

# **UW System and UW-Oshkosh: Announce innovative pilot program to help meet state's IT workforce demands**

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Today, UW System and UW-Oshkosh officials announced a new, innovative pilot program to increase the number of Information Technology (IT) professionals in Wisconsin. Governor Walker was on hand to announce this new initiative: students can complete their first year of college while in high school to earn a bachelor's degree more quickly. This helps to meet the state's IT industry demands by getting them into the workforce more quickly - and helps keep college affordable for students and families since the first year is completed in high school. The NEW IT Alliance - which is a group of IT businesses from Green Bay to Oshkosh - is acting as an advisory group to identify the Fox Valley's IT workforce needs.

UW System, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Green Bay and the regional UW Colleges (supported by local technical colleges) are partners in the initiative. The 1+3 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 that provides students an opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.

"Wisconsin is at a critical turning point: we have an aging state population with a

shrinking work force - and a decline in the state's birth rate. That means we are facing a workforce shortage in years to come, and 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 also complete 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."

"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 this process by allowing students interested in a career in IT 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."

"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.

"This degree program demonstrates strong partnership and innovation between education and companies in Northeast Wisconsin," said John W. Kreul, Chief Information Officer at Bemis Company, Inc. "It is a huge win for everyone."

The 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 companies that have formed the advisory IT Alliance in the Fox Valley area are:

Bemis Company, Inc.

Cellcom/NSight

Fox Valley Technical College

J. J. Keller & Associates

Johnsonville Foods, LLC

Katapult, LLC

Omni Resources, Inc.

Oshkosh Corporation

Thrivent Financial

SECURA Insurance Companies

Stellar Blue Technologies

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

### **About CAPP at UW-Oshkosh**

UW-Oshkosh CAPP worked with more than 100 school districts and served more than 4,000 students this academic year. UW-Oshkosh's CAPP was the first program of its kind nationally accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) in Wisconsin. NACEP standards are built upon the best practices of exceptional, rigorous college programs.

Junior and senior high school students who meet at least one of the following requirements may enroll in CAPP: They rank in the top 25 percent of their class; they have a GPA of at least 3.25 on a 4.0 scale; or they have achieved an ACT score of 24 with a class rank in the top 50 percent. Other students may also be eligible with approval of the University liaison, a high school adjunct instructor or the program director.

### **NEW IT Alliance**

The NEW IT Alliance is a nonprofit organization, which works under the umbrella of the New North organization, whose mission is to attract, develop and retain diverse talent in Northeast Wisconsin to support economic growth. The NEW IT Alliance offers support through the use of innovative programming and highlighting of regional success stories to educate the positives of an IT career. IT Alliance members include: UW-Oshkosh, Bemis, J. J. Keller, Thrivent Financial, Oshkosh Corp,

Fox Valley Technical College and others in the region.

**New North, Inc.**

New North is a nonprofit regional marketing and economic development organization that fosters collaboration among public and private sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, which is known as the New North. The mission of New North, Inc. is to harness and promote the region's resources, talents and creativity for the purposes of sustaining and growing the regional economy.