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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

Updated

UW System restructuring reaches key milestones

MADISON, Wis.—University of Wisconsin System President Ray Cross today announced the System has achieved key milestones in its ambitious campus restructuring.

The first achievement is a successful accreditation review from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), one of six regional entities that assess the quality of U.S. higher education institutions. After a rigorous six-month review, the HLC in March issued its final decision upholding initial approval of the restructuring and no further review or reporting is needed.

The second achievement is the approval of the UW System Guaranteed Admission Transfer policy. The policy continues the similar policy that had been in place with the former UW Colleges. The policy maintains that students at branch campuses who meet academic eligibility requirements are guaranteed admission to any four-year institution in the UW System.

Finally, several UW System institutions are also offering new and enhanced programs. UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield and UW-Stevens Point at Wausau are proposing associate degrees in human services, health sciences, information science, applied finance, leadership and project management, and environmental science and management. Those campuses are also planning bachelor's degrees in business administration and social work and a master of business administration in applied leadership and decision-making. UW-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County and UW-Platteville Richland will offer associate degrees in food and agriculture and business administration. UW-Green Bay is planning a bachelor's degree in water science.

"Restructuring reforms were critical to ensure the financial sustainability of our campuses while increasing access and affordability for students throughout Wisconsin," said UW System President Ray Cross. "The milestones we have achieved are helping us meet these goals while growing Wisconsin's talent pipeline statewide."

In October 2017, President Cross announced a plan to restructure UW Colleges and UW-Extension and align them with seven of the UW System's four-year institutions. The goal was to maintain access and affordability at the colleges amid declining enrollment and financial challenges.

Branch campuses officially joined the seven receiving institutions in July 2018.

The HLC reviewed the branch campuses for, among other things, educational quality; administrative oversight; instructional oversight; planning and budgeting; academic program continuity; student support services; and faculty, staff, and student governance.

The Commission approved the restructuring and noted strengths in campus leadership, collaboration, Board of Regents involvement, detailed planning and execution, accountability, flexibility, and regional

support. It also advised campus officials to address declining enrollment, financial challenges, student services, and campus communications.

“Final accreditation is a tremendous achievement,” said Board of Regents President John Robert Behling. “I deeply appreciate the very hard work of our System administration staff and the employees of our UW System branch and four-year campuses who are working on this important project.”

Restructuring is expected to be completed by July 2020.

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The University of Wisconsin System serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding 36,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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