The Meals with Heels program offers students and professors the unique opportunity to get together outside of class and connect in a more causal setting. Maegan Clawges, a junior journalism and computer science major, has used the program at least eight times and has talked to her professors about various topics. “Generally, I enjoy hearing about their research and side projects to get a better feeling of how to apply the knowledge I am acquiring in a practical setting,” she said. “I have found that each professor offers a unique perspective on things I should pursue academically and extracurricularly to reach my goals and further my ambitions.”

David Navalinsky, a dramatic arts professor, said he uses Meals with Heels because he wants to get to know the students in his class. “I have a class of 150 students who are not (drama) majors, so I see them in class and then they fade away,” he said. “I feel it’s important to make a connection even if it’s just with a few of them.” Navalinsky said he mentions the program to his class quite often and usually partakes in about two meals per semester, but he would like to increase that number. “If I understand my students better, I can be a better teacher,” he said. “It helps the students understand that their professors are real people, I’ve had conversations about my children, fishing and everything in between.

At the end of the day it’s usually a good time for both parties Clawges agreed and said, “talking over a meal allows for a more relaxed conversation. We are able to explore wherever the conversation takes us instead of being focused on the class material.”

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