

Minutes of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee  
University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents  
Van Hise Hall, Madison, WI  
February 7, 2013

Chairman Bradley convened the meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation (REDI) Committee at 1:05 p.m. Regents Bradley, Higgins, Hribar, Pruitt, Tyler and Whitburn were present for the meeting.

Chairman Bradley asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2012, REDI Committee meeting. Regent Hribar offered a motion, which was seconded by Regent Pruitt, and approved with no discussion.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Lisa Johnson, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Vice President of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, highlighted WEDC initiatives in the areas of start-up, innovation, and small business development. Johnson said that the focus of her mission, and that of the WEDC, is to encourage more business start-ups across the state. To encourage these efforts, she called for supporting an entrepreneurial ecosystem, increasing investment capital, and accelerating the pace of change in Wisconsin's risk-adverse culture.

She commended UW-Extension's Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN), the Whitewater Community Development Authority partnership with WEDC to provide seed capital and support to local entrepreneurs, and recognized UW-Eau Claire, UW-Stout and UW-Milwaukee as places that would benefit from seed accelerator investment.

University of Wisconsin System Office of Economic Development

Associate Vice President for Economic Development Dave Brukardt discussed the UW System's economic development road map and posed questions for discussion and review. The three initiatives that were highlighted include:

Communication: 1.6 – Establish metrics and reporting related to Act 32 performance requirements. Brukardt noted that he was serving on the UW System Accountability Working Group, and that from an economic development standpoint, there is merit in focusing on interpretations of the metrics that can help lead to greater levels of customer satisfaction.

Connection: 2.4 – Collaborate with business partners and associations to leverage university economic development efforts. Over the past 10 years, MIT and its partners, including UW-Stout, have helped advance a Fab Lab network nationwide. Fab Labs enable users to define problems and prototype solutions. It is an environment that removes barriers, such as access to equipment and expertise, and serves as an incubator for applied research, particularly suited to UW-Stout's applied research environment. Brukardt indicated that similar, stronger and deeper connections between WEDC, the

UW and industry will continue to become increasingly important in an environment where more than one-third of the entire U.S. labor force changes jobs each year, and where students can expect to have as many as 14 jobs by the time they reach age 40.

Capital: 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 --- Establish a WEDC seed fund that fosters undergraduate research, industry growth, and entrepreneurship; structure WiSys for long-term sustainability; support WEDC initiatives such as Centers of Excellence. Brukardt urged members of the committee to analyze and develop best-practice sustainable funding models for these priorities.

### Motion

Vice Chair Tim Higgins moved, and Mark Tyler, seconded the following motion: That two subcommittees of the Committee be established, with a list of deliverables and projected completion dates. One subcommittee is to identify opportunities to reward faculty members who engage in activities related to research, economic development, and innovation; and another subcommittee, comprised of representatives of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, the UW-Milwaukee Research Foundation, WiSys Foundation, WEDC, and others, is to develop a framework or infrastructure to support the development of a sustainable resource pool to be used to advance promising research from seed capital through early stage start-ups. Motion passed.

Chair Bradley indicated that he would begin work to create the subcommittees.

### UW-Oshkosh Role in Economic Development

UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Rick Wells and Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services Tom Sonnleitner led a discussion of the role that comprehensive universities play in regional economic development. Two workforce development initiatives include professional/technical skills gap closers and higher order “cognitive/soft skills” gap closers. He said that nearly three-fourths of all degrees awarded annually (about 1,500) are professional, career-ready or science, technology, engineering and math-based (STEM) degrees. Over the last 5 years, UW-Oshkosh boosted STEM baccalaureate degrees conferred from 143 to 201 (more than 40% increase).

One effort unique to UW-Oshkosh is its “Business Success Center.” Established in 1998, faculty, staff, and students from UW-Oshkosh, and community-based experts combine their knowledge and professionalism to offer customized training, applied research, business consulting, student internship programs, and survey services to business in the area. Wells also highlighted another initiative under way to create the UW-Oshkosh Business Accelerator Program that will focus on fostering business growth in five industries, with an initial focus on aviation and space technologies.

UW-Oshkosh is also a leader for anaerobic digestion, and the campus is becoming a leader in renewable energy production, operation, research, and testing. Sonnleitner discussed multiple collaborative relationships, including an innovative partnership with Milk Source’s Rosendale Dairy and renewable energy companies, the Viessmann Group of Germany, and BIOFerm Energy Solutions of Madison.

Due to time constraints, Chair Bradley indicated that Art Rathjen, UW-Oshkosh Foundation President, would be asked back to speak to the Committee at another time.

Chairman Bradley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Regent Tyler offered a motion, which was seconded by Regent Hribar, and the committee adjourned at 2:30 p.m.