

Chancellor Chat

Far more than just tassels were turning the day I stepped up on the Winona State University podium to receive my diploma. With bachelor's degree in hand and confidence in my stride, I pursued my doctorate in educational policy from the University of Minnesota before concluding that a role in the academic environment would be my ideal occupation. I quickly decided to take on a career of administration at the collegiate level, returning to my Winona roots in 1998, where I served as executive director of the university's Foundation board of trustees. From there, I served in a variety of managerial positions among several schools in the region until—after years of honing my professional passions and sharpening my skills as a leader—I finally found my Blugold calling.

Along this journey to becoming UW-Eau Claire's chancellor in 2013, I was privileged to discover several fundamental elements at the core of successful leadership. The most important, perhaps, is that with a position of authority comes an inherent responsibility to lead by example—guiding with grace and determination while maintaining an attitude of complete humility. Having held administrative roles on multiple college campuses, I found that rather than claiming a position of superiority, one in charge should seek a parallel stance alongside its publics in order to develop the most authentic and worthwhile connections.

I encourage you to explore the contents of this magazine and the large scope of majors and minors this university has to offer. By the conclusion of each semester, leaders and world-changers emerge from every program at UW-Eau Claire prepared to tackle new lives and occupations. Regardless of which path each person chooses to follow after graduation—and whether it involves front-line administration or work behind-the-scenes—every individual to walk across the stage shares a Blugold identity.

Best,

Dr. James Schmidt,
Chancellor