

UW-River Falls: Chancellor Gallo named chair of national women's executive council

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April 18, 2022 — University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo was elected in March as the chair of the American Council on Education (ACE) Women's Network Executive Council (WNEC).

Gallo will serve in the position for two years. She has served on the WNEC since June 2018, most recently as the group's vice chair.

ACE Women's Network is a national system of networks within each state, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia with the goal of advancing and supporting women in higher education. The state networks are linked to one another through ACE WNEC, a group of senior women executives from across the country who serve as both mentors to the state chairs and advisers to ACE on the overall functioning of the ACE Women's Network.

According to ACE's American College President Study 2017, only 30% of the nation's college and university presidents are women, up just a few percentage points over the past decade. Of those, 78% of women presidents are serving their first presidency. The goal of ACE's multi-association national initiative Moving the Needle seeks to increase the number of women leaders, with a goal that at least 50% of college and university presidents will be women by 2030.

"By providing mentorship to other women leaders, we serve to build a national pipeline of women prepared to advance to senior and executive-level positions in higher education," Gallo noted.

What is now named ACE WNEC was founded with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation in 1977. The executive council uses geographic locations to divide mentoring responsibilities for individual state networks among its members.

As chair, Gallo will work directly with the director of ACE Leadership to coordinate activities.

Gallo succeeds Sonoma State University President Judy Sakaki. The immediate past chair of the WNEC serves on ACE's Board of Directors.

Gallo was named UWRF's chancellor in July 2021 after serving five years as the Delaware Valley University president in Doylestown, Penn. Before that she was dean and director of Research and Cooperative Education at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. Her research interests included plant molecular biology and genetics and plant-microbe interactions. Gallo earned her bachelor's degree in agronomy from Cornell University and both her master's degree in crop science and Ph.D. in genetics from North Carolina State University.

ACE is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. To learn more, visit acenet.edu.