

UW Oshkosh's 2008-2009 annual report highlights decade of growth despite economic challenges

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2452/uwos-2008-2009-annual-report-highlights-decade-of-growth/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh saw a number of initiatives come to fruition and enjoyed many successes in 2009, ending the decade on a high note in spite of staggering budget shortfalls.

UW Oshkosh just released its 2008-2009 Strategic Plan Update & Annual Report (www.uwosh.edu/strategicplan), which provides updates on the University's key operational plans, strategic action initiatives and activities of major units on campus.

The report also includes at-a-glance facts and highlights the growth and improvements the University experienced since 2000.

Among 2008-2009's accomplishments are the following "Top 6" standouts:

1. Record-breaking enrollment and degrees awarded

Fall 2009 marked the largest enrollment in the institution's 139-year history, with more than 13,000 students attending classes — a 13.8 percent increase in full-time equivalent enrollment since 2000 and a testament to the University's dedication to remaining accessible and affordable. The number of students of color more than doubled, and the number of nontraditional undergraduate students (age 25 and older) rose 33.3 percent. Additionally, UW Oshkosh has the highest number of transfer students among the UW comprehensive universities. In the past decade, the number of degrees conferred at UWO increased by 24.9 percent.

- [Read more about enrollment.](#)

2. First doctoral program and new undergraduate majors

In spring 2009, the UW System Board of Regents approved the doctor of nursing (DNP) program, the University's first doctoral program. Starting in summer 2010, the program will address the region's need for advanced care practice nurses and primary care providers. UW Oshkosh added several other majors, as well, including environmental studies, theatre arts and the state's first Bachelor of Applied Studies program.

- [Read more about the DNP.](#)

3. High-impact learning opportunities

To combat the challenges presented by a \$13.6 million biennial budget shortfall — including increased tuition and state-mandated furloughs — the University strategically set aside \$500,000 in additional, one-

time funding to bolster student wages, stipends and assistantships. The Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) maximizes students' educational experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate level while providing faculty and staff members the assistance they need.

- [Read more about STEP.](#)

4. Adding — not losing — employees

Rather than making dramatic, across-the-board budget cuts that would have resulted in the elimination of more than 200 jobs, the Governor, State Legislature, UW System, and UW Oshkosh administration and governance leadership worked to create alternatives, furloughing employees rather than laying them off. With the help of 2007-2009 Growth Agenda funds, the University hired three dozen more tenure-track faculty in high-demand fields. Ongoing construction projects also are creating hundreds of jobs for the region.

- For more about strategic budgeting, visit www.uwosh.edu/chancellor/communications.php and choose "Opening Day Remarks."

5. Groundbreaking of the new academic center

Following the completion of \$100 million in construction, the University has launched several more projects that will result in another \$100 million worth of facilities enhancements in the next two to three years, including a 191,000-square-foot, environmentally friendly academic center — the first new academic building on campus since 1971. The \$48 million academic center, which will be built to LEED gold standards, will contain 27 state-of-the-art classrooms; two lecture halls; 23 labs; and dozens of breakout, study and project rooms. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in October 2009; the grand opening is planned for fall 2011.

- [Read more about the new academic center.](#)

6. Recognition for leadership

UW Oshkosh received national attention for developing exemplary campus-wide liberal education programs, engaging and partnering with all types of individuals and organizations to better serve the region, and committing to "green" principles by decreasing negative environmental impacts through water and energy conservation. In September 2008, UW Oshkosh became the first Fair Trade University in the nation.

"In these challenging economic times, we are thrilled that the University continues to grow, serving the knowledge needs of the people of Wisconsin's New North," said Chancellor Richard H. Wells. "UW Oshkosh has an annual economic impact of more than \$500 million in the region, an increase of 30 percent over the past 10 years, and directly and indirectly creates 9,000 jobs. No other organization in the area — aside from Oshkosh Corp. — has had this level of job growth and economic input."

"Our strategy to move toward positive change is to 'polish the silver' — to recognize and appreciate the many things we have to be proud of and to remain committed to them," Wells said.

To read more comments from Chancellor Wells, visit www.uwosh.edu/strategicplan/letter-from-chancellor-wells.