

**Minutes of the Research, Economic Development & Innovation Committee**  
**University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents**  
**UW-Madison**  
**December 7, 2017**

Chair Eve Hall convened the meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation (REDI) Committee at 10:18 a.m. Regents Hall, Klein, Erickson, Higgins, and Tyler were present. Also in attendance: Dave Brukaradt, Nicole Sment.

**a. Approval of the Minutes of the October 5, 2017 Meeting of the Research, Economic Development and Innovation Committee**

Regent Hall asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2017 REDI Committee meeting. Motion made by Regent Higgins, seconded by Regent Tyler, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Regent Higgins introduced Rebecca Deschane, who was named WEDC's Talent Initiatives Director on November 27, 2017. The new position is jointly funded by the UW System Administration and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and will lead and coordinate statewide efforts to attract and retain talent. Ms. Deschane is uniquely qualified for the position as she has served as WEDC's legislative liaison since 2011. She was WEDC's primary contact for engaging young professional organizations across the state and helped launch an initiative aimed at attracting and retaining young talent in Wisconsin. Regent Higgins concluded his introduction by wishing Ms. Deschane much success in her new position. Ms. Deschane addressed the committee members stating her admiration of the REDI committee's activities and successes in expanding its scope.

**b. The University School of Medicine and Public Health: The Wisconsin Partnership Program – Acceptance of the 2016 Annual Report and the Report for the Period January 1, 2017 – June 30, 2017.**

Dr. Robert Golden, Dean of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, presented a report of the Wisconsin Partnership Program. In accordance with its organizational directives, 35 percent of its disbursements are allocated for public health initiatives and 65 percent for education and research initiatives to advance population health in Wisconsin.

The committee heard highlights of the Partnership's 2016 activities and its report of outcomes for the period January 1 through June 30, 2017. The Wisconsin Partnership Program mission is to improve health through research, education and community partnerships. The Partnership has awarded 450 grants in the amount of \$205.8 million. Additionally, those grants have leveraged additional funding by the grantees in the amount of \$471 million. Dr. Golden's presentation focused on three current examples of the Partnership's work supporting the mission: research on triple negative breast cancer, the advancement of health equity in Wisconsin through nutrition, and improving care for Wisconsin seniors.

Regent Higgins stated that “...the Board of Regents has an oversight role for the Wisconsin Partnership Program and I am pleased that they have found a permanent home in the REDI committee.”

Regent Hall asked how the work being done on triple negative breast cancer will fold back into the university. Dr. Golden answered that the research is being led by the head of the school of medicine and public health at our university and we have reason to anticipate that it will lead to substantial support by the American Cancer Society. With more leverage, funding is expected to go into the clinical trial phase. It shows remarkable progress.

Regent Hall inquired if every community in the state does a community healthcare needs assessment. Pat Remington, Associate Dean for Public Health answered that the assessments were initiated 10 years ago and now every county in the state participates. Community health assessment and planning is currently done with all the health systems in the state to find out what they are doing to encourage partnership with the community.

Regent Hall thanked Dr. Golden for the presentation.

**c. Driving Global Leadership in Aquaponics and Aquaculture at UW-Stevens Point – Pathways from Idea to Commercialization – Led by Chancellor Bernie Patterson and Prof. Chris Hartleb.**

UW-Chancellor Bernie Patterson introduced both Dr. Chris Hartleb, a UW Regent Scholar and Economic Incentive Grant recipient, and UW-Stevens Point alumnus and Superior Fresh Chief Operating Officer Brandon Gottsacker. This new organization is fast becoming the largest aquaponics producer of salmon and walleye worldwide. Its state-of-the art facility based near Eau Claire has been recognized for setting worldwide standards for organic aquaponics and aquaculture systems.

Dr. Hartleb addressed the committee focusing on the implications of how aquaponics and aquaculture could affect world hunger; he noted that currently, 90% of fish consumed in the USA is imported, often from places without any regulations. Dr. Hartleb went on to identify the job opportunities in aquaponics noting that the Wisconsin roadmap for aquaculture includes offering education to new, and up and coming, aqua-culturists and to support and expand the 450+ jobs and 200 fish farms operating throughout the state. He stated, “There are proven results in aquaponics. It is a growing venture industry across the nation, and Wisconsin is at the center of it.” By working closely with the industry, UW–Stevens Point knows what the industry needs and can adapt education for those majoring in the program, establishing aquaponics courses and certificates. The UW-Stevens Point aquaponics program has a 110% job placement rate. All students graduating in the program have secured jobs and there are more jobs than students.

Dr. Hartleb introduced Brandon Gottsacker who spoke about Superior Fresh, the first Atlantic salmon farm in the U.S. and the largest in the world. He explained the process and infrastructure supporting his newly built aquaponics facility. Mr. Gottsacker noted the goal is to prove that this type of aquaponics facility can be built anywhere in the world. He added that finding and retaining qualified employees is the biggest challenge Superior Fresh has encountered.

Regent Hall asked where Superior Fresh products are sold. Mr. Gottsacker indicated they are sold to high-end restaurants throughout the Midwest. The Superior Fresh products will also soon be sold in high-end grocery stores in Wisconsin. Regent Tyler noted that this was a smart and strong investment, and we couldn't have asked for a better outcome from the initial UW System Economic Development Incentive Grant investment which was made in 2013.

The question of how we can help consumers understand the difference between Superior Fresh product and other "farmed" products was raised. The answer is to educate people about farmed fish. Gottsacker said there is a great need to make people aware that an aquaponics facility such as Superior Fresh completely controls the growth cycle and the biological environment. Fish in this system thrive in an environment that is ideal, and which requires no antibiotics or pesticides to support the growth cycle. Mr. Gottsacker added his firm continues to focus on educating consumers on the benefits of aquaponically raised fish and vegetables.

Regent Hall thanked Dr. Hartleb and Mr. Gottsacker for their presentation.

**d. WiSys Innovation Engine Supports Faculty/Student Teamwork – UW-Parkside Highlights Pioneering "Green Vertical Farming" Concept – Led by Chancellor Debbie Ford.**

UW-Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford introduced faculty member Dr. Daryl Sauer and junior level student Nikolai Lumpkins.

Dr. Sauer spoke of UW-Parkside's commitment to undergraduate research and its new state-of-the-art-facilities. He shared that mentoring student research and innovation is the most rewarding job he has ever had, but it is harder than working in the industry. "When doing innovation you are learning at the same time as the student, and learning just as much as they are."

Dr. Sauer highlighted the work of two students, Cassie Van Hoof, who developed a product to relieve feline anxiety; and Nikolai Lumpkins, a WiSys student inventor and honoree who has pioneered an innovative "Green Vertical Farming" concept. Mr. Lumpkins' concept has been granted patent-pending status. He explained his innovation, the Marble Pillar, which is a green vertical farming product that allows for plant production in small, indoor urban spaces. Regent Klein noted that WiSys funded the grant that helped set up the prototype.

Regent Hall thanked Dr. Sauer and Mr. Lumpkins for the informative and inspiring presentation.

Regent Hall thanked the committee members and adjourned the meeting at 11:32am.