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ALERT

GUEST COMMENTARY

Guest commentary: The value is in the degree

Dr. Debbie Ford

Dec 18, 2022

One of the very important reasons that I am so proud to lead the University of Wisconsin-Parkside – and there are many – is because we transform lives. This past weekend, we transformed another record number of lives – 513 graduates received their associate, bachelor’s, or master’s degrees.

As part of our record class, we awarded 207 master’s degrees – almost double the amount from just two years ago. UW-Parkside is recognized as having one of the nation’s fastest-growing master’s populations among small colleges and universities.

We are well on our way to meeting our 2025 Strategic Framework bold goal of increasing the number of graduates by 50 percent. We are meeting the needs of current and future students, and the talent demands of our region, our state, our nation, and our world.

The value is in the degree

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Not only does a UW-Parkside degree create the opportunity for higher income and sustained employability, it also translates to increased community and civic engagement. Employers see a university degree as evidence that the career candidate will bring critical-thinking skills to the organization along with the ability to manage and complete complex projects.

Strengthening the value of a UW-Parkside degree is my responsibility, as well as the responsibility of each devoted member of our faculty and staff. With the degree they earn today, our graduates can enter new doors of opportunity and keep doing so as their professional careers develop.

More than 50 percent of our winter 2022 graduates are the first in their families to earn a university degree, and 31 percent represent minority populations. To help answer the challenge of better serving all students, UW-Parkside joined Moonshot for Equity, the nation's first public-private consortium to eliminate graduation gaps among students of color and white students.

In addition, we are a proud member of the Higher Education Regional Alliance, an 18-institution collaborative in southeast Wisconsin to improve student success and employer access to talent.

During my commencement remarks, I often remind graduates that there is a catch. The UW-Parkside degree will open doors. However, as individuals, they must commit to their success by being lifelong learners and dedicating themselves as engaged citizens. The fact that they earned the degree and completed the rigorous academic requirements proves that UW-Parkside graduates are ready!

UW-Parkside is Transforming Lives

Earlier this year, UW-Parkside was recognized by US News and World Report for transforming lives. We are the fourth-ranked public higher education institution across 12 Midwestern states and tops among UW comprehensives for increasing social mobility. This important category measures the extent to which schools elevate the standard of living for low-income students.

Additionally, US News and World Report ranked us fifth in the 12-state Midwest region for diversity and first among UW comprehensives.



Last month, I was honored to attend the American Association of State Colleges and Universities annual conference. I was there to receive the organization's Excellence and Innovation Award for Student Success and College Completion. The award recognized the amazing work being done at UW-Parkside by our incredible faculty and staff to help more students succeed, including those who have been historically underserved by higher education.

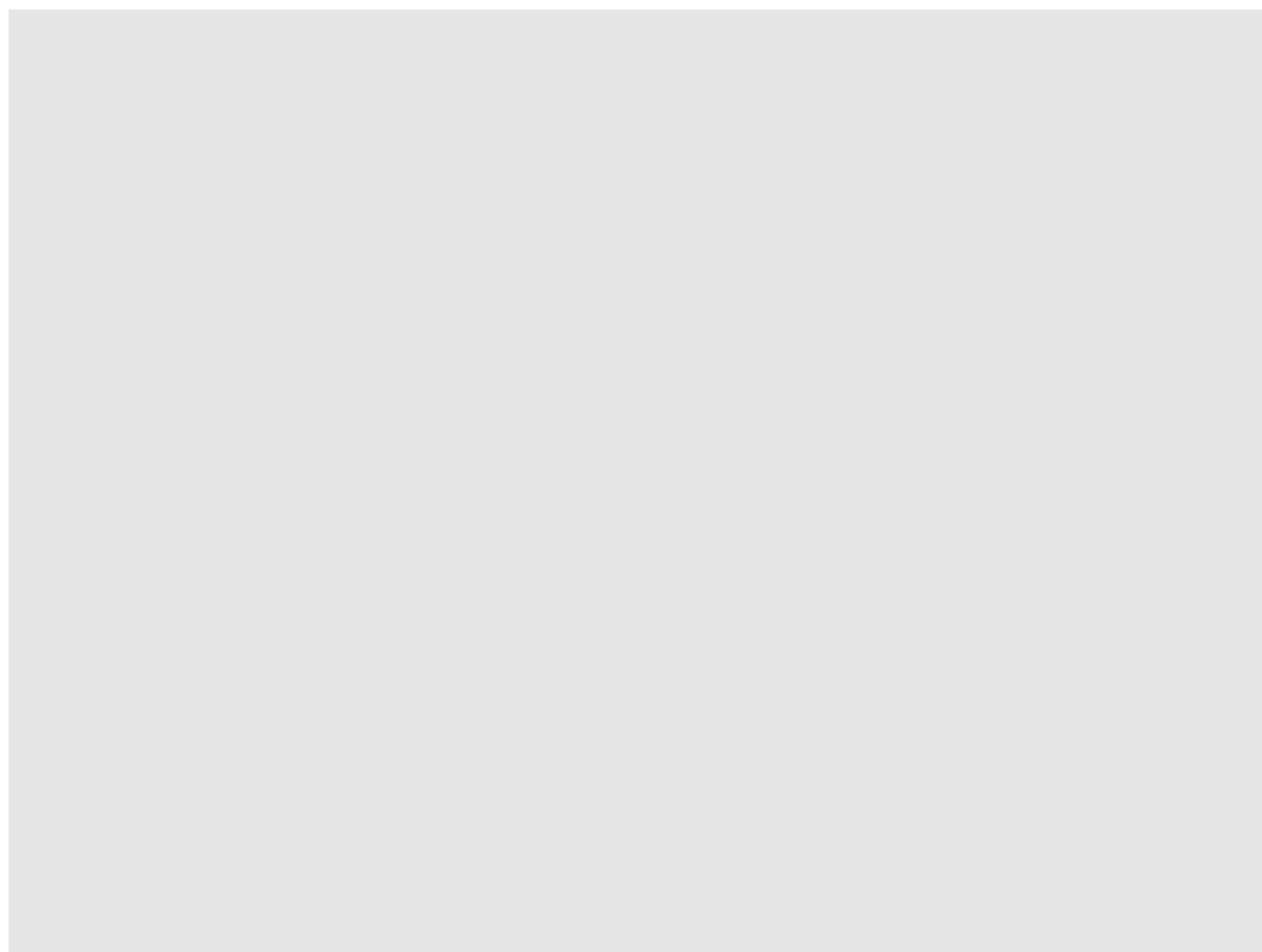
Parkside graduates are ready

UW-Parkside graduates are ready to take on the challenges of today and tomorrow. They are ready to continue the partnerships and community connections that began here at UW-Parkside. I see leaders, and I see people who understand what it means to help others. A UW-Parkside education has transformed their lives and prepared our graduates to inspire the world.

To our record-setting UW-Parkside Class of 2022, I say, “Congratulations, Graduates!” I am so proud of their accomplishments and the value they will bring to our society.

IN PHOTOS AND VIDEO: UW-Parkside joins state partnership to help inmates succeed

UWP - WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT

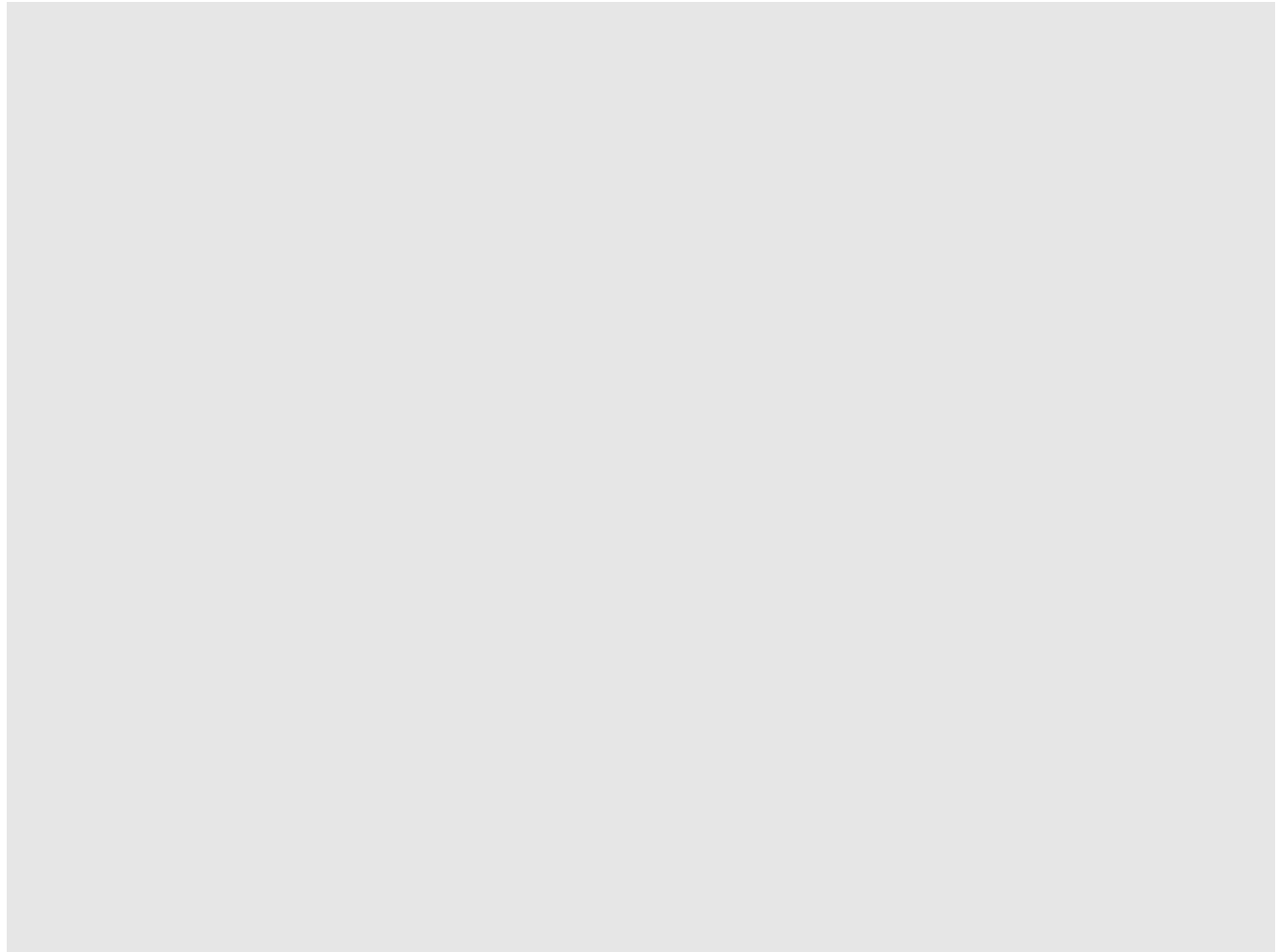


Anny Morrobel-Sosa, UW System vice president for academic and student affairs, speaks during a press conference on campus Wednesday announcing a project funded through a Workforce Innovation Grant that will draw on regional partnerships to teach employable skills to incarcerated students while and work

to reduce racial disparities in education, income and incarceration.

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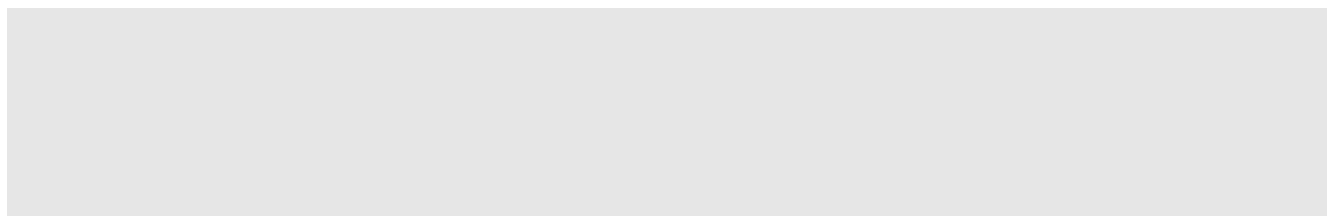
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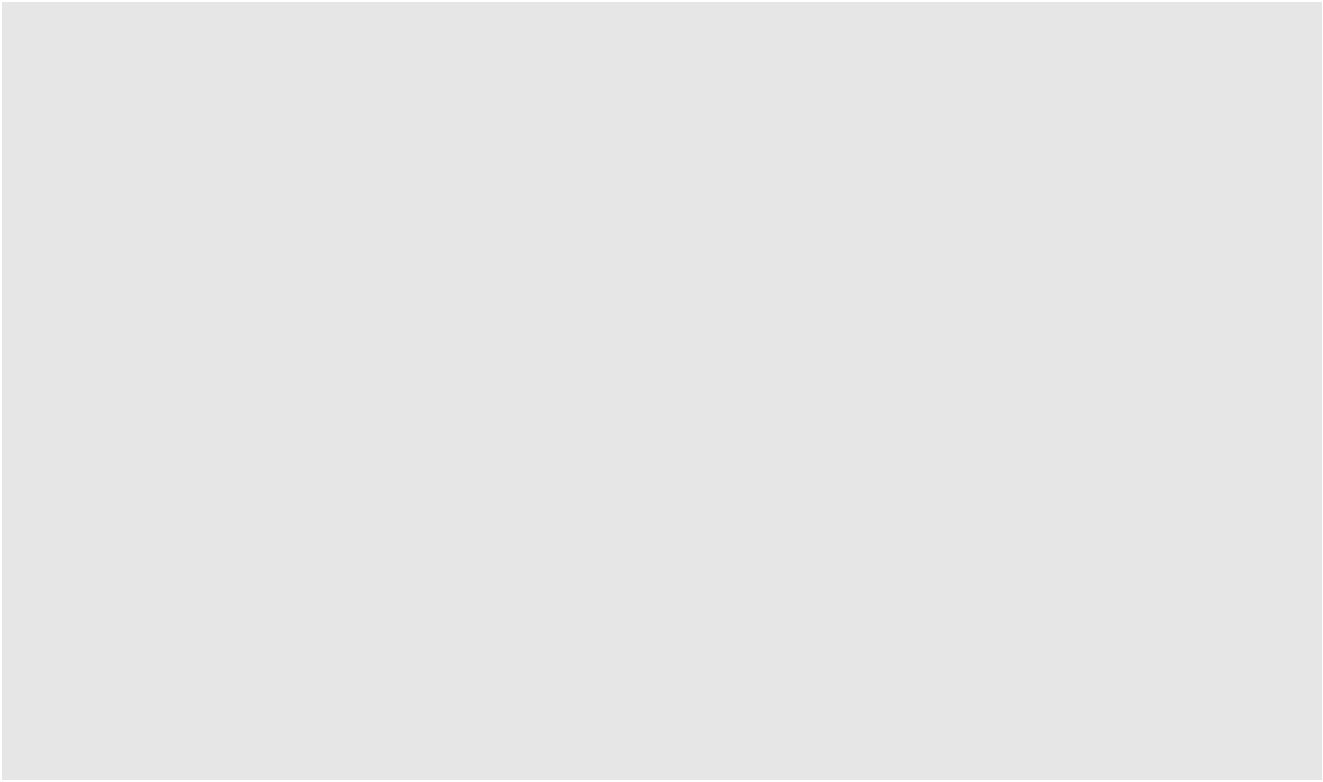


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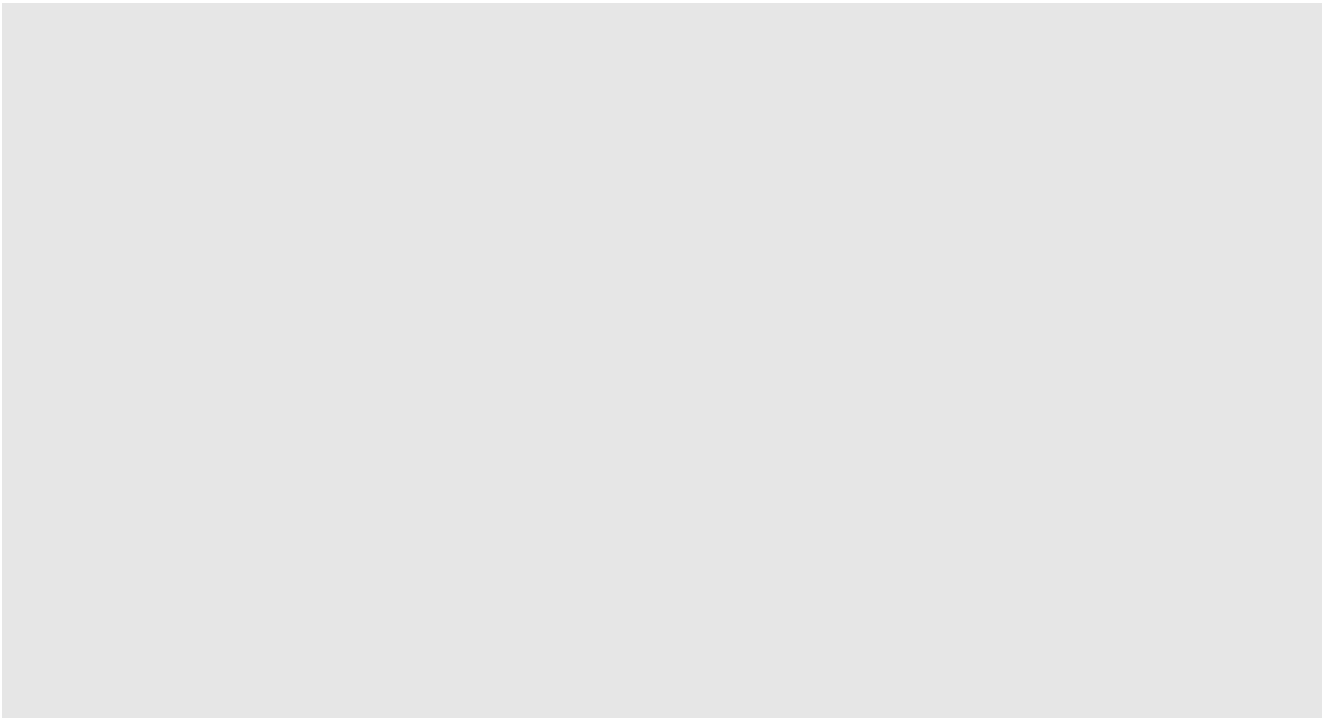


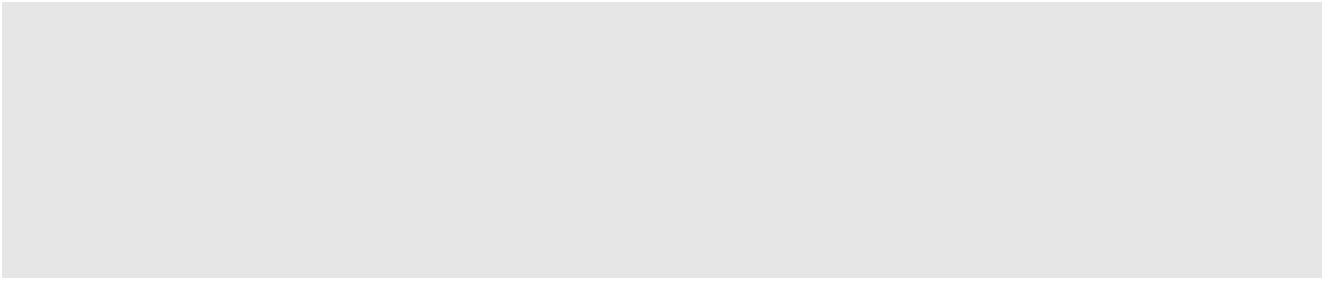


Wisconsin Department of Corrections Secretary Kevin Carr speaks during a press conference Wednesday at UW-Parkside announcing a project funded through a Workforce Innovation Grant that will draw on regional partnerships to teach employable skills to incarcerated students and work to reduce racial disparities in education, income and incarceration.

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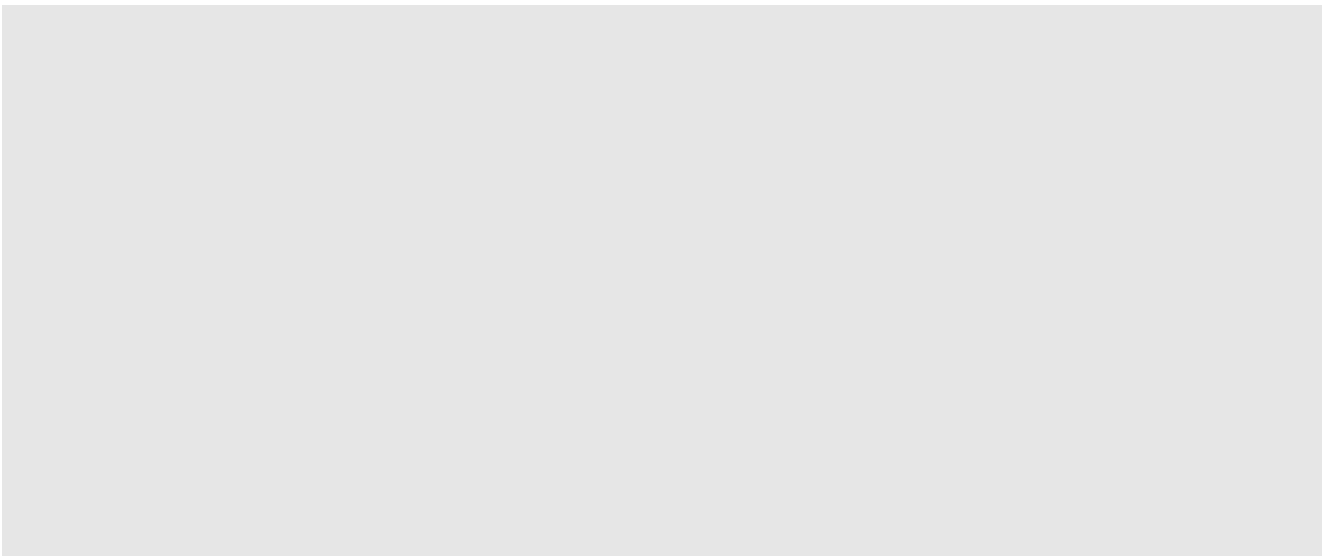


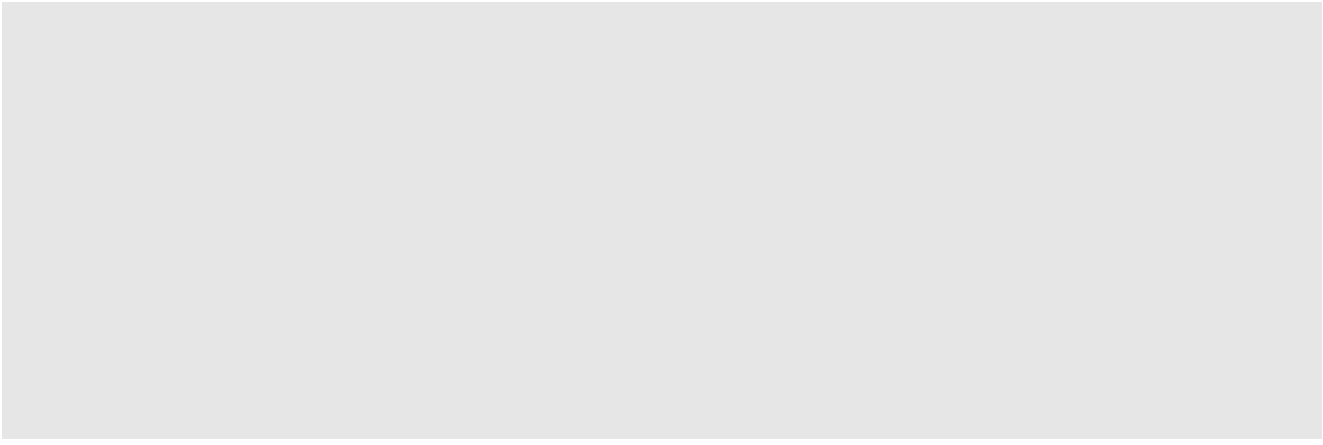


UW-Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford speaks during a press conference on campus Wednesday announcing a project funded through a Workforce Innovation Grant that will draw on regional partnerships to teach employable skills to incarcerated students and work to reduce racial disparities in education, income and incarceration.

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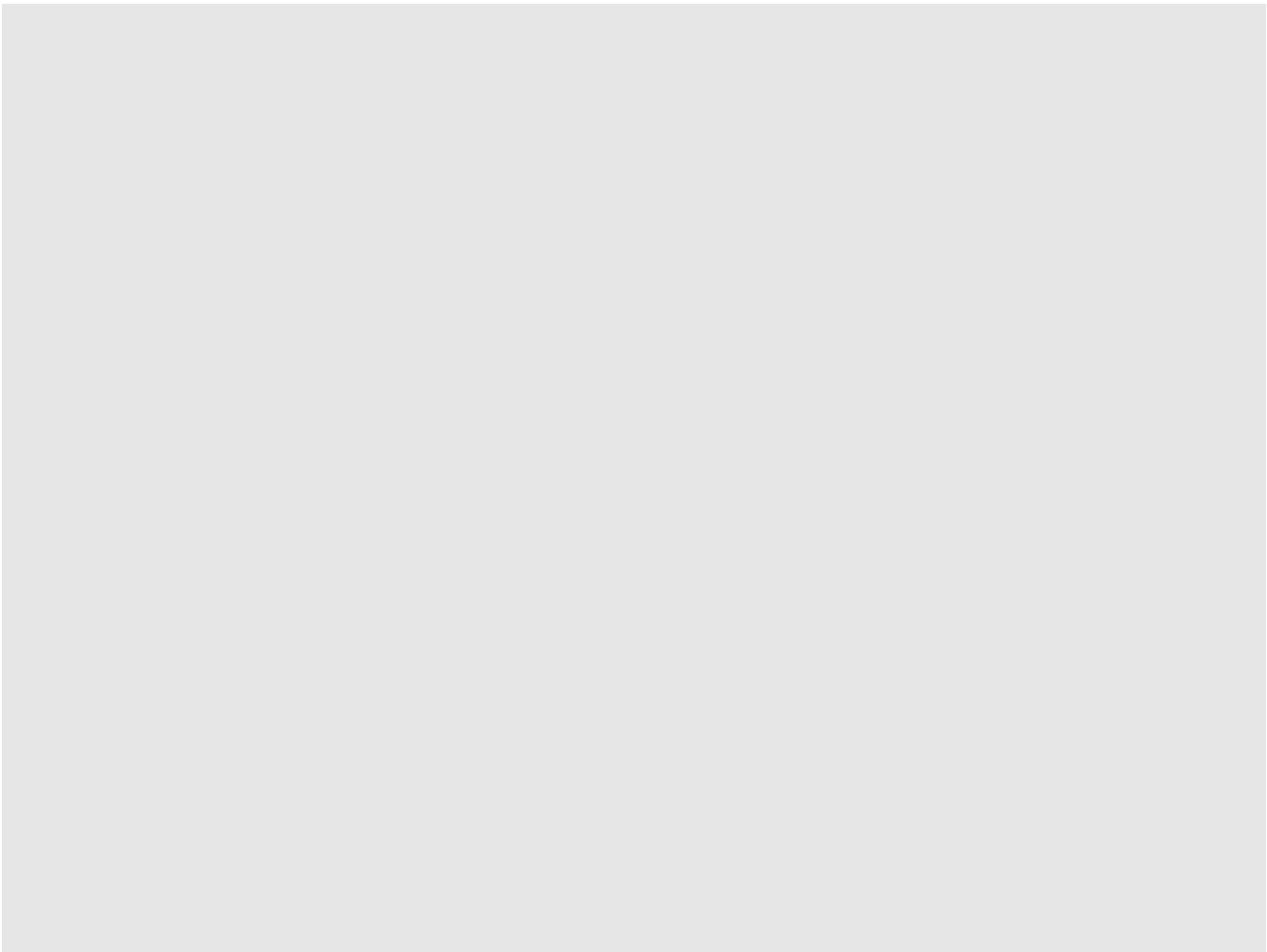




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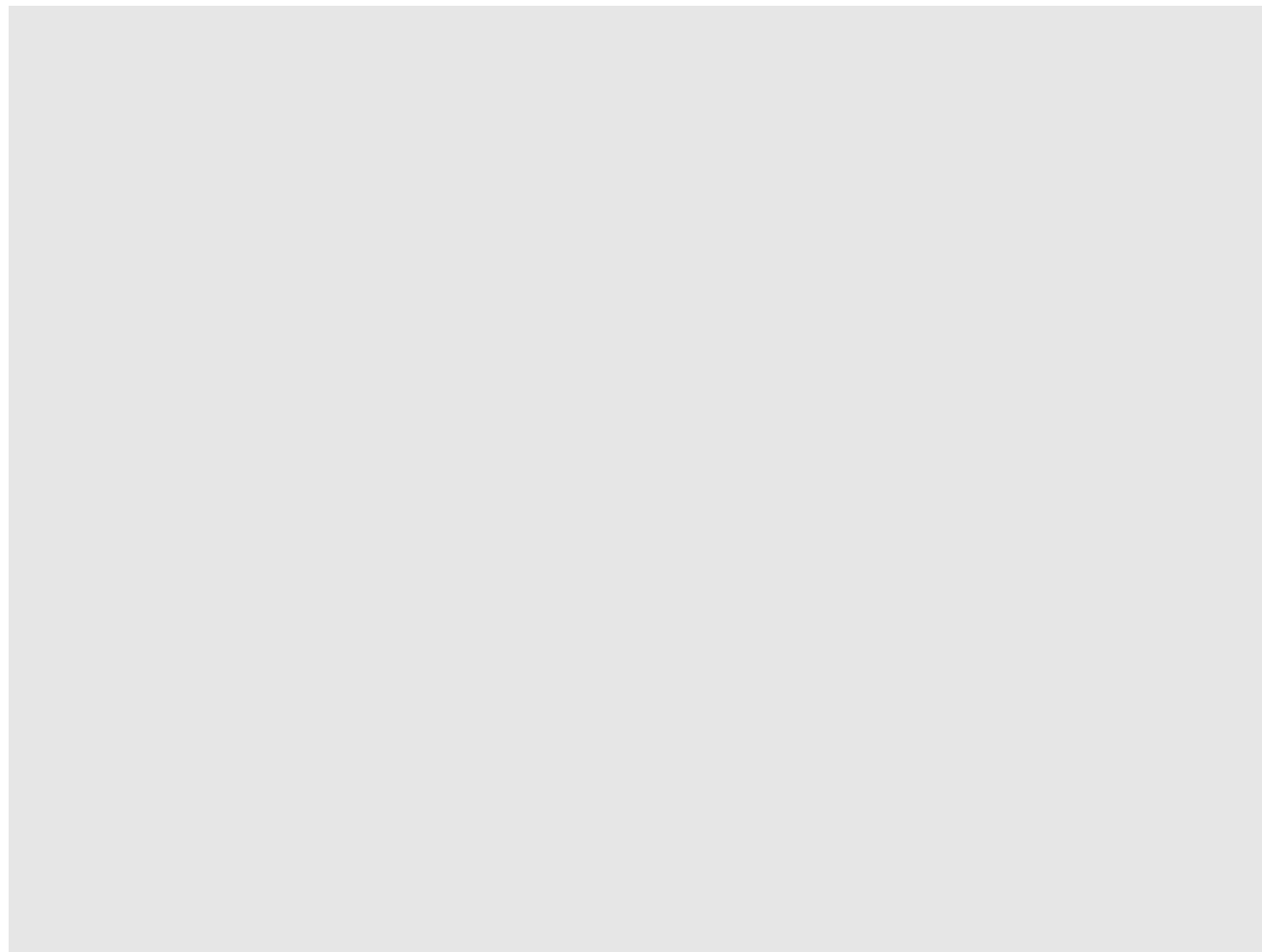


UW-Parkside Communications Professor Jonathan Shailor, center, stands to be recognized during a press

conference on campus Wednesday, announcing a project funded through a Workforce Innovation Grant that will draw on regional partnerships to teach employable skills to incarcerated students and work to reduce racial disparities in education, income and incarceration. Shailor has led the Shakespeare Project at the Racine Correctional Institute since the 1990s, a partnership between Parkside and the Racine prison which provides a chance for inmates to study and perform the works of William Shakespeare.

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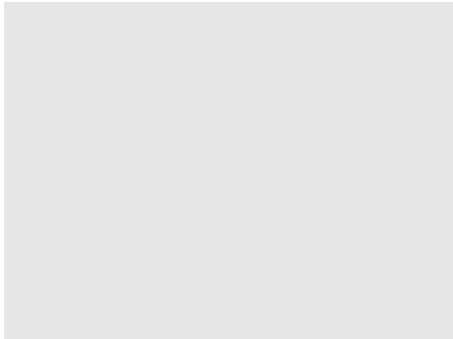
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DOC Secretary Kevin Carr at UW-Parkside



UW-Parkside joins state partnership to help inmates succeed



Ford

UW-PARKSIDE

Dr. Debbie Ford is chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.