

## **UW Oshkosh Foundation Community Breakfast shares, awards stories of collaboration**

**by Mandy Potts - Friday, September 23, 2011**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/14650/uw-oshkosh-foundation-community-breakfast-shares-awards-stories-of-collaboration/>

Nearly 300 people gathered Sept. 23 at the 6th annual University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Foundation Community Breakfast to celebrate the collaborations and partnerships enhancing and advancing UW Oshkosh.

The UW Oshkosh Foundation's sixth-annual report to the community and breakfast was held at Reeve Memorial Union and featured Alexa Posny, assistant secretary of special education and rehabilitative services for the U.S. Department of Education and the presentation of the annual Collaboration in Action award.

Posny, a Wisconsin native who is a graduate of a UW System institution, plays a pivotal role in policy and management issues affecting special education and rehabilitative services. She believes firmly in ensuring equal access for students, especially for those with disabilities.

"There are two lessons we can give our children, one is roots and the other is wings," she said to the Community Breakfast audience, filled with many educators. "...You are helping (students) soar to the highest level they possibly can."

The breakfast also included the presentation of the annual Collaboration in Action award, which is annually given to an individual or an organization in Wisconsin who advances the mission of the University. This year's recipient, BIOFerm Energy Solutions of Madison, was recognized for helping the Foundation and the University establish the first-ever dry fermentation anaerobic biodigester in the Americas. The plant is located on Dempsey Trail adjacent to the Campus Services Center.

The renewable energy facility includes heat and power generators, which produce heat and electricity for UW Oshkosh. The biodigester also offers learning opportunities for students and is helping UW Oshkosh work toward its sustainability goals, including a 2025 carbon neutrality target.

BioFerm was nominated by John Koker, dean of the College of Letters and Science, for the Collaboration in Action award.

"BIOFerm is bringing the idea of collaboration to life," said UW Oshkosh Foundation President Arthur Rathjen.

Nadeem Afghan accepted the award on behalf of BIOFerm, which is a member of the Viessman Group, an international leader in heating systems and renewable energy technology.

"We have 250 digesters, and none have the collaboration and educational impact like the one at UW

Oshkosh," Afghan said, proudly accepting the award.

Rathjen called the biodigester "a living, learning laboratory of renewable energy infrastructure for students, faculty, staff, the community and others."

"It provides hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies," Rathjen said.

The Community Breakfast was followed by the dedication of Sage Hall, UW Oshkosh's first new academic building in 40 years. The UW Oshkosh Foundation helped raise approximately \$5 million in donor funds to make the state-of-the-art, sustainably-built academic center a reality.

To watch the complete podcast of this year's UW Oshkosh Foundation report to the community, visit <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=453786819>.

Read more:

- [SNAPSHOTS: Community Breakfast 2011](#)
- [UWO dedicates campus' newest academic building in 40 years](#)
- [Agreement reached to purchase downtown Oshkosh hotel](#)
- [UWO Foundation announces plans for riverfront alumni center](#)