



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN  
GREEN BAY

## 2009 MID-YEAR CONVOCATION

Wednesday, Jan. 21 | Phoenix Rooms, University Union

*Chancellor's remarks* **David J. Ward, Interim Chancellor**

### WELCOME

Good morning and welcome to our second Mid-Year Convocation. Our program this morning reflects on what we have accomplished together in the last seven months and what we can accomplish in the months ahead. And, later in the convocation program, we will honor many of our colleagues who this year are celebrating significant anniversaries of their service at UW Green Bay.

When UW System President Reilly called me last spring, I knew he wasn't calling to offer me a gold watch they had forgotten to give me when I retired from my position with the System a decade ago.

No, President Reilly called that day to offer me the opportunity to serve as interim chancellor of an institution that was very special to me: the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. I may not have known it at the time, but leading this institution would become one of the great privileges of my life. And it is such a privilege because the people of this region — from our faculty and academic staff to the community friends who support us — are committed to building a great university.

No one that I can think of has shown that commitment better than my good friend and colleague Bill Laatsch. As you know, Bill delayed his richly deserved retirement to once again answer the call of a grateful university. He has done an outstanding job in the Provost's office and the value of his advice and counsel to me has been immeasurable. Please join me in thanking Bill for all he has done for UW-Green Bay.

Thanks, Bill, and best wishes for your retirement — whenever it comes.

I also want to offer my personal congratulations to all of our colleagues who will be recognized for their years of service to UW-Green Bay. I would especially like to congratulate and thank two distinguished individuals who have devoted 40 years of exemplary service to the University and have set a standard of excellence for which we all should strive: Professors Kumar Kangayappan and Ganga Nair. Prof. Nair could not be with us this morning, but I would ask Prof. Kangayappan to please stand and be recognized. Please join me in showing our appreciation for what these two outstanding individuals have meant to UW-Green Bay.

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## WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR

As I think back on the summer and the Fall Semester, I think about the many special occasions, accomplishments, and people who have made my time in the Chancellor's Office so rewarding. Let me review a few of the highlights of the last seven months:

— Our Fall Commencement one month ago at the Weidner Center. Commencement is always one of the happiest days of the year on campus. That's especially so at UW-Green Bay where so many of our graduates are the first members of their families with a college degree. The opportunity to pursue higher education and that degree from UW-Green Bay creates opportunities that otherwise would be unattainable for many of our graduates. And as we graduate more students each year, our alumni build the brain power base in the New North and that directly benefits the economy and quality of life in the region.

— One of the events I will always remember is Phuture Phoenix Days last October, when hundreds of fifth-graders fanned out across campus to get a glimpse of college life. These youngsters visited your classrooms and laboratories, the library, residence halls, the Union and the Kress Events Center. They even stopped by my office to see what the principal was up to. And in a question-and-answer session, (called cookies with the Chancellor) they asked tougher questions than I've ever taken from the news media.

— Certainly one of the highlights was a reception we held at the historic Lambeau Cottage last fall to celebrate the largest scholarship gift in UW-Green Bay history: a generous One million dollar gift from the late Craig Mueller in support of scholarships for our Arts and Visual Design and Communication students and also for Phuture Phoenix students. Craig was a UW-Green Bay alumnus whose generosity toward his alma mater will pay off for students well into the future.

— Another highlight of our academic year was the Common Theme program which gives our campus a chance to come together around an innovative, interdisciplinary Common Theme program. This year's common theme, Waging War, Waging Peace, was certainly timely as we look at world events in the Middle East and elsewhere around the globe.. This program, which celebrates the ideals of a liberal education and our interdisciplinary mission, has included everything from photo exhibits and documentary screenings to inspiring performances by our bands.

— Another accomplishment in the last year is the high quality of our student-athletes who not only give it their all in their athletic endeavors but who, as a group, have attained a grade-point average exceeding 3.0 for 18 consecutive semesters. That's an achievement in which our entire campus community should take great pride.

— While we can list a few of these accomplishments today, it is the everyday efforts of our students, faculty and staff that make UW-Green Bay a very special place. Every day, incredible things happen in classrooms and laboratories, on performance stages, and playing fields and courts, all across campus, day-in and day-out. It is in those places and at those times that our committed faculty and staff are doing so much to create a bright future for our students, our region, and the state of Wisconsin.



## WHAT'S AHEAD

But while we reflect on and celebrate our achievements and successes, we cannot afford to live in the past and rest on our laurels. The inauguration yesterday of President Barack Obama laid out the challenges for the nation and thereby the challenges for higher education in the years ahead. My sense is that higher education has returned to a status not seen since the days of the Cold War and Sputnik. Increasingly in this global, knowledge-based world, the nation and the states look to the University to solve complex problems. We have again become a critical force in the life our nation. With that challenge, we need to be up to the task of delivering our instruction, research and outreach to benefit the country and help move it forward.

So let us turn to issues and challenges we will face in the weeks, months and years ahead. As an economist, I hesitate looking into a crystal ball. After all, it is said that economists have forecasted nine out of the last five recessions.

But some things we know for certain.

We will have a very promising leadership change later this year. As you know, Dr. Thomas Harden, president of Clayton State University near Atlanta, has been selected as the fifth chancellor of UW-Green Bay. Dr. Harden will begin his day-to-day duties here by June 1. I expect him to be on campus and in the community a number of times before then. I have been in close contact with Dr. Harden, keeping him informed on matters that soon will be his responsibility. I pledge to you today that the transition will be smooth and that we will do everything we can to make sure the new chancellor is ready to maintain the positive momentum of UW-Green Bay from the day he arrives on campus.

In connection with the leadership change and the difficult process of seeking a new leader, I also want to thank Professor Denise Scheberle and the Chancellor Search and Screen Committee for their outstanding job in identifying a strong field of chancellor candidates and for showing the candidates that we have something extraordinary here at UW-Green Bay. Please join me in thanking Denise for her leadership and all the faculty, staff, students and community members who committed so much time and energy to this important search.

One of Dr. Harden's first priorities will be the selection of a new provost. We already have begun the process that will lead to filling the provost position, and we anticipate that a Search and Screen Committee will begin accepting nominations and applications for the position as early as next month. I am confident that the provost search will be every bit as successful as the search for a new chancellor and that Dr. Harden will have an excellent candidate pool from which he can select the next chief academic officer for this campus.

I can assure you that even during this period of transition, we will not only maintain, but accelerate the university's positive momentum. At Mid-Year Convocation a year ago, Chancellor Shepard laid the groundwork for several academic initiatives that would build on our strong academic program foundation, set us apart from other campuses in the UW System, and earn national and international recognition for UW-Green Bay.

At Fall Convocation, I had the privilege of advancing one initiative by announcing the creation of the Environmental Management and Business Institute (EMBI). I noted then that by connecting science, policy and business, and by collaborating with public- and private-sector partners, this institute has the potential to make UW-Green Bay and the New North region synonymous with sustainability and environmental leadership.

I can report to you today that, under the leadership of Professors John Stoll and Kevin Fermanich, the EMBI is making substantial progress. We have established a home for the Institute on the Third Floor of Rose Hall. EMBI is in the final stages of developing a certificate program integrating environmental science, policy and business, with plans to initiate it for current students in the fall. And planning for the institute's first high-profile public event, the Green Innovations 2009 symposium April 22 – the Wednesday of Earth Week – is well under way. The symposium will feature local and nationally recognized speakers on sustainability and will showcase best practices in green business and renewable energy technology. Featured speakers will include Bob Willard, a nationally known expert and author on the business rationale for sustainability, and Larry Weyers, CEO of Integrys, the parent company of Wisconsin Public Service.

I also am pleased to announce that "Realizing our Sustainable Future," a proposal written by Professors Stoll and Fermanich, has been approved as the University's Common Theme for the 2009-2010 academic year. What an appropriate theme for the 40th anniversary not only of Earth Day but of our university, once famously described by a national magazine as "Eco U." And what better time for UW-Green Bay to rightfully lay claim to the title of "Eco U for the 21st Century."

We have been working on other ways to build on UW-Green Bay's strengths – including community engagement and our commitment to interdisciplinary study and problem solving – to better serve our region in a rapidly changing economic environment. The future of the communities, the New North region, and state we proudly serve is tied to the development of innovative businesses that will create good-paying jobs.

Our graduates will both create these businesses and then fill these jobs.



The effort of many thoughtful and committed individuals enables me today to announce the launch of an initiative to establish UW-Green Bay as a leader in business innovation process. The Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation will be directed by Mr. Paul Lemens, who has returned to this area from Arizona where he worked in the private sector as well as at Arizona State University on product and service innovation. He will bring to the IEI fresh approaches and great ideas for innovation that can serve our students and the broader and growing New North business community. Paul is with us this morning, and I ask that he please stand and be recognized.

Thanks, Paul, and welcome to UW-Green Bay. Paul and I and others on campus have been meeting with community and business leaders to discuss concepts for the institute, financial support and other assets that will help UW-Green Bay educate the entrepreneurs and innovators who will grow the businesses that are crucial to the 21st century economy. I look forward to working with our faculty and community friends as we continue to build this promising program.

We also are working on the third academic initiative announced last January — building a more international campus. Our Student Government Association's Global Blog is now up and running and is helping connect UWGB students to the global community. Visits to the SGA Global Web site have increased every month since it went live in August.

Another international initiative involved Deans Fritz Erickson and Scott Furlong who visited Finland in the fall to explore issues and opportunities of mutual interest. We continue to explore the possibilities of building relationship with Finland which shares much in the way of climate, natural resources, size of population and industry clusters with the State of Wisconsin.

Finally, we are working with the UW System to find ways in which we the University can assist communities impacted by the increasingly international character of our economy. The recent acquisition of the Manitowoc Marine Group (with operations in Marinette, Sturgeon Bay and Green Bay) by the world class Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri is an example of international economic opportunity for the New North. UW-Green Bay can I believe play a role in developing this opportunity to the benefit of its students, faculty and the economy of the region.

Some of you probably are wondering, "When is he going to mention the state budget?" The newspapers and blogs have been filled with speculation about how Governor Doyle and the Legislature will address the projected \$5.4 billion budget deficit. I wish I had more information to share with you this morning. I'm sure the Governor will provide some glimpses of how he plans to deal with the deficit when he gives his State of the State speech next week. But the details are unlikely to be clear until he releases his biennial budget proposal on or about February 10.

One late breaking piece of budget news is the connection between what is going on in Washington, D.C. and our state budget deficit. Yesterday, state budget director David Schmiedecke speculated that the fiscal stimulus package being developed in the Congress as I speak might have \$2.5 billion in various program payments that would offset a portion of the state's 5.4 billion deficit. We will learn more about this in the weeks ahead and will be closely watching the fiscal stimulus package.

With respect to budget, we will do all that we can share with you as much budget information as possible in as timely a manner as possible. We will also endeavor to inform you about the impact of the new state budget on the future of UW-Green Bay.

Even in the face of lagging state revenues and legitimate economic concerns, I want to remind you that Governor Doyle and legislative leaders have publicly expressed their support for the UW System and our Growth Agenda. They understand the crucial role universities across this state play in economic development and job creation — and in leading us through and past these troubled economic times.

That crucial role — to open doors to opportunity, to improve lives and to build a brighter future with a rich quality of life and strong economy — is something we must never forget or take for granted. Change is happening at a lightning pace, and we cannot afford to be left in the dust as others embrace change and prepare for the future. But while change is inevitable, progress is not. For UW-Green Bay to progress, and for this university to play a vital role in the future success of the New North region and the state of Wisconsin, we must set the bar high and be willing to take necessary risks. Some of the risks we take may fail. But an unwillingness to take them guarantees failure.



## CONCLUSION

Yes, there are daunting challenges ahead. But this university has faced challenges before. The doors of UW-Green Bay had just opened in the fall of 1969 when the country went into a serious recession. In the first 12 years of the University's life, we had four economic recessions. UW-Green Bay met those difficult challenges head on. It has prevailed. It has endured. As I look out at this room today, I can't help but think about the potential we have to again overcome barriers that stand in our way and to accomplish, together, great things.

In my career spanning five decades, I have had the opportunity to work at two universities, at the university system level and in the private sector. I have learned much from each of these experiences. And one thing I have learned — and can see clearly today — is that UW-Green Bay is a special place that is making a difference in the lives of the people of our region and our state and our world.

It is a privilege for me to be your colleague and to be part of the UW-Green Bay community and to lead this University. I wish each of you a productive and rewarding semester. Thank you for your service and commitment to our great University.

