigative Team include (from left to right): Yasmeen Ashour, Alex Wormley, Ally Price, Erik Bakken, Nora Ptacek, Sophie Mariano, Mariya Todorova, Gabi Lacayo, Jake Zajkowski and Nolan Arnold. Photo by Olivia Molter

Noctiluca Mission Statement

The Noctiluca and northnoct.com are the student-run news sources of Appleton North High School. Noctiluca and northnoct.com are designated public forums for student expression. Student editors make all content decisions.

Noctiluca's mission is to publish information relevant to its readers and its community. Its goal is to maintain high ethical standards and provide a designated public forum for free and responsible expression of views.

The newspaper and website welcome diversity of scope, depth and breadth of coverage in order to heighten mutual understanding and awareness through our entire community.

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- Ally Price
- Mariya Todorova
- Alex Wormley

Second semester sees new finals schedule

By Gabi Lacayo

The calendar for the end of the school year looks a little different than how past years have finished.

The last day of school for the Appleton Area School District is Wednesday, June 7, but graduation day for seniors is Thursday, June 1, almost a full week before grades 9-11 complete the school year.

The reason for this special circumstance is all because of how the calendar falls this year. Last spring when the District was planning this year's academic calendar, they wanted to preserve the tradition (for the community and families) of having graduation on a Thursday. However, it created a special challenge for administration as they work out this year's finals schedule.

"We always knew we had to do something different, with graduation being on a Thursday," Appleton North Principal Mr. Huggins said.

In order to provide the most efficiency, administration, with the input from staff, decided that seniors would not be taking

finals with the rest of the grade levels during the official finals week, starting Friday, June 2, continuing the next Monday, June 5, and then finishing on Tuesday, June 6.

This idea is not a new one, however, since many districts in the state already have seniors graduating the week before the rest of the grade levels, according to Mr. Huggins.

The process of getting a finals week schedule drafted and approved is a lengthy one, and was made more difficult given the circumstances of the schedule. An administrative board contributed to building the new schedule, then it was revised by the high schools within the district for uniformity, and even the Principal's Cabinet had ideas as well.

"Seniors still have to show that they have demonstrated their proficiency in the course," Huggins said, so there will be some sort of an assessment for the graduating class, just not during finals week, but rather during the class periods on the days leading up to June 1.

2017 FINALS SCHEDULE

Thursday, June 1

9th-11th Grade: Extended HR Schedule
12th Grade: Breakfast, Commencement Rehearsal, Commencement, Graduation Party

Friday, June 2

9th-11th Grade ONLY: Periods 8, 3, & 4

Monday, June 5

9th-11th Grade ONLY: Periods 5, 7, & 6

Tuesday, June 6

9th-11th Grade ONLY: Periods 1, 2, & Make-Up, Locker Clean-Out

Wednesday, June 7

9th-11th Grade ONLY: Early Dismissal Schedule, Yearbook Signing

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www.northnoct.com

Poverty at North is larger problem than most students are aware

Student speaks about her experience with poverty

By Alex Wormley

Hailey Matthews seems shy at first, but once you get her to open up, she is eloquent and confident.

She is a sophomore at North who enjoys reading and drawing. Her favorite book series is *The Selection*, which tells the story of a prince in the future who holds a competition to find his future wife. She hopes to become a kindergarten or first grade teacher so she can “steer them in the right direction,” but she also hopes to do some writing on the side.

However, Matthews’ life hasn’t always been the easiest. Her family has struggled with poverty.

Picture four random students at North. Odds are, one of them is living in poverty. According to the Department of Public Instruction, 23.8 percent of students at North were economically disadvantaged last year. For a family of four, this means their total income does not exceed \$31,590 a year.

If you were shocked by that, it’s likely that you, like many people at North and in the community, believe the stereotype that North is the “rich kid school.” This stereotype about North students is part of the reason some students find it hard to get help.

“If you look around the halls, you notice people with their friends,” Matthews said, “but you don’t notice the people who are kinda by themselves and might not be wearing the nicest clothing.”

Poverty is a hard problem to see, because the students affected by it are good at hiding it. It could be the outspoken kid who sits next to you in Biology or the quiet girl you see every day in the LMC.

“What am I gonna wear tomorrow? How am I gonna sleep tonight? Is my family going to be cold? Should I give my brother my blanket?” These are just some of the questions students like Hailey have to face on a daily basis.

“When I tell teens that one in four statistic, they’re shocked because they feel like they’re alone,” said Mrs. Debbie Strick, the social worker at North. “From a student’s perspective, if they’re living in poverty, they don’t feel like they belong because they’re not wearing the name-brand clothing.”

“They come in, covered in head-to-toe with something brand new they bought yesterday,” Matthews said, when I asked her how her life is different from most students. “I’m wearing something I’ve had for many years and it doesn’t fit me correctly.”

Students living in poverty may find it hard to get basic school supplies like calculators or backpacks. Even the heart rate monitor for Phy-Ed, which students have to purchase for themselves, can pose a problem for teens. After school, they might have to work long hours to help pay for bills. Some families turn to Homeless Connections, the emergency shelter in Appleton, if they don’t have a place to stay the night. All of these things add up to a lot of stress that can inhibit their performance in school.

“They have a lot more barriers when they’re not sure where their next meal is going to come from,” Mrs. Strick said.

Homelessness is an additional problem that often comes with poverty. As of Feb. 14, Appleton Area School District had identified 294 students as “homeless,” according to Lisa Hunt, the AASD School Social Worker who coordinates programs for homeless students. Of that, 52 percent were doubling up with another family, 27 percent were living in shelters, and two students even reported



Illustration by Andrea Calzada living in their car.

Luckily, there a lot of resources available to these students to assist them in getting the tools necessary to succeed.

“We have a Compassion Closet here at North for basic things like deodorant,” Mrs. Strick said. “If students can’t afford any school related supplies, we can write a voucher through the school nurse so they can get it. That can even include if a teen has grown out of their shoes and their parents can’t afford it; we can get them. If we know about it, we can get them connected.”

That’s the most important part, Mrs. Strick said. There are resources available for everything from furniture to glasses to field trips to prom tickets, but students have to be willing to come forward to get the help.

At school, these students can get educational assistance through programs like “Northward Bound” that helps underclassmen learn in smaller classroom environments. Online classes also provide opportunities for credit recovery for upperclassmen.

For homeless students, the district provides free meals, provides school supplies, and can help arrange transporta-

tion to and from school.

The best thing you can do for a student in poverty, according to Mrs. Strick is to “treat the person as a whole person. You shouldn’t look at what clothes they’re wearing or how much money their parents have because that’s not what matters.”

Clubs and groups at North can organize giving campaigns for organizations that help those in need. Students and teachers can volunteer individually at shelters like Homeless Connections.

“My family is getting back on track, which I’m very grateful for because we’ve got a lot of support from people here at North,” Matthews said. She’ll be leaving Northward Bound this semester to return to regular classes, thanks to help from teachers in the program.

And to students living in poverty, Matthews said, “There will be hard times for you. It might take awhile for you and your family to get through this. But know that I, myself, am a supporter of you, even if I don’t know you. There are other supporters here at North, like Mr. Hechel and Mrs. Vander Loop. It’s okay to ask for help, even if you don’t think you need it. Ask for it.”



Hailey Matthews writes in the commons at lunch. Photo by Alex Wormley

Compassion Closet provides basic goods

By Alex Wormley

North’s Compassion Closet is quite literally, a closet. It’s a small room on the second floor with a couple of metal file cabinets. Inside these file cabinets, however, are everything from toothbrushes to mac and cheese, available to students living in poverty.

When a student is living in poverty, they face a lot of hurdles that most kids don’t. Mr. Hechel, the Alternative Education Coordinator at North, says, they might not know “where they’re living, what they’re going to eat, who’s going to pay the rent, or if they have the supplies they need for school.”

The Compassion Closet serves to alleviate some of these worries by providing non-perishable food and hygiene supplies, including deodorant, shampoo, toothbrushes, feminine products and more to these students and their families. If a student is in need of supplies, they can go in the closet, by themselves, with the door shut, and take as much as they need. This semester, the Closet is teaming up with St. Joseph’s Food Pantry to collect more food items.

North’s poverty issue is greater than most students are aware of. “These students are so good at hiding their struggles on a daily basis. So you might have someone who sits next to you in class that looks normal, acts normal, talks normal, does well academically, but is homeless,” Mr. Hechel said.

The resources available to these students go far beyond the Compassion Closet. Money is available to cover costs for athletic fees, field trips, eyeglasses, and even prom tickets.

Mr. Hechel explained, “As a school, we have to be compassionate. It’s tough for students to ask for help. Sometimes we have to lead them to the resources and let them know it’s okay.”

For more information about resources available to students living in poverty, contact Mr. Hechel, Mrs. Vanderloop or Ms. Strick.

Mickayla George contributed to this report.

Resources:

Homeless Connections:
(920) 734-9192
Leaven (Next Step):
(920) 738- 9635