

# UW-Stevens Point: Thomas Gibson installed as chancellor

Posted on Friday, Sep 23, 2022

**>> 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.](#)**

Thomas Gibson, Ed.D., was officially installed as the 15th chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Friday before more than 300 Wisconsin education, business and community leaders, faculty, staff and students.

Gibson became chancellor in January 2021. This formal inauguration, filled with academic tradition, was postponed until now because of the pandemic.

The postponement gave dignitaries an opportunity to comment on Gibson's collaborative leadership and achievements in the past 20 months. Based on the "many great things he's accomplished thus far," UW System President Jay Rothman said, "Tom Gibson was the right person for the job. Tom has been a calm and steady leader, making the tough decisions to always keep students first and his university communities healthy and safe."

Regent President Karen Walsh, who was co-chair of the chancellor's search committee, said the committee was charged with finding a new chancellor who was warm, forthcoming, insightful, inspirational and unafraid to lead. Gibson exceeded those expectations, she said. "You are poised for great things."

As the first in his family to attend college, Gibson said he recognized that education was a pathway to greater opportunity. He shared experiences from his youth, college and career, discovering his passion to serve others.

"I understood early on if I were to achieve any success, personal or professional, it would be through securing an education beyond high school," he said.

In college, he worked as a new student orientation peer adviser, resident assistant and peer tutor. "These experiences afforded my first opportunity of being of service

to others within higher education,” Gibson said. It provided direction and professional purpose that continued through his life.

“Helping more students succeed is my mission. It was my purpose for the first 25 years of my higher education career. Now as chancellor of UW-Stevens Point, it is the core of our purpose-driven education.”

Enhancing student success is a partnership with faculty and staff, who are united in a shared sense of purpose, he said, and also with businesses, schools, nonprofit organizations and individuals in Stevens Point, Wausau, Marshfield and the region.

Gibson highlighted the three strategic imperatives he introduced when he joined UW-Stevens Point in January 2021:

- Enhancing academic excellence
- Expanding diversity, equity and inclusive excellence
- Increasing enrollment and growth

Integrated into the university’s strategic plan, these goals will help to move the institution forward and be responsive to evolving student, community and regional needs, he said.

“Inclusive excellence embodies making our campuses places where everyone feels valued, supported and welcome. It includes expanding access and creating opportunities for everyone who wants to attend UW-Stevens Point to be able to do so,” Gibson said. More on-ramps are being developed to expand how education is delivered with robust online and hybrid programs.

He introduced the Gibson Family Scholarship, which will support first-generation and historically underrepresented students to realize their potential at UW-Stevens Point with less financial pressure.

“I understand the power of education, how it can change an individual’s life as well as the lives of families and generations. I understand the grit and resiliency required to complete a college degree, while juggling multiple jobs and competing priorities. This was my own experience, and it is the experience of many students who are seeking degrees from our institution.”

Gibson described himself as a mission-focused leader who learns from others, tests new ideas and nurtures strong, trusting relationships.

“This is precisely the time we need thoughtful and authentic leaders – to bring folks together, to collaborate, to solve problems with creativity and innovation, to model civil dialogue and respect, to provide more pathways for students to pursue their passions and succeed,” Gibson said. “As a community of learners, we all have something to teach and to learn.”

Kyle Beyersdorf, Student Government Association president at UW-Stevens Point, said the chancellor has inspired him to follow a similar career path in higher education. Students appreciate that the chancellor buys students coffee, takes SGA-sponsored walks and is helping with a weekend programming initiative to encourage students to stay on campus. “He makes students feel valued and welcome,” Beyersdorf said.

Gibson has built relationships on the three UW-Stevens Point campuses and in their communities, Rothman said.

“UW-Stevens Point is a university that gets it, he said. “Headed by Tom, it understands that the boundaries of the university do stretch far beyond its campus perimeters. This university proves that the Wisconsin Idea is not just some abstract concept, but it’s a very real force for good, one that changes all of our lives for the better.”

Rothman placed the Chancellor’s medallion over Gibson’s head as a symbol of the office. Wearing it serves as a reminder to channel talents to serve the people and partners of UW-Stevens Point.

“I am honored to lead this great institution,” Gibson said. “My work is to ensure the university continues to provide transformative educational experiences for students and to expand access to more diverse learners in support of institutional enrollment and growth.”