MINUTES
OF THE RETIREE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL COOKOUT/PICNIC & MEETING
July 21, 2026, WEIDNER CENTER
4:30 social hour, 5:30 dinner

**Report by the Retiree Association President Dan Spielmann**

After an enjoyable social hour with friends and colleagues, Dan welcomed 39 attendees to the annual indoor picnic dinner. Dan thanked all Board members and asked then to stand. He shared the following information as part of his summary of the Association's 2025-20256 academic year.

**Events**

- Dan attended the Wellness/Benefits Fair held October 13, 2025, and staffed a Retiree Association Table. Several people stopped to inquire about the Association.
- Deb Anderson of the Library Archives led a tour of 12 retirees on October 27, 2025.
- The Green Bay Italian Club invited retirees to join them for dinner at Gallaghers before attending a Green Bay Film Society sponsored movie at the Neville Museum entitled "Marriage Italian Style." 7 retirees attended.
- About 25 retirees attended the January 24, 2026, pregame retiree reception (with special priced tickets) for the women's basketball game at the Kress Center on January 24, 2026.
- Tickets were discounted for the UW-Green Bay vs UW-Madison Volleyball game on April 18, 2026, at the Kress Center.
- The spring arboretum walk was held May 8, 2026, led by Andrew LaPlant of the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity. The walk drew 7 nature lovers.

**In Memorium Names**

Names Dan asked for a moment of silence to remember our colleagues and friends who have passed away since our last July 2025 dinner: Clifford Abbott, Robert Bauer, Fran Baugnet, Thomas Churchill, Jack Day, Janice Hartung, Ceil Hintz, Lovell Ives, Judy LeMense, Jim Murray, Nikitas Petrakopoulos, Nicholas Pollis, Dorthea Sager, Bill Terrien , Dean Thomas

**Scholarship Endowment Fund**

As of May 31, 2026, the Retiree Scholarship Endowment Fund has $168,358. With growth in the principal, and turnback of unused awards from previous recipients, an impressive total of $9000 was awarded to 4 students for the 2025-26 academic year. The Retiree Association S&E account has $5,475.

**Featured Speaker: Chancellor Michael Alexander**

After dinner Dan introduced our guest speaker, Chancellor Michael Alexander. The Chancellor opened by expressing gratitude to retiree attendees and especially those of the founding generation who have given UW-Green Bay such strong roots with an emphasis on innovation. Today's UWGB, built on that foundation, has continued to excel. Highlights:

* Total enrollment has grown 28 percent over his five-year tenure;
* The dorms are essentially full for fall semester. Even as substantial gains in high school and non-traditional numbers have powered overall growth, our more traditional cohort of recent high school grads has remained solid;
* Our institutional research classification has been bumped up a notch in the national index, placing us among the UW System's top five in the dollars-received metric;
* The Cofrin Arboretum is fully welcoming visitors again with trail and new-bridge upgrades;
* Two important community-facing programs – the Weidner Center for the Performing Arts and Phoenix Athletics – have experienced recent success and revitalization. The chancellor complimented ED Kelli Strickland and AD Josh Moon.
* The new Cofrin Technology and Education Center is getting closer every day. It will be a true front door to campus and a showcase of new tech and learning. The facility will open in 2027, with a soft opening in late spring and formal grand opening in fall. A "new library" was a tough sell for legislators, but the Chancellor said campus and community pitched it as a different sort of library, overcame any skepticism and achieved something quite impressive: the first new academic building for UWGB since Mary Ann Cofrin Hall in 2001. He singled out Library Director Paula Ganyard ("She's a superstar") for helping drive the project forward.

Chancellor Alexander gave Retiree Association members a description of what the new CTEC will have to offer. One thing apparent just walking through the front doors will be incorporation of native history and culture into the design. (UWGB has the highest percentage of First Nations tribal members enrolled as students, Alexander said, and is actually a close runnerup to many-times-larger UW-Madison in absolute numbers, as well. The doctoral program and academic offerings in First Nations Studies are leaders.) Reflecting this commitment and sense of place, the UWGB First Nations Center will be located on the ground floor. Wood from the nationally renowned Menominee Enterprises sustainable forest and sawmill will feature prominently, as will locally sourced limestone. Some gathering rooms will depart from the strict, square-box layout and instead feature curved walls and rounded edges more preferred in native-designed structures. An in-house café will be named the Three Sisters Café to honor indigenous food traditions.

Another highly visible part of the design will be extensive windows and natural light throughout.

All University tours will launch from the new center. The second-floor will be technology-rich, with the Center for Teaching and Learning, the tutoring center and library staff located there. The third floor will feature office space, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Learning, and an outdoor deck open to all. The fourth floor will be home for the climate-controlled University Archives and local history collections, along with instructional classrooms. The fifth floor will have student study spaces and windows overlooking campus in all directions.

Eventually, demolition and removal of the 1970s-era, eight-story Library will open up a true campus quad. While some "tunnel" connections will remain, others will not, and students, employees and visitors will adjust to new traffic patterns and outdoor travel "seeing the light of day."

In Q&A, among questions asked and answered, and topics raised:

*What happens to all the books housed in the old library?* Yes, there will be a culling, and, presumably, a massive used-book sale. Heavily-used volumes will be retained, of course. Print works remain important, but the business model has changed: through inter-library loan, especially involving UW-Madison, the various UW campuses have long been slimming their respective collections. The library will still be the hub of campus, just in a different way.

*How much of our enrollment growth has been transfers?* Quite a bit. The Chancellor talked at length about prioritizing easy VTAE-UWS credit transfer for students. It has been an ongoing effort for several years and continues to pay dividends.

*There's been talk of a big shakeup in the structure of academic affairs*. It's clear that successful organizations "change before they have to change," he said. Full details are available in his White Paper on Academic Structure. Basically, universities nationwide are facing an enormous demographic challenge as the number of 18-year-olds continues to plummet. To illustrate, at UWGB the average student age is now 25. To facilitate being more adept at matching policies and programs to rapidly changing needs, the proposed new structure will delegate decision-making and spending authority more widely across the University on a major-by-major basis. No more college-centric management; there will be 3 primary divisions but area leaders will have more budget control. Fundraising, too, will devolve in a similar way.

Chancellor Alexander concluded by thanking the retiree attendees for their participation and ongoing support of UWGB. Don't hesitate to follow up with questions and suggestions, he said.

**Election of Board of Directors**

The next order of business was the election of the Board of Directors.

Board members continuing for their second year of a 2-year term (2025-2027) are Pat Przybelski, Chris Sampson, Dan Spielmann. Craig Lockard has moved and resigned from the Board. James Loebl has agreed to fill Craig's remaining one-year term on the Board (2026-2027). Members who have 2-year terms expiring (2024-2026) are Ken Fleurant, Frank Madzarevic, John Stoll, Kevin Fermanich and Jeanellyn Schwarzenbach. They have agreed to continue the Board for another 2-year term (2026-2028). Dan asked for other nominations from the floor. Having none, it was moved and seconded to approve a new member to the Board for a 1-year term (2026-27) and 5 members to the Board for the 2-year term (2026-2028).

The evening festivities ended at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sampson