

UW-Milwaukee & WisPolitics.com/WisBusiness.com: New video podcast launching from Lubar Entrepreneurship Center

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For immediate release

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MILWAUKEE — A new video podcast called “Meeting in Middle America” will highlight young leaders in the heartland and some of their solutions to the nation’s most pressing challenges.

The weekly podcast, a joint production of UW-Milwaukee and WisPolitics.com/WisBusiness.com, will be produced at UWM’s new Lubar Entrepreneurship Center. It will formally launch on Feb. 13 with an event from 5 to 7 p.m. at the entrepreneurship center, where an invited audience will hear from host Steven Olikara and get a sneak peek of the first episode.

“What we’re going to hear will be much deeper and in many ways an untold story that many of the national news outlets haven’t quite picked up on yet,” said Olikara, a Brookfield native and founder and president of the nonpartisan Millennial Action Project.

The video podcast, which will also be available in audio-only format, will feature discussions with political leaders from across Wisconsin and the Midwest, innovative entrepreneurs and others willing to bridge political, geographical and social divides.

“If we can unlock the solutions to some of the big national challenges in Wisconsin

— for example, how we deal with political polarization, how we create new economic opportunity in the Rust Belt, how we attract young people to Middle America so we can counteract the brain drain — if we can answer some of those questions, I believe the solutions will ripple across the country,” Olikara said.

UWM Chancellor Mark Mone welcomed the podcast. “UW-Milwaukee is pleased to co-host this podcast launch from our Lubar Entrepreneurship Center, where the best and brightest minds of our campus and broader community meld,” Mone said. “There is great diversity of thought in our region, and we welcome and encourage the open exchange of ideas and civil, intellectual challenge. It is vital that the many voices of our state be heard.”

Jeff Mayers, president of WisPolitics.com and Wisbusiness.com, said the new podcast is one way for young professionals across the country to tap into the Midwest mindset and potential. “There’s a lot going on here that people on the coasts miss. But more and more there’s a curiosity about Milwaukee, Wisconsin and the upper Midwest. This podcast will provide a way to tap into all the neat things happening here.”

A Feb. 13 launch party will formally unveil the podcast, which will be distributed on digital platforms including WisPolitics.com, WisBusiness.com, uwm.edu, millennialaction.org and YouTube. The party at the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center, 2100 E. Kenwood Avenue in Milwaukee, kicks off at 5 p.m. with music and appetizers; the program begins at 6:15 p.m.

The nation’s attention will be focused on Wisconsin this year as a battleground state in the presidential election, but Olikara notes the podcast will go “even deeper than the election itself.”

The new show will have a national audience, and Olikara says broadcasting out of Milwaukee will grant a unique vantage point on issues with nationwide relevance. Few national podcasts are based in Wisconsin, with many others originating from places like California, New York and Washington, D.C.

“When we talk about Middle America, we talk about a region that is at the crossroads of the future of our country. You have powerful trends taking root here that matter to the very idea of America. This is a moment we need to hear from the people behind those trends,” Olikara said.

Olikara, who calls himself a “nontraditional political entrepreneur,” heads the Millennial Action Project, started in 2013 after a government shutdown. MAP is now the largest nonpartisan organization of young lawmakers in the country. According to Olikara, the group is all about making connections across political lines and bringing all ideas to the table.

About WisPolitics.com

WisPolitics.com is a nonpartisan news service based in Madison. Launched in 2000, WisPolitics.com also operates WisBusiness.com and Battlegroundwis2020.com. The sites provide subscriber services to political and business professionals and stage newsmaker events in Madison, Milwaukee and Washington, D.C.

About the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center

The Lubar Entrepreneurship Center (LEC) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is creating a focal point for entrepreneurship education and programs that impact UWM students, businesses, and our region’s economy. Programming is designed to engage UWM students and faculty across disciplines – giving them skills in innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking to enhance their success. The Lubar Entrepreneurship Center also serves as a pillar of Milwaukee’s growing entrepreneurial ecosystem – as a home to key programs that create a pipeline of talent and a resource for growing businesses.

About UWM

Recognized as one of the nation’s 131 top research universities, UW-Milwaukee provides a world-class education to 26,000 students from 91 countries on a budget of \$689 million. Its 15 schools and colleges include Wisconsin’s only schools of architecture, freshwater sciences and public health, and it is a leading educator of nurses and teachers. UW-Milwaukee partners with leading companies to conduct joint research, offer student internships and serve as an economic engine for southeastern Wisconsin. The Princeton Review named UW-Milwaukee a 2020 “Best Midwestern” university based on overall academic excellence and student reviews.