

## PRESIDENT ADLER ANNOUNCES DECISION TO RETIRE

West Chester University President Madeleine Wing Adler has announced her decision to retire effective June 30, 2008.

Speaking before a May 3 assembly of University students, faculty, staff, and friends, President Adler, whose 15-year tenure is the third longest in the University's history, noted that "this was a very difficult decision. West Chester University is an energizing and creative place to be, and I have been proud to lead this community for 15 years. There comes a time, however, when you realize that your principal goals have been accomplished and that the University is best served by providing new opportunities for leadership."

Speaking on behalf of the University community, Council of Trustees Chair Bernard J. Carrozza thanked President Adler for her outstanding service. "As chairman of the Council and an alumnus of this great institution, I assure you that your impact on WCU cannot be overstated," said Carrozza. "Under your leadership, this institution has become one of America's great comprehensive public universities."

Carrozza also said that he will work with Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Chancellor Judy Hamble and her staff to organize a search committee to begin the process of identifying Dr. Adler's successor. The committee is expected to be named by the fall.

"While President Adler has certainly earned retirement, WCU, the System and all of us who admire her immensely will suffer a great loss," said Judy Hamble, Chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

"In her years as president, Dr. Adler has transformed WCU into one of the best comprehensive universities in the nation. She is a visionary, dynamic, inspirational and intellectual leader, as well as a fabulous person, who is passionately committed to excellence in learning.

"As usual, Dr. Adler has a bold agenda planned for 2007-2008 and will continue to promote excellence at WCU and PASSHE until the moment she departs the campus. I know that all of you join me in wishing her the best as she makes plans to transition to a different phase of her career and life."

### Measures of Excellence

An accomplished university administrator and a scholar of urban politics, Dr. Adler assumed the presidency at West Chester University in 1992. During her tenure, the University's enrollment has grown to 12,882 from 11,959, while the number of first-year applicants has nearly doubled to more than 12,000 from 6,700 for 1,900 spots in the first-year class. At the same time, the quality of incoming students has improved as average

SAT scores increased from 940 to 1096, the highest average in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Financially, the University has diversified its funding base as state support has fallen from 60 percent of its operating budget to 32 percent. The University's annual economic impact on the region has more than quadrupled to \$256 million in 2006 from \$60 million in 1993.

Fundraising has also grown as a result of President Adler's leadership. Annual gift income exceeds \$4 million, among the highest for public master's degree institutions. In addition, she has presided over two successful capital campaigns: "Windows to the Future," which raised \$13.8 million toward a \$12 million goal, and the current "Campaign for Excellence," which has reached its \$25 million goal eight months ahead of schedule.

Improvements in campus facilities also have marked Dr. Adler's presidency, with major renovations to more than 15 campus buildings, the addition of new residence halls, a state-of-the-art science center, a music building and performing arts center, a graduate business center, and several parking garages.

At the same time, President Adler has encouraged partnerships with community groups and businesses from across the region and world – from the Kennett Symphony and the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research to collaborations with Centocor, Johnson & Johnson, State Farm Insurance, and more than 100 other corporations. She also has sought to link campus academic expertise with regional workforce needs.

Among the more than two-dozen innovative academic programs launched during her presidency are Pharmaceutical Product Development, Applied Statistics, Information Assurance, and the Technology and Electronic Commerce MBA program. Under her leadership, the Institute for Educational Excellence and Entrepreneurship was established to work with schools and businesses to improve learning. WCU graduates more teachers than any other university in the State System of Higher Education.

As a result of Dr. Adler's commitment to the arts, the University continues to be the cultural center of Chester County, attracting more than 60,000 people to campus cultural arts events annually. The internationally recognized West Chester University Poetry Conference has become the largest of its kind.

Central to the University's secure future and ongoing excellence have been the campus-wide strategic planning process and document, *A Plan for Excellence*, which articulates West Chester University's mission, values, and goals and focuses on student success.

The Plan for Excellence also reflects West Chester University's commitment to a diverse campus community and to attracting, enrolling, and graduating students from a wide variety of educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The University population of

students and faculty is among the most diverse in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Under the stewardship of the Strategic Planning Resource Council and each member of the University, the Plan for Excellence continues to be implemented through initiatives and activities across campus.

Beginning in 1992, Dr. Adler launched a unique management approach known as “distributed leadership” that is linked to a commitment to civility, mutual respect, and the acceptance and appreciation of diversity. The hallmark of “distributed leadership” is that all faculty, staff, and students are considered part of the University’s leadership team, holding appropriate authority and responsibility not only for their own success but also for that of the institution. In 2005, the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement was established to oversee the University’s extensive student leadership development programs.

Prior to her appointment as West Chester University’s first woman president, Dr. Adler was the academic vice president at Framingham State College, in Framingham, Massachusetts. She holds a bachelor of arts in political science from Northwestern University and a master of arts and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Among her many honors are the 1998 Chester County Citizen of the Year, 1998 March of Dimes Woman of Achievement, 2001 Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition Pink Ribbon Award, 2002 Philadelphia Business Journal’s Women of Distinction Award, 2003 Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Citizen Award, and 2005 Distinguished Citizen Award from the Boy Scouts of America’s Chester County Council.

Dr. Adler currently heads the Chester County Community Foundation Board of Trustees, is a trustee of Willow Financial Bank, and serves on the Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania Advisory Board. Nationally, she is on the board of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

### Goals for the Coming Year

In the coming academic year, Dr. Adler will oversee a continuation of the fundraising for an undergraduate business center and the renovation of 25 University Avenue for WCU’s mathematics, computer science, and information assurance programs. The University will move ahead with construction of a new student recreation center and an additional parking structure and will complete the plans for a comprehensive replacement of University student housing, a \$250 million project that will begin construction next May. Ongoing progress toward additional program accreditations, enhanced leadership opportunities for students, and campus-wide collaboration with the Strategic Planning Resource Council to monitor the Plan for Excellence are on the agenda, as are reviewing, updating, and expanding the University’s emergency preparedness procedures where

appropriate. Similarly a priority will be preparing for an orderly presidential leadership transition.

In reflecting on her presidency, Dr. Adler said, “When Fred [Dr. Frederick Lane, President Adler’s husband and a professor of public administration in Baruch College’s School of Public Affairs at the City University of New York] and I came to the University, we came with the highest hopes, and reality has even surpassed those expectations. The greatest reward of all is the enormous affection that we feel for and have received from the West Chester University community.”

In pointing to the next academic year, Dr. Adler noted that the University will need the campus community’s ongoing full engagement and commitment to distributed leadership and the vision, values, and excellence that have brought the institution to where it is today.

“The most exciting years for West Chester University are still in the future,” said Dr. Adler, “and for the year ahead, Fred and I look forward to many conversations with members of the University community about this great institution and where it is going.”