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WEDC, UW System Name Talent Initiatives Director

Rebecca Deschane to oversee statewide efforts to attract, retain highly skilled workforce in newly-created position that will serve both organizations

Madison, WI – The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) today announced that Rebecca Deschane has been named talent initiatives director, a new position that will lead and coordinate statewide efforts to attract and retain talent for both organizations.

Deschane, WEDC's legislative liaison since 2011, has been an integral part of WEDC's efforts to identify and develop various talent initiatives. She serves as the primary contact for WEDC's engagement with the young professional organizations across the state and has worked with NEWaukee to launch and expand YPWeek, a statewide initiative aimed at attracting and retaining young talent in Wisconsin. Deschane also led an internal task force on talent retention and attraction that developed and coordinated activities across the various divisions at WEDC.

"Rebecca will play a key role in helping us stay connected to Wisconsin businesses. When we meet with organizations about how the UW can help address Wisconsin's current and future workforce needs, employers tell us they want and need employees who work collaboratively and possess critical, creative problem-solving skills," said UWS President Ray Cross. "About 85 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin, and the more we can connect students and alumni with employers, the stronger our economy will be."

"Rebecca has a proven track record of working with our partners around the state to help address Wisconsin's workforce challenges and is uniquely positioned to lead the efforts of UW System and WEDC in this critical area," said Tricia Braun, deputy secretary and COO of WEDC. "Attracting talent to Wisconsin is a key component of Governor Walker's [Workforce Agenda](#) and WEDC's operational priorities, and Rebecca will play a leadership role in the state's campaign to attract veterans, young professionals, and Wisconsin alumni to live and work in Wisconsin."

Deschane, who was selected after a national search, will work with WEDC and the UWS Office of Economic Development to help align local, regional, and statewide talent and workforce initiatives. She will engage with organizations to provide insight and policy development to support the talent needs of Wisconsin's businesses. In addition, she will serve as liaison to organizations and institutions seeking to develop and support complementary talent initiatives.

A graduate of Marquette University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in political science, Deschane served as youth development director for the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and as a congressional aide before joining WEDC.

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The new post is modeled after the economic development liaison position, which has been a shared function of UWS and WEDC since 2012. Through that office, WEDC and UWS have collaborated on numerous initiatives, including the [Ileadvance](#) seed fund, the [WiSys Technology Foundation](#), the [Research, Economic Development, and Innovation \(REDI\) Committee](#) of the UW System Board of Regents, [UW Career Connect](#) and [UW-Madison's Discovery to Product \(D2P\)](#).

Since the creation of that position, held by UWS Associate Vice President David Brukaradt, UWS and WEDC have worked together to attract nearly \$8 million in private match funds from U.S. and global partners to support faculty research and campus-based economic development initiatives.

The announcement comes as WEDC prepares to launch a \$1 million campaign to attract talent to Wisconsin. A large portion of that initiative will target young people currently living and working in the Chicago area, which is a primary market for Wisconsin's talent attraction efforts.

That campaign also will include having WEDC work with alumni associations of universities and colleges throughout the state to engage with recent graduates, particularly those who have left Wisconsin, to connect these talented young people with the unmatched opportunities Wisconsin offers for professional and personal success.

In addition, Governor Walker announced last week that he will ask the Legislature for \$6.8 million in funding for a targeted campaign to attract talent to Wisconsin as part of his Workforce Agenda. That initiative includes:

- \$3.5 million for a targeted campaign to attract veterans to Wisconsin
- \$3 million to market Wisconsin as a destination for young professionals across the Midwest, including cities like Detroit and Minneapolis
- \$300,000 for the Department of Workforce Development to create a mobile Job Center that could provide job services and talent recruitment in areas with limited access to permanent services.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit winwisconsin.com or follow WEDC on Twitter @InWisconsin to learn more.

About the University of Wisconsin System

The UW System is one of the largest systems of public higher education in the country, serving approximately 180,000 students each year and employing about 39,000 faculty and staff statewide. The UW System is made up of 13 four-year universities, 13 freshman-sophomore UW Colleges campuses, and statewide UW-Extension. Together, these institutions are a tremendous academic, cultural, and economic resource for Wisconsin, the nation, and the world. Visit www.wisconsin.edu, follow UWS on Twitter @UWSsystem, or [Facebook](#) at University of Wisconsin System. For information on the UWS Office of Economic Development, visit www.wisconsin.edu/economic-development or follow @UWEconD on Twitter.