

UWO, companies join LEAP 'Employer-Educator Compact'

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/26381/uwo-companies-join-leap-employer-educator-compact/>

The following is a joint release issued April 10 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh announced today its participation in a new national initiative called the LEAP Employer-Educator Compact.

UW Oshkosh Chancellor Richard Wells has signed the Compact which was developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and by employers working with AAC&U. AAC&U is a national organization of colleges and universities of which UW Oshkosh is a long-standing member. Chancellor Wells also is a member of a special presidential leadership group within AAC&U called the LEAP Presidents' Trust. Presidents' Trust members and employers who work with them are the initial signatories to this ongoing national initiative to ensure that today's students will be well prepared for economic, civic and global challenges.

Participating campuses and employers will work together through 2014 to showcase employer support for the aims and outcomes of a broad liberal education and to show how higher education is helping students connect college learning with work, citizenship and global challenges.

Regionally, New North companies including Oshkosh Corporation, SECURA Insurance and JJ Keller and Associates, Inc. are among the dozens around the nation to also sign onto the initiative.

As part of the Compact initiative, Chancellor Wells is working with these partners to underscore the economic value of liberal education and to provide students with more hands-on learning opportunities to connect their campus learning with real-world contexts and problems.

“The leaders and innovators in our workforce and those on our university and college campuses are in agreement,” Wells said. “We both understand the demand and need for talented, liberally educated and technically skilled global citizens who are masters of problem solving, who embrace teamwork and who exhibit the critical and creative thinking necessary to continually propel our economy while nourishing our democracy. The LEAP Employer-Educator Compact is one strong, strategic and collaborative way we can demonstrate our shared vision and belief that higher education is essential to the future prosperity of our workforce and our quality of life.”

At an April 10 Compact forum in Washington, DC featuring remarks by US Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, AAC&U launched the new LEAP Employer-Educator Compact to make high quality college learning a shared national priority. More than 250 college presidents, business and nonprofit leaders have signed on to the LEAP Employer-Educator Compact. They have pledged to work together to ensure that all college students—including those attending two-year and four-year, public and private institutions—have access to a high quality liberal education that prepares them successfully for

work, life, and citizenship.

“Too many students believe that the key to economic success is completion of a major whose title seems to promise a job,” said AAC&U president Carol Geary Schneider. “What the Compact and the research on employer priorities show is that, whatever the choice of major, employers say that career success will require broad liberal learning, strong 21st century skills, and ‘real-world’ experience and savvy. We want to make sure that students and their families hear this message from employers themselves.”

At the release event in Washington, DC today, AAC&U also released a report, *It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*, summarizing the findings of a national survey of business and nonprofit employers. Among other things, **the survey reveals that, after reading a definition, 74 percent of business and nonprofit leaders say they would recommend a twenty-first century liberal education** to a young person they know in order to prepare for long-term professional success in today’s global economy.

The findings from this national survey of business and nonprofit leaders also reveal that:

- Nearly all employers surveyed (**93 percent**) say that “a demonstrated capacity to **think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems** is **more important than [a candidate’s] undergraduate major.**”
- Even more (**95 percent**) say they prioritize hiring college graduates with skills that will help them contribute to **innovation in the workplace.**
- **About 95 percent** of those surveyed also say it is important that those they hire demonstrate **ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.**
- **More than 75 percent** of those surveyed say they want more emphasis on five key areas including: **critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings.**
- **80 percent of employers** agree that, regardless of their major, **every college student should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.**

Members of the Presidents’ Trust include leaders of institutions representing every sector of higher education—liberal arts colleges, community colleges, comprehensive state universities, and research universities. Business and nonprofit leaders signing the compact include individuals from many sectors of the economy including: finance, engineering, manufacturing, healthcare, human services, insurance, education, media, retail, real estate, and energy. For a full list of LEAP Presidents’ Trust members and employers signing the compact, see www.aacu.org/leap/presidentstrust/compact.

All the individuals signing the LEAP Employer-Educator Compact have committed to:

- 1) Helping Americans understand the rising demands of a global workplace and the need for every student to acquire liberal education outcomes;
- 2) Ensuring that all college students have access to experiences that help them develop the broad knowledge and intellectual skills needed for success;
- 3) Expanding and supporting new designs for hands-on learning, including such things as senior projects, undergraduate research, and internships;
- 4) Advancing the dual mission for American higher education to prepare students *both* for successful careers *and* for civic responsibility;
- 5) Documenting progress in helping all students achieve key learning outcomes, including their ability to apply learning to complex problems.

For a full report of the complete findings from the 2013 survey of business and non-profit leaders, see: http://www.aacu.org/leap/public_opinion_research.cfm.

About UW Oshkosh

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, with an enrollment of more than 13,500 students from across the state and beyond, is the third-largest university in Wisconsin. Supporting the institution's more than 140-year tradition of leadership and innovation, including the transformation of general education, UW Oshkosh's respected faculty members have earned a host of UW System Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Awards. The University offers 76 baccalaureate and graduate degree programs in the colleges of Business, Education and Human Services, Letters and Science, and Nursing, which began offering the University's first doctoral degree (Doctorate of Nursing Practice) in fall 2010. Serving as an educational and cultural anchor for the 1.2 million residents of northeastern Wisconsin, UW Oshkosh champions the economic well-being of the New North with an annual \$501 million impact, directly and indirectly creating 9,000 jobs and collaborating with partners in an array of catalytic economic development initiatives. A pioneer in campus sustainability, UWO became the first Fair Trade University in the nation in 2008. UW Oshkosh is among 21 colleges and universities from around the United States to earn a spot on The Princeton Review's 2013 Green Honor Roll and was ranked 14th in the nation in the Sierra Club and Sierra Magazine's annual "Coolest Schools" rankings, based on the "greenness" of participating universities. For an institutional overview and statistics, visit www.uwosh.edu/strategicplan.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises nearly 1,300 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size.

AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education and inclusive excellence at both the national and local levels, and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.

About Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)

Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) is a national advocacy, campus action, and research initiative that champions the importance of a twenty-first century liberal education—for individuals and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. LEAP responds to the changing demands of the twenty-first century—demands for more college-educated workers and more engaged and informed citizens. The Presidents' Trust is a leadership group within the LEAP initiative. The Trust consists of presidents from all sectors of higher education who are committed to advocating for the vision, values, and practices that connect liberal education with the needs of the twenty-first century. The mission and work of the Presidents' Trust are grounded in the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.

Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at www.aacu.org.

Learn more:

- [University Studies Program at UW Oshkosh](#)
- [Knowledge Powers Wisconsin](#)