



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Op-ed

## Research in the Rotunda showcases student research

*By Ray Cross, President, University of Wisconsin System*

Nearly 130 outstanding undergraduates from across the University of Wisconsin System this week filled the Capitol Rotunda to share findings from the important research they have conducted over the past year.

At this year's 16<sup>th</sup> annual Research in the Rotunda, UW-Stout students presented research on supporting sexual violence survivors, while UW-Platteville students discussed how they teamed with NASA to test a polymer for cleaning aerospace equipment. Undergraduates at UW-Green Bay, Marinette Campus explained how they collaborated with faculty to see if blue-green algae might be useful as a water filter, while a junior at UW-Stevens Point explained how he helped central Wisconsin employers create a hiring process to minimize employee turnover and save training dollars.

Undergraduate students throughout the UW System are taking part in the kind of research that was once reserved for graduate students.

From my perspective as a former educator, it is exciting to see how these research projects embody the personal and intellectual growth of the students who created them. Engaging in undergraduate research is a proven practice that leads to student success, not only in school but also in future careers. High-impact practices like undergraduate research lead to higher grade point averages and help students progress toward a degree while giving students the opportunity to enhance skills that employers demand, such as critical problem-solving, project management, and working as a team.

From my perspective as an administrator, I see these projects as a tangible representation of the UW System's ongoing commitment to build the talent pipeline and to expand knowledge and ideas that are instrumental to the state's success. Efforts to extend knowledge beyond the boundaries of campus and to stimulate society through research exemplify the Wisconsin Idea and make us all very proud of our students, our university system, and our state.

The event is a reminder that the UW System, including our students, our institutions, and our faculty and staff, is the engine that drives Wisconsin's economy and delivers a significant 23 to 1 return on investment for Wisconsin taxpayers. Our recent economic impact study estimated that the UW System has a \$24 billion impact on Wisconsin's economy every year.

I offer my thanks to all of Wisconsin's elected representatives who participated in the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Research in the Rotunda. I also want to thank the families, community supporters, and UW faculty advisers and staff who helped our talented students with their significant and valuable research that is right now improving lives and communities in Wisconsin and beyond. I'll see you next year.

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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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