Patterson envisions increased role for UWSP in greater community
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Bernie Patterson said the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point has the ability to play an increased role in solving problems and addressing needs throughout the community and the region.

“A university is the birthplace of diversity of thought. That’s what we are all about,” Patterson said. “It’s happening on our campus, and we have a responsibility to continue to make it happen.”

The university chancellor outlined his vision for how UWSP would accomplish that goal during his annual State of the University address Wednesday in the Laird Room at the Dreyfus University Center.

His address titled, “A Partnership for Thriving Communities,” outlined four aspects of a thriving community — vibrant, healthy, prosperous and sustainable — that UWSP would focus on as initiatives.

Patterson focused his speech on the healthy communities initiative. He noted that the last week the UW System Board of Regents unanimously approved a capital budget request that included $187 million for four construction projects, one of them a $75 million biology and chemistry building at UWSP.
“That decision was a very symbolic one for our campus, because it means the state is willing to continue to invest in our university, and that is a great message,” Patterson said.

Patterson said the new building, which could begin construction in early 2015 pending final approval from the State Building Commission and the Legislature, would be a major component of the healthy communities initiative. He said UWSP also would work to improve health care curriculum and training opportunities for students, as well as assist graduates to stay and work in the region in the health care industry.

Patterson outlined other goals, ranging from a continued increase in diversity, further work with the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Task Force to combat substance abuse on campus, and a renovation of the Specht Memorial Forum.

Patterson said the university also would work to improve salary and benefits. He said the school could receive some of the funding back from the $2.7 million it was forced to cut in the last state biennium budget, and that salary increases would be a main area where that funding would be used. He also said the university planned to spend about $100,000 on salary increases this year.

He also said that an efficiency study, completed in June, of various aspects of the university could help provide savings, which he would push toward salary and benefit increases.

http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/article/20120830/SPJ0101/308300268/Patterson-envisioned-increased-role-UWSP-greater-community?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE&nclick_check=1