

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

of the

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Held in 1820 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706

Thursday, February 7, 2013  
9:00 a.m.

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- President Smith presiding -

PRESENT: Regents Jeffrey Bartell, John Behling, Mark Bradley, Michael Falbo, Tim Higgins, Tracy Hribar, Edmund Manydeeds, Regina Millner, Katherine Pointer, Charles Pruitt, Gary Roberts, Brent Smith, Mark Tyler, José Vásquez, and Gerald Whitburn

UNABLE TO ATTEND: Regents John Drew, Tony Evers and David Walsh

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**PRESIDENTS' GREETING**

President Smith began the meeting by welcoming Regents and all attendees and relating a story about a campus tour of UW-Madison with his daughter. The tour guide mentioned that the Board of Regents has offices on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of Van Hise so that they can see all that is going on. President's Smith's comments were met with laughter.

President Smith said that the morning would begin with a presentation on improving student success within the UW System, led by Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Mark Nook. This would be followed by an update on the Knowledge Powers Wisconsin strategic vision from President Reilly and Dave Giroux, and a report from Chancellor Rick Wells on UW-Oshkosh's strategic goals.

President Smith turned to President Reilly for brief introductions. President Reilly introduced Dr. Jackie Weissenburger, who had begun serving as the Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at UW-Stout. She previously served as Associate Vice Chancellor for about two years and is a former director of the UW-Stout School of Education.

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## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS WITHIN THE UW SYSTEM**

President Smith then introduced a presentation about efforts to improve student success within the UW System. This topic is at the heart of what the university does, to provide an educational experience that will help UW students become well prepared, successful, engaged students. The goals set were from the More Graduates targets of increasing the number of UW undergraduate degrees conferred by a cumulative 80,000 degrees by 2025, and pursuing Inclusive Excellence and fostering greater diversity, equity, and accountability at every level of university life.

As important as setting these big goals is the actual work that is being done, President Smith said. He introduced Senior Vice President Mark Nook to address this topic. Dr. Nook, referring to the title of his presentation, said that improving student success within the UW System could mean improvement in numbers, and it could also mean improvement in what is being done to improve student success. He said that both aspects would be addressed in the presentation.

Senior Vice President Nook referred to three sets of materials that had been provided in Regents' packets: a set of slides that showed data that he would be presenting; a supplemental set of slides, with additional data; and a longer document, entitled "Selected Examples of Proven, Promising, and Emerging Programs and Strategies; Strengthening Retention, Closing Equity Gaps, and Degree Attainment." Dr. Nook thanked Associate Vice Presidents Heather Kim and Vicki Washington and their staffs for compiling the materials.

### ***Overview***

Providing an overview of his presentation, Dr. Nook said that he would describe the student success goals, provide an update on the data, and examine systemwide and institutional efforts to improve student success measures and to work toward meeting the goal of 80,000 more graduates between 2009 and 2025. Presentations by Renée Wachter and UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Michael Lovell would follow.

Dr. Nook began by reporting that the System was on track to meet the overall goal of producing 80,000 more graduates by 2025, being approximately 1,100 degrees ahead of schedule. However, the pace of degree attainment in the future is not predictable, although examining the retention rate provides some indication. Four- and six-year graduation rates continue to be strong, Dr. Nook said. Also, as the student body becomes more diverse, both racially and economically, it is important to continue to improve the success rates of both economically challenged students and those students who come from historically under-represented minority groups. Enrollments are another area to watch; while enrollments were slightly higher in October than they were the year before, they were about 3,800 behind the targets. The current presentation, Dr. Nook said, would examine retention rates, graduation rates, and equity gaps as a way of assessing how well the university is doing at helping students attain their degrees.

## ***Retention and Graduation Rates***

Dr. Nook indicated that the retention rate was about 80.2 percent, which was a full percentage point ahead of the national average; the System's goal was 80.5 percent. A concern is that the rate has been static over the last several years. Four-year graduation rates look good compared to the target; at 29 percent, they are up by one percentage point. Transfer students are up three percentage points above their four-year-graduation-rate target. However, the national average for new freshmen is at 31.4 percent. The UW System is about 2 to 2.5 percentage points below the national average. That gap has been closing over the last few years. While consistent growth has been seen in four-year graduation rates, this is an area where additional focus is needed.

Six-year graduation rates were also on track, Dr. Nook said. Rates for new freshmen were at 59.6 percent, about 0.3 percentage points below the target. Transfer students were above target by nearly two percentage points. The UW System is a full three percentage points above the national average. The System has also seen growth in its six-year graduation rate. The System is on track to continue to meet its goals, which points to greater efficiency in graduating and retaining students and a high likelihood of meeting goals for degree production.

Turning to a slide related to the make-up of the freshman class, Dr. Nook indicated that the number of Pell Grant-eligible students is growing as a percentage of the freshmen class, having moved from 14 percent of the class in 2000 to 20 percent of the class in 2011. Members of under-represented minority groups who are not Pell eligible grew from 3 percent to 5 percent of the freshman class. The group that changed the most was members of historically under-represented minority groups who are Pell eligible; they grew from 3 percent to 8 percent of the freshman class.

Regent Higgins indicated that he was glad that the numbers looked good, but he asked Dr. Nook about the extent to which the increases reflected demographic changes rather than efforts the UW System was making. Dr. Nook said that there was faster growth in under-represented minority students than is seen in the demographics, primarily due to increases among Hispanic and Native Americans graduating from Wisconsin high schools and enrolling in UW institutions.

The UW System is becoming more diverse economically, Dr. Nook said, referring to the large growth in the percentage of students on Pell Grants, as well as more diverse ethnically and racially. It is important that all students are being moved through the System and receiving the education they should in a timely and efficient manner.

Dr. Nook said that, traditionally, data are split into two groups: under-represented minority students compared with non-under-represented minority students. He noted that the gap in retention rates had been reduced from a benchmark of 11 percentage points to eight percentage points and was on track. The gap in the six-year graduation rate had been reduced from a benchmark of 23 percentage points to 21 percentage points; however, this is not a significant change, and the target is actually about 11 to 12 percent. This rate is going to be more difficult to move because it has a longer timeline.

For Pell Grant recipients compared with non-Pell recipients, the gap in the retention rate increased from five percentage points to seven percentage points. The gap in the six-year graduation rate increased from 12 percentage points to 15 percentage points. The six-year graduation rates for the

most recent two cohorts, 2005 and 2006, show a decline for Pell Grant recipients, primarily among non-under-represented minority students. Dr. Nook suggested that this is a reflection of the Pell-eligible students being at economic risk and having to survive the economic downturn in 2008 to graduate.

The first-year retention rate for non-under-represented minority students is very stable at 80 percent, while the retention rate for under-represented minority students fluctuates; there was a decline around 2005 and 2006, which reflects tuition increases and the challenging economy.

Regent Higgins asked what would be a realistic equity-gap target. Dr. Nook explained that the goal was to reduce the difference in retention rates between under-represented minority students and non-under-represented minority students from 11 percent to 5 to 6 percent by 2015. He said that he thought this was realistic. The under-represented minority retention rate is not as affected by the economy as the Pell-eligible rate is.

### ***Strategies to Achieve Equity***

Dr. Nook mentioned strategies the System had been employing to “move the numbers.” Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), is a national program set up and managed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and begun in Wisconsin in 2005. It has four key areas: (1) essential learning outcomes that students need if they are to be successful; (2) high-impact practices; (3) authentic assessments of student learning, and (4) Inclusive Excellence.

With respect to Inclusive Excellence, Dr. Nook stated that a three-pronged strategy is employed: (1) to achieve compositional diversity in both the student body and the employment body (faculty, staff, and administration); (2) to ensure a climate and culture that serves all employees and students; and (3) to achieve equity in outcomes, whether for faculty and staff pay and tenure and promotion, student retention and graduation rates, or the awarding of academic and community service honors. Within inclusive excellence are such guiding principles as making diversity central to institutional life, sharing engagement and accountability at all levels, and measuring success by results and tangible outcomes.

One way of measuring success is through a process known as the equity scorecard, developed at the Center for Urban Education at the University of South Carolina, through work with institutions throughout the country. All UW institutions have participated in the equity scorecard at some level. Dr. Nook provided an example of the application of the scorecard at UW-Eau Claire, where it was determined that the process in place for selecting students to enter the honors program limited the ability for underrepresented minorities to be involved. As a result of some changes, the diversity of students in the program improved.

UW campuses have also participated in the campus climate survey, run by Professor Sue Rankin at Penn State. The climate survey uses surveys to identify areas that might inhibit an open and inclusive environment on a particular campus and throughout the System. Dr. Nook said that a report was due within a couple of months.

## ***Recruitment and Retention Efforts at UW-Superior***

Dr. Nook then asked Chancellor Wachter to speak about efforts to improve retention and graduation rates at UW-Superior. Chancellor Wachter first noted that, based on research the campus had done on best practices, it was evident that there is no magic bullet; different types of students require different kinds of interventions.

Chancellor Wachter said that using multiple strategies results in the greatest impact, and sometimes it will not be possible to identify which one thing had the greatest impact, especially with respect to campus climate. Citing data from the Educational Advisory Board, she noted that students' demographics create challenges.

Speaking about the student profile at UW-Superior, Chancellor Wachter said that the institution has a high number of students that have need and receive some kind of financial aid: 87 percent. Of these students, 46 percent have Pell grants. Fifty percent of UW-Superior students are first generation. She noted a high nontraditional-student component; nearly 30 percent of undergraduate students are over the age of 24. She also mentioned distance-learning students, students supporting families, and students attending part time. She also said that UW-Superior has the highest number of transfer students, which may actually make them more likely to graduate.

In 2012 UW-Superior focused on retention, bringing in a national speaker and talking about national trends and student success. The campus also commissioned a study to look at advising practices. As a result of work done over the summer, UW-Superior reorganized to create a student success team, including representatives of first-year seminar, first-year experience, career services, advising, multi-cultural, and the tutoring center. The vice chancellors were realigned and lines of communication were opened through some restructuring. Chancellor Wachter said that UW-Superior had brought in a peer to learn about successful retention, implemented an action plan, and expanded student-recruitment efforts.

She noted that improvements had occurred as a result of these efforts. New international students grew by 161, coming from 37 different countries. Students of color were 243, the highest-ever number on campus. More than 8 percent of the campus student body is now under-represented minorities; the chancellor said that great strides had been made, considering that before this there was essentially not a number to report.

The campus most recently had been focused on two areas: receiving a grant related to encouraging under-represented minorities in STEM programs, and receiving a \$1.2 million Department of Education grant to train Native American teachers.

Referring to some other activities that had been particularly successful, Chancellor Wachter mentioned high school senior days and junior days; college-student-for-a-day; minority-student days on campus; more visits to the region; junior nights; and a new English-as-a-second-language program.

With respect to first-to-second-year retention rates, Chancellor Wachter said that at UW-Superior the gap between under-represented and non-under-represented minorities was one percent during the prior year. She spoke in particular of the importance of climate and Native-American-oriented inclusion

efforts, peer mentoring, social media, and analysis of enrollment trends and mandatory counseling sessions for students who had not re-enrolled due to holds on their records. The first-year seminar, study abroad, and other high-involvement activities also have an effect.

The chancellor mentioned areas that still needed attention, such as second-to-third-year and third-to-fourth-year retention and gaps in graduation rates for both Pell-eligible students and under-represented minorities. To address such challenges, Chancellor Wachter said that UW-Superior was doing further data analysis to identify early students that might be at risk of not continuing and to ensure follow-up so that students stay on track. High-impact practices are being broadened; examples are first-year seminars, undergraduate research programs, and efforts to make the best use of limited financial-aid dollars. In addition, parents are being engaged as partners, so that they can intervene in instances where family support would be helpful. Chancellor Wachter concluded by saying that retention efforts would be a critical part of UW-Superior's strategic planning, to be started in April.

In response to a question from Regent Bradley about how UW-Superior would compare with other similar institutions, Chancellor Wachter said that the institution had used benchmarks. Using national data, UW-Superior is about average; and it is in the middle for both retention and graduation numbers. She said, however, that UW-Superior is trying to raise the bar.

### ***Recruitment and Retention Efforts at UW-Milwaukee***

UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Lovell spoke next. He began by remarking how similar some of his remarks would be to Chancellor Wachter's, even though the two institutions are so different. He reiterated that there is not a silver bullet for solving student-success problems.

Chancellor Lovell said that UW-Milwaukee is extremely unique in the System. Its mission is three-fold: access, research, and serving regional needs. He said that because of the institution's location and who it serves, it has a student population with a unique socio-economic status. For families applying for financial aid, the average student's family had a median income of about \$60,000; the System average is \$75,000, and UW-Madison's is almost \$100,000, he said. One reason this is important is because almost all UW-Milwaukee students have jobs, some more than one. This creates a different dynamic, as the student population has a lot of time off campus.

Chancellor Lovell noted that, similar to UW-Superior, UW-Milwaukee has a very high proportion of students who are Pell eligible. He suggested that these two institutions may have the highest percentage in the System. This creates interesting challenges.

Also, as of fall 2012, for the eighth straight year UW-Milwaukee enrolled more Wisconsin residents than any other university in the System, or about 26,000 Wisconsin residents. Not only is UW-Milwaukee's student population from within the state, but it is a very diverse population. The freshman class for the current year was about 28 percent from under-represented groups, and these groups are growing. The student-veteran population is also growing. In fall 2012, the campus had 140 student-veterans.

Chancellor Lovell observed that UW-Milwaukee's retention and graduation rates are among the lowest within the UW System, with UW-Parkside's rates being the lowest. However, he stressed the

importance of not comparing UW-Milwaukee to all of the UW institutions. Each is different, and it is important to compare apples to apples. Compared with UW-Milwaukee's peers, it is in the middle with respect to graduation rates. The chancellor also noted that UW-Milwaukee has the most transfer students in the System; if a student transfers from another UW institution to UW-Milwaukee, and the student graduates from UW-Milwaukee, this is not counted in UW-Milwaukee's graduation rate for IPEDS reporting. Consequently, the graduation rate is misleading.

Pointing out other misleading aspects of the reported retention and graduation rates, Chancellor Lovell shared a story about a student who graduated in May 2012 who had a 12-year journey to graduation, including a tour in Iraq as a member of the Marine Corps reserves and a successful career as a cage fighter. The chancellor said that by the IPEDS definition, this student would be a failure; but UW-Milwaukee considers him a success.

UW-Milwaukee adopted an aggressive goal of moving from 40 percent to 50 percent for its six-year graduation rate by 2017. The chancellor said that the institution had already implemented a number of high-impact practices over the past five years, focusing in particular on scholarships, specific retention programs, and better engaging students of color. One of the best ways to help working students be successful is to provide scholarship opportunities for them so they either do not have to work or have to work only one job instead of two. UW-Milwaukee has more Morgridge Scholars than any other UW institution; these students indicate that they are able to be more successful because the scholarship allows them not to work as much.

Chancellor Lovell said that during the institution's last capital campaign it raised about \$29 million for student scholarships. UW-Milwaukee is getting ready to launch a new campaign, called the Student First Campaign; the top priority for raising funds during the next campaign will be for student scholarships. When the institution's top 40 donors were interviewed about the preferred purpose of their donations, the top preference was for student scholarships. The chancellor said that raising more money for scholarships would be a way to help significantly with student retention.

Chancellor Lovell noted that UW-Milwaukee had done research, as UW-Superior had, about how to better retain students, particularly in urban institutions. UW-Milwaukee found that first-year transitional courses, freshman-seminar-type activities, mentoring programs, tutoring, and other experiences could be effective. The chancellor said that since starting such programs five years before, participation had increased significantly. Learning communities in dormitories provide an opportunity for students of like interests to share common experiences. These are also new, compared with five years earlier, and 16 percent of the student population is participating.

A critical opportunity at UW-Milwaukee is formal internship opportunities. The seven-county region surrounding Milwaukee has more than 60,000 companies in the private sector, or two private companies for every student on campus. He said that all internships were being centralized to help students find these opportunities. Providing service learning opportunities is also important; once students are engaged in these activities, they are more likely to be retained at UW-Milwaukee.

Chancellor Lovell noted that 15 percent of UW-Milwaukee students do undergraduate research on campus; this is another opportunity begun in the past five years to help improve retention rates.

Chancellor Lovell reiterated that the fastest-growing population on campus is under-represented minority groups; he said it was very important to address how students of color can be more successful on campus. In 2006 the institution launched an Access to Success initiative that specifically focused on helping students of color be more successful. Since then, the institution has seen a 16-percent increase in the first-year retention rate of these students. There is a less-than-one-percent difference in first-year retention rates for students of color and other students. Chancellor Lovell said that the programs had been working, particularly in the first year.

Noting that UW-Milwaukee was working on specialized programs with partners in the community, Chancellor Lovell mentioned Northwestern Mutual's scholarships and mentors for minority students, as well as similar programs with Harley Davidson, Rockwell, and others.

Chancellor Lovell also noted the importance of partnering with the K-12 community. Toward this end, he said that he is a co-chair on the board of three different major organizations in Milwaukee which aim to improve student success. Such initiatives work to help students enter college better prepared and without the need for remedial courses.

Closing his remarks, Chancellor Lovell said that a 40-percent graduation rate is not what UW-Milwaukee preferred to have. He indicated that through the implementation of the new initiatives he had described, he expected to see continued progress toward a goal of 50 percent.

## ***Discussion***

President Smith began the discussion of the presenters' remarks by asking about what is being done to improve the four-year graduation rate. Chancellor Wachter mentioned several steps being taken, particularly to encourage freshmen to finish in four years: streamlining the curriculum; watching for changes in students' majors; and employing a degree-map program that shows students what they need to take and when they need to take it, and ensuring students are entering their data and using the system.

Chancellor Lovell indicated that one of the challenges with the four-year graduation rate is providing access to the classes students need to graduate. Work is being done to develop more online opportunities, so that students do not have to physically be in the classroom to earn credits for their courses. Chancellor Lovell said that one in four UW-Milwaukee students is taking at least one online course.

In response to a question from Regent Whitburn about students' changing majors, Chancellor Wachter indicated that national data says that the average graduation rate is 5.1 years with no change of major. Every time a student changes their major, more time is added to this. She indicated that major changes are flags, prompting a conversation with students about what underlies the change. Regent Whitburn asked Chancellor Lovell if major changes were viewed similarly at UW-Milwaukee. Chancellor Lovell agreed with Chancellor Wachter's conclusion that changing majors adds more time to degree and is a cause for concern.

Regent Vásquez expressed concern about an emphasis on recruiting more students of color and asked how minority students can be better served to help ensure that they graduate. He stressed the importance of helping students develop the ability to seek the resources that they need, rather than the

universities' waiting for problems to occur. He asked what lessons had been learned that could be applied systemwide to address the important issue of graduation rates of students of color.

Chancellor Lovell responded that UW-Milwaukee had a 40-percent graduation rate overall in six years, and for its students of color this rate was 22 percent. He mentioned a focus on first-year retention, noting that current efforts were leading to virtually no difference between the students of color and the general population, which is an important step. He said that the reason the graduation rate for students of color is traditionally lower is because of a college-readiness problem. Students of color, particularly at the UW-Milwaukee campus, are not college ready. If students are ready for college and do not need remedial math and remedial English, they will not need the services to which Regent Vásquez referred. The chancellor mentioned again his efforts to focus on helping students get what they need in the K-12 system.

Chancellor Patterson elaborated on the discussion, saying that when he arrived in Wisconsin he found it somewhat unique that there seemed to be an expectation among parents and students that it would take at least five years to graduate. He observed that careful planning, avoiding multiple major changes, listening to advisors, and taking course on schedule were all part of changing the cultural expectations surrounding the length of time it takes students to graduate.

In response to a question from Regent Bartell about why transfer students' graduation is not counted toward an institution's graduation rate, Senior Vice President Nook responded that this is related to national IPEDS-data collection practices. However, the UW System does track the graduation of students transferring within the System and has also begun to track students transferring from institutions outside of the System.

Regent Millner, referring to a conference she had recently attended, noted that a strategy that was discussed was a focus on a 15-credit semester as a path to four-year graduation. She asked about the application of such a strategy in Wisconsin. Chancellor Lovell indicated that UW-Milwaukee tracks how many students have 24 credits or more at the end of their freshman year; this is a predictor of retention. The need for remedial courses presents a challenge in meeting 15 credits per semester, because remedial classes are not offered for credit. Chancellor Wachter added that if students are Pell eligible, there are probably financial issues, which may mean they have to work and cannot realistically enroll for 15 credits.

Chancellor Wells observed that with a diverse student body, including first-generation college graduates, lower-income students, students of color, working students, and older students, expecting students to fit a four-year graduation model is not realistic. Such a model fits at an institution that is highly selective and has a very high average family income. When serving an increasingly diverse and more economically-challenged population, longer time to degree must be expected.

Regent Pruitt complimented the presenters and asked about other strategies that could be employed to increase graduation rates, in light of the factors Chancellor Wells and others had mentioned. Senior Vice President Nook responded that each UW institution has a different mission, not just in the degree programs they offer but in the student bodies that they serve, ranging from access institutions to UW-Madison with its higher average class rank, high school GPAs and ACT scores. He indicated that access institutions would likely continue to see lower graduation rates as they work to meet their missions.

With respect to the discussion about four-year graduation rates, Chancellor Telfer provided the context that the four- year graduation rate for the entire System in 1981 was 17 percent. The System’s current rate of 29 percent actually evidences dramatic improvement, even while the System has served an increasingly diverse population. Dr. Nook added that another 28 percent graduate in the fifth year.

Vice President Falbo, suggesting that how success is defined is important, reiterated that the System was serving much different populations than in the past. He praised the efforts that had been made and encouraged the development of additional tools for success, such as the new Flex Option.

Regent Point asked whether UW institutions had entertained the idea of emphasizing the four- or five-year-guarantee contract between institutions and students. Senior Vice President Nook indicated that most UW institutions have the four-year contract on the books, and a relatively small number of students have participated. Chancellor Gow observed that this was available at UW-La Crosse but was not in high demand. He also noted that of the best students take longer to graduate because they take two majors, participate in internships, or study abroad. Students are also working, sometimes 30 to 40 hours per week, even though research shows that more than 20 hours is detrimental. Research indicates that if students have jobs on campus, rather than off, this is better for their progress

Dr. Nook emphasized that students are working more because costs are higher and a greater proportion of students are economically disadvantaged than they were in the past.

President Reilly, offering additional context for newer Regents, commented that four or five years before, chancellors, provosts, and System administrators considered the number of people with a baccalaureate degree in Wisconsin, compared with national statistics. Wisconsin was two percentage points below the national average. This is significant because states that have a higher percentage of college graduates in their populations have higher per capita incomes.

President Reilly indicated that each chancellor brought in his or her leadership team, met with him and his leadership team, and set goals for additional baccalaureate degree holders on top of the then-existing trajectory. Therefore, the effort to produce more graduates goes back to serious conversations about what the state’s public university needed to do for the state and the country.

Closing the achievement gap is important because the System cannot meet its goals unless more students of color, students from poorer families or recent-immigrant students earn degrees. President Reilly indicated that other nations are building out their post secondary systems at a rapid rate; ten years before, the United States was the highest-educated country, but it was recently only the tenth-most educated. The System is working hard to meet the challenge of higher degree completion.

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## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: “KNOWLEDGE POWERS WISCONSIN” UPDATE**

President Smith turned to President Reilly for an update on Knowledge Powers Wisconsin, the System’s new communications strategy, or “brand.” President Reilly noted that the new brand platform

was developed with significant input from across the UW System and across the state. Public opinion surveys showed how the System's value needed to be explained in a way that reflects how the System is viewed by others. The surveys indicated that people feel proud of the UW System institutions and the educational opportunities that they offer, but think the System can do a better job of stimulating job growth and supporting local industries.

## **Website**

President Reilly asked David Giroux, Executive Director of Communications and External Relations, to provide on how the message platform had begun to be used during its early stages. Mr. Giroux noted that he had introduced Regents to the [uwpowerswi.com](http://uwpowerswi.com) hub in November; this website highlights success stories from around the state that showcase how the UW creates a stronger workforce, stronger businesses and stronger communities. He indicated that the website was already populated with more than 50 success stories, accompanied by social media integration, to allow the stories to be easily shared on Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

## **Other Recent Developments**

Beyond the website, Mr. Giroux provided examples of recent developments: (1) a "Knowledge Powers Wisconsin Farmers" insert from UW-River Falls in local Chamber of Commerce newsletters, to drive home that message that UW-River Falls has a strong, positive impact on the agriculture industry in its region; (2) a version of the same ad in the UW-Madison College of Agriculture alumni magazine; (3) a story about Knowledge Powers Wisconsin on the UW-Madison [wisc.edu](http://wisc.edu) website, about how lighting pioneer Electronic Theater Controls is prospering in Middleton; and (4) UW-Oshkosh's branding its community engagement "Knowledge Powers Community." Mr. Giroux noted that UW institutions were finding ways to use the wording, emblems, and brand platform in various ways.

He introduced UW-Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford to talk about UW-Parkside's community impact report, produced in the fall semester. Chancellor Ford indicated that UW-Parkside was sharing a message about the impact of the institution in the community and in the southeastern-Wisconsin region. Chancellor Ford said that UW-Parkside also produced radio spots and advertising to spread the message about degree opportunities at UW-Parkside; she played one of these ads, featuring UW-Parkside's MBA program.

Mr. Giroux noted that the day's presentation provided only a snapshot of some of the tools that were provided through a shared web folder to communications directors at all UW institutions. Others tools included Facebook icons, Facebook banners, and electronic ads which could be customized to fit with institutions' colors or logos. Mr. Giroux also mentioned a legislative fact sheet branded with "Knowledge Powers Wisconsin." He provided Board members with a small supply of "Knowledge Powers Wisconsin Workforce" postcards.

Mr. Giroux noted the existence of a "UW Powers Wisconsin" Twitter account, to be followed by another Twitter account called "UW Powers Me." This account would include tweets from students about their classes; interactions with professors and staff; and interactions with the fellow students, clubs, and sports that enrich their educational experience. He also spoke of plans for a platform for UW faculty and staff to describe their ideas, important discoveries, and other contributions.

Mr. Giroux mentioned that the “Knowledge Powers Wisconsin” theme also would be applied to the “Posters in the Rotunda” venue on April 17<sup>th</sup> in the Capitol, where more than 100 UW undergraduate students from around the state would exhibit their research and engage with state legislators. In addition, at the Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism, how “Knowledge Powers Wisconsin Tourism” would be emphasized. Also, in fall 2013, the introduction to the UW System that is sent to high school counselors and parents is expected to incorporate a theme such as “Knowledge Powers Your Future.” Finally, a new WEDC publication would include eight pages of dedicated content about the UW System and how it is powering Wisconsin’s economy.

### ***Discussion***

Regent Vásquez asked about the lifespan of a campaign of the type Mr. Giroux described. Mr. Giroux responded that initially it had been thought that the campaign he described would have a short lifespan, but more recently, it had been considered a long-term brand because of its flexible nature.

Regent Bartell noted that the campaign appeared to have political, educational, and other objectives. He asked how Mr. Giroux would prioritize those objectives. Mr. Giroux commented that one of the biggest objectives was to convince people that it is worthwhile for the state to invest in the UW by articulating the return on investment that the UW provides.

Vice President Falbo noted that the UW System was a prominent focus of the postcard Mr. Giroux had provided and asked if the message was actually about the UW’s universities and colleges. Mr. Giroux indicated that they were the focus and that the power of the message lies in localizing the message.

Regent Tyler asked how the strategy’s roots in the university would be retained while applying the message to the assistance the UW provides to business and industry. Mr. Giroux explained that one of the institution logos or the UW System logo always needed to be included when telling success stories about how the UW has a positive effect on the quality of life in Wisconsin.

President Reilly thanked Executive Director Giroux and his colleagues for their great work. He also observed that the UW knowledge that powers Wisconsin is discovered, developed, and disseminated by UW faculty and staff. He reiterated a commitment to advocate during the present budget cycle, after four years of compensation cuts, for more competitive compensation to keep the faculty and staff producing the knowledge that powers Wisconsin for years to come.

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## **NEXT IN A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH CHANCELLORS ABOUT UW INSTITUTIONS’ STRATEGIC GOALS: UW-OSHKOSH CHANCELLOR RICK WELLS**

President Smith called upon UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Rick Wells to provide the next in a series of reports from chancellors, this one about UW-Oshkosh’s strategic goals. Chancellor Wells thanked Board members for the opportunity to provide an update. He noted that he became the chancellor at

UW-Oshkosh in the fall of 2000 and developed a very thorough strategic and operational planning process. He said that virtually every year in January an annual report is prepared; this report was distributed to the Regents.

### ***UW-Oshkosh's Strategic Focus***

Chancellor Wells said that UW-Oshkosh had established a strategic and operational planning process with “horizontal distinctiveness” – things that characterize UW-Oshkosh nationally across the whole institution. This was the focus, rather than vertical distinctiveness, which pertains to things that characterize a particular college or particular program. The focus was on building excellence in ways that cut across the entire institution.

UW-Oshkosh identified three areas for which it wanted to become known nationally: (1) to be a national leader in sustainability; (2) to be a catalyst in community collaboration; and (3) to be a leader in designing distinctive, high-quality education.

Chancellor Wells said that UW-Oshkosh’s strategic focus was “enhancing essential student learning outcomes.” The desired output of this focus is to provide more graduates with a better education so they are talented, liberally educated, technically skilled, global citizens who are actively engaged in civic, political, social and economic life. In order to achieve this goal, students must master more of the essential learning outcomes that characterize someone that receives a baccalaureate or master’s degree from UW-Oshkosh. The identified learning outcomes essentially mirror the goals of the America’s Promise movement.

Referring to slides, Chancellor Wells described the rubrics that underlie the commitments to essential learning outcomes. For example, the “Critical Thinking Value Rubric” identifies benchmarks and milestone and capstone expectations for the explanation of issues, evidence, influence of context and assumptions, the student’s thesis or hypothesis, and conclusions and related outcomes. Another rubric is the “Problem Solving Value Rubric.” Chancellor Wells explained that a rubric is a way of making sure that faculty, and staff are giving consistent feedback to a student with respect to their progress toward mastering any particular essential learning outcome.

To maximize students’ mastery of the essential learning outcomes, they need more high-impact practices, such as first-year seminars, organizations and clubs, and collaborative assignments. Research shows that if students have experience with high-impact practices, they will master the essential learning outcomes at a higher level and be better prepared graduates. To ensure strategic and operational plans are organized so that resources are intentionally used to maximize high-impact experiences for students, for example, UW-Oshkosh has eight operational plans that are updated annually.

Chancellor Wells referred to a chart labeled “Aligning Governing Ideas and Resources,” which illustrated how the institution’s values and strategic directions align with its key operational plans and processes.

## ***Successes***

Chancellor Wells reported that UW-Oshkosh had ten successful strategic outcomes since committing to the planning process a dozen years before. He began by listing larger enrollments, significant increases in numbers of students of color, more grants, additional online accelerated and collaborative degree programs, higher level of academic preparedness of first-year students, additional tenured faculty positions, and enhanced facilities.

In addition, Chancellor Wells said that between 2000 and the completion of some recent projects, \$316 million was invested in UW-Oshkosh. Of that amount, \$160 million was from the state of Wisconsin; \$111 million from program revenue, such as residence hall fees, business service fee revenues; and \$45 million from donor and university-private sector partnership investment.

Another successful outcome was UW-Oshkosh's national reputation for a commitment to green principles. Also, the institution was recognized as a national model for developing exemplary campus-wide liberal education programs, and it has an emerging reputation for collaborating with organizations and individuals to better serve the region. In addition, UW-Oshkosh was able to support its faculty and students in particular "amazing" achievements.

Chancellor Wells said that UW-Oshkosh had been an outstanding university for a long time, and in the past 12 years had become even better. The only reason the institution is not yet a great institution is because of some remaining challenges.

## ***Challenges***

Before describing challenges facing UW-Oshkosh, the chancellor noted the difference between micro- and macro-strategies for addressing challenges. Both are important, but many of the strategies employed to address achievement gaps are micro-strategies.

The chancellor identified three challenges: improving student success and closing achievement gaps, affordability of college, and competitive compensation and support for and development of faculty and staff.

With respect to the first of these challenges, Chancellor Wells said that since 2000, UW-Oshkosh's enrollment of degree-seeking student had increased by 17 percent, and its degrees awarded by 28 percent. The six-year graduation rate also increased. For those graduating from UW Oshkosh within 6 years, the rate was 47 percent for the 2002 cohort. Another 16 percent graduated from another institution in the country (based on National Clearinghouse data). The total graduated or still enrolled from the 2002 cohort was 77 percent. He noted that although institutions are criticized for having graduation rates below 50 percent, the fuller picture shows that 77 percent actually either graduated from UW-Oshkosh or somewhere else or were still working toward graduation. Similarly, for the 2006 cohort, the overall rate was 81 percent, up from 77 percent for the 2002 cohort.

However, the data for first-year retention were less positive, Chancellor Wells said. He described the situation at UW-Oshkosh in some detail, indicating that the gap between students of color and white students opened and closed and opened again. He stressed the importance of looking at

particular institutions with an eye toward their particular missions and challenges; achievement gaps can shift dramatically from one year to the next.

Exploring the gap further, Chancellor Wells said that he was exceptionally concerned about what could happen to the Pell Grant federal financial aid program because of its importance for giving more Americans opportunities. He said that many people who need aid do not receive it. Comparing the 2007 cohort to the 2011 cohort, the chancellor said that more students applied for Pell grants (+28.8 percent). The average award amount increased (+34.6 percent), and total awards granted increased dramatically (+63.3 percent). The number of UW-Oshkosh Pell students who received awards with zero expected family contribution increased; in the 2007 cohort (pre-recession) there were 846, and in 2011 (coming out of the recession) there were 1,726.

Comparing the 2007 cohort to the 2011 cohort, Chancellor Wells said that retention rates improved for both non-Pell white students and students of color. The number of Pell-eligible white students increased, and their rates of retention decreased. The number of Pell-eligible students of color also increased; however, their rate of retention decreased more than four times the white Pell students' rate.

### **Strategies**

Chancellor Wells discussed some of the strategies to address the issues he had described, such as early-alert programs, exchanging information with other institutions, and staying aware of national developments. He highlighted, in particular, the University Studies Program, an Inclusive Excellence strategy that he said was core to the mission, provides close attention to all students, provides for joint pursuit of diversity and excellence, and pertains to all students rather than only students of color.

This strategy is built on better teaching and better learning, as well as greater expectations from students that they demonstrate their. The faculty met and had conversations to agree on essential learning outcomes. The challenge is to provide better education and better engagement of students. This can be accomplished by training peer mentors – student ambassadors – to work with incoming students to help them navigate the general education program, through community engagement projects with social service agencies, through volunteer alumni mentors, and through the work of a team of people focusing on each student.

Chancellor Wells mentioned the challenge of the affordability of college. In fall 2000, when he arrived on campus, the total student cost for a resident Wisconsin student was \$6,858; it is now \$15,284, a 123 percent plus increase. The strategy to address this is to develop a stakeholder's scorecard related to responsibility. Internal stakeholders, such as the administration, faculty and staff, have a role, as do external stakeholders, such as the state, federal government, and donors. The faculty and administrators are responsible for the cost and the quality of delivering education, the chancellor said. However, students themselves make choices about their costs, as well; and federal, state and donor price subsidizers are most responsible for the price paid and the student investment and loan debt incurred.

An additional challenge is competitive compensation, support for development of faculty and staff. He referred to the recent mention of President Reilly's discussion of faculty and staff salaries in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and the competitive-compensation commission convened by the UW

several years before. The strategy to address compensation is to increase external-stakeholder funding for compensation and professional development for the UW's outstanding faculty and staff, Chancellor Wells said. Internal allocation of resources must also focus on making salaries more competitive and providing more professional support and development programs.

Chancellor Wells expressed concern about the way the state pay plan has been set for university employees, recognizing mostly statewide and local conditions, rather than Midwest, national, and international markets. He stressed the importance of the university's having the authority to set its own pay plan, and he closed his remarks by saying that if the highest priority is a better education, then it is necessary to provide fair and competitive compensation and support for faculty and staff.

### ***Discussion***

Regent Bradley observed that some people in the academic community suggest that the primary problem underlying the cost of public education is a failure to control costs, rather than a decline in the subsidization of costs. Chancellor Wells said that he was suggesting that both premises are right, that there is a responsibility on the part of the university to contain costs and also a responsibility for public investment in public education. Such investment and commitment to higher education makes the United States distinctive.

Regent Whitburn asked Chancellor Wells' opinion about Georgetown economist Anthony Carnevale's recent comments to the Board about higher education and health care having greater inefficiency than other sectors of the economy. Chancellor Wells indicated that a greater awareness of efficiencies had developed ten years before. He suggested that there is a choice; when investors are unable to continue the level of investment for whatever reason, the university can "moan and complain and cry about it," or figure out how to create greater efficiencies and how to leverage whatever flexibility it can create in its budget.

Chancellor Wells concluded by saying that one way to gain greater efficiencies is to have innovation-fund investment in efforts to improve both efficiency and effectiveness. He indicated that UW-Oshkosh had been able to develop its capacity to fund innovation and creativity through private investment and other means; examples would be detailed at the afternoon's Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

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Submitted by:

/s/ Jane S. Radue

Jane S. Radue, Secretary of the Board