The University of Wisconsin-Platteville Plastics Processing Technology Center recently received a gift. Hans-Juergen Lang, the president and owner of Wisconsin Tool & Mold Co. Inc. located in Friendship, Wisc., donated an injection molder. The replacement cost for this piece of equipment would be $92,000. Wayne Vander Zanden, of Norstech Plastics Equipment and former president of the SPE-Milwaukee Section, initiated this donation.

An injection molder is a large piece of equipment that shapes plastic, metal or ceramic material through injection into a closed mold. “The injection molder will allow a higher level of technology to UW-Platteville,” said Dr. Majid Tabrizi, director of the UW-Platteville Center for Plastics Processing.

“This gift is a major influence in the world of Wisconsin plastics processing,” said Tabrizi. The plastics industry ranks the third largest industry in the nation with an estimated 1.2 million workers. Wisconsin is rated between eighth and 12th in plastic manufacturing. It is the fourth largest industry in the state, with over 700 plastic and plastic-related companies. Plastic manufacturing employs over 51,000 people in Wisconsin. Total sales exceed $3 billion annually and over a dozen Wisconsin companies rank within the top 100 companies nationwide. That figure doubles if Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota are included.

Almost 30 percent of jobs in the industry are located in companies within 250 miles of Platteville. UW-Platteville is one of the few universities in the region which train students in the plastic industry. “We’re living in a global society which is becoming more and more competitive. We have to be able to have highly qualified people, and the UW-Platteville plastics program is a strong contributing factor in being able to do that. We find your graduates have the strong technical background we need to come in and help us build on our knowledge and experience,” said Gene Schooohs, engineering manager for Plastic Ingenuity, Inc.
When Dr. Wayne Weber first interviewed for a UW-Platteville faculty position in 1997, he admittedly had very little knowledge about the state. “Coming from Colorado, all I knew about Wisconsin was beer, brats and cheese. I looked up UW-Platteville and found out about the world’s largest ‘M,’ but that was about it,” he said. “As soon as I interviewed here, I knew I wanted to be part of UW-Platteville. I have been here 14 years, and I truly love this university.”

Chancellor Dennis J. Shields said, “Dr. Weber has had an outstanding career at UW-Platteville as a professor and teacher as well as a department chair. He and his department of biology completely revamped their curriculum in a thoughtful, team-oriented effort. As an interim dean, he also has been outstanding. What struck me in his short stint as the interim dean is that he is extremely willing to take on the tough issues and works with his colleagues to reach a consensus in a genuine and authentic way.”

Weber joined the UW-Platteville faculty as a professor in 1997 and served as the biology chair from 2002-08. He earned his bachelor’s in biology with a minor in anatomy, and his master’s and doctorate in zoology from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. He has served on many university committees, including the Faculty Senate, of which he once was the vice chair. He is the advisor to the UW-Platteville chapter of the Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society.

Among the goals for the new dean are increasing development activities with corporate entities and alumni, developing an administrative infrastructure with effective policies and procedures to instigate a more consistent and permanent institutional memory, working with administration to develop an equitable and competitive salary plan, planning resource allocation effectively through strategic enrollment strategies, fostering intra- and inter-college collaborations, institutionalizing undergraduate research and creative activity, increasing international experiences, fostering a commitment to diversity and inclusivity and developing leadership within the faculty and staff.

Weber said he is excited about the quality of the College of BILSA and the potential it has to become even greater. He is eager to continue working with his colleagues and to be an effective dean.

**STUDENTS EXCEL AT WISCONSIN BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION COMPETITION**

UW-Platteville television production students recently won two awards at the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association competition held in Madison on Saturday, March 3.

The student-produced newscast, “University Report,” took second place in the television newscast category. “Pioneer Sports Report” took third place in the sports programming non play-by-play category. Students Craig Frederick, Reed Seiler, Brent Wetter, Ben Higgins, Courtney Ryan, Kyle Thorson, Robert Berres, Eric Prohaska, Matthew Schmit and Mathias Timmerman worked on both entries, and Jordan Hahn assisted with the sports program.

The contest, which is open to all private and public colleges, universities and other post-secondary schools in Wisconsin, requires competing students to submit entries in one of 11 different categories. They are then judged on overall quality, including content and production values.
Nearly 400 people from across the region packed into the standing room only Agriculture Education Pavilion at Pioneer Farm on the University of Wisconsin-Platteville campus to ask questions of Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and Tom Vilsack, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, during a town hall meeting.

“Agriculture is extremely important; it's a $50 billion industry in Wisconsin. When you add in Iowa and Illinois, it is remarkably important to the future of this country, and to the world,” said UW-Platteville Chancellor Dennis J. Shields. “It was fabulous to have the secretaries here today. They are good folks, they know what they're talking about, and the most impressive thing is how willing they were to listen to questions and be responsive, and talk about the challenges that are in front of us.”

High school and university students, National FFA Organization members and educators asked the secretaries a myriad of questions about the importance of education, agriculture and the partnership between the two as the Federal Government looks to revitalize the economy and bolster the nation's educational opportunities.

“To see what's going on here at UW-Platteville, during tough economic times while keeping costs down, there's a tremendous commitment to quality education,” said Sec. Duncan. “We talked to a number of students that obviously focus on ag education today, but I talked to a number of folks today in the School of Education at UW-Platteville; they're all thrilled with the education they're getting, and I think there is some fantastic work going on here. I had a scent of it, but you really learn something by seeing it.”

Sec. Duncan and Sec. Vilsack signed a joint agreement that compels and requires the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Education to work collaboratively to promote agricultural education and to promote agriculture teaching as a vocation. The agreement encourages the two departments to share best practices and to use resources collaboratively.

“It's great to be at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. What I enjoyed most was the opportunity to talk with students both before and during the town hall meeting,” said Sec. Vilsack. “I want these young people, particularly the FFA and farm kids to understand and appreciate what a tremendous opportunity we have here in agriculture. It is an underappreciated and undervalued aspect of our economy; I think more people are beginning to realize that agriculture is the key to our security, the key to our job growth in rural America, the key to our energy future, and its frankly the key to our manufacturing future. This is the future and it is happening right here.”
BILSA INTRODUCES THREE NEW ONLINE MASTER’S PROGRAMS

BILSA is proud to announce its three new online master’s programs: integrated supply chain management, organizational change leadership and distance education leadership.

Integrated supply chain management examines the interplay and coordination of business, industrial studies and engineering, while providing real-world capabilities that stretch beyond a typical master's degree in business.

Organizational change leadership explores the nature of change, the change process, establishing the change vision, the origins of resistance, assessing readiness for change, communication strategies, assessing stakeholders and sustaining change.

A distance education leadership degree is designed for professionals who desire the knowledge, skills and competencies to move from the fundamentals of online higher education to leaders who promote academic and operational excellence.

PROFESSORS RECEIVE RECOGNITION FOR GOOSEBERRY HILL LLC CONTRIBUTIONS

Two University of Wisconsin-Platteville professors received special recognition for their contributions to Gooseberry Hill LLC, a privately owned cottage and nature preserve. Dr. Becky Doyle-Morin and Dr. Kris Wright were each awarded educator grants from the Gooseberry Hill Scholarship Fund.

“For years, Dr. Wright has been a trusted and contributing environmental advisor to Gooseberry Hill,” said Gene Weber, one of the property owners. “It was Dr. Wright’s involvement with the Platteville Community Arboretum that led to the initial idea to involve students in real life experiences at Gooseberry Hill. He also led us to Reclamationist Dr. Tom Hunt whose students have done multiple excellent projects at Gooseberry and environmental engineer Dr. Mike Penn.

In a project sponsored by the Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement, Doyle-Morin worked with students from the Fundamentals of Biological Investigations class on a lake water clarity project at Gooseberry Hill. The property owners are in the process of converting farmland, wetlands, forest, prairie and a man-made farm pond back to a natural state. After 60 plus years of intensive farming, accumulated nutrients have contributed to water-clarity issues and excess vegetation growth. The owners were interested in exploring non-chemical means for improving water clarity. The students investigated the uses of barley straw as a water-clearing agent for the property’s farm pond.

“Both Dr. Wright and Dr. Doyle-Morin have generously shared their knowledge and expertise and created tremendous learning opportunities for UW-Platteville students,” said Dean Wayne Weber.