

UWO greets new year with glance back, look ahead

by News Bureau - Tuesday, September 02, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1184/uwo-greets-new-year-with-glance-back-look-ahead/>

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh faculty and staff kicked off the 2008-2009 academic year Sept. 2 with an assembly, at which University administrators outlined ongoing accomplishments and upcoming goals.

Additionally, 13 faculty and staff members were recognized with 2008 service and achievement awards. [Click here for the list of recipients.](#)

In his opening remarks, Chancellor Richard H. Wells expressed hopes that the Wisconsin Legislature will continue its trend of investing in higher education by passing the UW System Board of Regents-approved 2009-2011 biennial budget.

“The fact that some public reinvestment is going back into higher education signals a recognition that we are a critical part of the solution. We are the part that drives positive change and growth,” Wells said, adding that UW Oshkosh must focus on goals of making the institution more affordable, accessible, accountable and competitive.

University initiatives that address retention include the Undergraduate Advising Resource Center (UARC) and the Equity Scorecard Project, while the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), of which UW Oshkosh is a pioneering member, will provide a consistent, straightforward and transparent “College Portrait,” when it is unveiled nationally on Sept. 24.

Other campus initiatives that will enhance the University’s competitive edge include implementation the student learning outcomes developed by the Liberal Education Reform Team (LERT) and the University’s partnership with the AAC&U Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) initiative.

“It is a huge point of pride that our Faculty Senate, the members of LERT and the Liberal Education Resource Group (LERG) and campus leaders are continuing to keep us on the forefront of the national movement to reform liberal education in the United States,” said Wells.

- [Read all of the chancellor’s remarks here.](#)

In addition to the momentum of VSA and LERT, which includes sustainability efforts and expansion of the American Democracy Project, interim Provost Al Hartman highlighted other accomplishments in the areas of curriculum and assessment. For example, 2008 marks the first year of a program to increase the number of external grants by providing support to select faculty members based on competitive proposals.

“A major priority this year will be new program development and expansion of existing programs supported by the Growth Agenda,” Hartman said. Wisconsin’s Growth Agenda will fund about 30 new

positions at the University over the next several biennia.

Hartman also said that 2008-2009 will see progress on the University's diversity and inclusivity efforts, which include the Emerging Scholars Program, designed to help African-American students achieve academic, intellectual, personal and professional success, and the opening of the LGBTQ Center in October.

"It is your collective responsibility to make us even better than we are today," Hartman told the assembled faculty and staff. "Be great teachers. Be active scholars. Be good colleagues by doing your share of service. Be great staff members by helping students and faculty be their best."

- [Read all of the provost's remarks here.](#)

Vice Chancellor Petra Roter shared the following updates about the Student Affairs division:

- Citizenship Day, Aug. 20, saw 150 student leaders volunteering at more than a dozen local agencies.
- Through a grant obtained by the Counseling Center, Student Affairs will be working with faculty, staff and students to reduce student depression and suicide.
- The Students at Risk Response Team recently was acknowledged by the Governor's Task Force on Campus Safety as a state-wide best practice.
- The University will expand its campus safe walks program and implement a new safe ride program this fall.

"Our students are not only concerned about safety, they demand it. We will continue, with the help of the campus community, continue to focus on campus safety," Roter said.

Vice Chancellor Tom Sonnleitner's report for the Administrative Services division included the following:

- Student Accounts and the Cashier's Office have developed a new, efficient system, which includes direct deposit to checking account, to reduce the number of visits required by students.
- E-billing currently is being tested, with the full rollout expected in January 2009.
- The University's first comprehensive Emergency Procedures Guide has been distributed to employees, residence halls and classrooms. It also is available online at www.uwosh.edu/emergency.
- The University is investigating how to implement an all-campus emergency broadcast notification system.
- UW Oshkosh's Sustainability Plan is taking great strides, including the pending Fair Trade University resolution, the hiring of a sustainability director and a climate footprint study, aimed at getting the University off of the fossil fuel grid.

Sonnleitner also gave an update on campus construction projects, which included ongoing flood recovery efforts, particularly at the River Center. Plans for the new 17,000-square-foot academic center will be sent to the Board of Regents in November.

“This will be the first public building of this size with LEED certification in the state,” Sonnleitner said of the center, which is expected to be operational in 2011.

Art Rathjen, UW Oshkosh Foundation President, made the following announcements on behalf of the Advancement division:

- The Foundation is just below halfway in raising \$4 million for the new academic building and more than halfway in raising \$2 million for the scholarship fund.
- \$10 million in renovations recently have been completed at the Oshkosh Sports Complex, further enhancing what has become one of the Midwest’s finest athletics facility.
- The Alumni Relations office, which has successfully merged with Integrated Marketing and Communications, will focus on cultivating an online for alumni communications, including five new alumni chapters.
- Integrated Marketing and Communications has made great strides in developing the University’s brand strategy by expanding media relations efforts to include UW Oshkosh Today, the University’s one-stop news portal; overhauling major publications, such as Engage, the alumni magazine; launching the University’s first comprehensive branded Web site, and rolling out an account liaison system for working on marketing projects with constituents across campus.

“I have the highest expectations that these marketing initiatives will continue to positively affect enrollment, fundraising, our state-wide reputation and marketplace identity for UW Oshkosh,” Rathjen said.

Related stories:

- [Chancellor Wells’ Opening Day remarks](#)
- [Provost Hartman’s Opening Day remarks](#)
- [Faculty, staff receive awards for 2008-2009](#)
- [12 faculty promotions announced for 2008-2009](#)
- [Fall 2008 semester sees almost 150 new faculty, staff](#)
- [Seen on campus: Move-in Day](#)