

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Research, Economic Development, & Innovation Committee

Via Webex Videoconference

Thursday, December 10, 2020

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- A. Call of the Roll
- B. Declaration of Conflicts
- C. Approval of the Minutes of the October 8, 2020 Meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee
- D. WiSys Technology Foundation Update and Chancellor Panel Discussion on the Growth and Impact of Faculty Research, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation
- E. Innovative Approaches to Connecting Students with Business and Career Opportunities: Focus on Preparing Graduates for Jobs of the Future in an Increasingly Diverse Marketplace
- F. UW System Regent Scholar Grant Program Preview

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**WISYS TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION UPDATE AND CHANCELLOR
PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE GROWTH AND IMPACT OF FACULTY
RESEARCH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION**

REQUESTED ACTION

Information only.

SUMMARY

[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 university campuses. For two decades, WiSys has demonstrated leadership in advancing research and technology development in a cost-effective manner by building strategic partnerships with startups, high-tech companies, clinical organizations, and other innovators.

WiSys Board Chair Dr. David Ward will introduce the topic, and WiSys President Arjun Sanga will provide an overview and lead a panel discussion. The program will highlight current WiSys successes and positive outcomes that have distinguished the UW System faculty partnerships and collaborations within and outside of the university setting.

Presenters

- WiSys President Arjun Sanga
- Deborah Ford, Chancellor, UW-Parkside and Chair, WiSys Advisory Committee
- James Schmidt, Chancellor, UW-Eau Claire
- Dennis Shields, Chancellor, UW-Platteville

BACKGROUND

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, WiSys' campus-based network of regional associates and student ambassadors has continued to deliver "in-market"

support for faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, WiSys has taken on oversight of a portfolio of UW System research-funding initiatives including the Regent Scholar program, which recognizes faculty for innovation, entrepreneurship, and business collaboration. WiSys President Arjun Sanga will provide an update of WiSys programs and project support. He will also lead a panel discussion with three Chancellors who will highlight successful university initiatives and provide insights into future programming directions.

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**INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CONNECTING STUDENTS
WITH BUSINESS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:
FOCUS ON PREPARING GRADUATES FOR JOBS OF
THE FUTURE IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE MARKETPLACE**

REQUESTED ACTION

Information only.

SUMMARY

The UW System represents a significant talent pipeline that supports Wisconsin's workforce needs in the changing and challenging 21st century economy. By strengthening the System's alignment with business and community partners, students can experience more robust "real-life work" opportunities, leading to the development of highly skilled workers, managers, and community leaders. Through campus-based [Career Services](#) offices, UW students have opportunities to connect as undergraduates 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.

Career fairs have typically provided an opportunity for students to network in-person with a room full of possible employers; COVID-19 has changed that. In light of restrictions now in place due to the pandemic, UW universities are adopting alternate channels to help students make important career connections. This fall for the first time, Career Services offices across the UW System have teamed up to offer virtual [Career Treks](#).

Presenters

- Rebecca Deschane, Talent Initiatives Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- Haley Carr, Employer Relations and Events Specialist, UW-Superior Career Services
- Nick Hovel, UW-River Falls Agricultural Engineering student and intern with WinField Solutions in Land O'Lakes
- Jean Salzer, Director, Career Planning and Services Center, UW-Milwaukee
- Melissa Wilson, Director of Career Services, UW-River Falls

BACKGROUND

UW System universities are highly active in business outreach efforts to support work experiences and job-placement programs for students. Such experiences may include collaborations, internships, research projects, and mentoring experiences, among others, with the duration being as brief as one day or as long as an entire semester or more. The end goal is for the UW System to become a leading higher educational enterprise in making workforce readiness a reality for all students. During the global coronavirus pandemic, cultivating these vital connections becomes more challenging.

UW System President Tommy Thompson has characterized the new Career Treks initiative as the latest example of how UW universities benefit Wisconsin students, businesses, and communities. The innovative Career Treks format provides student access to a growing range of virtual opportunities to connect with businesses and also facilitates learning more about specific career and industry pathways. This interactive engagement can help inform student decisions related to university curriculum choices. It can also help to expand workforce readiness aptitudes as students explore and learn more about internships and post-graduation employment opportunities.

The Career Treks panel discussion, led by Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Talent Initiatives Director Rebecca Deschane, will provide a more detailed look into the program and the cross-campus collaborations that are bringing these weekly career explorations on-line.

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UW SYSTEM REGENT SCHOLAR GRANT PROGRAM PREVIEW

REQUESTED ACTION

Information only.

SUMMARY

REDI Chair Bob Atwell will preview [UW System Regent Scholar grant program](#) details. This honor is offered to faculty to help recognize and reward exceptional work with undergraduate students and other collaborative research and industry partners whose activities focus on developing entrepreneurial ideas and innovative project outcomes. Regent Scholar criteria include:

- Recognizing excellence in research and other high-impact practices;
- Engaging undergraduate students in strong research experiences, thus preparing a high-quality workforce, ultimately driving economic development; and
- Celebrating undergraduate research, scholarly, and creative activity (URSCA) at the UW System Board of Regents level.

The UW System Board of Regents will formally recognize faculty and students involved in the project as “Regent Scholars” early 2021. Regent Scholars will be encouraged to disseminate the results of their work in other local, national, and international venues.

Presenter

- Bob Atwell, UW Regent and REDI Chair

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the REDI Committee endorsed the newly developed Regent Scholar program that was designed to recognize faculty excellence in the areas of collaborative research, industry partnerships, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The program continues in 2020-2021, with President Thompson’s call for nominations for three recipients to be honored as

Regent Scholars. Each recipient will receive a faculty/student grant of up to \$50,000 to be presented in early 2021 in order to continue their exceptional work.

Through a systemwide competitive process, Regent Scholar grants are available for faculty to explore entrepreneurial ideas and innovative projects with undergraduate students working with community and business partners and collaborators. The goal is to expand the boundaries of knowledge, enhance research, stimulate new technologies, inspire start-ups, fuel product development, better prepare the future workforce, and support the creation or retention of jobs in Wisconsin.