

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

Thursday, February 8, 2024  
1:00 p.m.

Union South  
Varsity Hall II  
1308 W. Dayton Street  
Madison, Wisconsin

-President Walsh presiding-

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The recording of this meeting's open session is available at: [February 8, 2024 Webcast](#)

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## CALLING OF THE ROLL

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

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

UNABLE TO ATTEND: Robert Atwell

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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 introduced Dr. Lynn Akey as the 7<sup>th</sup> Chancellor of UW-Parkside. He said Chancellor Akey was unanimously approved by the Board of Regents and began her role on January 2, 2024. Previously, Chancellor Akey served as the Vice President for Student Success, Analytics, and Integrated Planning at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She has held a variety of positions at the Mankato campus since 2000. In Chancellor Akey's most recent position, she established a new student success approach that led to increased re-enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. She has also overseen strategic planning at the Minnesota State University, Mankato for the past 10 years. Chancellor Akey was named Minnesota State System Academic and Student Affairs Administrator of the Year in 2021. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota, her Master of Arts degree in College Student Personnel at Bowling Green State University, and her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology at Truman State University.

Chancellor Akey thanked everyone for the warm welcome and support she received during the transition period. She said she is honored to join the Universities of Wisconsin. Chancellor Akey said UW-Parkside is a special place to live, learn, and lead. She said her appreciation of UW-Parkside began as the parent of a student and that the university delivers on its mission of transforming lives. She noted that one in three students at UW-Parkside is Pell eligible, just under half the students are first-generation, and that UW-Parkside is the most diverse campus within the Universities of Wisconsin. Chancellor Akey said UW-Parkside is a community that is truly committed to the transformative impact of higher education and that she looks forward to contributing to that work.

President Rothman thanked Scott Menke, UW-Parkside Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration, for serving as interim chancellor after the departure of Debbie Ford.

President Rothman welcomed Dr. Betsy Morgan, UW-La Crosse Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who will be serving as interim chancellor while the search for the next UW-La Crosse Chancellor continues. Interim Chancellor Morgan said she appreciated the support she received after being named the UW-La Crosse interim Chancellor.

President Rothman welcomed Karl Kunkel, UW-La Crosse Dean of the College of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, for serving as the interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UW-La Crosse.

President Rothman introduced Tracy Drier, UW-Eau Claire Executive Director of Finance & Administration and Chief Human Resources Officer, who is serving as the Interim Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration at UW-Eau Claire.

President Walsh recognized Bob Golden, Dean of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, for his 18 years of service. She thanked him for his presence at Board of Regents meetings, including presenting to the Board on matters related to Wisconsin Partnership Program, a grant-making program within the medical school committed to improving health and advancing health equity in Wisconsin through investments in community partnerships, education, and research.

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## **APPROVAL OF MEETING RECORDS**

[\[Recording: 00:10:12\]](#)

The records of the December 7-8, 2023 regular meeting and the December 9, 12, 13, 27, and 29, 2023 special meetings of the UW System Board of Regents were approved as distributed.

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## **REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

[\[Recording: 00:10:25\]](#)

### **Report of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board**

The January 2024 report of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board had been provided. There were no comments or questions.

### **Update on the UW-La Crosse Chancellor Search Process**

President Walsh reported that the UW-La Crosse Chancellor Search & Screen Committee, led by Regent Ashok Rai with Professor Enilda Delgado as the vice chair, was preparing to interview semifinalist candidates on February 14-15, 2024. She said the Special Regent Committee, which includes Regents Angela Adams, Evan Brenkus, Jim Kreuser, and Joan Prince in addition to Regent Rai as chair, would then select the candidates who will be invited to visit the UW-La Crosse campus as finalists in early March. President Walsh thanked the members of the Search & Screen Committee for their time and dedication to the process.

Regent Rai echoed President Walsh's appreciation for the time the committee members had given throughout the search process and said he looked forward to finding a great chancellor for UW-La Crosse.

President Walsh noted upcoming events recognizing two chancellors: First, UW-Whitewater Chancellor Corey King's investiture will take place on February 23, 2024. Second, UW-Platteville Chancellor Tammy Evetovich's upcoming inauguration is scheduled on April 4, 2024.

### **Research in the Rotunda**

President Walsh asked Regents to hold the date of March 6, 2024, for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Research in the Rotunda event. She said it is one of the Universities of Wisconsin's signature events and it reflects a number of key priorities in the Strategic Plan, including being a global leader in research, scholarship, and creative activity, as well as ensuring undergraduate students get hands-on experience in finding solutions to problems.

President Walsh said the Research in the Rotunda event allows undergraduate student researchers and their faculty advisors the opportunity to share their research findings with legislators, state leaders, UW alumni, and more. President Walsh said a brief video about the research will be featured on the Research in the Rotunda website.

### **March 7, 2024 Meeting Cancelled**

Finally, President Walsh reported that the Board of Regents meeting scheduled for March 7, 2024 had been cancelled. She said the next regular meeting of the Board would be April 4-5, 2024, at UW-Platteville.

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## **REPORT OF THE SYSTEM PRESIDENT**

[\[Recording: 00:14:42\]](#)

### **Legislative Updates**

President Rothman reported the legislature was moving forward on the actions called for by the agreement approved by the Board in December. He said the Joint Committee on Employment Relations (JCOER) approved the UW pay plan on December 19, 2023, which is retroactive to July 2, 2023. President Rothman emphasized the importance of the 4% + 2% pay raise to all of the hard-working UW employees. Additionally, pay raises were approved for trades employees at UW-Madison and UW System. President Rothman noted the pay plan is consistent with Strategy 3 of the strategic plan and the UWs' commitment to increase compensation for employees in order to remain competitive with peers.

President Rothman reported that the Joint Committee on Finance approved a piece of legislation relating to reciprocity. He said the bill will ensure that UW campuses can retain the tuition differential when accepting reciprocity students from Minnesota instead of those dollars going into the state's GPR fund, which was the case previously. President Rothman said the additional funds will be a huge asset for UW universities, especially UW-River Falls and UW-Stout, which are on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border. President Rothman said reciprocity was specifically identified in Strategy 5 of the strategic plan, which reflects the commitment to help universities retain the full benefit of the Wisconsin/Minnesota reciprocity agreement.

President Rothman reported that the 2023-25 capital budget amendment bill, with \$699.7M in capital funding, was being considered by the Legislature. Among others, President Rothman said projects impacted by the bill include the new UW-Madison engineering building; UW-Whitewater's Winther Hall and Heide Hall renovations and replacements; and planned demolitions at many campuses including UW-Eau Claire, UW-Green Bay, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee and UW-Platteville. The bill will also affect utility projects across the UWs as well as residence hall upgrades at UW-Madison. President Rothman noted the bill was unanimously approved by the Joint Committee on Finance.

President Rothman said the reciprocity bill and 2023-25 capital budget amendment bill still need full legislative approval prior to going before Governor Evers. He added that advocacy efforts for the release of the \$32 million workforce supplemental funding continue.

President Rothman noted guaranteed admissions and a National Guard reimbursement bill are both ongoing discussions. He said the proposed guaranteed admissions bill would ensure Wisconsin's top students have a clear path to attend one of the UW universities and still needs to be voted on by the Senate and concurred in as amended by the Assembly. The National Guard reimbursement bill would allow National Guard members to receive their tuition grant up front when it is due, rather than having to wait for reimbursement of paid fees after the end of the semester. The bill passed the Senate unanimously and awaits a vote by the Assembly.

President Rothman reported that a Tech Hub bill being considered in the legislature would provide \$7.5M in state funding for a grant to BioForward, Inc., the lead member of the Regional Tech Hub for Biohealth consortium, of which the Universities of Wisconsin are a member. He said the designation has great potential to expand the UWs' national leadership in biohealth technologies and to help grow Wisconsin's economy.

## Strategic Plan Update

President Rothman reported the Board would hear strategic plan update later in the afternoon from Monica Smith, Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging for the Universities of Wisconsin. He said Associate Vice President Smith works closely with university leaders to develop and share best practices to advance the 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.

President Rothman said the following day, UW-Madison would be convening a panel to discuss the importance of strategic alliances and maximizing federal funding opportunities through public-private partnerships. He said the topic aligns with Strategy 6 of the strategic plan, a commitment to focus on being a global leader in research, scholarship, and creative activity, as well as knowledge dissemination that benefits society. President Rothman said it also aligns with Strategy 7, fostering a culture of innovation in support of advancing human knowledge and economic prosperity, and with Strategy 9, engaging with employers to address talent, support, and research needs.

President Rothman highlighted the newly remodeled Wisconsin Online Portal, which provides information for existing online efforts at all 13 UW universities in one place. He said the website is designed so that students can search for programs by program level, area of interest, or by campus. The site also has information targeting international students, military students, prospective undergraduate and graduate students, and transfer students. As the workforce continues to change, President Rothman said the delivery of education, including online, will do so as well. He added that the Wisconsin Online Portal plans to expand its program array with certificates, microcredentials, and other innovations. President Rothman noted the new portal aligns with the UW's strategic plan's commitment to support student success by enhancing the UW online educational opportunities and expanding access to the UW universities.

President Rothman recognized those who participated in the nearly nine-month effort, which was overseen by executive sponsors UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Mark Mone, UW-Superior Chancellor Renée Wachter, and Senior Vice President Johannes Britz. He also thanked the implementation team, which included UW-Whitewater Provost John Chenoweth and representatives from UW-Milwaukee, UW Oshkosh, and UW Extended Campus.

## **Universities of Wisconsin Accomplishments**

President Rothman congratulated the three recipients of the 2023 UW Innovation Grant, each of which would receive funding totaling up to \$175,000 split over two years. The 2023 recipients were: The UW Oshkosh College of Nursing, which proposed to develop and integrate curriculum to educate current and future nurses on the use of telehealth to improve rural chronic illness outcomes; five faculty members at UW-Stevens Point and a collaborator at UW-Madison, who earned a grant to improve Wisconsin soil through research on phytoremediation from soil using hemp and alfalfa; and a team from UW-Stout along with a faculty member at UW-River Falls who are developing a low-cost, wireless sensor network to monitor farm fields for temperature, humidity, wind, soil moisture, heat, and more.

President Rothman congratulated UW-Milwaukee on the UWM Foundation receiving \$1.2 million from Microsoft to support the university's Connected Systems Institute. He also congratulated the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health on being awarded \$150 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health for a nationwide research initiative to investigate the neurobiology of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

## **The Future of Higher Education**

President Rothman said the Universities of Wisconsin have a plan to ensure the universities are positioned to be vibrant and sustainable for future generations, which is made clear by the recent actions and strategies that have been implemented. He said the UWs are committed to serving students while at the same time addressing some of the most pressing needs of the state, adding that the Universities of Wisconsin value and safeguard their legacy of excellence and their commitment to serve. President Rothman noted a recent report from the Wisconsin Policy Forum indicating that the data showed a continued shift in Wisconsin toward higher-paying occupations that tend to require more education.

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## **HOST-CAMPUS PRESENTATION BY UW-MADISON CHANCELLOR JENNIFER MNOOKIN: "INNOVATION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD: A BEDROCK VALUE AND LAUCHPAD TO THE FUTURE"**

[\[Recording: 00:31:23\]](#)

President Walsh invited Jennifer Mnookin, Chancellor of UW-Madison, to present to the Board.

Chancellor Mnookin said UW-Madison will build on its 175 years of excellence with several bold new initiatives designed to address global challenges, notably artificial intelligence and environmental sustainability. She said the university remains deeply committed to its ideals around inclusion and belonging, free expression, and student success, while advancing its teaching, research, and outreach missions.

Chancellor Mnookin said the Wisconsin Research, Innovation, and Scholarly Excellence (RISE) Initiative is designed to help address significant, complex challenges of particular importance, with artificial intelligence being its first focus. She noted that UW-Madison expects to hire between 120 and 150 new faculty through the Wisconsin RISE Initiative over the next three to five years, in addition to regular hiring, reflecting around a 40 percent increase in faculty hiring.

Chancellor Mnookin said that UW-Madison is launching a new cross-campus initiative focused on environmental sustainability, centered around five goals that include the launch of an interdisciplinary research hub. She said the new initiative reflects the university's commitment to stewardship and to addressing challenges to the state's natural resources and a changing climate, both of which are affecting Wisconsin residents.

Chancellor Mnookin noted an ongoing priority for UW-Madison is to further strengthen the thriving hub of innovation and entrepreneurship. She said a working group including business leaders and entrepreneurs from on and off campus will assess current practices and make recommendations, with a report expected by June. Chancellor Mnookin said the group's goal will be to open communication between programs on campus and make them easier to access, and to consider new and different opportunities to support the faculty, staff, and students who are interested in entrepreneurship and commercialization.

President Walsh said she was pleased to see an increase in UW-Madison's business and industry related research and asked how that could help increase entrepreneurial activity on campus. Chancellor Mnookin said clearer guidelines around intellectual property (IP), growing business engagement efforts, and a larger emphasis on industry partnerships are all a part of ongoing efforts to increase entrepreneurship. In response to President Walsh's

question about administrative changes to address the issue, Chancellor Mnookin said creating a clearer and more streamlined path to engagement would help.

Regent Weatherly asked about collaborative efforts that could be made between UW-Madison and the other UWs to retain students who apply to UW-Madison but are not admitted and guide them to an alternative UW university. Chancellor Mnookin noted transfer programs that exist with UW universities and branch campuses, as well as Madison Area Technical College, but added that providing more visibility to the existing programs could help in efforts to retain students.

Regent Underly said Chancellor Mnookin's presentation further emphasized the point that the success of children and of the state of Wisconsin is dependent on continued investment in education.

Regent Manydeeds thanked Chancellor Mnookin for UW-Madison's implementation of Bucky's Pell Pathway and the Wisconsin Tribal Educational Promise Program, which he said help to open up educational opportunities for many students.

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The Board took a brief recess from 2:29 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.

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## **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING**

[\[Recording: 01:26:58\]](#)

President Walsh invited Dr. Monica Smith, Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging for the Universities of Wisconsin, to present an update on her office's efforts and priorities as part of the regular progress reports on the UWs strategic plan.

Associate Vice President Smith noted that all goals in the overall strategic plan focus on student success, directly or indirectly, and that includes its attention to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB). She said after reviewing and discussing strategic plans with campus leadership, they recognized the connections between campus plans and the Board-approved strategic plan for all of the Universities of Wisconsin.

Associate Vice President Smith said her update would focus primarily on Strategy 1, “Increase access and improve rates of success for historically underserved students,” and on how Strategy 2, “Champion student success across higher education life cycle,” and Strategy 3, “Promote excellence in teaching and prioritize recruitment, development and retention of high-quality, diverse faculty and staff,” feed into the first strategy.

Associate Vice President Smith said while EDIB benefits all students, historically underserved students are mentioned in Strategy 1 because the population tends to have multiple at-risk characteristics that hinder their success. She said it is important to identify milestones and benchmarks of success towards degree completion, as doing so helps to reveal where barriers of success are for students and where to target interventions.

Associate Vice President Smith said student success begins from the point of application and continues to graduation and post-graduation. She said ensuring equitable access to necessary resources and identifying barriers to persistence are necessary to promoting success across the learning environment. Associate Vice President Smith noted that developing cultural competencies is important for effective and impactful engagement in the classroom, but also at internships and post-graduation in a working environment. She emphasized the importance of cross functional collaborations and partnerships with faculty and staff and across higher education.

Associate Vice President Smith provided an overview of the social identity characteristics, core areas, and focal groups of EDIB in higher education. She said entrenched practices in higher education tend to reinforce inequities that lead to vastly different outcomes for some students and noted that EDIB addresses all of a student’s identity characteristics in order to help them better succeed on their higher education journey. She said the UWs should be meeting students where they are and supporting them throughout their educational journey. Associate Vice President Smith provided an overview of the inclusive excellence framework and how it guides EDIB within higher education in relation to access and success; climate and intergroup relationships; education and scholarship; infrastructure and investment; and community and partnership.

As a part of Strategy 2.3, “Enhance focus on achieving a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for students,” Associate Vice President Smith said she plans to partner with the universities to infuse strategies for developing and enhancing cultural competencies in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs. In addition, she said she would partner with the Office of Professional and Institutional Development (OPID) to ensure that essential learning outcomes are being met, and work with universities to increase student participation in high impact practices.

Associate Vice President Smith said she has developed partnerships with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service, as well as the Institute for Citizenship and Dialogue and Madison Hillel Foundation, as part of Strategy 3.1, “Advance an inclusive and engaging campus environment.” Additionally, she said conducting campus climate surveys will help to better understand the student experience and will help the universities to better make decisions that positively impact enrollment and retention.

Associate Vice President Smith said partnerships with the UWs chief human resource officers are important to Strategy 3.4, “Assist the universities in recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality, diverse, and innovative faculty and staff.” She said work was underway to diversify staff and expand recruitment efforts, with immediate focus on honoring the legislative agreement approved by the Board on December 13, 2023.

Regent Underly thanked Associate Vice President Smith for her presentation and noted the importance of recognizing the different ways students need to be supported in order to be successful, and how that is different for each student. She said conversations need to continue about rethinking and redesigning what student support looks like.

In regard to campus climate surveys, Vice President Bogost asked what is done with the data and how it informs campus decision making. Associate Vice President Smith said the data is analyzed to identify potential areas of improvement, and the results are also shared with the university.

Regent Adams said she appreciated Associate Vice President Smith’s approach to EDIB, specifically integration and collaboration. Regent Adams asked if there was baseline data from each UW university in order to better understand what progress has been made.

Regent Manydeeds asked if some sort of communication or outreach was planned to go to students in order to reassure them of their belonging at UW universities and the UWs’ commitment to EDIB, and explain how that fits into the legislative agreement the Board approved on December 13, 2023. Associate Vice President Smith said she feels students are looking to see what action is taken by the Universities of Wisconsin Administration (UWSA) and UW universities on reimagining EDIB efforts and honoring the legislative agreement. She noted that UWSA has continually articulated the commitment to EDIB.

President Walsh asked how practices that have not been working are being identified so that they can be avoided in the implementation of new programs. Associate Vice President Smith said identifying the areas – financial, social, or academic – that are creating

difficulties for students will inform where to focus targeted interventions and where there is an opportunity for change.

Regent Weatherly asked what practices are going to be ended or amended in order for progress related to EDIB be made on campuses. Associate Vice President Smith noted the importance of an intersectional approach and looking at all characteristics of a student in order to identify where the UWs can better support them. She said new proposals and initiatives would be based off of what the data analysis shows.

Regent Adams noted the complexity of EDIB and said she thought the Board should provide more guidance, clarity, and focus on this topic in addition to the strategic plan, in order for work to be done effectively and efficiently.

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## **CLOSED SESSION**

[\[Recording: 02:20:09\]](#)

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

### Closed Session Resolution

Resolution 12133      That the Board of Regents move into closed session to a) consider personal histories related to a naming at UW-Madison, as permitted by s. 19.85(1)(f), Wis. Stats.; and b) consider performance evaluations for 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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During the closed session, Regent Rai moved for the adoption of Resolution 12134. The motion was seconded by Regent Bogost and approved on a voice vote.

Authority to Name the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Outreach Center, UW-Madison

Resolution 12134     That, upon the recommendation of the Chancellor of UW-Madison and the President of the UW System, the UW System Board of Regents authorizes that the new Lakeshore Nature Preserve Outreach Center be named the "Lakeshore Nature Preserve Frautschi Center".

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The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 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