

UW Oshkosh unveils plans for new academic center

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1248/uw-oshkosh-unveils-plans-for-new-academic-center/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh will unveil plans Sept. 16 for UW Oshkosh's first new academic building since 1971 as well as its pride. purpose. promise. campaign that will augment state support for the facility.

Under the budget approved in October 2007, the state will provide a \$54-million package to fund the construction of 175,000-square-foot building that will serve as one of Northeastern Wisconsin's most distinctive academic learning environments. The funding package includes construction of the new building as well as \$6.2 million for the relocation and site maintenance of the facilities management department, currently located on the site of the to be constructed building.

It is anticipated that more than 12,700 current students and tens of thousands of future students will be impacted by this new building as the state's third-largest university ramps up to deliver the region's portion of Wisconsin's Growth Agenda. An additional \$8.6 million was to be raised from private donors for the new academic building as part of the University's first comprehensive fundraising campaign.

In a time of declining state support of public higher education, the challenge for public universities to secure private support of facilities and academic programs and services will increase, according to Chancellor Richard H. Wells, in regard to the need for a public university to seek private support.

"With nearly \$4 million already raised for this project, we are off to a great start of a successful campaign that is integral to supporting the capacity of UW Oshkosh to grow Northeastern Wisconsin's New North," said Wells.

Community and corporate commitment is an integral component of the pride.purpose.promise campaign. Lead donors to the building campaign include alumni and individual friends of the University as well as area organizations including 4imprint, Appleton, Associated Bank, Castle-Pierce Printing, CitizensFirst, Great Northern Corporation, Jewelers Mutual Insurance, M&I Bank, Secura Insurance and Thrivent Financial, according to Sue Neitzel, campaign director.

"We are very grateful for the support of the Northeast Wisconsin, which has a vested interest in the success of the University," said capital campaign co-chair David Omachinski, retired president of Oshkosh B' Gosh Inc. and an independent executive management consultant. Added co-chair William Raaths, chief executive officer at Great Northern Corporation, "This capital campaign will provide support and help to continue the transformation of UW Oshkosh."

Among the lead donors is the Bemis Company. Nearly 100 UW Oshkosh alums are employed by the company, many of their staff are involved in University advisory boards, they support endowed professorships and student scholarships, and they provide internship opportunities.

“The Bemis Foundation is proud to be a part of the expansion and growth of UW Oshkosh,” said Gene Seashore, vice president of human resources. “Although the Bemis Foundation typically chooses to fund programming over capital campaigns, the strong relationship that exists between the University and Bemis makes this an exceptional opportunity for us both. Undoubtedly, the campus will be enhanced, and its student population enriched. Likewise, Bemis will continue to reap the benefits of the fine academic training students receive as those graduates make the transition into the workplace.”

The building, providing a much-needed contemporary teaching and learning environment for the College of Business and numerous College of Letters and Science departments, will feature state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, project rooms and faculty offices. The university-wide impact will relieve crowding and provide opportunities for future renovations to update facilities for the colleges of Nursing and Education and Human Services.

In late 2007, the Legislature gave the UW System the nod on the Wisconsin Growth Agenda by providing funding for projects in a number of system institutions, including UW Oshkosh. The construction of the new academic facility is a key component in the UW Oshkosh’s charge to deliver the Growth Agenda and in particular, the institution’s role in providing accessible, affordable quality education to region.

In addition to raising \$8.6 million for the academic building, the pride.purpose.promise campaign also seeks to increase the institution’s scholarship endowment, which will make it possible for more students, including those with family responsibilities or who are embarking on second careers, to attain a bachelor’s or master’s degree. The third component is the establishment of a collaborative student-faculty research and learning endowment, which will help attract and retain high-quality faculty and students. The fourth component includes annual giving.

The state’s \$97-million funding package also includes the relocation of the Facilities Maintenance Center and a new student support and development center. Additionally, program revenue funding will be used for the construction of a new residence hall.