

Tommy Thompson Center on Public Leadership: Selects research themes and confirms director

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 26, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: ANNA FOSDICK
anna.fosdick@wisc.edu

MADISON—Today, the Public Leadership Board for the [Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership](#) took action on a number of important items that will set the stage for the Center's success.

The Center identified two major themes on which it will focus during the 2018-2019 academic year. The first theme targets prison-to-work policies in Wisconsin. The Center will investigate how Wisconsin can reform prison re-entry policies in a way that reduces recidivism and long-term prison costs while increasing employment stability. Along these lines, the Center will investigate Governor Thompson's proposed "[Second Chance Initiative](#)." That Initiative aims to deliver certified job and entrepreneurial tools, along with necessary life skills training, for low-level offenders.

The Center's second theme will examine Wisconsin's transportation future. The Center will identify changes in Wisconsin's transportation system in the near and long term, and seek to devise policy solutions that sets the state on a path of long-term transportation success.

The Center will call for UW System Faculty grant proposals on these—and related—topics soon. It will also hold conferences on the topics this coming academic year.

Additionally, the Board selected [Professor Ryan Owens](#) as the first Director of the Thompson Center. Owens earned his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis in 2008, his law degree from UW-Madison in 2001, and his Bachelor's degree from UW-Madison in 1998. The two-time Badger expressed excitement at his selection: "I'm pleased to lead the Thompson Center and look forward to working with the Board and the faculty to help solve some of Wisconsin's most pressing leadership and policy challenges. We aim to follow Tommy's legacy of big tent problem solving."