

# **UW Oshkosh: New Whitburn Center for Governance and Policy Research set to strengthen Wisconsin's 'good government' tradition**

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The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's new Whitburn Center for Governance and Policy Research seeks to reinvigorate Wisconsin's "good government" tradition by embodying the public service ideals of its founding benefactor, alumnus Gerald Whitburn '64.

"A strong commitment to good governance across all levels of Wisconsin's governmental units has always been important, but it has never been more critical than at this point in time," Whitburn said. "Although Wisconsin's good government reputation has consistently been a unique strength for our state, it mustn't be taken for granted."

The Whitburn Center will produce annual reports, research briefs, fee-for-service consulting projects and leadership training related to state and local government.

Whitburn, the retired chair and chief executive officer of Church Mutual Insurance Company, served as secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services and held three senior positions in Wisconsin government: deputy secretary of administration (1987-1989); secretary of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (1989-1991); and secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services (1991-1995).

Whitburn also was appointed to serve as a UW System Regent for nine years, earning the Board of Regents' emeritus standing. In private sector governance roles

he served as past chairman of the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCI) and was a member of the board of Trustees of the American Institute for Charter Property Casualty Underwriters (AICPCU). He also had two tours in Washington D.C., where he spent three years on staff of the Secretary of the Navy at the Pentagon and six years working for U.S. Sen. Bob Kasten.

Whitburn, and his wife Charmaine, who met as undergraduates at UWO, reside in Wausau.

“Gerald Whitburn has modeled a remarkable life and career in scholarship, service and executive leadership that spans public and private sectors, epitomizing the rich and unique experiences this institution strives to make attainable for every Titan,” said Chancellor Andrew Leavitt.

Michael R. Ford, department chair and associate public administration professor, will direct the day-to-day operations of the center. Samantha Larson, assistant public administration professor, will serve as deputy director.

“How we do things in government matters,” Ford said. “Through the power of our network of MPA alumni and friends, we will connect high-quality governance research to practice. We will demonstrate UWO’s positive impact on Wisconsin.”

The launch of the Whitburn center will be overseen by an initial advisory board chaired by former Wisconsin Gov. Scott McCallum. “This board will ensure the Whitburn Center is doing practical governance research to make a lasting impact in Wisconsin government,” McCallum said.

Other advisory board members include:

- Ellen Nowak, Wisconsin Public Service commissioner
- Raymond Taffora, former deputy Wisconsin Attorney General
- Mark Rohloff, Oshkosh city manager
- Benjamin Krumenauer, Osceola village administrator
- Kathryn Schauf, Eau Claire County Administrator
- Sachin Shivaram, Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry CEO

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