

**MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION COMMITTEE  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS**

Thursday, October 8, 2020

WebEx Videoconference

Regent Cris Peterson called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. Regents Eve Hall, Becky Lezvow, and Kyle Weatherly were present. Regent Bob Atwell was absent. Regent Peterson also provided an opportunity for committee members to declare any conflicts of interest; none were so stated.

**a. Approval of the minutes of the August 20, 2020 meeting.**

On a motion by Regent Hall and seconded by Regent Lezvow, the minutes of the August 20, 2020, REDI Committee meeting via WebEx were unanimously approved.

**b. University of Wisconsin – Green Bay Water Science Program Update from the “Coastal Campus” University**

In her opening remarks, Provost Kathleen Burns acknowledged the importance for water science professionals as our world faces significant challenges regarding water quantity and quality that are expected to worsen during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the addition of its three new coastal campuses, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is expanding its academic, professional, and community connections to address these challenges. Dr. John Katers, Dean of the College of Science and Technology and Emily Tyner, Director of Freshwater Strategies provided an overview of current and planned initiatives, as well as the outcomes and effects these programs have on the region and beyond. The UW-Green Bay campuses straddle the world’s largest freshwater estuary and are well-situated to support innovative water research that will help support sustainable economic growth across the region.

**c. New Perspectives on Research Related to the Impact of COVID-19 on the Proclivity Towards Entrepreneurship and the Potential Impact on the Wisconsin Economy.**

UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank discussed the value of innovation and entrepreneurship and introduced Dr. Jon Eckhardt, who is leading a research project that is the only one of its kind in the United States. Professor Eckhardt

who holds appointments at the Wisconsin School of Business and the Wisconsin Institute of Discovery, provided an update on his research that is focused on building technologies to identify, create, or facilitate innovators and entrepreneurs. His project relies on the collection and analysis of big data and incorporates recent findings regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the risk-taking propensities of entrepreneurs. Initial indications reflect a reduced appetite for risk during this time of extreme uncertainty.

**d. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Progress Report on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity.**

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity was created by Governor Evers' [Executive Order #65](#) to gather on-the-ground input from diverse stakeholders throughout the state whose lives and livelihoods are tied to the vitality of rural communities. The Commission seeks to tap local perspectives on long-term, recent, and future economic challenges facing the people, communities, and businesses that make rural Wisconsin shine – and to turn ideas into action that increases economic activity and improves the quality of life for future generations. As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been realized, the Commission scheduled a series of virtual listening sessions through the summer and early fall to explore opportunities. Kelliann Blazek, Director of the Office of Rural Prosperity at Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provided an overview of the new office in addition to the Blue Ribbon Commission's work. Regent Atwell serves as one of the Blue Ribbon Commissioners appointed by Gov. Evers.

**e. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.**