

Campaign to fuel UW-Stevens Point

Bernie Patterson, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

[Stevens Point Journal](#) – April 30, 2016

Tonight is a special night in the history of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. We launch an effort that will transform us from “good to great,” as business author Jim Collins says.

When I became chancellor in July 2010, one of my goals was to reinvent ways to support and advance the university. We have been working quietly on that ever since.

Tonight we launch a comprehensive capital campaign with a gala. It's a purple letter day for UW-Stevens Point and, I believe, is also significant for central Wisconsin.

We're so fortunate to be part of a community that has been supportive and aspirational to the university. Since our founding in 1894, a vibrant, prosperous community has made possible a vibrant, prosperous university – and vice versa.

The campaign is a tangible extension of our Partnership for Thriving Communities strategic plan. Over the years, I've used this column and other venues to outline our aspirations for increasing responsiveness and relevance to the region. That kind of engagement is only possible with substantial investment to fuel our work.

For example, in our effort to help communities prosper, we've partnered with regional businesses and organizations, led by Cliff King, CEO of Skyward, to address a dire need for information technology professionals. These partners are funding a faculty position to help UW-Stevens Point educate more students and fill the growing information technology needs of area businesses.

Sentry Insurance generously stepped forward to endow two faculty positions that will create a new major in data analytics, preparing students to understand and interpret the massive amount of information critical in analyzing health data, predicting and reducing crime, driving business decisions and formulating strategy. Sentry's \$4 million commitment, the cornerstone gift to date in our capital campaign, is one example of how philanthropy allows the university to respond in a relevant manner to community needs.

UW-Stevens Point is fueled by a three-way partnership: We rely on support provided by state taxpayers, tuition paid by students and their families; and, increasingly, we rely on the philanthropy of generous friends and alumni.

This reflects the changing nature of public higher education. Being a “state school” used to mean tax dollars covered the majority of university costs. UW-Stevens Point continues to be publicly assisted, but



just 13 percent of our budget comes from tax dollars. Our profile more resembles a private college, with tuition and private giving of ever greater importance.

UW-Stevens Point exists to help students succeed. We are committed to preparing students for success in careers, in their communities and in life. How inspiring to know nearly half of our students are the first in their families to attend college. For them and for so many students, UW-Stevens Point provides accessible, quality education that transforms lives.

This campaign will support scholarships so many students – who work multiple jobs – can work fewer hours and focus attention on full-time college work. It will provide tutoring assistance to help students master advanced physics courses. It will help us attract and retain phenomenal faculty for our classrooms. And it will provide opportunities for those who care about UW-Stevens Point and about opportunities for future generations to fulfill their own dreams.

One way to be involved is on May 10, UW-Stevens Point's Day of Giving. Wear your Pointer apparel, take a "selfie" and post it to Facebook or twitter with the hashtag #uwspgivesback. For each selfie, a \$1 match will be donated toward first-year student scholarships. Like the Day of Giving Facebook page for more.

My thanks to our community, our students and faculty and staff members who have made it possible for UW-Stevens Point to thrive for 122 years. Together we have done great things, as have our 80,000 alumni throughout the world. Together, we will continue to do great work.

Bernie Patterson is the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

<http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/life/2016/04/30/campaign-fuel-uw-stevens-point/83690838/>