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April 22:

## Celebrations change for students turning 21



[Hannah Hippensteel](#), Features Reporter

April 22, 2020

Turning 21-years-old in college has come to represent a rite of passage for many students.

Winona State University has a dry campus, but the city itself has several downtown bars that offer traditions for students on their 21st birthdays.

Establishments like Lucky's on Third offer a "Helen Keller shot" where celebrators blindly throw three ice cubes and are served a drink combining all the choices.

Other bars like Tavern 129 (the Tav) give the birthday person a commemorative cup or shot glass.

With the end date of the COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions still not concrete, students are shifting their expectations for birthday celebrations.

Students who have already turned 21 had different perspectives on how they saw quarantine's impact on celebration.

Hayden Zaborowski turned 21 on Oct. 31 and had what he described as a "proper" birthday bash in Winona.

Zaborowski said he sees going out as a 21st birthday rite of passage and explained why.

"The best feeling is when the clock strikes midnight and the nervous feeling evaporates. You can just have fun with a giant weight now off your shoulders," Zaborowski said.

He also offered insight for those who will be confined at home on how to customize their celebratory day.

"Some people just don't like the bar atmosphere. To those people, throw a kick-back with people you enjoy being around. Don't sacrifice your happiness," Zaborowski said.

For Justin Kostecki, the quarantine has impacted larger events in coordination with his birthday.

"I turn 21 on June 10 and my brother wanted to have his wedding around the same time so I could celebrate with a drink," Kostecki said.

Self-proclaimed as not "being big on birthdays," the shift in plans hasn't been major for Kostecki.

"I'll still be 21, still going to be able to buy alcohol, so I don't mind either way," he said.

At the other end of the spectrum is Allie Westphal.

Westphal, who celebrated her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday on April 19, expressed her frustration on maximum capacity rules for gatherings, saying they thwarted her attempts to have a good time.

“I live with five other people and we can’t have more than ten people in a place at once. I really don’t want to only celebrate my birthday with only three or four of my friends in order to be safe,” Westphal said.

Westphal mentioned how she sees going to bars or making a liquor store purchase as a rite of passage, but she does not identify as a big drinker.

Instead, she said she spent the time leading up to her birthday making a do-it-yourself (DIY) drinking game.

Students have said being at home has allowed them to return to more traditional ways of celebrating with family, from the party planning to deciding what is served for dessert.

They also reported using Zoom, the conference call software, to have virtual parties. Although physical parties are up in the air for the time being, most students continue to find ways to celebrate and feel loved on their milestone birthday.

*The opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of Winona State University, the Minnesota State Colleges and University system, or the Winona State University student body.*

# Winona State students react to stay-at-home extension



[Kellen Brandt](#), Features Reporter

April 22, 2020

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz ordered a statewide stay-at-home order on March 25 that went into effect on March 27, asking Minnesota residents to stay at home whenever and if ever possible until April 10.

On April 8, Walz extended the statewide stay-at-home order until 11:59 p.m. on May 3.

College students across the world are expressing concern over missing out on regularly scheduled activities, living in their college town and experiences at their university.

Winona State University students are among that population and expressed both their endorsement and their frustrations with the stay-at-home-order.

Bailey Barnes, a junior majoring in nursing, expressed how she felt about the extension of the stay-at-home order.

“I’m sad but understanding,” Barnes said. “I understand it is needed to try and flatten the curve, but I am sad that this semester of school and being with friends was taken from so many people, especially seniors and their graduation.”

Barnes said she finds herself most days in her room all day doing online classes and homework.

While Barnes understands the severity of the coronavirus and is respectful of the extended stay-at-home order, she, like many other students, is struggling to be home with family.

“I respect them, but it is getting very hard to stay at home consistently with my family,” Barnes said. “They are driving me nuts.”

Much like Barnes, third year Debra Medin, majoring in creative digital media and advertising, is living at home for the time being.

Medin is one of twenty people living in her house at the moment, which she believes makes her day a bit more unscheduled, fast-paced and livelier than many other students living at home right now.

“There is not really a chance to be bored because there are so many people to hang out with,” Medin said. “I just started making TikToks with my seven-year-old niece and that’s been pretty hilarious. Having babies around definitely makes staying at home more enjoyable, too.”

Medin has been following the stay-at-home order and hopes other are as well.

“I hope that people are taking the stay-at-home order seriously, but I think it depends on the person,” Medin said. “From social media it seems like people take it seriously to a point.”

Medin sees the stay-at-home order lasting well into May, but with her birthday coming up, she hopes the stay-at-home extension ends at least before the middle of June.

“I want to see my friends on my birthday, but I would understand if they extended it past then,” Medin said. “It would definitely be a sad day, seeing as a fourth of my senior year got taken away, my commencement got cancelled and I wouldn’t be able to celebrate my birthday as planned.”

Among many students following the stay-at-home order, Abbey Johnson, a fourth year student majoring in literature and language and applied and professional writing, welcomed the initial stay-at-home order.

“I’m still grateful for the extension order to reduce contact with others,” Johnson said. “I wish the order were stricter though to cut down on unnecessary social interactions more.”

Johnson is no longer working for the time being, which has significantly hurt her income.

“I’m now on unemployment benefits which has helped, especially with the passing of the CARES Act,” Johnson said.

In hopes the stay-at-home order can get everyone including herself back to work, Johnson is in full support of the stay-at-home orders and has only been leaving her house for groceries.

Barnes left with a final message, short and to the point.

“This sucks,” Barnes said. “I wish it was May 4th already.”

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# Winona State's budget forum rescheduled



[McKenna Scherer](#), News Reporter

April 22, 2020

Winona State University rescheduled its latest public budget forum following “discrepancies” found in its budget plans.

Chief Financial Advisor Scott Ellinghuysen announced over email that the April 14 forum would instead occur on April 21 at 2 p.m. via Zoom meeting.

Ellinghuysen said that after several budget meetings with the President’s Cabinet and creating multiple versions of budget reduction scenarios, there was a final plan presented with the “Super Meet and Confer.”

Those at the Super Meet and Confer meeting discovered several errors in the final budget plan.

“For example, a reduction put forth in the December 2019 meeting no longer made sense given a BES1 in a department and other subsequent personnel moves,” Ellinghuysen said.

The Super Meet and Confer is a meeting among the leaders of each bargaining unit on campus, including teaching faculty, service faculty, clerical and facilities staff, etc., to have an open discussion on topics such as the budget.

Ellinghuysen said after that and other errors were discovered, “we needed to take a step back and double check everything.”

Winona State implemented its Board Early Separation Incentive (BESI), a budgetary maneuver that encourages faculty and staff members to enter early retirement along with monetary incentive, earlier this year Feb. 3.

The BESI gave two retirement options: retire after the 2019-20 school year or the 2021-21 school year.

Chief human resources officer Lori Reed said in February that of the 108 offers sent to faculty and staff, the majority went to faculty members.

Ellinghuysen now says that 24 of the 108 offers were accepted, and that 15 of those 24 acceptances were from faculty members.

He did not specify which of the 15 faculty members would be retiring after this spring semester or the 2021 spring semester.

Student Senate president Benjamin Ellgen said that he had not been specifically told why the budget forum was rescheduled.

However, Ellgen said that the university administration has not withheld any information from Student Senate regarding the budget situation.

Ellgen also said that Student Senate has had steady communication with the university about the budget situation and how it could affect students.

“It was not like there was some big conspiracy uncovered,” Ellgen said. “They wanted to make sure the information is 100 percent correct before bringing it forward.”

Ellgen said that Student Senate is currently working on a recommendation for next school year's tuition, which will have a "significant impact" on the budget deficit situation.

Ellgen said that Student Senate will be having their own budget forum, with just the senate members, at their April 22 meeting to have further discussion.

"[There are] no indications that tuition would raise higher than 3 percent due to COVID," Ellinghuysen said.

Ellinghuysen said that Winona State will present budget plans to the Board of Trustees in May or June which will determine if tuition prices will go up or not.

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# The life of a student sex worker



Ren Gennerman, Copy Editor

April 22, 2020

Among the mass of jobs college students may have, very few require a worker to act as a professional, a fantasy and a therapist all at once. However, one group of people have to do all of this, all while facing intense social stigma: sex workers.

Violet Hughes, a sex worker who attended Winona State University whose name has been changed to protect their identity, has worked in the sex industry for more than five years and believes sex work is a type of work which is exceedingly complex, including what qualifies as sex work.

“I would describe sex work as any kind of erotic labor. Basically, getting paid to get people off,” Hughes said. “[This industry can range from including] strippers, escorts, full-service sex workers, cam girls, porn stars, etc.”

Hughes has been in the sex industry since their senior year in high school, when they started “escorting” and “sugaring”. Escorting is when a person takes someone on a date, and the date provides company, conversation and occasionally sex. Sugaring is similar, as in return for similar services as escorting, workers receive

gifts or money. While escorting tends to be a short-term relationship with smaller payments, sugaring tends to be more long-term with larger payouts. Workers may define and differentiate according to their own preference.

“I started out doing sex work by doing “dates,” basically escorting and sugaring from senior year of high school into sophomore year of college,” Hughes said. “But then I started permanently staying in Winona for the summers and full-service jobs became harder and harder to come by and more and more dangerous for people around me finding out my jobs, so now I do cam work and take the occasional date.”

Hughes was 18 when they started escorting but had been exposed to it earlier through “sugaring blogs” on Tumblr. After following girls who gave them advice, Hughes started escorting and sugaring until they found a system that worked for them.

As it turns out, sex work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century often requires creative use of social media. Josie Yates, a Winona State student whose name has also been changed to protect her identity, does her sex work through selling pictures and performing on a webcam. While she posts on OnlyFans, a social networking site which allows sexually explicit videos, she entertains many of her clients through Snapchat.

“[Snapchat is] a platform where you know if things that you’re putting out there are being screenshotted,” Yates said, “That’s my biggest thing. I use like third party apps for payment and once I get that screenshot sent to me right on Snapchat [confirming a client paid]. I saved that screenshot and then I’m like, all right. Now I can add you to the private story and you’re able to view whatever.”

Yates got into sex work two years ago after some friends of hers also became interested. After doing some research, which Yates highly suggests before diving into any job, Yates began selling photos of herself.

“I already liked doing my makeup, looking pretty, getting dressed up in cute outfits and just kind of doing cosplay. And then it got more into like lingerie and stuff like that,” Yates said. “I just really like and feel confident when I get all dressed up and make the most of my evening if I don’t have any plans. I’m already taking cute pictures and stuff for my boyfriend at the time; I might as well make money off this in my free time.”

Yates advertises on Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram through her story, so her ad is gone within 24 hours. However, a lot of her clients also come through Tinder, an online dating app, where she specifies that she is in a relationship and only interested in friendship. While Yates said she used to advertise through a website, it was eventually shut down and she had to rely more on social media.

There are many reasons why a client may come to a sex worker. According to Hughes, most are “fine people with some quirks”.

“I’ve had people that are just virgins and want to ‘figure it out’ before they hit the dating scene, and I’ve had people that have a fetish that they feel they can’t ask a partner about and either want help with sorting out how to ask or just getting their fill of it with me,” Hughes said. “When I was doing full-service, it was a little bit easier to get to know people not only because I had to, but because I actually saw them and had to spend time with them. It was still work and they didn’t know me very well, usually just whatever fantasy I was at that time. Now, I just put up videos and people buy them, and I would never know the difference.”

While Hughes and Yates are making money off their sex work, they both have other jobs not in the sex industry, with Yates describing sex work as her “side hustle”. According to Hughes, the money they make is not enough to claim on taxes, allowing full, untaxed money coming in.

“I get payment a lot of different ways, so it really depends. I tend to use Paypal or Venmo,” Hughes said. “When I use Manyvids or Onlyfans, I just link my banking info because people can’t see it when they buy, but at the end of the day, it all goes back into my Wells Fargo account.”

For any income under \$500 a year, taxes do not have to be filed. If someone makes more than that, they have to file as an independent business, wherein workers are more able to file sizable tax deductions. Online platforms like ManyVids or OnlyFans have their own W-2 form to later be filed for taxes.

According to Yates, while working on campus can provide some extra income, it is difficult to make ends meet. Sex work provides some supplemental income.

Hughes began working to help out with money at home.

“I started doing sex work because I was the last kid at home with my mom. My dad was in prison at the time, and I knew that she needed help with the bills,” Hughes said. “I started, going for pretty cheap so that I could figure it out and so that I could hide it from my mom. I remember getting my first \$500 off one person and handing it to my mom and she was like ‘Where did this come from?’ Luckily, it was January, so I just convinced her that it was off my holiday overtime hours.”

Though sex work provides Hughes and Yates with extra money for school and living expenses, doing it while in college comes with complications. For Hughes, they had to make changes when they came to Winona.

“When I became a student, I purposely chose to stop doing full-service because Winona is such a small town,” Hughes said. “This prevented me from having students, faculty or spouses of faculty as clients. I chose to do this because I saw how much other peers of mine struggled to keep work and personal separate.”

Yates had different struggles. As she found out after she logged onto her ManyVids account through her university laptop during the end of finals week, using “university property” for checking the earning on her sex work is not allowed. Yates received a letter from the university stating they had to confiscate her laptop. Though she had one more final on her computer she had to take, her laptop was confiscated, and she had to go use library computers.

“They never told me how long they were going to keep my laptop,” Yates said. “They said, ‘We can’t give you any absolute answers as to when we’ll be done’.”

Yates had to leave the university because of the end of the semester and had already scheduled her time to leave her dorm room. However, because the university kept her laptop, Yates had to stay with her boyfriend for a few days until she was able to get her computer back.

“I got my laptop back and I didn’t hear from anyone,” Yates said. “No one emailed me, no one said anything. From then on, I didn’t use my laptop to check any of the

sites. I don't use it at all for sex work. As of just December, I paid out the laptop, so it's officially mine."

Yates also once had an angry client who took her videos and photos and sent them to her friends on Facebook. She said she tried to take legal action against him, but that the "laws have not caught up yet".

Aside from complications with college, sex work is an industry which is subject to several legal hurdles, which can increase danger to sex workers.

"The fact that it is still very dangerous and becoming even more so with SESTA laws being in place," Hughes said. "It's harder to vet clients now more than ever, people work really hard to scam people trying to do sex work, and the risk of sexual assault is much higher as it goes without sanctions because most people don't report it for fear of being prosecuted for prostitution."

The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) was put in place to help stop the human trafficking in the United States. However, according to advocacy group StopSESTA, the act does not punish sex traffickers, but instead threaten sex workers who are doing legal work online by shutting them down, censoring them or prosecuting them.

However, many people disagree as to whether or not sex work should be decriminalized or legalized. Decriminalization would allow for sex workers to continue their work and have to pay a fine if prosecuted. Legalization would require no fines.

According to Yates, legalization is key.

"It does need to be like decriminalized on all levels for sure," Yates said. "But people are going to take advantage of the lack of rules if it's just decriminalized, so legalization would provide a way for people to do it safely."

Hughes disagrees, stating that decriminalization is preferable to legalization.

“I’m for decriminalization because it allows regulations that can uphold health and labor laws without negatively stigmatizing sex work,” Hughes said. “Legalization brings about structures like the famous ‘Nordic Model’ in which the sale of sex is not illegal but it’s purchase is. This still creates a stigma around sex work and makes it difficult to work safely because it punishes people that want sex work and still disregards the regulation of workplaces.”

To Hughes, the way people still see their job is so toxic, despite the good that they do for people.

“I still believe that it’s important to talk about with how much sex workers get portrayed as home wrecking whores and clients get made to be creepers lurking in the shadows,” Hughes said. “I’ve been harassed and assaulted more working at Kmart than doing full-service work.”

Regardless of how people feel about decriminalization verses legalization, there are concrete way in which sex workers can be supported. Yates, who is going into her master’s program in the fall semester, needs people to pay for her content.

“Sometimes I get people who just want to chat for free, but my time is real money,” Yates said. “If you don’t understand it, get more information on it. So why not sit down and have a conversation with a sex worker? If you want to be a consumer, actually purchase people’s content.”

Hughes agrees, saying everyone should buy content instead of streaming for free, and making sure to tip. If someone cannot afford to buy it, they should still promote the person’s work. They also added ways to help keep workers safer.

“Have conversations about sex work that destigmatize it. If someone is shitting on sex workers, stick up for them,” Hughes said. “Vote and otherwise engage politically with them in mind. It may be hard to find but see if you can find how candidates voted on SESTA and how they behaved around sex worker’s rights in their communities before.”

At the end of the day, Hughes and Yates said it is a valid job, even if the law has not caught up with them yet.

“This is just something I do,” Yates said. “It’s a part of me, but it isn’t all I am. If you can’t see that we are people too, that’s on you.”

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