

Gov. Walker: Joins UW System and UW-Oshkosh in announcing innovative pilot program to meet IT workforce demands

Posted on Friday, Jun 2, 2017

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NEENAH - Governor Scott Walker joined University of Wisconsin System and University of Oshkosh officials today in announcing a new, innovative pilot program to increase the number of Information Technology (IT) students in Wisconsin.

“In the 21st-century workforce, the IT industry is booming,” Governor Scott Walker said. “To bridge the skills gap and meet the growing demand for IT professionals in our state, we must provide our students with the knowledge and skills they need to pursue a degree and thrive in an IT job upon graduation from college. This pilot program jump-starts the process by allowing students interested in an IT career to complete the first year of their four-year degree while still in high school. That’s a win-win because it helps us fill high-demand jobs in IT while also keeping higher education more affordable for students and their families.”

Under the new pilot program offered by UW-Oshkosh, students can complete their first year of college while in high school to earn a bachelor’s degree more quickly, which ultimately helps meet the state’s IT industry demands and helps keep college more affordable for students and families since their first year of college is completed in high school. The NEW IT Alliance, a group of IT businesses from Green Bay to Oshkosh, is acting as an advisory group to identify Fox Valley’s IT workforce

needs.

“Wisconsin is at a critical turning point: we have an aging state population with a shrinking workforce – and a decline in the state’s birth rate. That means we are facing a workforce shortage in the years to come, but we are working to address those concerns now,” said UW System President Ray Cross. “Students will complete their first year of college in high school and be able to utilize internships with partner companies, which ultimately makes them more likely to be offered a job that keeps them here in Wisconsin to live, work, and raise their families.”

The UW System, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Green Bay and other regional UW colleges, with support from local technical colleges, are all partners. The pilot program will build on the state’s largest, long-time concurrent enrollment program, the Cooperative Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) at UW-Oshkosh. CAPP is a UW-Oshkosh initiative and collaboration with participating high schools provides students an opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.

“Through CAPP, thousands of students across Wisconsin are already able to complete their first year of college while in high school, reducing their time to degree and providing Wisconsin’s workforce with much-needed talent faster. This new program we are unveiling today builds on the success and reputation of CAPP,” said UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Andrew Leavitt,

The pilot program will initially coordinate with six to eight area high schools to provide courses in a variety of required general education areas and in-major courses in four degree pathways: information systems (IS), computer science, engineering technology, and secondary education.

The UW System has committed \$900,000 in funding over three years to pilot the new program, which will begin this fall.