

## At Opening Day assembly, Chancellor Wells proposes compact to better educate more people

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/5743/chancellor-wells-proposes-compact-to-better-educate-more-people-at-opening-day-assembly/>

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh leaders recognized the achievement of faculty and staff members, introduced a compact to garner more support from the State to better educate more people, identified major goals and provided key updates for the campus community at the annual Opening Day assembly Sept. 7.

“Opening Day is a time for us to celebrate the character, passion and commitment of UW Oshkosh people, and to recognize notable achievements with awards and honors,” said Chancellor Richard H. Wells.

- [See the complete list of Opening Day awards.](#)
- [Watch the video on iTunes U.](#)

Chancellor Wells’ address, titled “Principles for Progress and Prosperity: A Compact to Better Educate More People,” emphasized the importance of UW System’s Growth Agenda for Wisconsin, a central component of the Advantage Wisconsin strategic framework for producing more, better-prepared degree holders; creating more well-paying jobs; and building stronger communities.

Specifically, Wells outlined three ways in which UW Oshkosh can meet the future needs of the economy and community while contributing to the Growth Agenda (provided certain criteria are met by the State of Wisconsin): produce better-prepared graduates; more successfully align learning outcomes to improve quality of education; and increase the number of UW Oshkosh graduates by taking steps to boost enrollment, reduce time to degree and improve retention/graduation rates.

- [Read more about the record-breaking enrollment growth projected for fall 2010.](#)

To contend with the challenges of improving quality while at the same time reducing per-capital degree costs and student debt, Wells explained how internal stakeholders — administrators and staff, students, and faculty and instructional staff — will have to be more innovative, and external stakeholders will have to contribute more to the overall support of the institution. The new advocacy strategy builds upon the compelling case made for the first phase of the Growth Agenda, which proved effective in garnering state and private support for the Growth Agenda in 2007-2009.

The first phase of the Growth Agenda received support from the State because UW System and its advocates successfully convinced legislators that state universities had collaboratively aligned themselves to the needs of the region. Likewise, the Principles for Progress and Prosperity Compact is designed to reframe the way state officials think about the public university. The compact is not based on a hardball strategy that uses threats, bluffs and other negative tactics — which could not hope to succeed in the

current economic environment — but rather operates on good faith, respect and mutual understanding among all stakeholder groups.

“I am asking for your support to uphold our end of the compact, for your willingness to find ways to increase quality and to lower per-capita cost of our degrees,” Wells said to those assembled. “I realize this is a tough ‘ask,’ but if successful, we stand to gain, over the next three biennia, competitive compensation and enhanced overall support to better educate more people. That, to me, is worth the risk.”

Chancellor Wells also outlined UW Oshkosh’s progress in the four major public policy themes developed by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities: access, competitiveness, accountability and affordability. With respect to affordability he announced that, the University will make another \$500,000 investment from its Strategic Initiative and Rainy Day Fund to maintain the Student Titans Employment Program (STEP) for a second year.

- [Learn more about STEP, which offers students high-quality, employment-based educational experiences while providing faculty and staff with much-needed assistance.](#)
- [Read Chancellor Wells’ full address.](#)

Following the chancellor’s address, other UW Oshkosh administrators presented an overview of additional strategic initiatives for the second half of the 2009-2011 biennium:

Provost Lane Earns spoke about the University’s commitment to general education reform and the importance of providing students at all levels with skills centered on inquiry, critical and creative thinking, civic engagement, social and environmental responsibility, intercultural competence, written and oral communication, teamwork and problem solving. He invited the faculty to engage in a dialogue about the very nature of liberal education at UW Oshkosh.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Petra Roter explained how employees in the Student Affairs Division will infuse principles of sustainability, learning outcomes and inclusive excellence in their everyday mission to support students. Her report also introduced the new Student Success Center, which brings the Career Services office, Center for Academic Support Services, Counseling Center, Undergraduate Advising Resource Center and the Writing Center together as a one-stop destination for student services.

Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services Thomas Sonnleitner spotlighted the ongoing improvements to campus, including the emergency notification system and “green” construction projects, such as the photovoltaic solar tracking array and solar thermal installations throughout campus, the upcoming groundbreaking for the nation’s first dry fermentation anaerobic biodigester and the new academic building.

- [Follow construction updates at www.uwosh.edu/home/campus-growth.](http://www.uwosh.edu/home/campus-growth)

UW Oshkosh Foundation President Arthur Rathjen highlighted four primary goals for the Advancement Division: continue fundraising for special projects, improve external relations programs while strengthening the University brand identity and outreach efforts, launch new engagement efforts and thereby increase awareness of UW Oshkosh across internal and external audiences, and sustain the

previous initiatives in an environment that promotes inclusive excellence in all facets of University operations.