Interim Chancellor Gilles Bousquet
University Senate Address
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Feb. 12, 2013

Thank you, Susan, for inviting me to share with University Senate my priorities for the remainder of the spring semester and update you on the work that is coming to fruition for which together we have laid a strong foundation.

As I begin, I want to thank all of you for your guidance and your support during my first semester as your interim chancellor.

This weekend we heard that in his new budget, the Governor will devote more than $100 million in “smart and targeted investments” in the UW System and technical colleges to ensure that Wisconsin citizens have the skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The announcement, following similar priority settings at the system and Board of Regents levels, shows us again and again that talent and economic development is now, more than ever, front and center in the way new and continued funds will flow. We must, therefore, position ourselves to capture these funds.

As a liberal arts institution we play a crucial role in attracting and nurturing the creative talent that is at the core of competitiveness in an innovation economy. I am pursuing a multi-pronged approach to that end:

1. **Strengthen our capacity to collect and organize data that show in the most convincing of terms how our university directly impacts the economic, social and cultural growth and well-being of an entire region.** In Wisconsin, Act 32 established a series of accountability reporting requirements for all UW System schools, including several economic development measures, job and business creation and expansion.

2. **Give strong voice to our perspective as a liberal arts institution in the conversation on talent and economic development.** Toward that end, as I discussed with your executive committee last week, I will be appointing an ad hoc Rapid Action Taskforce on Liberal Education and Talent and Economic Development to help us identify ways we can demonstrate to
our various stakeholders — including students, parents, donors, legislators, businesses people and the Governor — the multifaceted impact UW-Eau Claire has on talent and economic development in western Wisconsin and beyond. We’re calling it a rapid action taskforce because I’ll be asking them to bring me a report in just a matter of weeks. I appreciate the members’ willingness to serve.

3. **Amplify advocacy and relationship building** Last semester, we hosted important visits from Regents and the head of Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, and we hosted one of just three summits in the state following the Be Bold 2 reports, thus putting our region on the map, in part because higher education presented a united front with the chancellors of UW-Stout and UW-River Falls and the president of CVTC on the same panel.

Following that job summit, in partnership, I’m exploring ways in which our universities in the region and economic development organizations (at the city, county and regional levels) can partner to take action on strategic areas of talent investment so that together we will be in position to drive economic growth and attract new funding for the region and expand our relationships with business, non-profit, government, and health care organizations, making UW-Eau Claire a central player and resource in this new focus on talent and economic development.

Further, regarding advocacy, I have reorganized and expanded the Chancellor’s Advisory Council — made up of alumni and friends of the university — with the appointment of regional leaders (Jill Barland, Peggy Leinengukel) and national leaders (such as Ambassador Mark Green). The council is equally active in Madison — where we have key advocates within the legislative and business circles — and in Eau Claire — where we can count on equally strong advocates at the city, county and community levels.

Internationalization and global engagement — a cornerstone of the Centennial Plan — will continue to be a major focus this semester.

Some of you were engaged in workshops and meetings this week involving Madeleine Green. More than 70 faculty and staff spent the afternoon yesterday creating together elements of a vision what UW-Eau Claire as a global campus would look like in
a 3-, 5-, and 10-year horizon, and what strategies would be most effective to get there. It was a very productive meeting. I was also most pleased that we were able to consult with the student leaders, confirm the very strong support of the Foundation for that undertaking, and hear of most enthusiastic and supportive community leaders wanting to partner for a greater international footprint for our region.

To build on this momentum, as I shared with your executive committee, I will form an Internationalization and Global Engagement Committee. I have invited one of its senators, Dr. Paul Kaldjian, to work with me on creating the group, which he will lead. Many of our faculty and staff who already have done so much tremendous work on all aspects of global learning will be involved with this committee, so their expertise and experience will continue to guide our efforts. This group will also include students, community leaders, alumni, and representatives from business and civic organizations. It will continue to engage faculty, staff, students and our community in this effort.

I’m happy to report that already we are seeing benefits from the work done by our delegation in China last fall! Among our many stops was a visit to 3M China, where its president spent considerable time with our delegation. Linda Young, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, recently heard from 3M here in the U.S. that they will donate high-end digital stethoscopes to our nursing program, and, noting the university’s proximity to its Twin Cities offices, 3M has said it’s interested in developing a closer relationship with our nursing program. Dr. Young is enthusiastically following up with them to identify potential partnerships and opportunities with that highly respected global corporation.

When we visited businesses in China, we found that a number of CEOs and world-class entrepreneurs were interested in building a lasting relationship with our campus. In collaboration with the College of Business and the Chancellor’s Office, we will be inviting our first ever Global Executive in Residence, Mr. Ho, CEO of Print-rite, and Mr. Yu, president of 3M China, to give lectures on campus, and for our students and faculty to network with these high worth individuals. I want to thank Dean Diane Hoadley, Associate Dean Tim Vaughan, and professor Rebecca Wyland for their commitment.
Next week, Drs. Mike Carney and Marc McEllistrem will travel to Hong Kong to meet with officials from City University to discuss a partnership that would allow UW-Eau Claire chemistry and materials science students to study in Hong Kong and students from there to study on our campus.

I also continue to be involved in several statewide discussions regarding global engagement issues. Recently, I led discussions at a Wisconsin International Education Council conference and facilitated a conversation around internationalization at the UW System’s chancellors' retreat, and I’ve been talking with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation in preparation for the Governor's trade mission to China in April.

This semester I also will continue my work on what I call “New Century Initiatives,” those programs and projects that will help shape UW-Eau Claire well into the future.

You will receive a more detailed briefing at subsequent meetings about our progress on The Confluence, The Priory and other innovative projects and programs.

The New Century Initiatives also include changes that will strengthen existing academic programs and better meet the needs of current and prospective students. For example, Provost Kleine, Interim Arts and Sciences Dean David Baker and College of Nursing and Health Sciences Dean Linda Young are working on an initiative that would align our many outstanding pre-professional and degree-granting professional health care programs into a health care education cluster that would position UW-Eau Claire as Wisconsin’s leader in health care education. The cluster would enhance student recruitment, improve and sustain academic program quality, provide immersive learning experiences for students, and provide additional research opportunities for faculty and students.

The political science and foreign languages departments also are exploring the possibility of expanding our Asian studies minor to create an interdisciplinary program that would expand language offerings as well as Asian history, culture and politics. Hmong language, history and culture could be a part of such a program, something many students have sought on our campus.
Strengthening our campus climate is an ongoing goal for all of us. I want to use the beginning of this new semester to refocus our attention and dedication to ensuring that UW-Eau Claire is a safe, welcoming and nurturing campus for all students, faculty and staff.

We have identified short- and long-term strategies to help us with our diversity and inclusivity efforts.

For example, while very good diversity training has occurred with residence hall directors and resident assistants for many years, Housing and Residence Life enhanced this training in January by offering a new three-hour diversity workshop.

The Bias Incident Response Team will focus this spring semester on finding effective ways to raise its profile and better let the campus community know how to report incidents.

And we are working to improve our support for faculty and staff in the area of professional development that addresses climate issues. We want to ensure that professional development opportunities are available, and that accomplishments in areas related to campus climate are formally recognized during tenure and promotion reviews and in other ways.

While much work has been done around campus climate in the past, there is much more to do. We are all committed and mobilized to continue to engage in conversations with faculty, staff and students around climate issues. I am happy to thank here publicly David Jones and Mary Canales, our two Equity and Diversity Fellows, for their tireless efforts and their thoughtful guidance.

Finally, in my role as interim chancellor, I look forward to welcoming to our campus the next leader of this wonderful institution. I will work to ensure that there is a smooth and productive transition for your new chancellor.

As many of you may know, Dave Gessner has announced that he will retire this summer, so we are commencing a search for a Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance. I will be consulting with the Executive Committee on the position description next week. We are attempting to coordinate with the chancellor search to give the new chancellor a chance to participate in the appointment, which we hope to have accomplished before the end of the spring term.
Thank you again for the wonderful work you do every day on behalf of our students. I continue to be confident that your creativity, talent and passion will help continue UW-Eau Claire’s transformation from an excellent higher education institution to an exceptional one.

I am happy to answer any questions.