

Statement from Chancellor Wells Regarding the Budget

by Chancellor Richard H. Wells - Tuesday, October 23, 2007

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/76/statement-from-chancellor-richard-h-wells-regarding-the-budget/>

As you may know, the Legislature has just approved a compromise budget. With the anticipated release of a final state budget by Governor Jim Doyle, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh will receive funding to continue to provide affordable, accessible and quality education to the citizens of northeast Wisconsin. While University of Wisconsin institutions will be challenged by an annual funding lapse of \$12.5 million a year during the next four years in costs to continue (UW Oshkosh's annual share is \$600,000); overall, the state budget is good news. The budget fully funds the Wisconsin Growth Agenda, as well as funding a compensation reserve, which allows for pay increases for faculty and staff, and eliminates the need to institute a tuition surcharge or to cut courses scheduled for spring 2008.

This budget comes as a welcome relief after many years of major funding reductions, the failure of the state to provide funding for a much-needed academic building during the past 40 years, a lack of sufficient compensation increases for faculty and staff, resulting in salaries well below their Midwest peers, and large tuition increases and insufficient financial aid. Meanwhile, the University has increased its enrollment by 900 students since 2000 and maintained the lowest administrative costs in the nation.

The Growth Agenda will provide UW Oshkosh with much-needed funding for approximately 20 new faculty positions, which helps support the recent enrollment growth of 900 students, as well as the projected enrollment of several hundred students over the next three years. The Growth Agenda is particularly targeted toward increasing enrollment in high-demand fields such as biology/microbiology, medical technology, psychology, nursing, business and math/science teacher education. Using Growth Agenda funds, UW Oshkosh will also enhance the implementation of new programs for graduates of the Wisconsin Technical College System to pursue the recently approved bachelor of applied studies (BAS) degree.

The state's new budget also moves forward crucial construction projects on the UW Oshkosh campus, including the first new academic building since the 1970s, planning and construction of a new Student Support and Development Center on the Elmwood site, a new residence hall, and other important improvements to the campus. The combined cost of UW Oshkosh's building projects is \$97.3 million. Under the approved budget, the state will provide \$54.4 million, which will fund the construction of a 200,000-square-foot academic building, the relocation of maintenance facilities and improvements to the Elmwood Student Support and Development Center. The approximately \$35 million needed to fund the construction of a new residence hall will come from program revenue. An additional \$8.6 million will need to be raised from private donors for the new academic building.

We are especially appreciative of the state's investment in our construction needs, as the last two campus construction projects – the Student Recreation and Wellness Center and the High Avenue Parking Ramp – did not use taxpayer dollars but instead were funded entirely by student, faculty and staff fees.

UW Oshkosh is appreciative of the support of Governor Doyle and legislators from both houses and

political parties who agree that higher education will and should play a pivotal role in planning Wisconsin's future successes. We are also appreciative of all of the business and community leaders who strongly advocated for the state to invest in the future of UW Oshkosh and the region.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh has grown since its founding in 1871 to become the third largest university in Wisconsin. With a total head count enrollment of more than 12,500 (11,000 on campus) students, the university offers 73 associate, baccalaureate and master's degree programs in the colleges of Business, Education and Human Services, Letters and Science and Nursing. UW Oshkosh serves as an economic engine for the 1.2 million citizens of northeastern Wisconsin.

This is an exciting time to study, live and work on the UW Oshkosh campus. This funding support from the Legislature advances the University and its efforts to affect positive change in the northeastern Wisconsin region.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Wells
Chancellor