

UW Oshkosh Foundation event emphasizes importance of collaboration

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2192/foundation-event-emphasizes-importance-of-collaboration/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Foundation's fourth-annual Report to the Community Breakfast, Sept. 15, drew 200 friends of the University, including faculty and staff, regional business and organization leaders, and key donors.

Oshkosh Student Association President Thomas Wolf welcomed those gathered in Reeve Memorial Union Ballroom and expressed gratitude on behalf of the student body to UW Oshkosh's partners and advocates for their continuing support.

More than 2,000 new donors gave to the Foundation in 2008, contributing to what has been the most successful three years in the organization's history. Following the success in fundraising for the new academic center, the Foundation's pride.purpose.promise campaign is focusing on scholarships and funding for high-impact, collaborative learning initiatives.

"Scholarships enable traditional and nontraditional students to have access to higher education, and they diversify the community," Wolf said. "An investment in UW Oshkosh students is an investment in our communities."

Chancellor Richard H. Wells identified the University's three biggest challenges presented by a \$13.6 million biennial budget shortfall — affordability, quality and morale — and shared several strategic initiatives for lessening, though not eliminating, the negative consequences of the budget shortfall.

The new Student Titan Employment Program (STEP), for example, will provide up to \$500,000 in one-time funds to bolster student wages, stipends and assistantships for students. Students will benefit from the high-impact learning and working opportunities while University departments will benefit from having student assistants during a time when state-mandated furloughs are causing a 3 percent reduction in the full-time equivalent workforce on campus.

Chancellor Wells also shared how dollars raised for the emergency student loan fund and grants, such as a recent \$900,000 National Science Foundation grant for the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, address affordability challenges for students.

Keynote speaker Paul Anger, the editor and publisher of the Detroit Free Press and a 1972 alumnus of UW Oshkosh's journalism program, shared examples of how both the U.S. automobile industry and the newspaper industry are adapting in the face of big obstacles.

"No matter what your challenges are, they could be worse," Anger said.

Citing examples of how the auto industry is evolving in order to become more competitive and financially

solvent, Anger said that companies like General Motors are stronger because the U.S. government — and taxpayers — invested in them.

“We truly have a U.S. auto industry that can compete. Talk about collaboration!” he said.

Anger noted that while circulation numbers are down across the nation, newspapers probably reach more readers than ever before because of the Web. He made predictions for the media’s future, relaying a message of hope that while the format will continue to change, great journalism will continue to thrive through many multimedia channels.

Following the keynote address, Elizabeth Wyman, chair of the Foundation Board of Directors, presented the third Collaboration in Action Leadership Award to the Door County Government for partnering the county’s Department of Soil and Water Conservation and Public Health Department with UW Oshkosh’s biology and microbiology departments to develop a comprehensive beach monitoring program.

Foundation President Arthur Rathjen closed the event with an invitation to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Campus Services Center, which moved into an abandoned building formerly occupied by Cub Foods earlier this summer.

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