

Statement from UW System president Kevin P. Reilly on Higher Education Day

by News Bureau - Tuesday, October 07, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1344/statement-from-uw-system-president-kevin-p-reilly-on-higher-education-day/>

In celebrating Wisconsin's third-annual Higher Education Day, we take time to help students of all ages focus on their life goals, and ways that we can help them fulfill those dreams.

Now, more than ever, the vitality of our state, our citizens, and our communities is linked to the number of college degree holders we produce and attract. Research tells us that out of every 100 Wisconsin eighth-graders today, only about 30 will earn some kind of post-secondary degree within the next 10 years. That is simply not enough to allow Wisconsin to compete in today's knowledge-driven global economy.

The UW System's Growth Agenda for Wisconsin is about creating more graduates, growing well-paying jobs, and strengthening local communities where workers and businesses alike can thrive. Two related efforts – LEAP and KnowHow2Go – further reflect our commitment to Wisconsin's future.

Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) is a decade-long national campaign to spark public debate about the kinds of knowledge and skills students need to prepare for their future roles as active American citizens. As a pilot partner in this national effort, UW System is helping students prepare for 21st Century challenges by focusing on skills such as critical thinking, written communication, and teamwork.

KnowHow2GO Wisconsin is part of a national campaign to translate college aspirations among our youth into concrete action steps. Studies show that almost nine out of every 10 teens have college aspirations, but only four out of ten know how to achieve that goal. That is why the UW System is partnering with the Wisconsin Technical College System, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Department of Public Instruction on this critical venture.

Higher Education Day is one opportunity to shine a light on these worthwhile efforts, but long-term success will require an ongoing commitment to building college going aspirations and providing the support to achieve these goals for our children and grandchildren. For their sakes, we should work to ensure that every day is Higher Education Day in Wisconsin.