

UWO to implement 'More Graduates' for Wisconsin plan

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2612/uwo-to-implement-more-graduates-for-wisconsin-plan/>

As part of the [University of Wisconsin System's goal](#) to improve the competitiveness of the state by increasing the number of college graduates, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is implementing a comprehensive strategy to increase the number of undergraduate degrees it confers by nearly 7,500 by 2025.

The UW System goal, to be discussed during the Board of Regents meeting on Thursday in Fond du Lac, aims to boost the number of college graduates in the state by awarding 30 percent more degrees by 2025. Meanwhile, UW Oshkosh has set an aggressive goal of graduating 44 percent more and better-prepared students with degrees aligned with the needs of the state over the same time period. To reach that goal, the University must confer 2,669 undergraduate degrees each year, up from the current 1,850 degrees awarded annually.

“In Wisconsin’s New North, only about 19 percent of adults hold four-year college degrees — which is 7 percentage points behind the state, 9 percentage points lower than the national average and 13 points behind Minnesota,” said Chancellor Richard H. Wells. “States with higher rates of degree attainment have higher per capita incomes and achieve a greater quality of life.”

The [UW System's Growth Agenda for Wisconsin](#) focuses on the state’s human potential, job creation and strengthening communities as well as outlines strategies to support economic recovery and renewal. UW Oshkosh’s targets are structured to address a regional need to increase the number of college-educated citizens — impacting personal income, enhancing quality of life and increasing state economic productivity.

“As part of our commitment to our mission and core values, UW Oshkosh will continue to provide high-quality, affordable and accessible higher education, while supporting the higher education needs of northeastern Wisconsin’s New North and beyond,” said Provost Lane Earns.

State support needed

Increasing the number of undergraduate degrees conferred in the state will require that specific conditions exist. First, there must be statewide agreement that the goal is critical to the future of Wisconsin. Additionally, the state must be committed to economic development and provide a business-friendly climate to stimulate jobs for more college graduates.

Further, state and federal financial aid funding must be increased proportionately to ensure higher education is affordable and attainable for all Wisconsin residents. The state also must commit to providing competitive compensation for faculty and staff and commit to providing additional general purpose revenue to support the programmatic needs for additional students.

To reach its goals, UW Oshkosh must increase its enrollment from 13,200 to 16,500 by 2025; however, it also must improve its retention and graduation rates.

- [See more degree growth details \(Word document\).](#)

Moving forward

Already, UW Oshkosh has placed priority on several strategic initiatives designed to improve graduation rates. Now in its sixth year, the University's groundbreaking Graduation Project has already helped 158 students who have "stopped out" return to campus to complete their bachelor's degrees. Currently, more than 200 students are being served by the program, which provides specialist assistance to students, and 55 are on schedule to graduate in spring 2010.

A second groundbreaking program, implemented last month, provides UW Oshkosh students in good academic standing who "stopped out" with 45-89 credits the opportunity to complete an [Associate of Arts degree](#). The University, which has the authority to grant associate degrees for students who meet specific criteria, sees the degree as a logical progression in helping those students continue to work toward a bachelor's degree. This program, if replicated across the nation, could help the country increase its ranking in degree attainment internationally.

While the U.S. ranks first for bachelor's degree attainment for adults, except in the 25-34 age category, many other countries have a much higher attainment rate for associate degrees and certificates. Therefore, the United States ranks 10th out of the 30 industrialized nations for post-secondary degree attainment for younger adults.

In addition to supporting programs designed to improve graduation rates, the University also is committed to ensuring it supports high-demand programs. Most recently, the University launched its first doctoral program — the Doctor of Nursing Practice — which will help provide well-trained nurse practitioners for the state. The University also recently added a program in Environmental Health. Another example is the Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS), which provides a major in Leadership and Organizational Studies for technical college associate-degree holders.

These programs represent examples of how the University has aligned itself to respond to the educational, economic, healthcare and leadership needs in the New North region and beyond while also working to ensure that a high-quality education is affordable and accessible.

- [Read about other ways the University has worked to become more aligned with the needs of the region.](#)
- [Read about the latest major at UW Oshkosh.](#)