

**RECORD OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS**

Thursday, March 4, 2021
8:45 a.m.

By WebEx Videoconference

-President Petersen presiding-

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The recording of this meeting's open session is available at: [March 4, 2021 Webcast](#)

CALLING OF THE ROLL

[\[Recording: 00:00:01\]](#)

PRESENT: Regents Robert Atwell, Scott Beightol, Amy Bogost, Héctor Colón, Michael Grebe, Eve Hall, Mike Jones, Tracey Klein, Becky Lezow, Edmund Manydeeds, John Miller, Andrew Petersen, Cris Peterson, Corey Saffold, Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Karen Walsh, Kyle Weatherly, and Olivia Woodmansee.

Regent Corey Saffold joined the meeting at 8:51 a.m. following the calling of the roll.

Regent Becky Lezow joined the meeting at 9:15 a.m. during the panel discussion.

UNABLE TO ATTEND: None.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS

[\[Recording: 00:02:04\]](#)

Before considering any items on the open session agenda, President Petersen asked if any Board members wished to declare any conflicts of interest as per Regent Policy Document 2-4, "Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy for the UW System Board of Regents." No conflicts were declared.

INTRODUCTION OF REGENT JOHN W. MILLER

[\[Recording: 00:02:17\]](#)

President Petersen welcomed Regent John W. Miller, who was appointed by Governor Evers to fulfill the remainder of the late Regent José Delgado's term ending in May 2021.

Regent Miller is the founder and principal at Arenberg Holdings, a venture capital fund established in 2015 to make investments in early stage companies, with an emphasis on companies located in the Midwest. He began his career as a Congressional staffer, serving as the chief tax and budget policy advisor for a Wisconsin Congressman serving on the House Committee on Ways and Means as well as the Committee on the Budget.

In 2006, Regent Miller joined his family's farm equipment manufacturing business, Miller-St. Nazianz, Inc., and became the fifth generation of his family to lead the company as President & CEO. In late 2014, he sold the company to CNH Industrial, its largest customer.

Regent Miller serves on many local charitable boards including Discovery World, the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Foundation, BublR Bikes, the Wisconsin Policy Forum, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee. He earned his bachelor's degree at Marquette University, a master's degree at Georgetown University, and a law degree from University of Wisconsin Law School.

Thanking everyone for welcoming him to the Board, Regent Miller stated that he is looking forward to getting to know his fellow Regents.

APPROVAL OF MEETING RECORD

[\[Recording: 00:04:17\]](#)

Regent Jones moved for approval of the record of the February 4-5, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Regents. The motion was seconded by Regent Woodmansee and approved on a voice vote.

REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

[\[Recording: 00:04:47\]](#)

Update on the UW-River Falls Chancellor Search Process

President Petersen reported that the Search and Screen Committee, chaired by Regent Scott Beightol, is expected to reconvene later in March to select semi-finalist candidates and hold off-campus interviews.

Capital Budget Update

President Petersen remarked on the UW System's \$1.3 billion capital biennial budget request which was approved by the Board of Regents in August 2020, emphasizing the need for significant repair and renovation work to ensure the continued safety of university facilities as well as to support continue excellence in teaching, learning, and research on the UW campuses. He noted that proposed new construction projects are only for obsolete buildings where renovation is neither cost-effective nor educationally appropriate.

President Petersen said the UW System's capital budget request reflects the demand for modern STEM facilities to support state workforce needs and help attract and retain students and faculty. The request also includes more than \$200 million to complete projects that are already underway.

President Petersen added that even with the expansion of online class delivery due to the pandemic, student enthusiasm for the residential UW college experience has remained strong: "Our experiences of the last year have reinforced the belief that collaboration and in-person contact are key to learning and growth – and that means we need the proper facilities."

President Petersen concluded that UW System leaders look forward to working with the Governor, legislators, stakeholders in the public and private sectors, faculty, staff, and students to advance their shared priorities: "We know there will be a robust debate on this budget, but we trust that the Governor and our legislators understand that a significant investment in higher education helps advance our shared priorities of growing Wisconsin's talent pipeline, improving lives, and providing opportunities for families to earn higher wages."

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SYSTEM

[\[Recording: 00:10:00\]](#)

Update on COVID-19 Response

President Thompson reported an overall COVID-19 test positivity rate of 0.3 percent on campuses System-wide over the past seven days. He noted that this data compares favorably with statewide positivity rate of 2.6 percent, and comes amid aggressive testing protocols at all UW campuses.

President Thompson said more than 700 UW students in nursing or other healthcare related fields have signed up for the UW Nursing Initiative to assist with providing healthcare services or administer vaccinations during the pandemic.

In addition to the public vaccination sites which recently opened at UW-Green Bay and UW-Oshkosh, President Thompson indicated that sites at UW-La Crosse and UW-Milwaukee will open in the next week, with other campuses expected to follow soon.

President Thompson reaffirmed that he is optimistic about planning for Fall 2021 with a target of 75% of classes being held in-person, which would return the UW System to pre-pandemic levels.

PANEL DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE 21ST CENTURY MARKETPLACE

[\[Recording: 00:20:21\]](#)

President Petersen welcomed the following panelists who joined the Board of Regents for a discussion on how the UW System might develop innovative approaches for connecting students with career opportunities in an increasingly diverse 21st Century marketplace:

- Becky Bartoszek, President/CEO of the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce
- Ashley DeMuth, Chief Executive Officer of the Menomonie Chamber of Commerce
- Meghavi Patel, President of the Platteville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Jenny Trick, Executive Director of the Racine County Economic Development Corporation

In a discussion moderated by David Brukardt, Associate Vice President for Corporate Relations & Economic Engagement, the panelists shared their perspectives on innovative strategies and actions that could serve to strengthen the UW System's alignment with

business and community partners, as well as provide students and graduates with more robust, “real life” work experiences and career opportunities.

The panelists also discussed the greatest economic challenges in their regions, particularly the need for more talent, the lack of broadband access and/or affordable housing in rural areas, and the impacts of COVID-19, as well as how local businesses are partnering with the university to address those concerns.

President Petersen emphasized the importance of internships in developing and retaining new talent in Wisconsin, and shared details about his company TDS’s experience with transitioning to a virtual internship program in response to COVID-19.

Regent Beightol said the collaborative ways that UW Chancellors work with their local communities are a tremendous selling point to businesses that are thinking about establishing or expanding operations in Wisconsin, and that the relationships created between UW campuses and businesses also help attract new students from across the country.

Regent Bogost noted that UW alumni can also be a good resource for connecting new graduates to open job opportunities and offering advice as they transition into the workforce.

Regent Grebe asked the panelists what they perceive as the biggest obstacles or challenges in making connections between businesses and UW students. Ms. Trick, Ms. DeMuth, and Ms. Patel discussed how universities can help better support or connect with businesses that lack the time, resources, or infrastructure to develop on-site internship programs.

Noting that her organization has been creating networking opportunities for interns from different employers as one strategy to help retain more graduates in the Fox Cities area, Ms. Bartoszek said the university could help expand this initiative to further enhance students’ internship experiences.

In response to a question from Regent Weatherly about the wide variance in students’ internship experiences with different employers, Ms. Bartoszek and Ms. DeMuth discussed the need to educate businesses and empower students to create more successful internships. Regent Weatherly said he would like to explore this topic further, perhaps at a future meeting of the Research, Economic Development, and Innovation Committee.

Mr. Brukardt noted that in addition to resources on the UW campuses, UW System has also partnered with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to create the Talent Generator website, which includes information for small businesses on how to build quality internship experiences.

In response to a question from Regent Klein, President Petersen invited several Chancellors to discuss how their campuses are engaging local businesses in the development of new academic programs or initiatives, such as the Freshwater Collaborative.

UW SYSTEM FEDERAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021

[\[Recording: 01:37:04\]](#)

President Petersen called upon Allison Steil, the new UW System Director for Federal Relations, to provide an overview of the UW System's federal priorities for 2021.

Director Steil highlighted the need for additional federal support and funding flexibility in order to maintain and expand COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and virus mitigation efforts across the UW campuses.

In recognition of the impact of financial aid on the ability of students to attend UW institutions, Director Steil said the UW System will also continue to advocate for programs that increase access and affordability.

Director Steil indicated that other priorities in 2021 will include advocating for further investments in research activities; supporting immigration policies that will help the UW System attract the brightest international students, faculty, and researchers; and engaging with lawmakers on efforts to reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

UW-MADISON CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE EMMES COMPANY, LLC

[\[Recording: 01:46:25\]](#)

President Petersen called upon Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Laurent Heller to provide an overview of a fee-for-service agreement between UW-Madison's Fundus Photograph Reading Center and The Emmes Company, LLC.

Regent Walsh moved for the adoption of Resolution 11597. The motion was seconded by Regent Stanford Taylor and approved on a voice vote.

UW-Madison Contractual Agreement with The Emmes Company, LLC

Resolution 11597 That, upon recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approves the contractual fee for service agreement between the Board of Regents of the University of

Wisconsin System, doing business as UW-Madison, and The Emmes Company, LLC for the period ending March 30, 2023.

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NEW REGENT AWARD FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF EMPLOYEES

[\[Recording: 01:49:25\]](#)

President Petersen called upon Regent Olivia Woodmansee to present a proposal to establish a new annual Regent award recognizing the exceptional service and contributions of University Staff employees.

Regent Woodmansee stated, "Being on campus every single day, I can speak firsthand to how tirelessly our University Staff have worked during this pandemic. Our institutions would not be open right now without the dedicated time and energy of these individuals." She then moved for the adoption of Resolution 11598. The motion was seconded by Regent Grebe.

Stating her support for Regent Woodmansee's proposal, Regent Walsh observed that the pandemic has highlighted the crucial importance of the people in these jobs, many of whom did not have the option to work from home.

Regent Manydeeds and Regent Hall both thanked Regent Woodmansee for her efforts to recognize University Staff.

The motion to adopt Resolution 11598 was approved on a voice vote.

University Staff Excellence Awards

Resolution 11598 That, upon the recommendation of the President of the UW System, the Board of Regents establishes up to three University Staff Excellence Awards to be given annually.

President Petersen thanked Regent Woodmansee for taking the initiative to establish this new award honoring the exceptional service of University Staff employees, citing this as one example of her persistence, hard work, and dedication to the UW System:

"Olivia has worked tirelessly to advance issues of importance to students, faculty, staff, and our universities. Most often she works quietly and thoughtfully behind the scenes, with curiosity and determination, in service to students, UW employees, and her colleagues on the Board. She's also tenacious, asks tough questions, and speaks out against injustice. As a member of this Board, I have had the pleasure to serve with many

remarkable colleagues and great leaders. Regent Olivia Woodmansee is without question among the best of the best.”

Regent Manydeeds also spoke in praise of Regent Woodmansee’s efforts to advocate on behalf of UW students and staff: “She always speaks the truth, and that requires courage, it requires strength, and it requires conviction.”

REGENT COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

[\[Recording: 01:55:51\]](#)

President Thompson congratulated UW-Green Bay on becoming the first university in the UW System to receive the First Generation Forward designation from the Center for First-Generation Student Success for demonstrating a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. He noted that 34% of undergraduates and 11% of graduate students at UW-Green Bay are the first in their families to pursue a college degree.

Regent Walsh shared a communication from the UW School of Veterinary Medicine regarding the recent suicide of Dr. Josh Smith, a clinician in the emergency medicine department who was well respected by his students, colleagues, and clients. As a member of the UW School of Veterinary Medicine’s Board of Visitors, Regent Walsh noted that people are often surprised to learn the prevalence of suicide in the veterinary profession. She encouraged her colleagues to learn more about this issue by viewing the January 2020 TED Talk by Dr. Melanie Bowden, DVM: “What being a veterinarian really takes.”

CLOSED SESSION

[\[Recording: 02:02:36\]](#)

President Petersen called upon Vice President Grebe to read the motion to move into closed session. The motion was seconded by Regent Jones and adopted on a roll-call vote, with Regents Atwell, Beightol, Bogost, Colón, Grebe, Hall, Jones, Klein, Levzow, Manydeeds, Miller, Petersen, Peterson, Saffold, Stanford Taylor, Walsh, Weatherly, and Woodmansee voting in the affirmative. There were no dissenting votes and no abstentions.

Closed Session Resolution

Resolution 11599 That the Board of Regents move into closed session to: (a) consider strategies for crime detection and prevention as permitted under s. 19.85(1)(d), Wis. Stats.; (b) confer with legal counsel regarding

potential litigation as permitted by s. 19.85(1)(g), Wis. Stats.; and (c) consider personnel evaluations of chancellors, as permitted by s. 19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats.

Before considering any items on the closed session agenda, President Petersen asked if any Board members wished to declare any conflicts of interest as per Regent Policy Document 2-4, "Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy for the UW System Board of Regents." No conflicts were declared.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/ Jess Lathrop

Jess Lathrop
Executive Director & Corporate Secretary
Office of the Board of Regents
University of Wisconsin System