

UW-Madison: Scholz to depart for University of Oregon presidency

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“It’s a wonderful opportunity to help lead one of America’s leading research universities, with broad strengths across the arts and humanities, social sciences, and physical, biological and mathematical sciences, along with several excellent professional schools,” says Scholz, who will begin in the new role on July 1. “It has a well-deserved reputation for innovation and excellence.”

Scholz succeeds Michael Schill, who left Oregon to lead Northwestern University following Rebecca Blank’s withdrawal from that role related to her cancer diagnosis. One of Scholz’s three daughters is currently a PhD student at Oregon, studying volcanology, the science of volcanoes.

“We are thrilled and honored to welcome Karl Scholz to Oregon,” says Ginevra Ralph, UO Board of Trustees Chair. “He is an inspiring, committed leader with clear passion for public higher education. His depth of leadership experience as a provost and dean at a leading public university stood out. He possesses all the qualities to take the University of Oregon into its next ambitious era.”

Scholz became UW-Madison provost in August 2019, having previously served as dean of the College of Letters & Science. A search for a new UW-Madison provost is currently under way, with finalists’ visits planned after Spring Break.

Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin says Scholz will be missed by many across campus for his steady and innovative leadership.

“I’m delighted for Karl and this new opportunity for him to lead a wonderful university that has a tremendous amount of momentum behind it,” says Mnookin. “We’ll miss him for all the ways that he has contributed over many years, including,

above all, his warm presence and thoughtful leadership.”

A native of Nebraska, Scholz graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., and earned his doctorate from Stanford University.

He joined the UW–Madison Economics Department in 1988. From 1990–91 he was a senior staff economist at the Council of Economic Advisors and from 1997–98 he served as deputy assistant secretary for tax analysis at the U.S. Treasury Department.

A former director of UW–Madison’s Institute for Research on Poverty, his studies include work on household saving, the earned income tax credit and low-wage labor markets, financial barriers to higher education and bankruptcy laws.

During his tenure as L&S dean, he launched SuccessWorks, a career initiative that helps undergraduates identify career opportunities early, gain practical experience and highlight the value of their L&S education. Also in the college, he implemented changes in the L&S budget model to support teaching/learning and research enhancing fiscal transparency, invested additional resources in student advising, and expanding summer courses and professional master’s degrees.

While provost, Scholz helped navigate the complex academic side of the pandemic, focusing on the safety of students, faculty and staff while working toward an appropriate return to in-person learning. Under his leadership, campus continues to diversify its student body and faculty, while enrolling some of the most talented classes in its history. He helped create the Center for Teaching, Learning and Mentoring, which will further enhance instruction across campus.

Scholz says that there are many things that he will miss about Madison, but the most important is the dedication of the thousands of faculty and staff members who help the university fulfill its teaching, research and outreach mission.

“This is a remarkable place and I am sad to leave it,” he says. “UW-Madison is full of amazing people who inspire me every day.”

For more information on Scholz’s appointment, visit <https://www.uoregon.edu/>