wisconsin.edu
Facebook.com/universitiesofwisconsin
X.com/universitiesWI
universityrelations@wisconsin.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2026

News Release

Rashid Bashir named chancellor of UW-Madison



MADISON, Wis.—Rashid Bashir, dean of the Grainger College of Engineering and vice chancellor for Chicago strategic partnerships at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, has been selected as the next chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

The Board of Regents of the Universities of Wisconsin unanimously approved the appointment at a special meeting today.

Bashir is an internationally recognized bioengineer whose research is focused on developing new technologies to diagnose and treat serious infections, cancers and other diseases more effectively, and on creating living biological systems that can be used in small, advanced medical or computing devices. His expertise sits at the intersection of engineering, biology and medicine.

“UW-Madison is one of Wisconsin’s greatest assets and among our nation’s most distinguished public universities,” says Regent Amy B. Bogost, chair of the Search and Screen Committee. “Its research enterprise is a powerful engine of discovery, innovation, and economic opportunity. It must lead the nation in the fields that will define our future, from artificial intelligence to quantum science, while continuing its longstanding commitment to the Wisconsin Idea by ensuring that the benefits of its teaching, research, and service reach far beyond campus and into communities across our state and around the world.”

“Dr. Bashir is exactly the leader for this moment,” continues Bogost. “He is an exceptional scientist and accomplished leader whose own journey embodies the promise of the American Dream. He understands both the possibilities that education creates for individuals and families and the responsibility that comes with leading an institution of this stature. He brings a compelling vision for the future, and I am confident he will build on UW-Madison’s extraordinary legacy. As Wisconsin’s flagship university and a source of tremendous national pride, UW-Madison has an essential role to play in shaping the future of our state. I can think of no more important responsibility or opportunity.”

Bashir moved to the United States from Pakistan when he was 15 years old. He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Texas Tech University and that helped foster his deep belief in the value of the public land-grant university. He was inspired by the chance to come to UW-Madison, he says, because of the university’s ability to turn innovation and discovery into tangible results for people in Wisconsin and around the world.

“Serving as UW-Madison chancellor is about serving the people of UW-Madison – faculty, staff and students – and the state at large,” says Bashir. “The Wisconsin Idea, the idea that the work of our campus influences the state and world beyond, and the importance of access to the university, that resonates deeply with me because those were the opportunities that were also given to me. I want to give back, and I will do that through service leadership, with empathy, kindness and community-building. I am very honored, humbled and excited to serve.”

Bashir will begin his appointment on or about February 15, 2027. Interim Chancellor Eric Wilcots will continue to serve until that time.

In addition to his leadership roles at University of Illinois top-ranked engineering programs, Bashir is also a professor of bioengineering and the Grainger Distinguished Chair in Engineering, with faculty appointments in electrical and computer engineering, materials science and engineering, mechanical science and engineering, and molecular and integrative physiology. He is a member of the Beckman Institute, the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology and the Social and Behavioral Science Institute.

Bashir has authored or co-authored more than 340 journal papers, and he holds more than 65 patents. He was elected a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors in 2018, a member of the National Academy of Medicine in 2023, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2024.

He earned his BS in electrical engineering from Texas Tech University and his MS and PhD in electrical engineering from Purdue University in 1989 and 1992, respectively. It was at Purdue University that Bashir began his academic career and where he expanded his interests to biomedical applications of micro- and nanotechnology.

Since he began as dean in 2018, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has significantly expanded its undergraduate and graduate engineering class sizes and increased research expenditures. He oversaw the naming of the college following a $100 million gift from the Grainger Foundation and the formation of the Siebel School of Computing and Data Science within the college with a $50 million gift.

Most recently, Bashir has been involved in the launch of the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park in Chicago, where he serves as vice chair of the Board of Managers. As vice chancellor for strategic partnerships, he also coordinates the campus’s strategy and partnerships in Chicago.

Bashir was a member of the core founding team of the Carle Illinois College of Medicine, the world’s first engineering-based college of medicine, where he co-chaired the curriculum development committee and served as executive associate dean.

At Illinois, Bashir has supported entrepreneurship efforts by partnering with the Gies College of Business to launch a new campuswide entrepreneurship minor that began in fall 2026.

Earlier in his career, Bashir spent six years at National Semiconductor Corporation, rising to senior engineering manager. His team led the development and commercialization of four generations of analog, high-voltage, and RF microelectronics manufacturing technologies.

Bashir's wife, Dr. Masooda Bashir, is also a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and studies information security, digital privacy and human-centered AI.

"I want to thank the search committee, especially chair Regent Amy B. Bogost and vice chair UW-Madison Division of Extension Professor Annie Jones," says Regent President Kyle Weatherly. "The Universities of Wisconsin also express their appreciation to interim Chancellor Wilcots for the dedicated leadership he is providing during this transition."

Download photo of Dr. Rashid Bashir.

###

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

With a nearly $5 billion budget, UW-Madison is composed of 13 schools and colleges which offer upwards of 300 undergraduate majors and certificates, as well as more than 250 master's, doctoral, and professional programs. UW-Madison's research enterprise is one of the largest and most diverse in the nation. The university is a member of the Big Ten Conference, and the Wisconsin Badgers field 23 NCAA Division 1 teams. In 2026, UW-Madison was ranked fourth among public universities in the United States by Time magazine, which uses the rankings to highlight institutions that drive academic excellence globally. The university was 12th among public universities in the U.S. News & World Report rankings in 2025.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITIES OF WISCONSIN

The Universities of Wisconsin serve approximately 164,500 students. Awarding more than 37,000 degrees annually, these 13 public universities are Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state Universities of Wisconsin graduates stay in the state five years after earning a degree. The universities provide a 23:1 return on state investment. The Universities of Wisconsin also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy. Learn more at wisconsin.edu.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Universities of Wisconsin Mark Pitsch mark.pitsch@wisconsin.edu universityrelations@wisconsin.edu	UW-Madison John Lucas john.lucas@wisc.edu