



PRESIDENTIAL *News*

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Launching Fall 2013



Welcome to Fall 2013. This is my favorite time of year as we welcome new and returning students, faculty, and staff to campus. The vibrancy is unlike any other time of year. We opened the academic year at Fall Convocation with over 1,200 in attendance, the largest crowd in history. It was a special celebration of our university and academic values; and I was especially pleased that the SGA presented me with the UWF's Honor Code signed by hundreds of our incoming Freshman.

Our Fall enrollment is at 12,697 students, we welcomed 32 new faculty into our classrooms, and our Fall Faculty Forum focused on High Impact Teaching Practices. Indeed, UWF continues to move forward in being a first choice university.

Yet, our major success story this Fall is Sophomore retention. Last year all of us put extra emphasis on retaining our students. We expanded our living learning environments, developed a retention plan, and participated in early warning activities. Our hard work paid off, our Sophomore retention is up 15.4% over this same date last year. Because of you, our students returned to continue progress toward a high quality education. You make the difference each and every day. Thank you.

This semester will be one of transition as we continue implementation of our strategic plan, academic visioning, campus master plan, and athletic master plan. Provost

Saunders is ably leading the way toward academic restructuring, creation of an innovation institute, and reaffirmation of our accreditation. These efforts will enable us to place significant emphasis on professional readiness, innovation, flexibility, and professional workforce demands.

This year we will also develop more comprehensive enrollment, diversity and inclusion, and retention plans. We made three key strategic hires this summer to aid us in these efforts. Dr. Joffery Gaymon will lead our enrollment efforts, Dr. Kim LeDuff will lead our diversity and inclusion efforts, and Ms. Patrice Moorer will lead our focus on retention. These dynamic leaders will build on our solid foundations and take us to new heights to ensure that UWF students are successful.

We are also making investments in our faculty and staff. The legislature is funding an across the board increases of \$1000 or \$1400, dependent on annual salary, effective October 1. We will also make strides on both faculty compression and staff equity this year, using our own university funds. The legislature is also funding a \$600 bonus for 35% of eligible employees which will be distributed in June 2014. Salary increases will be bargained, as appropriate. Our faculty and staff are deserving and we are pleased to make these modest investments.

Thank you for all you do each and every day to make UWF great. Our students are here and it is our time to make magic. We are in the business of changing lives. Let's give it our all. Have a great year.

BEI Activities Update

We want to bring you up to date on Business Enterprises, Inc.(BEI) which is now focused on three significant projects that will further our campus master plan. First is East Campus Argonaut Village. Earlier this year we signed an affiliation agreement with Viesta Development, LLC to build a hotel, conference center, student housing, and restaurants at our east entrance. Viesta Development, LLC assumes the responsibility for financing and construction and they continue to work through those details. BEI will review the financial pro-forma at their next meeting on September 16, 2013. Stay tuned to the BEI website at www.uwf.edu/bei to know how the project is progressing. You can also follow BEI on twitter @BusinessEnt_inc

Student Life: ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?



In 2011 I stood before a packed house in the UWF field house and announced that UWF would find a way to play football.

Consider this, we currently have fourteen sports that are routinely in the top ten in the nation, we have 7 national championships, 71 Gulf South Conference titles more than any other school in conference history, 275 student athletes that have a higher GPA than the UWF student body, and a new Women's Swimming and Diving team scheduled for their first meet on October 11, 2013.



A master developer has been selected for University Park and West Campus Village. Balfour Beatty, an international firm with experience building multi-million dollar university projects, was selected after a lengthy RFP (request for proposal process). Balfour Beatty is partnering with local contractors and firms on the design and construction. We anticipate finalizing the conceptual details of phase one in the Spring of 2014. When University Park is complete it will house a new university commons, academic space, student housing, retail space, updated athletic facilities, a 5,000-seat football stadium, bell tower, parking garages, and more.

It will truly transform our campus and set the stage for a vibrant UWF future. West Campus is planned to have an active 55+ living community for retired professionals from around the nation, a town center, and of course our very own Scenic Hills Golf Course.

UWF was named a "Green College" by the Princeton Review in 2011 and 2012 as we are committed to being environmentally friendly and employing sustainability into our everyday activities. To further this effort BEI recently put out an ITN (Intent to Negotiate) for a fleet of electric cars for student use. The concept includes cars that will be charged with wireless technology on campus and in popularly visited locations in our community.

As a part of this green initiative we would install a solar array and begin to achieve some of our electric needs via solar energy. The entire project will be funded by the partner selected, and their revenue will come from our energy consumption from their solar panels. This project will distinguish UWF in exciting new ways. Stay tuned to the BEI website for more details.

Did you know that only a few high school students in the Northwest Florida region went on to play football at Division 1 schools this year? This is an untapped potential for UWF, as we will be the only Division 2 public university football program in the state. There are hundreds of great players that want the opportunity to get a high quality education, and to play football. UWF will be their option. Will football make money for our institution? Probably not. But it will enhance the institution as a whole. It will enhance our recruitment and retention ability, it will enhance our classrooms because our student-athletes have a higher GPA than the average student body, it will enhance student life and engagement and build a sense of community, it will build vibrancy and excitement, it will enhance our national, regional, and statewide attention, it will build affinity and a reason to return for our alumni, and in the South it can create economic impact and excitement beyond imagination. It's time.

Today, I am announcing that UWF will play its inaugural football season in the Fall of 2016. We've worked with an athletics visioning committee, updated our facilities master plan, conducted a fundraising study, and received the recommendations of a football feasibility committee and student life implement team. We know the path. This Fall we will charge our Football Founders to begin the fundraising efforts in earnest, we will name our coach in Spring 2014 and in Fall 2015 you'll be able to see our team play scrimmage in preparation for the inaugural season.

We won't have all our facilities at first and we won't have full funding. We will start responsibly. We will play off campus at first and build on our solid foundation. I know we will succeed.

Today I invite you to join in my enthusiasm, to get involved, and to help us build the excitement. I know there will be many details, many questions, and there is much work ahead. That's okay, because together we can realize our dreams, ensure our plans become a reality, and make our future something special. It's time. We're ready for some Argo football.

Go Argos!!

Visit the FAQ's for more details:goargos.com/football.

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PRESIDENTIAL NEWS

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by the President's Office. The publication's purpose is to inform
faculty and staff about the school's progress and accomplishments