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April 13:

New provost announced



[McKenna Scherer](#), News Reporter

April 13, 2020

Winona State University's president Scott Olson announced the appointment of the next provost and vice president for academic affairs last week while the coronavirus pandemic has closed campus to the public.

Olson sent an all-campus email Mar. 23 to announce the position had been accepted by Dr. Darrell Newton.

Newton will begin his duties July 6, 2020, picking up where interim provost Edward "Ted" Reilly had left off.

Newton most recently served as the vice chancellor for Academic Affairs and dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) since 2017.

"Perhaps the most valuable experience I can bring is an appreciation for students, faculty, staff and the deans," Newton said.

Newton credits that appreciation as “a result of a history of excellent working relationships,” specifically extending gratitude to UW-Eau Claire for that. UW-Eau Claire has recently come under fire during its 2019-20 school year due to several incidents.

Incidents include gender-based discrimination allegations against its vice chancellor, multiple UWEC football team members facing suspension after racist messages were exposed and student Kayde Langer having found racial slurs aimed at her on a sign outside her dorm.

However, Newton said such incidents were not a factor in his decision to move on from the university.

“After almost 30 years in higher ed, I’ve come to appreciate each institution for the positive attributes it has,” Newton said. “This was a matter of preparing for and accepting an awesome opportunity, first and foremost.”

Newton has previously worked at Salisbury University in Maryland as an associate dean and department chair of communication studies, initiated and chaired several student initiatives and has served as a full-time professor, an adjunct lecturer and in several other academic positions.

He holds a doctorate and master’s degree in communication arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as a master’s in English and a bachelor’s degree in mass communications from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Newton said that he observed a sense of camaraderie during his interviews with Winona State’s screen committee while interviewing, all who seemed to be “warm and engaging, yet focused and diligent in their charge.”

He also said that UW-Eau Claire’s Chancellor Jim Schmidt, who had previously worked at Winona State, spoke highly of its campus and directives.

“I was impressed by WSU’s strong commitment to student success, service learning, and other skills students need to excel in our local, national and global communities,” Newton said.

Olson said that Newton’s hiring thankfully was not hindered by the coronavirus pandemic.

“All the face-to-face interviews for the provost search were completed before any COVID-19 restrictions were in place,” Olson said.

However, current and future searches have been affected by the virus and further interviews will occur through Zoom or Skype interviews, he said.

Olson also said he was able to meet Newton in person prior to the pandemic and expects he will do well in his new position.