

## UW-Stevens Point highlights from 2017

Bernie Patterson, for USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

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What an interesting year 2017 has been at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Like many of you, we celebrated milestones and faced challenges.

UW-Stevens Point marked several firsts:

- A University Honors Program was initiated this fall. High-achieving first- and second-year students were invited to take more academically rigorous General Education Program classes and receive specialized advising and priority course registration. The 126 students in the inaugural program will participate in research, experiential learning and honors internships as they move through their major areas of study.
- A new doctoral program in educational sustainability was introduced. It is the first Ed.D. in Educational Sustainability in the country and expands our doctoral offerings at UW-Stevens Point. Applications are being accepted for the second cohort in this interconnected program.
- The first Chancellor's Medals for Commitment to Diversity were awarded to seven people in May. The medal celebrates and honors those who embrace diversity. Area residents who received the medal were Dave Marie, Scott West and Robert and Rachel Lent.



Our sustainability efforts received high praise:

- UW-Stevens Point was named a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, one of only nine postsecondary institutions in the nation recognized for advances in sustainability. We were selected as the top Wisconsin institution of higher education for Green Ribbon Schools.
- We again earned a spot on 2018 The Princeton Review Green College Honor Roll. The only Wisconsin school to make this exclusive list, UW-Stevens Point was among 24 U.S. colleges in the nation to receive the highest score possible.
- UW-Stevens Point is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Top 30 College and University list of largest green power users in the Green Power Partnership. The university voluntarily uses more than 25 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power annually, which represents 90 percent of our total power needs. We use 100 percent green electricity.

Accolades for conservation came on another level as well:

- Christine Thomas, dean of the College of Natural Resources, was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in spring. She has been a leader in promoting conservation in the state and nation through higher education, research, natural resource policy and citizen participation.

We're proud of these accomplishments and equally proud of the hard work and dedication our faculty and staff demonstrate every day. We're proud of our students who work hard in the classroom, at jobs and internships locally and statewide, and of the 600 who graduated earlier this month. We're proud of students, faculty and staff who volunteer in the community. These partnerships make our campus and our communities more vibrant.

We will have numerous opportunities to strengthen those partnerships in 2018.

The UW restructuring to align UW-Marathon County and UW-Marshfield/Wood County with UW-Stevens Point will be a major focus in 2018 as our transition team continues to work through details. We look forward to closer collaboration, creativity and courage to deal effectively with enrollment challenges at all three of our campuses. Student success remains our focus.

Our new Chemistry-Biology Building should be completed in spring. We are excited to have our students learning in this state-of-the-art facility, beginning next fall. Watch for details about a community open house.

We will continue to prepare students to succeed personally and professionally and to use their education to make a difference in the communities they call home.

We will continue to seek out opportunities to embrace inclusivity because we know our differences make us stronger as a nation. Campuses are marketplaces of ideas, venues to hone critical thinking and civil discussion.

We will continue to share examples that demonstrate education provides more than personal gain for an individual. Education is a public good, improving the lives of all in our society.

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

<http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/news/local/2018/01/03/chancellor-uw-stevens-point-highlights-2017/999470001/>