

# **UW-Green Bay: Launches Institute for Women's Leadership to build in-demand pipeline of leaders in northeast Wisconsin**

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Green Bay, Wis.— Recognizing the region's growing need for a pipeline of women leaders and the distinct challenges faced by professional women in the workplace, UW-Green Bay is establishing the Institute for Women's Leadership [www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership](http://www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership). The Institute will serve as a comprehensive leadership resource for women in Northeast Wisconsin and will strive to eliminate barriers that narrow opportunities at all stages in their professional careers, from rising women of promise to woman executives.

- The facts about the women's leadership gap are well documented and speak for themselves:
- Women make up half of the world's talent pool. In the US, 50.2% of the college-educated labor force is made up of women.
- They have long eclipsed men in earning college degrees, yet women still only hold 25% of leadership roles.[i]
- Since 2015 there have been only modest signs of progress in the representation of women in the corporate pipeline[ii]: Women represent only 28 percent of the those in senior vice president positions in the workplace and only 21% of those occupying roles in the C Suite.
- One in five board members are women at Wisconsin's top 50 public companies[iii].

"One of the most powerful actions we can take as a University is to create a culture of 'conscious inclusion,' ensuring the region has a pipeline of women leaders," UW-

Green Bay Chief Business Officer and Senior Vice Chancellor for Institutional Strategy Sheryl Van Gruensven said. “Beyond policies and hiring practices, the Institute will give rise to an environment that embraces diverse perspectives with the conscious intent of including everyone, particularly women.”

Joy Ruzek, Vice-Chancellor of the Division of Continuing Education and Community Engagement and co-founder of the Institute with Van Gruensven, added, “Women lag substantially behind men when it comes to their representation in leadership positions, showing there clearly is a broken rung on the career ladder for women. Our goal is to build an ongoing culture where everyone brings their whole self to work each day and feels valued, heard and able to make an impact while progressing in their careers. By giving access to more representative voices, our society and economy will only get stronger.”

The Institute will put forward wide-ranging programs, events, and research, benefiting women with access to experts and supportive networks. Leadership certificate programs, a monthly speaker’s series featuring notable women throughout the area sharing their stories to leadership, monthly networking events, a women’s mentorship program, an annual leadership retreat, workshops and discussion groups will be offered to support women’s professional development needs. Equally important, the Institute will work to increase communities’ knowledge and awareness of issues related to women in leadership and advance new knowledge about women and leadership in the State of Wisconsin through benchmarking data on women in business and research about women and leadership.

Work on this important workplace topic has been steadily taking shape in Northeast Wisconsin over the last few years, including the work of Bridget O’Connor, Principal and Owner of O’Connor Connective, and incubator of “The Connective: A Community for Women in Business.” The Institute will incorporate O’Connor’s work into its offerings in an ongoing and expanded effort to grow and develop women leaders across industries and career stages.

“It’s a great day for women in Wisconsin!” says O’Connor. “We couldn’t be more thrilled to align our efforts with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, a forward-facing University, boldly sustaining and creating a community on the rise. Now we can reach even more women with more resources to advance in their careers. It’s that simple and that profound. The Institute takes the ideas of ‘The Connective’ to a whole new level, and we can’t wait to see what unfolds.”

“Now more than ever our communities need fearless leaders,” said UW-Green Bay Chancellor Michael Alexander.

“Our mission with the Institute is to empower women and to fulfill the evolving leadership needs of Wisconsin companies and organizations.”

The Institute will host a kickoff event on Friday, March 5, 2021 in celebration of International Women’s Day with a formal announcement and a virtual keynote speaker, addressing the campaign theme “Choose to Challenge.” The kickoff will start at 9 a.m. and continue until 10:30 a.m. Details will be shared on the website [www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership](http://www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership).

To learn more about the Institute for Women’s Leadership, please contact Teri Zuege-Halvorsen, Executive Director, at [zueget@uwgb.edu](mailto:zueget@uwgb.edu) or visit the website [www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership](http://www.uwgb.edu/womens-leadership).