

Commitment to excellence benefits Wisconsin's children

By Susan Angell

High-quality child care is good for Wisconsin's families and businesses. It's good for our state's future, as well.

It was that foresight that prompted the creation of the state's Early Childhood Excellence Initiative, a groundbreaking project that is increasing the quality of early care and education available to Wisconsin's low-income families.

Today, more than 30 Early Childhood Centers for Excellence are participating in the \$15-million project that was established in 1999.

Reaching out to child-care teachers

Co-directors of the Excellence Initiative, Dave Riley, Ph.D., and Mary Roach, Ph.D., together with a team of eight outreach special-

ists—all early care and education experts—are transforming the field of child care through the work they do with child-care teachers in the Centers for Excellence.

Using a model developed by Riley, the outreach specialists have nurtured a sense of trust, respect and pride among child-care teachers, who are often underpaid and underappreciated. The outreach specialists regularly observe teacher-child interactions in more than 100 classrooms around the state.

"The magic occurs when the outreach specialist takes the teacher to a quiet, cozy area to talk about the wonderful interactions that occurred during the observation, and how the teacher is positively influencing the children's development," explains Roach. "Early-care and education teachers don't hear those things often enough."

Helping children and gaining respect

The result of the strengths-based theory is that child-care professionals are finally starting to feel respected for the important work they do, and also to understand more about how their specific practices affect child development.

"The Early Childhood Excellence Initiative has restored dignity to the field of child care," said one child-care provider at a recent gathering of the Centers for Excellence. "When caregivers feel valued, their work is affected. That, in turn, affects the children we care for—and their families."

"Promising Practices" enhance child care

Not only is the Early Childhood Excellence Initiative raising the quality of care in the individual Centers for Excellence, but the impact is being felt throughout the state. "Promising Practices," vignettes that explain a teacher's actions and the corresponding developmental task, are being developed from the outreach specialists' observations. The "Promising Practices" are being documented and shared with the 10,000 other regulated child-care programs in the state through a quarterly professional newsletter distributed by the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center.

For more information:
www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/ece/index.html



State Sen. Dave Hansen, Green Bay, recently joined children at the Encompass Child Care – Rosebush Center in playing with rubber stamps. Encompass is one of more than 30 Wisconsin Centers for Excellence that are benefiting from technical support from UW-Extension.

Survey respondents give internal communications good grades

By Margaret E. (Peg) Davis

Almost half of respondents, 46 percent, to a recent survey say the quality of UW-Extension internal communications is "excellent" or "above average."

Last spring UW-Extension's Communications Team asked 1,453 faculty and staff members to participate in Extension's first online internal communications survey. And 534 helpful individuals, 37 percent, took the time to click through questions focusing on Extension's three major avenues of internal communications: the chancellor's FYI e-mails, the Web site www.uwex.edu and the *Extension News and Ideas* newspaper.

Here are highlights of that survey.

FYI e-mails

Of the three communications tools, Chancellor Kevin Reilly's FYI e-mails garnered the highest ratings among respondents in terms of usefulness. Eighty percent say the e-mails are "very useful" or "somewhat useful." Respondents suggest that the e-mails might be even

more useful if they included more "big picture" UW-Extension information, such as policy changes and budget updates, and an explanation of how Extension employees would be affected.

www.uwex.edu Web site

Eighty percent of respondents turn to the Web site to get information about Extension. More than half, 55 percent, say they are "very" or "somewhat satisfied" with the site.

The September issue of *News and Ideas* will include details about Extension's redesigned Web site, scheduled to go online Sept. 1. According to Extension webmaster Dana Burmaster, "The redesigned site will be more user friendly and include pages specifically for employees and a new full-text search."

News and Ideas newspaper

Almost three-quarters of respondents, 73 percent, report reading *News and Ideas* to "find out what is going on in Extension as a whole." The majority of survey

participants, 65 percent, indicate that they would prefer that the newspaper continue to be available in both paper and electronic versions. A significant number of people indicated that they share copies of the printed newspaper with family members or co-workers.

A leading-edge model

David Giroux, UW-Extension director of public information, says, "The Communications Team and I are gratified that so many of our faculty and staff took time to share ideas and suggestions. Their responses will guide our efforts to improve communications with UW-Extension employees in ways that better address their information needs and educational mission."

"The survey has piqued interest within and outside of UW-Extension because of our use of the Web as a survey vehicle," Giroux says. "What we learned from the process of fielding the electronic survey will be useful in the future, as we look for cost-effective ways

to gauge the perceptions of internal and external audiences."

Giroux adds, "Your comments about our internal communications don't have to wait for the next survey. Please contact me via e-mail (giroux@admin.uwex.edu) if you have suggestions or questions."

The margin of error for this survey at 95 percent confidence is ± 0.04.

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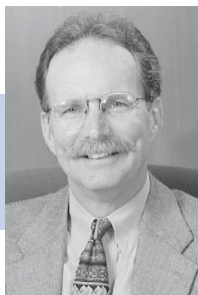
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Message from the Chancellor

Investment in education is key to our state's economic success



Kevin P. Reilly

The following are excerpts from Chancellor Kevin P. Reilly's testimony before the Senate Budget Committee on June 12, 2001.

Despite all the recent talk about the number of college graduates planning to leave our state, statistics show that 82 percent of resident students in the UW System will remain here after graduation, and about 18 percent of the non-residents will choose to stay in Wisconsin. Historically, we rank among the top 10 states in the nation for retaining college graduates.

Our challenge is to develop a balanced plan that addresses the supply of homegrown educated

workers and the demand for those individuals created by high-growth business and industry. On the demand side, we must do a better job of attracting educated workers from other states and growing businesses here that will hire them.

Through UW-Extension and our many educational partners, individuals and communities put university knowledge to work using hands-on education and research that hits home. We are helping to create jobs, improve schools, protect natural resources, strengthen families and develop sound community development plans. This translates into a higher quality of life and one giant step toward attracting and retaining a strong work force.

By helping core industries remain competitive and stimulating the growth of new knowledge-based businesses, we can boost Wisconsin's per-capita income, which currently lags the national average by five percentage points. Closing that gap and raising our

per-capita income to the national average would add a remarkable \$7.6 billion dollars in taxable income to our state.

To reach that future goal, we need investments today in educational systems that will create an attractive, thriving environment for all Wisconsin people. The link between educational attainment and economic health has been made clear in countless studies over the years. We know that investments made now in the University of Wisconsin—on campus and, through Extension, in every community—will reap valuable dividends in the future.

Kevin P. Reilly
Chancellor

reilly@admin.uwex.edu

See the full text of this testimony at www1.uwex.edu/gea/chancellor/



Marsha D. Rossiter, associate director of Continuing Education and Extension and acting

director of Weekend and Evening Degree Programs at UW-Oshkosh, has been selected as a Houle Scholar by the Cyril O. Houle Scholars in Adult and Continuing Education Program. The award, which entails a financial grant of \$40,000 over two years, is intended to support emerging scholars expected to make a significant contribution to the field of adult and continuing education.

Educational materials developed by Cooperative Extension basin educators **Mike Kroenke** and **John Haack** have won awards from the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (ANREP), which honors innovative products created for extension programming. Kroenke won a Gold Award in the promotional materials category for "Targeting Ashland and Bayfield Counties Private Landowners." Haack won a Silver Award in the video/videodisk category for "Rivers—Ribbons of Life."

Sheri Hicken, an outreach specialist with AgrAbility of Wisconsin, is Wisconsin's 54th Alice in Dairyland. AgrAbility, a partnership program of Cooperative Extension and Easter Seals Society of Wisconsin, serves farmers, farm workers and families dealing with disabilities. As "Alice," Hicken will promote Wisconsin's agriculture and agribusinesses.

Teen Connection, a series co-produced by **Wisconsin Public Television** and **North-eastern Wisconsin In-School Communications (NEWIST)**, received a media award from the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling for the video program "Teens and Gambling."

"Being Hmong Means Being Free," a **Wisconsin Public Television** production, is the winner of the *Media and Methods Magazine Award*. The program looks at the inherent challenges of individuals who must assimilate traditional Hmong culture with life in the heart of the Midwest.

Faculty leadership changes

By Greg Wise, secretary of the Faculty, Academic Staff and Statewide Extension Council

The UW-Extension University Committee, Faculty Senate and Hearings Committee will have some new faces when the 2001-02 terms begin.

Joining the University Committee for a three-year term is **Stan Nichols**, Department of Environmental Sciences; **Randy Knapp**, Department of Agriculture/Agribusiness; and **Karen Joos**, Department of Family Development.

They join returning University Committee members **Denise Retzleff**, Department of Youth Development; **Geof Wendorf**, Department of Community Resource Development; **Frank Emspak**, Department of Labor Education; and **Holly Breikreutz**, Department of Educational Communications. Retzleff will chair the University Committee/Faculty Senate for the 2001-02 term.

Elected to the Faculty Senate for three-year terms are **James Robertson**, Department of Environmental Sciences; **Lee Cunningham**, Department of Agriculture/Agribusiness; **Joan LeFebvre**, Department of Family Development; **Kristin Wegner**, Department of Youth Development; and **Jerold Braatz**, Department of Community Resource Development. A complete list of senators can be found on the Web site.

Elected to the Hearings Committee for three-year terms are **Tim Rehbein**, Department of Agriculture/Agribusiness, and **Hans Hanson**, Department of Community Resource Development. They join

continuing committee members **Johnnie Johnson**, Department of Youth Development; **Kathleen Metznerbauer**, Department of Family Development; **David Muench**, Department of Community Resource Development; and **Chuck Prissel**, Department of Youth Development.

Joining the ranks of academic department chairs for 2001-02 are **Geof Wendorf**, Department of Community Resource Development; **Tom Evans**, Department of Environmental Sciences; and **Jack Mitchell**, Department of Educational Communications. They join returning chairs **Ken Mericle**, De-

partment of Labor Education; **James Fanta**, Department of Agriculture/Agribusiness; **Faden Fulleylove-Krause**, Department of Family Development; and **Rosanne Schleif**, Department of Youth Development.

Congratulations to the nominees and thanks to those who participated in the elections. Contact your representatives to share ideas and contribute to academic staff governance issues.

For more information:
www.uwex.edu/secretary

Genson and Reilly complete ESP fundraising agreement



Mary Ann Genson, president of Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP), and UW-Extension Chancellor Kevin Reilly met May 31 to finalize details of ESP's fundraising efforts to support professional development for Cooperative Extension employees. Visit the ESP Web site to learn more about the fundraising effort and how to become a member of ESP.

For more information: www.uwex.edu/ces/admin/esp/

Teen court justices hear peer cases

By Mary Ellen Bell

VILAS COUNTY—When kids in trouble in Vilas County choose to appear before their peers in teen court instead of seeing an adult judge, they may think they'll get off easy: avoid a fine and keep the offense off their records.

However, they'll probably leave court with an order to perform 20 to 30 hours of community service, write letters of apology to those they hurt or wronged, attend classes to learn about the dangers of their behavior and prepare a report about what they have learned. These consequences will make a \$100 fine sound cheap. But they will be a lot more effective in preventing another brush with the law.

Fewer repeat offenders

Research shows that teens who complete the sentences handed down by a teen court are far less likely to be repeat offenders, according to Rich van Benschoten, UW-Extension youth development specialist. Statewide, he says, about two-thirds of all teens who appeared in a traditional juvenile court were later cited for another offense. For those who went before a teen court, only 13 percent became repeat offenders. Teen

courts only hear cases of first-time offenders charged with misdemeanors; comparable statistics for first-time offenders in traditional juvenile courts are not available.

Offenders see consequences

"I think some kids take us more seriously because we are their peers," says Chado DeYoung, a 17-year-old teen court judge with three years' experience hearing cases. "When they come to us, they don't just get a fine that their parent's would pay for them anyway. They really see the consequences of what they did."

Nancy Livingston, Vilas County 4-H youth development agent and state president of the Teen Court Association, agrees: "These young people learn a lot from the sanctions, whether they go to classes about drinking, tobacco use or retail theft or perform community service. The idea behind this program is to catch problems early and get these kids back to a positive place."

Greater family involvement

Connie Abert, a 4-H Youth Development agent in Waupaca County, says teen courts respond more



Teen court justices in Vilas County hear the cases of first-time offenders charged with misdemeanors such as underage drinking or tobacco use, shoplifting or vandalism. They impose consequences designed to fit the offense and prevent future offenses. Justices shown here are high school students (from left) Mike Blakely, Chado De Young, Leah Benson and Kristina Congleton.

quickly and more often bring parents or other family members into the process.

"The members of the teen court can question parents. They raise questions such as 'Does your child have a curfew?' or 'How is your child doing in school?'" Abert says family involvement is important for preventing future offenses.

Thirty teen courts are at work in Wisconsin communities. In nine counties, UW-Extension 4-H youth development agents play a direct role. Nationally, 150 new teen courts are established every month.

WPT provides "Screen Smarts" family viewing guidelines

By Lynn Brockmeyer

Every weekday Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) broadcasts seven hours of "Wisconsin PBS Kids" programming. These nonviolent, commercial-free offerings intro-

duce young viewers to people of different cultures, races and abilities while providing a basis for learning. However, WPT recognizes that kids can easily switch channels to view programming

that does not have children's welfare at heart.

Too much TV has negative effects

Studies show that more than four hours of daily viewing may interfere with language skills, creativity and academic achievement, contribute to decreased participation in extracurricular activities and may be a factor in obesity.

WPT's "Wisconsin PBS Kids" educational outreach staff recommends that families limit viewing to no more than 10 hours weekly, monitor programs and discuss the content.

WPT offers TV workshops

"We take seriously the notion of being a place to grow through learning and encourage families to adopt responsible viewing habits," says WPT Children's Outreach Manager Lynne Blinkenberg. "That's why WPT offers workshops for parents and child-care providers on extending the value of television, making smart media choices and dealing with violence on television," Blinkenberg adds.

On commercial television, children see stereotypes such as helpless women, forgetful or inactive senior citizens and minorities living under poor conditions or depicted as "bad guys." Parents can counteract these negative impressions and use them to facilitate discussion.

Parents can teach kids how to view TV

Parents can also teach children to question the reliability of television information and advertising by discussing what they know about obtaining information this way and how it may conflict with another source.

WPT encourages parents to monitor programs with violent content, discuss how violence is used to solve conflict and whether the person involved was a "good guy."

10 "Screen Smarts"

1. Watch TV with children and talk about it.
2. Talk about whether TV people look like real people.
3. Discuss whether TV people act like real people.
4. Ask kids what they think of the lives of the characters portrayed on TV.
5. Talk about stereotypes and explain what they are.
6. Examine and raise questions about all forms of advertising (TV, magazines, billboards, etc.).
7. Help kids understand TV genres.
8. Explain that TV is a business and that the business of commercial TV is to sell products to viewers.
9. Question children about violence on TV and consider what is appropriate viewing.
10. Explain that what is not shown on TV—the people, opinions and lifestyles that are absent—is also important.

Children should consider whether violence is okay if a "good guy" performs it.

WPT recommends the Media Awareness Network's "Screen

Smarts" guidelines to help children become critical and responsible TV viewers.

For more information: wpt.org/kids/workshops/, kids@wpt.org or (608) 265-5035



Lynne Blinkenberg

Preissing named Northern District director

John Preissing has been named Northern District director for Cooperative Extension.

He will provide leadership for 70 Cooperative Extension professionals in northern Wisconsin, and work in cooperation with 13 counties, tribal units, the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center and the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

As the Northern District director, Preissing will work to promote teamwork and shared leadership to deliver high-quality educational programs, support Cooperative

Extension diversity efforts, and coordinate external relations plans for northern Wisconsin.

Preissing has served as interim district director since July 1999.

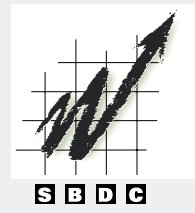
Prior to becoming interim district director, Preissing worked as a Community Natural Resource and Economic Development agent for



John Preissing

eight years in Burnett County. In addition, Preissing worked as assistant director for U.S. Catholic Relief Services in San Jose, Costa Rica, and as a project manager in Lima, Peru. He also was a research associate at the University of Kentucky and an agricultural extension agent for the U.S. Peace Corps in rural Ecuador.

Preissing's bachelor's degree in political science is from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb; his master's degree in agricultural economics is from the University of Kentucky in Lexington.



One-stop business center debuts

GREEN BAY—The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has moved off campus to partner with the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and several others to form a one-stop Business Assistance Center (BAC). The center houses counselors, financiers and business educators.

"Small business is where the growth is in our economy," says Jan Thornton, outreach and extension director at UW-Green Bay. "Consequently, we are excited about bringing all of the services for small business to a centralized, one-stop location rather than having people drive all over Brown County to get the help they need."

For more information:
[\(920\) 496-9010](tel:(920)496-9010)

Ward named interim director of Learning Innovations



David J. Ward

Innovations (UWLI).

Ward, who began his new position on June 11, will lead the university's e-learning support organization until a permanent director is hired. Mike Offerman, who led

David J. Ward, former senior vice president for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin System, has been named interim director of UW Learning

UWLI from its establishment in 1997 until this June, left to become president of Capella University, the world's largest online university, based in Minneapolis.

Since his July 2000 retirement from UW System, Ward has been active in economic development as president of Northstar Economics Inc. Previously Ward was UW System vice chancellor for academic affairs, deputy to the chancellor and acting chancellor of UW-Oshkosh. He had served on the faculty of UW-Oshkosh since 1976, and had chaired UW-Oshkosh's Department of Finance and Business Law.

Ward is credited with spearheading development of UW's systemwide technology plans, including the automated library system and helping to found UWLI.

Established in 1997 as a partnership between UW System and UW-Extension, UWLI specializes in developing and supporting online degree and certificate programs for UW System institutions. It also provides e-learning course design/development, training and learner services to other universities and non-UW clients.

Training to make Extension Web sites accessible offered

By Ron Kraemer, CIO, and David Dunham, ADA/Civil Rights Compliance

How helpful is your Web site for someone with a disability? Is your Web site useful to a person who is blind, has difficulty distinguishing colors, or has limited vision? Does your Web site play audio files? Are there features on your site that require wide-ranging dexterity?

Increasingly, people with sight, hearing and other disabilities are using the Web to get access to the services they need, including services provided by universities. How we design and implement our Web applications and content can

determine whether the users' experience is frustrating or immensely rewarding.

New law requires accessibility

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require that Web sites at public universities be made accessible to those with disabilities. On June 21, 2001, new national legislation went into effect that further clarifies what actions must be taken to make Web sites more accessible.

Compliance training July 16 and Aug. 28

Effective compliance with these laws requires an understanding of their substance and consideration of the technology and tools we use to offer services and publish content on the Web. Within UW-Extension, we are working to develop a policy to help guide faculty and staff members in producing content and services for the Web. Overview programs presenting

basic information about the law and how our Web sites can be made more accessible and useful are scheduled for July 16 and Aug. 28. In September (dates to be announced) hands-on classes dealing with the technical details of designing and implementing accessible sites will be offered.

For more information and to register: www1.uwex.edu/accessibility

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Comments should be sent to:
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Address changes:
Extension employees should contact their payroll office. Others should send changes to the above address.

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