

Ways to Participate in the Homecoming Parade

Thank you for considering being part of this year's UW Homecoming Parade. Below are some thoughts and ideas about participating in the parade for you and your team to consider.

Your organization can choose to participate in one of the following categories:

- Traditional Float
- Flatbed Float
- Walkers/bikers/dancers (you do not have to build a float to participate in the parade)

If you are considering building a float, think about your team's resources - money, number of folks you have to help, access to materials, and time you have to dedicate. Read below for some ideas & helpful tips as you make your decision:

The Traditional Float – These floats are the ones you see on a pickup or flatbed truck, constructed with a wood frame and covered with chicken wire and colored or spray-painted tissue. This float is similar to crafting the background of a stage play – capturing a specific theme or scene. This float takes the most time and skill to build with the need to create a frame and cover it with chicken wire, etc.

Resources needed:

Depending on the size and complexity of the float, you may need some of the items listed below.

- Cost: In general, the cost for these floats tend to be around \$500 - \$750, with the cost fluctuating depending on the quality of materials and the resourcefulness of your department/team/group.
Space: Consider where you can construct your float and store your items. Considering the weather in Wisconsin – you will want to make sure you have a way to keep it from the elements.
- Wood (2x4s): used to construct the frame, or skeleton, of the float. Will also want it under any chicken wire to make sure the frame remains sturdy.
- Chicken wire: used to surround the wooden frame to form the body of the float.
- Pumps (tissue or toilet paper): used to fill holes in chicken wire to form the “skin” of the float. You will want to stuff twice the amount of tissue, etc. through the chicken wire holes to help keep the structure upright.
- Nails: to secure the wire to the wood frame.
- Paint (spray and house): used to paint the float.
- Truck, trailer, flatbed, or pickup truck.
- Sheets: To create a banner, to cover the sides of a truck/trailer, or used in strips and used as skin for the float. Sheets are also useful to protect grass/cement/floor when needing to paint/spray any decorations.

The Flatbed Float – This type of float would have several people on the back of a flatbed dressed in costumes. It requires no construction for a scene or theme, but rather people dressed in costume to represent the theme with simple decoration of the vehicle. This type of float makes it easy to include either a large sign or banner with your group's name on it and signs with slogans on them that match the parade theme. The building time for a flatbed float can be anywhere from an afternoon to a couple of weeks. It really depends on how elaborate the costumes your team would like to wear to how you are dividing tasks between the group (to create banners, decorations for the truck, etc.).

Resources needed:

- Cost: \$50 - \$150.
- Costumes for each member participating in the float.
- Flatbed truck or trailer
- Building materials for staging the float and for minor construction of props, etc.

Walkers/Bikers/Dancers! - The least expensive and simplest way to participate and sometimes the most popular and entertaining! The success of this type of unit depends on the creativity and sense of humor the group incorporates. Often a skit or routine is performed several times throughout the course of the parade. The walking parade unit presents an excellent opportunity for groups with little time or money to participate in the parade.

With a bit of creativity and some time to rehearse, any group is quite capable of putting forth a superb parade entry. Another very popular form of participation is performing groups. Choral or military groups that develop some sort of synchronized movements often create very impressive and popular walking entries. Additionally, there is no required building time unless the group is going to make use of props. With such an entry, participants have the chance to utilize the whole parade corridor as a stage, allowing for closer interaction with the crowd.

Resources needed:

- Cost: Cost for a walking float can be minimal depending on your plans. As with the other varieties of float, costs will include any costumes and props rented or purchased, but construction will be minimal and no vehicle is needed for transport.
- If you are going to have some sort of choreographed routine, you'll probably need a room for rehearsal.
- If costumes or coordinated outfits are to be used, they and/or the material from which to make them will be needed.
- Creativity