

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

Thursday, July 6, 2023
1:00 p.m.

UW-La Crosse Student Union
Room 2120-2130
521 East Avenue N
La Crosse, Wisconsin

-President Walsh presiding-

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The recording of this meeting's open session is available at: [July 6, 2023 Webcast](#)

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CALLING OF THE ROLL

[\[Recording: 00:00:03\]](#)

PRESENT: Regents Robert Atwell, Amy Bogost, Evan Brenkus, Héctor Colón, Mike Jones, Jim Kreuser, Edmund Manydeeds, John Miller, Cris Peterson, Joan Prince (virtual), Ashok Rai, Mark Tyler, Jill Underly, Dana Wachs, Karen Walsh, and Kyle Weatherly

Regents Robert Atwell and Dana Wachs joined the meeting at 1:02 p.m. after the roll call vote was conducted.

UNABLE TO ATTEND: Regents Angela Adams and Jennifer Staton

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS

Before considering any items on the open session agenda, President Walsh 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.

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UPDATES AND INTRODUCTIONS

[\[Recording: 00:01:12\]](#)

President Rothman welcomed Edwin Martini, UW Oshkosh Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who began his role earlier in the week. Provost Martini is a 20-year higher education professional and will be responsible for leading UW Oshkosh's colleges, faculty, instructional staff, and academic programs.

President Rothman welcomed Monica Smith, UW System Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. He said Associate Vice President Smith is a clinically trained social worker and will work closely with university leaders focused on inclusivity and diversity to develop and share best practices to advance the UW System's strategic plan, including increasing access to UW universities and creating a sense of belonging for all students on campus, including first-generation students, disabled students, veterans, students with differing political ideologies, students with differing religious beliefs, as well as those students from underrepresented groups. He said Associate Vice President Smith will also be a resource for campuses with respect to recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality and diverse faculty and staff, as well as championing free expression and civil discourse.

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APPROVAL OF MEETING RECORDS

[\[Recording: 00:04:40\]](#)

The record of the June 8-9, 2023 meeting of the UW System Board of Regents was approved as distributed.

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REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

[\[Recording: 00:05:10\]](#)

Update on the UW-Parkside Chancellor Search Process

President Walsh said the UW-Parkside Chancellor Search & Screen Committee, led by Regent Kyle Weatherly as Chair and Professor Adrienne Viramontes as Vice Chair, was reviewing applications and would reconvene the following week to select semi-finalist candidates for interviews later in the summer.

President Walsh said the Search & Screen Committee will then recommend a slate of candidates to the Special Regent Committee, which will select finalists to visit the UW-Parkside campus and interview with the Special Regent Committee, which includes Regents Héctor Colón, John Miller, Ashok Rai, and Jennifer Staton, in addition to Regent Weatherly as chair.

Other Updates and Remarks

President Walsh noted Regents Business Partnership Award presentations will resume in August.

Finally, President Walsh shared her experience as a first-generation college student from a small farming community, recalling that it was very daunting to come to a large university and that the support she and other first-generation students received from people on campus was vitally important. President Walsh emphasized the broadness of diversity and the need to make all students feel included.

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REPORT OF THE SYSTEM PRESIDENT

[\[Recording: 00:08:27\]](#)

Strategic Plan Update

Noting that the Board would be receiving a detailed progress report on the strategic plan later that afternoon, President Rothman briefly shared an example of how the UW System is working to foster an open and robust sharing of ideas and to encourage greater civil discourse. He introduced a video showing interviews with students from four campuses – UW Oshkosh, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Platteville, and UW-Milwaukee – which recently held “It’s Just Coffee” gatherings where students had an opportunity to discuss difficult topics in a non-threatening environment.

State and Federal Government Updates

President Rothman said the UW System’s legal team has been working with UW universities for months to prepare for the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent final decision on the use of race in admissions decisions. Stating that the UW System would abide by the law, President Rothman said that analysis of the implications of the decision will be ongoing; however, resources to address questions and provide guidance to UW universities have already been established. President Rothman noted that there could be future proposed revisions to

existing policies as well as potential modifications to several metrics set forth in the strategic plan to ensure the UW System is operating in accordance with the Supreme Court's ruling as well as meeting obligations under federal law.

Next, President Rothman expressed his disappointment with the biennial state budget, noting it sets back the UW System's goal of partnering with the state to meet workforce challenges. Reiterating the UW System's commitment to diversity and inclusion and educating students from a variety of backgrounds, President Rothman noted employers' expectations that students be prepared for a global marketplace, as well as students' expectations to learn from a broad spectrum of cultures, ideas, and opinions. He said the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff are imperative to ensuring student success.

President Rothman said investing in the UW System, Wisconsin's greatest talent generator, is key in winning the war for talent. He added that continuing to shrink the UW System's budget will have consequences not only for the university system but will also jeopardize the longer-term competitiveness of Wisconsin and its economic vibrancy.

President Rothman concluded his comments on the budget by sharing a video highlighting the UW System's mission, history, and the opportunities it creates. He said the UW System will remain student focused and will continue to support Wisconsin's well-being.

UW System Accomplishments

President Rothman congratulated UW-Eau Claire and Chancellor Jim Schmidt on receiving the third-place award for Engaged University of the Year by the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities. He noted that UW-Eau Claire was the only finalist from North America for the international award.

President Rothman said all five Teacher of the Year honorees recently announced by the Department of Public Instruction completed some aspect of their licensure program at a UW institution, including receiving either their undergraduate or master's degrees from UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Milwaukee, UW Oshkosh, and UW-River Falls. One of the five honorees will be elected by a committee to represent Wisconsin in the National Teachers of the Year program later in the year.

President Rothman noted the UW System awarded over 3,500 educational degrees in 2021-2022; including certificates, the total awarded is more than 3,700. He said most of the 2,000 undergraduate degrees lead directly into teaching and added that UW institutions produce 76% of all graduates who could fill jobs as elementary, middle, secondary, and special education teaching positions in Wisconsin.

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HOST-CAMPUS PRESENTATION BY UW-LA CROSSE CHANCELLOR JOE GOW: “THE KEYS TO UWL’S SUCCESS: GREAT PARTNERSHIPS AND EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE”

[\[Recording: 00:27:51\]](#)

President Walsh invited Joe Gow, UW-La Crosse Chancellor, to present to the Board.

Chancellor Gow recognized the UW-La Crosse Men’s and Women’s Track and Field teams. The Women’s team won both the NCAA Division III Indoor and Outdoor National Championships and the Men’s team won the NCAA Division III Indoor National Championship and placed second in the Outdoor National Championship.

Chancellor Gow highlighted two of UW-La Crosse’s partners in the area, Kwik Trip and Mayo Clinic Health System, and noted the key role they both play in supporting UW-La Crosse’s workforce development efforts.

Chancellor Gow said the American Association of State Colleges and Universities recently recognized the UW-La Crosse Community Engaged Learning Program with its Excellence in Innovation Award for Civic Learning and Community Engagement. The Community Engaged Learning Program pairs local organizations with students and faculty who are uniquely qualified to help the organizations overcome challenges. In order to increase access to education, Chancellor Gow said UW-La Crosse’s ACCESS Center helps to provide personalized accommodations for students with disabilities.

Finally, Chancellor Gow recognized two members of the UW-La Crosse campus community, Truman T. Lowe and Dr. Tom Volk. Mr. Lowe, who passed in 2019, was a member of the Ho-Chunk nation, a UW-La Crosse alum, and went on to become a world-renowned artist and professor at UW-Madison. UW-La Crosse continues to honor his legacy with the Truman T. Lowe Center for the Arts building. Dr. Volk, who passed in 2022, was a UW-La Crosse biology professor and became one of the world’s foremost experts on the subject of mycology, the study of fungi.

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The Board took a brief recess from 2:14 p.m. to 2:29 p.m.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON UW SYSTEM’S 2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

[\[Recording: 01:14:52\]](#)

The Board heard an update on the progress of the 2023-2028 strategic plan, which was approved by the Board in December 2022, from Jay Rothman, UW System President; Johannes Britz, UW System Interim Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; Sean Nelson, UW System Vice President for Finance and Administration; and Jeff Buhrandt, UW System Vice President of University Relations.

President Rothman said the status quo is not sustainable and that the strategic plan is focused on addressing some of the significant challenges facing the state, including, among others, a significant shortage of workers with a four-year degree or more, shifting demographics in the state, a declining perception of the value of a college degree coupled with a decline in the participation rate of high school graduates, and the need to maintain and enhance world-class research capabilities.

President Rothman noted intentional overlap among various strategic objectives, which helps drive collaboration. Additionally, he highlighted the alignment between the systemwide strategic plan and the strategic plans at UW universities. President Rothman said the universities are essential to the fulfillment of the systemwide plan.

Office of Academic and Student Affairs

[\[Recording: 01:17:59\]](#)

Senior Vice President Britz provided updates on five areas of focus for the Office of Academic and Student Affairs: online growth, innovation, direct admissions, dual enrollment and open educational resources.

Senior Vice President Britz discussed strategic initiatives in support of the identified areas of focus, including completed action items and outlines for future plans related to:

- Collaborating with the universities to expand online teaching and learning, and increase participation rates;
- Fostering a culture of innovation in support of advancing human knowledge and economic prosperity;
- Coordinating with the universities to pilot and support innovative enrollment and transfer initiatives, including policy flexibility to facilitate innovation;
- Expanding access to higher education, including increasing dual enrollment participation among Wisconsin students, especially underrepresented groups, and increasing the number of students who then matriculate at a UW university;
- Supporting the maintenance and expansion of campus-level open educational resources activities.

Office of Finance and Administration

[\[Recording: 01:32:40\]](#)

Vice President Nelson said the Office of Finance and Administration has been focusing on three strategies in particular:

- Strategy 2., Championing student success across the higher education lifestyle;
- Strategy 3., Promoting excellence in teaching and prioritize the recruitment, development, and retention of high-quality, diverse faculty and staff; and
- Strategy 5., Ensuring the universities are financially and environmentally sustainable so that they are positioned to fulfill their strategic missions.

Noting the objective of strategies 2 and 3 is to enhance the student experience and social mobility, Vice President Nelson discussed current goals related to these strategies, including completed action items and outlines of future plans:

- Provide state-of-the-art facilities and digital platforms for student learning, and
- Coordinate with universities to enhance professional development that fosters career progression.

Vice President Nelson also discussed the following goals related to strategy 5 and its objective to foster civic engagement and serve the public good.

- Eliminate structural financial deficits at all universities;
- Implement shared services in a cost-effective manner preserving benefits for the universities;
- Apply principles of environmental sustainability with respect to the built environment;
- Employ zero-based budgeting principles and the UW System Administration level;
- Work with universities to develop action/sustainability plans for the two-year campuses to ensure they are financially viable; and
- Identify sound financial vehicles and revenue-securing opportunities for the universities

Office of University Relations

[\[Recording: 01:49:00\]](#)

Vice President Buhrandt highlighted projects and goals that have been completed in support of various strategic initiatives to enhance the student experience and social mobility, foster civic engagement and serve the public good, and advance economic prosperity, as well as future action items planned in continued support of the strategic plan.

Emphasizing that partnerships are important to the strategic plan, Vice President Buhrandt highlighted several partnering organizations and their significance to the UW System, including: Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing & Productivity, Titledown Tech, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, WiSys, Council on Workforce Investment, and BioForward Wisconsin

Discussion

[\[Recording: 02:03:07\]](#)

President Walsh asked in what way shared governance was engaged or involved during the plan implementation. Senior Vice President Britz said there were meetings and communication throughout the development phases, and that implementation plans were shared for campus feedback before being finalized. President Walsh and Regent Manydeeds agreed on the significant importance of collaboration with shared governance.

Regent Tyler asked about dual enrollment charges and how the UW System's dual enrollment fees differ from the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) program, which offers dual enrollment at no charge to the students. Senior Vice President Britz and UW Oshkosh Chancellor Andy Leavitt clarified the cost difference to students is due to how the course is evaluated for credit. UW System universities provide an instructor for the class whereas WTCS offers credit on a transcription basis after the completion of the course.

Remarking on the digital disruption to traditional in-person course delivery, Regent Atwell asked how the UW System plans to gain digital market share without disrupting revenue streams from traditional modes of course delivery.

Senior Vice President Britz said online course pricing is complex and depends on many variables but noted more pricing flexibility with online courses. President Rothman said in order to meet students' needs the UW System must adapt to the changing educational sector and continue to develop its online presence. President Rothman noted the valuable experience of living on campus and taking classes in-person and added that often online courses are taken as a hybrid in conjunction with in-person courses.

Regent Underly clarified that two different Wisconsin State Statutes apply for the UW System and WTCS in relation to dual enrollment and where payment comes from. She also noted the differences in accreditation of course instructors from UW System and WTCS and how the courses are transcribed. President Rothman commented on the difficulty of transferring some dual enrollment courses depending on the instructor's credentials.

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Due to the timing of final action on the state's 2023-35 biennial budget, President Walsh said the UW System's 2023-24 Annual Operating Budget would be considered at an upcoming special meeting within the next month.

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CLOSED SESSION

[\[Recording: 02:17:36\]](#)

President Walsh called upon Vice President Bogost to read the motion to move into closed session. The motion was seconded by Regent Rai and adopted on a roll call vote, with Regents Atwell, Bogost, Brenkus, Colón, Jones, Kreuser, Manydeeds, Miller, Peterson, Prince, Rai, Tyler, Underly, Wachs, Walsh, and Weatherly voting in the affirmative. There were no dissenting votes and no abstentions.

Closed Session Resolution

Resolution 12050 That the Board of Regents move into closed session to consider personnel evaluations of chancellors, as permitted by s. 19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats.

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Before considering items on the closed session agenda, President Walsh 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.

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Regent Prince left the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

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The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

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Submitted by:

/s/_____

Megan Wasley
Executive Director & Corporate Secretary
Office of the Board of Regents
University of Wisconsin System