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For more information, contact:
Teri Venker
(608) 263-5061

New Commission will study needs of UW Colleges students and communities

The needs of local students and communities will be the focus of a new commission appointed by David Wilson, the new chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and the University of Wisconsin – Extension.

The “Commission on Enhancing the Mission of the UW Colleges” will examine ways in which the 13 freshman/sophomore campuses of the UW Colleges can more directly serve the needs of students and the communities in which those campuses are located. The Commission will be looking at how the liberal arts education offered by the Colleges can be improved upon, while making the best use of limited resources.

“The overall objective is to ensure that the UW Colleges, as an integral part of the UW System, can continue to serve their regions well, paying particular attention to the needs of adult, place-bound students, and to respond to contemporary challenges, opportunities and trends,” said Chancellor David Wilson.

The UW Colleges through its campuses and UW Colleges Online provides the liberal arts foundation of the bachelor's degree and prepares students for transfer to any four-year UW campus. Personal attention, small classes and the lowest tuition in the UW are just a few of the ways it provides significant value to students and their families. UW Colleges campuses are located mostly in rural and small city settings, and its students have access to the resources of the entire UW System, enabling them to access a world-class education and the best start on a college education.

Co-chairs Roger Axtell of Janesville, who is a former executive with the Parker Pen Company, and John B. Torinus, Jr., CEO of Serigraph in West Bend, will lead the 18-member commission in its work with a report due by mid-December 2006. Axtell is a Regent Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents and Torinus is a former Board of Visitor for the UW Colleges. UW Colleges campuses are located in both Janesville and West Bend.

“John Torinus and Roger Axtell will bring impressive backgrounds to this assignment,” said Chancellor Wilson. “They have both served in executive leadership positions in the private sector and are familiar with regional, state and national needs. They are articulate spokespersons for the role that higher education can play in Wisconsin to help the state stay strong and competitive.”

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The Commission membership includes:

- ∞ Mark O’Connell, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association, Madison
- ∞ Don Schott, Attorney, Quarles and Brady, Madison
- ∞ Marv Van Kekerix, Provost and Vice Chancellor, UW-Extension, Madison
- ∞ Jim Veninga, Campus Dean/CEO, UW-Marathon County, Wausau
- ∞ Deborah Cureton, Dean/CEO, UW-Richland, Richland Center
- ∞ Brad Hansen, Vice President and COO, Nsight Telservices Corp., Green Bay
- ∞ Carol Lombardi, Former Mayor, City of Waukesha, Waukesha
- ∞ Cary Komoto, Professor, UW-Barron County, Rice Lake
- ∞ Malcolm Brett, Interim Director, Broadcasting and Media Innovations, UW-Extension, Madison
- ∞ Margaret Cleek, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UW Colleges, Madison
- ∞ Ken Grant, Chair of UW Colleges Academic Department Heads, Professor, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, Baraboo
- ∞ Kathleen Cullen, Vice President for Teaching and Learning, Wisconsin Technical College System, Madison
- ∞ Brad Karger, Deputy County Administrator, Marathon County, Wausau
- ∞ Richard Wells, Chancellor, UW-Oshkosh, Oshkosh
- ∞ State Representative Sue Jeskewitz, 24th Assembly District, Menomonee Falls
- ∞ State Senator Russ Decker, 29th Senate District, Schofield

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Staff in support of the Commission includes:

- ∞ Greg Lampe, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, UW Colleges
- ∞ Willie Larkin, Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the Chancellor, UW Colleges and UW-Extension
- ∞ Steve Wildeck, Vice Chancellor, Administrative Services, UW Colleges

For more background and the complete charge, see the following document, “Commission on Enhancing the Mission of the UW Colleges”

For more information about the UW Colleges, visit: www.uwc.edu

For more information about Chancellor David Wilson visit:
<http://www.uwex.uwc.edu/chancellor/>

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Commission on Enhancing the Mission of the UW Colleges

Background and Charge

Introduction: For over a century and a half, the state of Wisconsin has carefully built a system of postsecondary education that values access, innovative teaching, ground-breaking research, outreach and extension programs, and networks that are responsive to the ongoing needs of its citizens. As with any entity that aims to stay ahead of the competition and remain relevant and responsive to its stakeholder needs, it must constantly anticipate the future and move strategically to respond to what looms on the horizon.

In 2002-2003, the UW Colleges reviewed its mission and charted a course for the next five years with its Strategic Plan, 2002-2007. As the end of the period covered by that plan approaches, and in light of the UW System growth agenda to increase the number of baccalaureate degree holders in the state, it is appropriate to review the Colleges' mission, and determine the future directions and goals of the institution. The objective is to ensure that the Colleges, as an integral part of the UW System, can continue to serve their regions well, paying particular attention to the needs of adult, place bound students, and to respond to contemporary challenges, opportunities and trends. To carry out this task, I am empanelling a Commission on Enhancing the Mission of UW Colleges

History of the UW Colleges: The University Of Wisconsin Colleges, which is one institution with 13 campuses that prepares students for success at the baccalaureate level of education and provides the first two years of a liberal arts general education, is a key component of the UW System. Currently, the thirteen campuses enroll more than 12,500 students, and primarily serve residents of smaller cities, suburban areas and rural communities throughout the state. With their accessibility and affordability, they enroll significant numbers of place-bound returning adult students and students of color.

The UW Colleges is, in many ways, the perfect embodiment of the Wisconsin Idea. The roots of the UW Colleges lie in the establishment of off-campus classes and the beginning of extension services in 1907. These campuses have evolved into significant centers of learning with impressive physical plants and outstanding faculties. They also serve as significant cultural centers in their communities. As the evolution from university extension centers to campuses of the UW System took form, a unique partnership emerged. In a nutshell, this partnership called on the local counties to provide facilities to allow place-bound residents in those counties access to higher education, while the State of Wisconsin agreed to provide funding for instruction and academic support. This model has served the needs of local communities quite well over the decades.

Charge to the Commission: Given our goal of ensuring that the Colleges are nimble and agile enough to respond to contemporary challenges, opportunities and trends in their regions, how might we improve upon the excellent liberal arts education offered by the Colleges, while making wise use of the limited resources we have? In essence, should our UW Colleges campuses go forward with a renewed reinvigoration and reaffirmation of their existing mission, or should that mission be enhanced to enable it to more fully meet the needs of adult and place-bound students?

With these overarching questions in mind, the Commission on Enhancing the Mission of the UW Colleges should address the following questions:

- How can the Colleges better serve the needs of adult, placed-bound students in their local communities, and around the state?
- Should the Colleges continue to serve primarily as freshman-sophomore campuses (gateways) to the UW System? What should be the relationship between the Colleges and the Comprehensives and Doctoral Institutions?
- How can the Colleges capitalize on their uniqueness—local access, small class sizes, and academically nurturing environments, to offer more degree opportunities to its students?
- Should the Colleges be approved to offer selective baccalaureate degrees, either in collaboration with other UW comprehensive campuses, or otherwise, in areas that meet local demand of place-bound students and where the faculty expertise exists to do so? In essence, should we expand our degree/program offerings, and if so, in which areas and at what level(s) (AA, BS, BA, certificates, institutes, etc.)?
- Is a collaborative university center concept a model that would serve our local citizens well? If so, at which campus locations might the University Center model be most effective?
- How can the relationship between UW-Extension and the UW Colleges add value to the citizens of the State of Wisconsin?
- What is the Colleges' relationship to the Wisconsin Technical Colleges? What should that relationship be?

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