

# BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

## **Research, Economic Development, & Innovation Committee**

Webex Videoconference

Thursday, October 8, 2020

8:45 a.m. –10:00 a.m.

- A. Call of the Roll
- B. Declaration of Conflicts
- C. Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2020 Meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee
- D. University of Wisconsin – Green Bay Water Science Program Update from the “Coastal Campus” University
- E. New Perspectives on Research Related to the Impact of COVID-19 on the Proclivity Towards Entrepreneurship and the Potential Impact on the Wisconsin Economy
- F. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Progress Report on the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity

October 8, 2020

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – GREEN BAY WATER SCIENCE  
PROGRAM UPDATE FROM THE “COASTAL CAMPUS” UNIVERSITY**

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Information only.

**SUMMARY**

The world faces significant challenges regarding water quantity and quality that are expected to worsen during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The global need for water science professionals able to solve critical water issues is accelerating and expected to continue. 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. The UW-Green Bay footprint now includes a 16-county area that encompasses nearly 50 percent of the Wisconsin coastline on the world’s most expansive freshwater ecosystem.

This UW institution is strengthening its “water-centric” educational offerings for students at all four campus locations: Green Bay, Marinette, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan. Additionally, UW-Green Bay is a fully committed partner in the UW System Freshwater Collaborative and is working with the Governor’s office and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on the development of a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) focused on the Green Bay ecosystem. Once established, this NERR will become part of a national network of coastal sites designed to protect and study estuarine systems, while strengthening regional efforts and expanding opportunities for research, education, and community outreach.

Interim Provost Kathleen Burns will introduce the topic, and Dr. John Katers and Emily Tyner will provide an overview of current and planned initiatives, as well as the outcomes and effects these programs have on the region and beyond.

## **Presenters**

- Dr. Kathleen Burns, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Dr. John Katers, Dean, College of Science and Technology
- Emily Tyner, Director of Freshwater Strategies
- Dr. Kevin Fermanich, Professor of Water Science, Geoscience, and Environmental Science

## **BACKGROUND**

Since its founding in the late 1960s, UW-Green Bay has had a strong record of education, applied research, and outreach in water related disciplines. This has included undergraduate majors in environmental engineering technology, environmental science, environmental policy and planning, and more recently water science, and graduate programs in environmental science and policy and sustainable management. The University is also home to the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity and the Environmental Management and Business Institute, both of which contribute to academic programs and research. This work continues to be done in conjunction with numerous partner organizations, including academic institutions, federal agencies, local government, non-governmental organizations, water and wastewater utilities, agriculture, and many other businesses.

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's integrated approach to water related programming is designed to provide students with the tools necessary to solve the challenges of today and tomorrow. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and students have opportunities to work as research assistants on faculty projects, to complete internships, and to conduct their own independent research projects. These programs and initiatives help to attract, retain, and grow an array of water experts, managers, and innovators in Wisconsin who are focused on working to solve water resource challenges and on helping to keep Wisconsin's water-driven economy and quality of life strong and vibrant.

October 8, 2020

**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH RELATED TO THE IMPACT OF  
COVID-19 ON THE PROCLIVITY TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE WISCONSIN ECONOMY**

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Information only.

**SUMMARY**

UW-Madison Professor Jon Eckhardt will provide an update on a research project he leads 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.

**BACKGROUND**

UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank will introduce Dr. Eckhardt, who is the Pyle Bascom Professor in Business Leadership and an associate professor at the UW-Madison. Professor Eckhardt holds appointments at the Wisconsin School of Business and the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery (WID) where he is a Discovery Fellow. At WID, he is currently managing a team of researchers who are focused on improving entrepreneurship and innovation in academia. From 2012-2019, he was the Executive Director for the Weinert Center for Entrepreneurship where he helped to transform the center into a campus-wide program with an annual enrollment of more than 2,500 students.

October 8, 2020

**WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WEDC)  
PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON  
COMMISSION ON RURAL PROSPERITY**

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Information only.

**SUMMARY**

Wisconsin's rural communities are known for their resilience and self-reliance. Pulling together to support neighbors is common practice. When faced with a challenge, Wisconsinites band together to chart the best course forward. The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity 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.

The Blue Ribbon commission 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. 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 to build more resilient rural communities. From these listening sessions and numerous additional conversations with rural stakeholders, the Commission will send a final report with recommendations to the Governor by October 31.

**Presenters**

- Kelliann Blazek, Director, WEDC Office of Rural Prosperity
- Regent Bob Atwell, Blue Ribbon Commission Member and REDI Committee Chair

## **BACKGROUND**

The Commission includes 12 members with a wide range of backgrounds and experience from across Wisconsin, including UW Regent and REDI Chair Bob Atwell. Commission members, appointed by Governor Evers, represent the state's geographic diversity as well as the many industries and professions rural communities rely upon to thrive. Kelliann Blazek will provide an overview of the new Office of Rural Prosperity at WEDC and the Blue Ribbon Commission's work. Bob Atwell will reflect on his role as a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission and discuss initial observations based on the public listening sessions.