

Virginia Helm 2003

Virginia Helm served as the first female leader of UWSP in its 109-year history when she was appointed interim chancellor in 2003. She held the position for one year after the departure of Chancellor Thomas George.

A specialist in educational administration, Helm rose through the ranks to become a professor, assistant dean and assistant provost during a 25-year career at Western Illinois University before serving for one year as executive vice chancellor at Indiana University Northwest. She came to UWSP in 2002 as provost and vice chancellor, a position she held for four years prior to her retirement in 2007.

During Helm's tenure as chancellor, she strengthened relationships among students, faculty and staff on campus through her accessible leadership. She initiated a campus-wide reading and discussion of "Good to Great," helping many to improve their daily performance. She charged the campus to become environmentally sustainable, encouraged participation in the American Democracy Project, and furthered UWSP's efforts to promote regional economic development.

While Helm was chancellor, UWSP received a \$500,000 federal appropriation to partner with UW-Marathon County, broke ground on a \$26 million addition to the Fine Arts Center and achieved NCAA Division III history by sending three athletic teams to Final Four competitions in which the men's basketball team captured the national title.