

12/2/2015

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

I.4. Research, Economic Development,
and Innovation Committee

Thursday, December 10, 2015
1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Gordon Dining and Event Center
770 West Dayton Street, 2nd floor
Symphony Room
Madison, Wisconsin

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the October 8, 2015, Meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee
- b. UW System Vision for Creating Pathways to Fill Statewide Workforce Needs – Led by UW System President Ray Cross
- c. WEDC Partnership Update – Led by Secretary and CEO Mark Hogan
- d. WiSys -- The Momentum Continues – Led by WiSys Executive Director Arjun Sanga
- e. Regent Scholar Program Status Report – Led by UW System Regents Tim Higgins and Mark Tyler

UW SYSTEM VISION FOR CREATING PATHWAYS TO FILL STATEWIDE WORKFORCE NEEDS

BACKGROUND

The UW System represents a significant talent pipeline to support the expanding workforce needs of Wisconsin's 21st Century economy. As a result of changing demographics, including an increasing wave of Baby Boomer retirements over the next several years, Wisconsin will need to increase its workforce significantly to fill existing and anticipated workforce needs. By further expanding the university's alignment with business and community partners, Wisconsin will benefit from increased attraction, retention, and development of highly skilled workers, managers, and business leaders capable of competing effectively in global markets. Students who have opportunities to connect as undergraduates with Wisconsin businesses and industries are more likely to choose to live and to work in Wisconsin as they begin their careers.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only.

DISCUSSION

UW System campuses are already highly active in business outreach efforts that encompass internships, mentorships, and job-placement programs for students. At today's REDI Committee meeting, President Ray Cross will highlight success stories that illustrate the current scope and effectiveness of campus/business outreach efforts; he also will introduce an initiative to expand these activities for faculty and students within the traditional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines and across all other disciplines. **President Cross will outline a vision to foster programmatic and institutional support that encourages every UW System junior and senior to have at least one business experience before graduating.** Such experiences may include collaborations, internships, research projects, and mentoring experiences, among others, with the duration being as brief as a one-day program or as long as an entire semester or more. The end goal is for UW System to become the leading higher educational enterprise in making workforce readiness a reality for all students.

RELATED REGENT POLICIES

Not applicable.

**WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WEDC) –
PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

BACKGROUND

The UW System and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) continue to strengthen and expand partnership initiatives designed to identify and leverage collaborations and initiatives that accelerate innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development. WEDC provides regular updates to the REDI Committee on current and planned initiatives and provides progress reports on outcomes.

REQUESTED ACTION

Information only.

DISCUSSION

WEDC's newly appointed CEO, Mark Hogan, will provide an update on current initiatives and programs, with a focus on WEDC's efforts to collaborate with the university and with state businesses and economic development organizations to build stronger communities and to support opportunities for job creation.

RELATED REGENT POLICIES

Not applicable.

WISYS TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION – THE MOMENTUM CONTINUES

BACKGROUND

WiSys is the technology transfer entity authorized by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System to advance promising research and innovation from discovery through commercialization on UW System four-year comprehensive campuses and at UW Colleges and UW-Extension.

Since 2000, WiSys has provided significant support to advance research at UW System campuses and has played a critical role in transforming technology into jobs. WiSys has demonstrated leadership in advancing research and technology development across Wisconsin in a cost-effective manner by building strategic partnerships with innovative start-ups, high-tech companies, clinical organizations, and UW campuses.

To date, WiSys has pursued patent protection on 136 innovative technology discoveries. Additionally, 15 startups from seven comprehensive campuses have been formed.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only.

DISCUSSION

Over the past year, Executive Director Arjun Sanga and WiSys Board Chair David J. Ward have crisscrossed the state to meet with campus faculty, students, and administrators in an effort to raise the awareness of WiSys as a supporting organization of the UW System and to lay the foundation for an on-campus network of WiSys Regional Associates and Ambassadors who will provide “in-market” support for faculty and students. This expanded network, along with new regional representation, is already paying dividends. Sanga will provide an update of WiSys programs and project support, highlight successful campus initiatives under way, and provide an outlook for further progress.

RELATED REGENT POLICIES

Not applicable.

REGENT SCHOLAR GRANT PROGRAM REPORT

BACKGROUND

Last year, the REDI Committee introduced the UW System Regent Scholar Grant program to recognize and reward faculty and campus programs that undertake innovative undergraduate research projects with the potential to lead to job creation and economic development. The program continues this year (with three awards as compared with the five of last year) and is designed to help fill needs identified through UW System discussions focused on making it easier for faculty to work outside the classroom and providing financial support to make it possible. The Regent Scholar program allocates one-time funding, primarily for use in the summer months, for faculty to engage in research and other scholarly activities while stimulating industry outreach and innovation across a wide spectrum of academic pursuits.

REQUESTED ACTION

Information only.

DISCUSSION

This year's request for Regent Scholar entries drew 34 applications (compared to 32 last year) from faculty and their respective business collaborators across the state. Ultimately, a committee of UW System and outside evaluators will select three grant recipients to receive Regent Scholar awards. The external evaluators include Wisconsin business leaders selected by Speaker of the Wisconsin State Assembly, Robin Vos, and by Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, plus a representative of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). Additional selection committee members include UW System representatives from the Office for Academic & Student Affairs. Regent Mark Tyler is chairing the selection committee for a total of six evaluators. The newly selected Regent Scholars will be named early in January and will be honored at the UW System Board of Regents meeting in February 2016.

RELATED REGENT POLICIES

Not applicable.