



University Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

Statements on the announced retirement of UW System President Ray Cross

MADISON, Wis.—University of Wisconsin System President Ray Cross announced today his intention to retire. See statements below regarding this announcement.

See [updates online](#).

“The University of Wisconsin System has long been recognized globally as a leading system of public higher education. Ray Cross has provided personal leadership that solidified and enhanced that reputation, and he has done so in a way that remained true to the Wisconsin Idea of using the University to enhance the lives of the citizens of the State of Wisconsin. His mission focus and demand for excellence, accountability, and innovation will continue to benefit the System, our State, and our students and citizens for many years. I have enjoyed serving with Ray and value his leadership – and friendship.”

—*Michael M. Grebe, Regent Vice President*

“Ray has done a terrific job. Easy to like and respect, he's made friends for the University from one end of Wisconsin to the other. He has been the right guy at the right time.”

—*Gerald Whitburn, Regent*

“Ray Cross has been an extraordinary leader, helping chart a course that will benefit the UW System for decades to come. His service will be missed, as will his candor and commitment to anybody who engaged with him. While the challenges he faced during his tenure were significant, Ray delivered on improving accountability and transparency within the UW System. The recent \$1.3 billion capital budget, the biggest in UW System history, is proof of his great leadership.”

—*John Robert Behling, Regent President Emeritus*

“We are very fortunate to have had Ray Cross leading the UW System at a critical time. When difficult decisions had to be made, Ray had the intelligence and experience to reason through those decisions and the ability to clearly and diplomatically articulate his position. Most important, he had the courage to make those decisions. Ray will be missed, and we wish both him and Miriam the best in his well-deserved retirement.”

—*Regina Millner, Regent President Emerita*

“Congratulations to Ray Cross on his retirement from a long and distinguished career in higher education. Ray has provided steady and valuable leadership to both UW System and prior to that, UW-Extension and UW Colleges, during times that were frequently challenging. He did this with a warm smile and sincere interest in supporting the work of our students, faculty and staff. Ray has been a standard bearer for the Wisconsin Idea, believing that the education and research we conduct at the university should reach beyond

the boundaries of the campuses and benefit the people of the state and beyond. I will miss Ray's wisdom, humor and dedication to service in the state of Wisconsin. I wish him all the best in retirement."

—*Rebecca Blank, Chancellor, UW-Madison*

"The University of Wisconsin–Parkside thanks President Ray Cross for his leadership of the University of Wisconsin System and congratulates him on his upcoming retirement. President Cross has provided leadership during times of change and has always prioritized the mission of the University and the Wisconsin Idea. Thank you, Ray!"

—*Deborah Ford, Chancellor, UW-Parkside*

"President Cross has been a tremendous supporter of UWL and a great friend to me personally. We certainly will miss his leadership and collaborating with him."

—*Joe Gow, Chancellor, UW-La Crosse*

"I want to take this opportunity to thank President Cross for his valued and effective leadership through some very challenging times. I have enjoyed working with President Cross as both our provost and now as interim Chancellor, and have appreciated his advice, good humor and support. I wish President Cross and his family well as he moves into the next phase of his life. We will work with the System to help ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible."

—*Patrick Guilfoile, Interim Chancellor, UW-Stout*

"I once heard President Cross refer to the UW System as the 'Department of the Future.' I will not forget that. He made it his mission to remind legislators, business leaders, scientists, teachers, artists, entrepreneurs, farmers and our state's legion UW System alumni of the critical role each public institution plays in changing lives and shaping a better future for everyone in Wisconsin. This says nothing of President Cross's investment of more than 40 years of his life in higher education as a dedicated faculty member and passionate administrator. I am deeply appreciative of his leadership and service to UWO, the UW System and the state of Wisconsin."

—*Andrew J. Leavitt, Chancellor, UW-Oshkosh*

"I would like to express my gratitude to Ray. He was clearly the right president for the UW System at the right time. We needed someone who could navigate significant budget cuts with a steady hand, working with the legislature, leaders from across UW System, and faculty and staff. He has been a caretaker of the Wisconsin Idea, helping the UW System maintain its status as one of the best higher education institutions in the world. He also has been a great friend to UW-Milwaukee, recognizing our importance to our region and the state. During his tenure, we achieved and have maintained our status as a top-ranked research university. I thank him for his service, leadership and friendship, and wish him the very best in retirement."

—*Mark A. Mone, Chancellor, UW-Milwaukee*

"President Cross has provided the visionary leadership higher education needs to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We're a better system because his career path led him to Wisconsin."

—*Bernie L. Patterson, Chancellor, UW-Stevens Point*

"I've always appreciated Ray's recognition that the strength of the UW System is the diversity of its campuses. As president, he has worked closely with each chancellor to help their institutions achieve their goals, and this has helped our universities stay agile. Ray's leadership has been exceptional across his tenure at UW System, and the value he places on the diversity of offerings our campuses provide has kept the system strong in a changing world."

—*James C. Schmidt, Chancellor, UW-Eau Claire*

"Working with Ray Cross was to work with a person of great integrity and great passion for the state of Wisconsin, the students of the UW System, and all of its employees. He was selfless and put the great work of the UW System first. Under his leadership, UW-Platteville rose to be a world-class institution. His energy and creativity helped inspire the university to think outside its own walls to break ground on its first major new engineering building in a generation and be part of a first-of-its-kind Dairy Innovation Hub, a research partnership with UW-Madison and UW-River Falls. UW-Platteville students from the tri-state area now have enhanced opportunities on three campuses to prepare for the jobs and economy of the 21st century. Because of his tireless work, the surrounding Southwestern Wisconsin communities have a stronger, better positioned university. Thank you, President Cross, for your service."

—*Dennis Shields, Chancellor, UW-Platteville*

"In working with President Cross over the past years, I have greatly appreciated his understanding of the impact that the UW System has, not only on individuals but also on the future of Wisconsin and the world. I believe one of President Cross's greatest accomplishments is his success at building strong relationships with legislators and other elected officials. He has been very effective at communicating the value of public higher education. We are grateful for the interest that President Cross demonstrated in the work of our faculty, staff and students during his visits to UW-River Falls. On behalf of UW-River Falls, I thank him for his leadership and wish him all the best."

—*Dean Van Galen, Chancellor, UW-River Falls*

"The UW-Whitewater community thanks President Cross for his leadership as president of the UW System. He has been a tireless advocate for higher education in Wisconsin. Personally, I want to thank President Cross for his support and guidance as I begin my tenure as chancellor of this stellar university."

—*Dwight C. Watson, Chancellor, UW-Whitewater*

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The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 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 in-state 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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