



Office of the President

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Dear Cooperative Extension Colleague:

I am writing to ask your help in making the whole of our University of Wisconsin System, including UW-Extension, a stronger part of our changing state. Change is needed to revitalize the state's economy, better educate our residents and strengthen our communities. Your leadership is critical to the success of this effort.

To begin this process, which we are calling *Advantage Wisconsin*, I ask that you help lead your county in a statewide listening session on Tuesday, Nov. 27, from 2 to 4 p.m. I ask that a listening session be held at each of our 72 county Cooperative Extension offices.

In addition, you will soon receive a letter that I hope you will use to invite county residents, local leaders, elected officials and other interested individuals to participate in person at county Cooperative Extension offices. Participants also can watch the video broadcast at 2 p.m. from the *Advantage Wisconsin* website at <http://advantage.wisconsin.edu/>.

Our two-hour conversation will focus on two questions. We will ask participants to think about their connection with the University of Wisconsin, a four-year campus, a two-year campus or UW-Extension. How does the University of Wisconsin serve to strengthen our communities and economy today? What are additional ways the University of Wisconsin could strengthen our communities and economy in the future?

Our goal is to make the whole of our university system stronger than the sum of its parts. By doing so, we can "Advantage Wisconsin" in an increasingly global, competitive and knowledge-based economy. Our vision is for the University of Wisconsin System to become:


- The premier developer of Wisconsin's advanced human potential.
- A stronger catalyst to high-income job creation and new business start-ups.
- An even more valuable asset to communities across the state, helping them tackle the pressing issues all Wisconsin regions face.

You can learn more about the *Advantage Wisconsin* strategic framework at the website listed above. We welcome and encourage your feedback, and we are excited to receive the feedback from leaders and residents in your county. All feedback will be used to inform the strategic planning process. We hope to present a final report to the Board of Regents in February 2008.

I know from personal experience, as UW-Extension Provost and then Chancellor, how adept you are at convening these kinds of focused public conversations. (Chancellor Wilson tells me that you've gotten even better since I left. I trust there's no cause-and-effect there!) I hope that your participation in this project will also inform the good work of Cooperative Extension and your service to local stakeholders.

I look forward to your participation and insights on Nov. 27. Thanks again for your service to Wisconsin, Cooperative Extension and the University of Wisconsin System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin", written in a cursive style.

Kevin P. Reilly
President