

UWO's Rommelfanger to take lead at Foundation's Alumni Welcome and Conference Center

by Mandy Potts - Thursday, September 26, 2013

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Laura Rommelfanger lives and breathes the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

She began her run at the University in 2001 when she was hired to help plan events in the Chancellor's office. Eventually, she came to earn three degrees from the institution near and dear to her heart – first, an associate degree, then, a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in educational leadership.

On a career front, she's spent the last decade-plus planning some of UW Oshkosh's most public facing events such as commencement, Homecoming Tent City, the Dragonboat Race and Festival and Fall Fest as well as many events at the Chancellor's residence and smaller ceremonies and recognitions on campus.

"This really is my home away from home. This is where I am when I'm not at home. I believe in this place," Rommelfanger said.

And it's that exact commitment, paired with her passion and dedication to the state's third largest public university, that will help Rommelfanger transition to her new role as the manager of UW Oshkosh's Alumni Welcome and Conference Center, now under construction just off the Fox River at Wisconsin Street and Pearl Avenue.

The Center, billed as UW Oshkosh's new front door, will serve as an accessible, warm and welcoming place for UW Oshkosh's more than 80,000 alumni to come home to. The community venue will also feature a 460-person ballroom, break out rooms for 70-80 people and a 48-person board room. Once open next spring, the Alumni Welcome and Conference Center will play host to a variety of events, including educational conferences, meetings, alumni reunions and events, weddings and more.

The center is also one more asset the city of Oshkosh, heralded as "Wisconsin's Event City," will be able to co-market as part of its growing menu of convention, conference, meeting and event venues.

"Laura has proven herself as one of the premier event coordinators and managers in the UW System," UW Oshkosh Foundation President Arthur Rathjen said. "She is a big reason UW Oshkosh has developed so strong a reputation as a first-rate host for academic and cultural events – from our twice-a-year Commencement ceremonies, which pack Kolf Sports Center with thousands of graduates, family and friends to Opening Day and other celebrations. Each event has been enhanced by Laura's energy, leadership and focus on the details. There is no question she will help the Alumni Welcome and Conference Center be one more incredible asset not only for UW Oshkosh but, more broadly, for Oshkosh, Wisconsin's Event City."

Prior to her role as executive events coordinator in the UW Oshkosh Chancellor's office, Rommelfanger worked for more than 10 years in the hospitality industry serving in roles such as catering director, wedding planner and in events and conference management roles.

In her new role, she said she's excited to support faculty and staff members as they bring guests to campus and alumni as they return to their alma mater. Opening the Center doors to the Oshkosh community and beyond is also one of Rommelfanger's personal goals.

"I want the Alumni Welcome and Conference Center to be a place that has a reputation that makes it a place people want to come to," Rommelfanger said. "UW Oshkosh is a community resource for everything, I really do believe that."

In just a few weeks, Rommelfanger will begin to take on the responsibilities of her new role while she also simultaneously helps the Chancellor's office plan her last commencement ceremony, something she's planned, coordinated and executed twice per year for the last 12 years.

"There is so much to do with the new Center," Rommelfanger said. "I'm excited to start building the identity of what the facility will be."

She calls all that needs to be done "a blank slate." From menu and marketing plans to organizing promotions, calendar-building and sales, Rommelfanger will have no shortage of things to get started on before the Center formally opens in April.

Rommelfanger's loyalty to the University, she believes, will help her help make the Alumni Welcome and Conference Center a successful and thriving venue on the UW Oshkosh campus.

"I am UW Oshkosh," she said. "Studying, working and being a part of this campus has transformed me into who I am. I am excited to continue on and be and advocate for the UW Oshkosh Foundation and the University through this role."

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Foundation](#)
- [Time lapse: Almost a year into Alumni Welcome Conference Center construction](#)