

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

Thursday, December 10, 2020

WebEx Videoconference

Regent Bob Atwell called the meeting to order at 10:46 a.m. Regents Cris Peterson, Becky Lezvow, and Kyle Weatherly were present. Regent Eve Hall was absent. Regent Atwell also provided an opportunity for committee members to declare any conflicts of interest; none were so stated.

**a. Approval of the minutes of the October 8, 2020 meeting.**

On a motion by Regent Lezvow and seconded by Regent Peterson, the minutes of the October 8, 2020, REDI Committee meeting were unanimously approved.

**b. WiSys Technology Foundation Update and Chancellor Panel Discussion on the Growth and Impact of Faculty Research, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation**

In his opening remarks, WiSys Board Chair Dr. David Ward said WiSys began in 2000 “as an idea” designed to build capacity to assist faculty research initiatives; he acknowledged the continuing success of WiSys today as it completes its second decade of support for technology transfer and innovation generated at UW System’s comprehensive universities. Over the years, WiSys has demonstrated leadership in advancing research and technology transfer in a cost-effective manner, fostering campus efforts to build strategic partnerships with startups, high-tech companies, clinical organizations, and other innovators.

WiSys President Arjun Sanga lead a panel discussion with Chancellors from UW-Eau Claire, UW-Parkside, and UW-Platteville and noted that one-third of the invention disclosures WiSys registers each year come from students. The panel discussion highlighted notable WiSys program outcomes that distinguish UW System faculty partnerships and student collaborations within and outside of the university setting.

Chancellor Ford said WiSys serves as one of the best illustrations of the Wisconsin Idea in action. Chancellor Shields said WiSys has helped to create a culture of innovation on his campus, and it was in part responsible for UW-Platteville’s recent success in securing a \$1 million federal grant from the Economic Development Administration. Chancellor Schmidt said Eau Claire has been named the most underrated start-up community in Wisconsin; he credits WiSys efforts, including the early 2020 launch of the downtown Eau Claire VentureHome accelerator as a key driver in significantly expanding the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- c. Innovative Approaches to Connecting Students with Business and Career Opportunities During the Pandemic:** UW System represents a significant talent pipeline that supports Wisconsin's workforce needs in the changing and challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Through campus-based Career Services offices, UW students have numerous opportunities to connect with Wisconsin businesses and industries. Graduates who do so are more likely to choose to live and work in the Badger state as they begin their careers. This fall, for the first time, UW System Career Services offices have teamed up to offer virtual Career Treks. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Talent Initiatives Director Rebecca Deschane led a panel discussion with staff and student Career Services representatives from UW-Milwaukee, UW-River Falls, and UW-Superior. During the discussion, UWM's Jean Salzer pointed out that one Career Trek virtual session drew more than 90 students and 400 attendees from across Wisconsin, highlighting the value and reach of the program, despite the pandemic. Panelist Nick Hovel, an Agricultural Engineering student at UW-River Falls, described his internship at WinField as a unique opportunity that allowed him to do "incredible things" with laser technology that would rarely be available to undergraduates otherwise.
- d. UW System Regent Scholar Grant Program Review:** REDI Chair Bob Atwell previewed program details of the systemwide competition which will evaluate and name three Regent Scholars. This honor is offered annually to faculty to recognize and reward exceptional work with undergraduate students involved in collaborative research on campus and with industry partners focused on developing entrepreneurial ideas and innovative project outcomes. As chair of the evaluation committee, Regent Weatherly described the broad range of campus entries that have been submitted as highly commendable in terms of their approach to problem solving, building partnerships with business, and providing internships. The UW System Board of Regents will formally recognize faculty involved in projects that are selected as Regent Scholar initiatives in the spring of 2021.
- e. The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 p.m.**