

New UWSP Chemistry Biology Building highlights exceptional work on campus

Bernie Patterson, for USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

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In a few short weeks, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point will dedicate the new Chemistry Biology Building, and I couldn't be prouder. Not since Lee Sherman Dreyfus was chancellor from 1967 to 1977 has a major, free-standing academic building been constructed on the UW-Stevens Point campus.

This investment of state funds in UW-Stevens Point is validation of the exceptional work our faculty and staff perform. It's also validation of our outstanding graduates, who go on to pursue successful careers and meaningful lives. Approved as part of the 2013-15 state capital budget, this was the largest state-funded building project other than road construction in Wisconsin during that biennium.

Of note, the capital budget is separate from funding for academic programs, salaries or other support, and these funds can only be used for the intended capital building purpose.

The four-story building is the tallest on campus, and we believe the second tallest in Stevens Point. While Albertson Hall, which houses the university library, has six floors, the overall height of the Chemistry Biology Building is greater.

It also stands tall for what's inside. The 176,500-square foot building has 19 research laboratories and 39 teaching laboratories. They're arguably the best equipped labs at any of the four-year teaching UW universities. Instrumentation, including specialty microscopes used in professional chemical and biochemical labs, will give students hands-on experiences uncommon at the undergraduate level.

The building was designed so science education and research are on display as they occur. In addition to lecture halls and classrooms of varying sizes, students will be drawn to collaborative study spaces. A tropical conservatory with waterfall, still under construction, will serve as a green learning space. And a green roof covering a portion of the second floor, paid for by the Student Government Association's Green Fund, is an added place to study or relax.

This building stands tall primarily for the opportunities it offers our students. More than 1,300 who major or minor in biology, chemistry, biochemistry and natural sciences will spend much of their time in this building in the years ahead, learning, collaborating and conducting research. Chemistry and biology faculty members work with students on 200 research projects each year — an exceptional number.

They will discover passions, pursue dreams and prepare for careers — to become medical doctors, geneticists, scientists, teachers, chemists, wildlife biologists and more. They will join thousands of alumni who, combined, make UW-Stevens Point a leader in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and health science graduates among UWs.



All UW-Stevens Point students will have the opportunity to study and grow in this building, regardless of major. Some might solve world problems or posit new theories in the Common Ground café.

The building is staffed by Ph.D.-trained faculty who excel in their fields. They are teacher-scholars and mentors, researchers and collaborators, who offer a variety of learning experiences and strong foundations on which to build. This gives students freedom to explore a broad array of career options. Students learn to problem solve, make decisions and think for themselves – important traits for any career path.

These and other faculty members across campus give UW-Stevens Point the highest percentage of faculty with Ph.D.'s in the UW System who teach undergraduate courses.

This building embodies the latest and best of what helps drive student success at UW-Stevens Point. Students' individual goals and motivation, inspired and directed by our dedicated faculty and supported by staff across campus, make UW-Stevens Point the special place it is. From the natural and social sciences, to arts and humanities, business, health care, communication and natural resources, our faculty members are committed to ensuring students succeed.

Come see for yourself. The community is welcome to the Chemistry Biology Building grand opening at 3 p.m. Sept. 14. Tours will follow until 6 p.m.

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

<https://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/opinion/columnists/2018/08/27/uwsp-chemistry-biology-building-highlights-faculty-dedication-chancellor-bernie-patterson-column/1107749002/>