

Change agents: Dedicated UW Oshkosh faculty transforming higher-ed, propelling Wisconsin

by News Bureau - Thursday, September 12, 2013

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/29313/change-agents-on-and-off-campus-dedicated-uw-oshkosh-faculty-transforming-higher-ed-propelling-wisconsin/>

Classrooms cannot contain their talent, their expertise, their entrepreneurial solutions and their service. University of Wisconsin Oshkosh faculty members are leading change on and off campus and, in doing so, are impacting Wisconsin's present and future prosperity well beyond the borders the institution.

On the heels of Sept. 5 "[Common Ground](#)" summit hosted by the UW System Board of Regents, UW Oshkosh Chancellor Richard Wells is stressing the need for greater spotlight on the breakthroughs faculty are making not just in the classroom but in campus operational efficiencies and in the state's communities and economy. It is critical for the state legislature, university stakeholders and partners and the citizens of Wisconsin to see and understand the focus on change and solutions the teaching community is demonstrating off campus, outside their commitments to quality, classroom instruction, Wells said.

"Innovative teaching represents just the beginning of our faculty members' contributions to our UW campuses and our state," Wells said. "In fact, it has been challenging to keep up with the wellspring of new ideas, efficiencies and entrepreneurial approaches our faculty members are discovering and implementing. They are helping transform academic programs and campus operations, infusing our state workforce with skilled, creative, engaged employees and citizens and confronting environmental and economic development problems our communities face."

- **IN THE NEWS: "[Beyond the campus borders](#)," Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce News Wave magazine, September 2013**

It's the Wisconsin Idea in action. And Wisconsin is taking notice. Here are just a few of the dozens of examples of UW Oshkosh faculty leading incredible change in the region and state...

Collaborative engineering degrees directly responsive to workforce needs

When New North manufacturers signaled the need for a new kind of engineering skill, New North institutions' faculty experts responded.

UW Oshkosh Professor of Physics Dennis Rioux has spent dozens of hours, in addition to his on-campus academic responsibilities, helping shepherd the curriculum development and unique partnerships that will propel students within the new Leadership in Engineering Technology program. The program caters to

New North students and, ultimately, their future employers. Rioux saw this as an opportunity to build upon UW Oshkosh's existing pre-engineering program.

On July 12, the UW System Board of Regents approved the [trio of new and collaborative engineering technology degrees](#) designed to make a high-demand field more easily accessible to students in the New North. Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance (NEW ERA) institutions plan to effectively and efficiently deliver the based on the breadth of faculty expertise, both conceptual and hands-on application, combined with the state-of-the art laboratory equipment, technology and facilities at the region's four technical colleges. The institutions and colleges include five two-year UW Colleges, UW-Green Bay, UW Oshkosh and the College of Menominee Nation.

The program offers Bachelor of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, and Environmental Engineering Technology through collaboration between the NEW ERA institutions, colleges and an array of business partners.

“This program is critical for manufacturers to remain competitive, as it provides a very well rounded engineering degree that can be used in multiple areas of our businesses,” said Mark Kaiser, president and CEO of Lindquist Machine Corporation of Green Bay and chairman of the NEW Manufacturing Alliance. “This allows us to offer maximum flexibility and speed to market, as well as helping keep our costs at competitive levels.”

- **IN THE NEWS:** [“UW adds engineering technology degrees to northeast schools,” Wisconsin Public Radio, July 16, 2013](#)

Giving high school students a head start and preserving natural resources

In addition to his teaching, Greg Kleinheinz, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the College of Letters and Science, serves as director of UW Oshkosh 35-year-old, [prestigious and nationally-accredited Cooperative Academic Partnership Program](#) (CAPP).

According to the most recent approximation, the CAPP dual-enrollment program has propelled nearly 39,000 Wisconsin high school students into higher education since the program's start. Kleinheinz and the staff he oversees collaborate with high school teachers throughout Wisconsin to provide high-quality, rigorous, college-level courses and credits to students. They are getting a head start on their journey toward a degree and career. The program may see record numbers of students in 2013-14.

- **IN THE NEWS:** [“Working Together: Higher Education and PK-12,” Wisconsin School News, May 2012](#)

Kleinheinz's scientific knowledge and leadership is also making a tremendous impact in the state's tourism industry.

For years, he and teams of UW Oshkosh students have been responsible for the [annual monitoring and testing of water quality at beaches throughout northeastern Wisconsin](#). Fueled by \$3.2 million in Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants over the last three years, Kleinheinz's and students' collaborative field and lab work, involving UW Oshkosh's Environmental Research and Innovation Center (ERIC), [has assured that Wisconsin communities reliant on summer tourism have clean, safe beaches awaiting visitors](#).

Julie Kinzelman, director of the laboratory division and research scientist for the city of Racine Health Department, has collaborated with Kleinheinz on UW Oshkosh's grant initiatives, helping garner millions of dollars in funding to fuel testing and high-impact educational experiences for student-scientists at more than 50 beach sites up and down Wisconsin's eastern shore. Racine is just one of several Wisconsin communities to benefit from the partnership and the field science.

“Coastal health and recreational water quality is important for all the communities we work in,” Kinzelman said. “It’s important to the economics. It’s a sense of place. Your beaches and your waterfronts provide a sense of place for your community.”

- **IN THE NEWS:** [“\\$1 million grant to restore beaches,”](#) WLUK, Fox 11, August 30, 2012

Transforming general education, enhancing quality and earning the nation’s attention

Lori Carrell, Ph.D., is a professor of communication studies and director for the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#), UW Oshkosh's resource hub for the enhancement of student learning, charged with inspiring and equipping the UW Oshkosh teaching community to achieve excellence that emanates from research. Within CETL, Carrell and the staff she leads enable and support professional development, offer teaching resources and provide other support for the institution's teaching community.

While teaching and tending to her CETL leadership responsibilities, Carrell has also been leading UW Oshkosh's groundbreaking redesign of general education.

For approximately two years, over the course of thousands of hours as director of UW Oshkosh's new [University Studies Program](#), Carrell has led several staff members and worked with colleagues across UW Oshkosh colleges, departments and disciplines [to develop the “University Studies Program.” \(USP\) a groundbreaking general education experience in which students begin with an exploration of “signature questions” through what are called “Quest” classes](#). The USP, which launched this fall, connects learning experiences to three key questions that directly tie into the University's established Essential Learning Outcomes: “How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?” “How do people understand and engage in community life?” and “How do people understand and bridge cultural differences?”

It's a program designed to help each and every UW Oshkosh student succeed and thrive in a dynamic

workforce and society. The USP also provides students with learning communities and peer mentors while simultaneously launching them into the community to be active and engaged citizens in high-impact service-learning experiences within nonprofit agencies, businesses, other partner organizations and alumni mentors.

In all these phases, students' USP journey is strongly aligned with the learning outcomes and higher-order cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, teamwork and leadership, that Wisconsin's workforce demands. Already, under Carrell's leadership, the USP is earning national attention for its innovative efforts to improve student learning and retention and strengthen UW Oshkosh's educational impact well beyond the borders of the campus.

- **IN THE NEWS:** "[UW Oshkosh revamps general education](#)," WLUK Fox 11, Sept. 9, 2013

Insurance program, corporate partners answer call to prepare students for high-demand careers

When insurance industry executives in northeast Wisconsin cited a need for a new generation of knowledgeable, high-skilled risk managers, Associate Professor Scott Beyer and the UW Oshkosh College of Business delivered.

Beyer, director of the Oshkosh Center for Risk Management and Insurance at UW Oshkosh, founded the [Northeast Wisconsin \(NEW\) Insurance Program](#). The program, which began in 2009, "is guided by an advisory board of insurance executives, provides annual scholarships and grants to attract future insurance leaders and offers internship opportunities. This is a professional development program to prepare students for careers in the insurance industry."

The program's advisory board members have included representatives from: Acuity, State Farm, Liberty Mutual, Thrivent Financial, American Family, Human, Northwestern Mutual, Wausau Insurance, West Bend Mutual and Sentry insurance companies.

Beyer said the insurance program is distinct because of the real-world experience its students receive. "We train our students in the operations side of the business," Beyer said in a 2011 UW Oshkosh "Business Titan" report. "Our students are very well grounded in accounting, finance and risk management with an insurance perspective."

The program helps students network with professionals. It concentrates on student preparation for certifications, such as the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU). Students in the program are pursuing careers as corporate risk managers, bank analysts, and, most often, insurance company professionals.

Empowering Wisconsin K-12 teachers with STEM instruction knowledge, tools

UW Oshkosh Education Professor Eric Brunsell is going above and beyond to help Wisconsin's K-12 teachers deliver engaging science, technology, engineering and mathematics lessons.

Nearly 70 educators were on campus during the week of June 24 to interact with guitars and balloons, Slinkys, noisemakers and straws. They are more than trinkets. They are STEM-based learning tools at the core of Brunsell's and the UW Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services' [K-5 STEM Summer Institute program](#).

The goal of the continuing education program is to educate teachers about STEM fields so they can, in turn, teach and introduce their elementary-aged pupils to areas of study that are launching new careers and emergent industries in the economy.

"STEM education is rapidly changing as societal demands change," said Brunsell, associate education professor and project director. "A strong understanding of science, math, engineering and technology is critical from a workforce development standpoint."

Teachers from Fond du Lac, Menasha, Racine, Kenosha and Oshkosh came to campus as part of the programming, which is funded by a three-year, U.S. Department of Education grant. The K-5 STEM Summer Institute project is led by scientists, mathematicians and educators from UW Oshkosh.

"We're really being taught what to teach in our classrooms," said Heidi Jones, a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher from Kenosha, as she worked with her group to study vibrations via sound. "As elementary school teachers, we don't have to take a lot of science classes, so this really helps me help my students in applying science."

Doctoral of Nursing Practitioner degree continues College of Nursing's streak of innovations

The need for nurses with a new echelon of knowledge and administrative aptitude – nurses with "a seat at the table" – was clear. So, UW Oshkosh's College of Nursing leaders and faculty members, such as Associate Professor, Assistant Dean and Graduate Program Director Sharon Chappy, RN, PhD, CNOR, answered the call.

In May 2012, [the first doctoral graduates ever to cross a Commencement stage at UW Oshkosh earned their degrees](#). All are employees working in the nursing field throughout the New North, in Oshkosh, Appleton and Green Bay.

The college's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program achieved a significant milestone in 2011 when it received a five year accreditation, the best outcome possible for a new program, from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

“The affirmation of our program’s high quality is important to our students, our graduates, and our health care partners,” Chappy told UW Oshkosh Today in November 2011. “Students and future employers can be assured that UW Oshkosh is delivering top-notch education.”

Since 1974, the UW Oshkosh College of Nursing has been a leader in nurse practitioner education. So, when in October 2004 the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recommended moving the preparation necessary for advanced nursing practice from the master’s level to the doctorate level, the College of Nursing’s graduate program faculty and staff immediately set to work.

“I really believe that this is the future of health care – not just the future of nursing but the future of health care,” said Amber Carriveau of Green Bay, a graduate in the DNP program’s inaugural class. “Nursing has always wanted a chair at the table. Now we have an opportunity to have an equal chair.”

The College of Nursing faculty have been just as innovative with online programs, including the hybrid [Accelerated Online Bachelor to BSN option \(ACCEL\)](#), which allows individuals with bachelor’s degrees — meeting meticulous admissions criteria — to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 12 months. The program boasts more than 400 graduates, an attrition rate less than 1 percent and a first-attempt pass rate of the National Council Licensure Examination of more than 95 percent.

ACCEL is comprised of online theory courses and clinical rotations that take place in the students’ home communities and are supervised by specially trained “preceptors” in provider settings, such as hospitals. The option incorporates an innovative mix of technologies, including “Second Life,” a virtual environment in which students interact with professors, their fellow students and patient avatars.

- **IN THE NEWS:** [“UW Oshkosh confers first doctorates,”](#) WLUK Fox 11, May 9, 2012