



Herald Times Reporter

Jan. 15, 2012

University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc column: Serving the public good

Written by
Charles Clark

We routinely hear that a college graduate will earn up to \$1 million dollars more over a lifetime than an individual with only a high school diploma. While it is important to acknowledge the economic impact a post-secondary education can have on the student (that is, the "private good" of higher education), it is more important, I believe, to acknowledge the impact higher education has on a community and on society (that is, the "public good" of higher education).

During the recent fall semester at the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc, there were several instances where our students, faculty and staff participated in activities that served the public good of our community. I am pleased to highlight a few examples:

In November, the [Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership](#) and our department of biological sciences presented a program regarding an ongoing reclamation project at Hika Bay. UW-Manitowoc biology faculty and students have worked with the LNRP and with civic administration from the village of Cleveland to promote an enhanced natural environment on Centerville Creek and at Hika Bay. Our students have learned valuable scientific skills while they, along with their faculty mentors, serve the public good.

In November and December, faculty from UW-Manitowoc made presentations at the Lester Public Library in Two Rivers as part of a collaboration between the campus and the library. Professor Berel Lutsky discussed art interpretation, while Dr. Melvin Johnson explored the economic value of large-scale development projects. In both instances, these faculty members brought their expertise to a free, public forum where participants were able to exchange ideas. Faculty presentations scheduled for February and March at the Lester library will explore topics on biology and anthropology.

UW-Manitowoc has numerous student organizations that work to provide benefits for both the club members and the community. Many of them actively contributed last semester: The Environmental Club spent time cleaning up beaches as well as the campus; the Future Nurses collected stuffed animals for hospitals and law-enforcement officials to distribute to children and also held a fundraiser to benefit breast cancer research; the Future Teachers raised funds for families of Jefferson Elementary School in need; the Adult College Experience group organized an event where students and staff picked mittens with needs written on them and then donated specific gift cards and presents for struggling families; and the students enrolled in an emergency care class shared their skills with Monroe Elementary sixth-graders.

All campuses of the UW System contribute to the public good, which includes providing outreach and service to our communities, as well as educating students so as to thrive in our state's economy. At UW-Manitowoc, we continue to serve the public good while educating our students in the liberal arts and sciences. This curriculum prepares our students for transfer to baccalaureate institutions; it prepares graduates for participation in civic activity; and it prepares graduates for employment that calls for strong communication skills, problem-solving skills and creative thinking. Outside of the classroom, our faculty, staff and students work in our communities bringing their skills and expertise to help solve problems and to enrich our communities' understanding of our society.

Well-educated graduates are the key to contributing to the public good. A strong, publicly funded system of higher education in Wisconsin will ensure that our state's residents are prepared to lead the cultural, economic and social growth of our communities.

Charles Clark is campus dean and CEO at the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc.