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[00:00:01] **Speaker 1** Why don't you go shut the door real quick?

[00:00:04] **Speaker 2** Okay.

[00:00:05] **Speaker 1** Doesn't sound too loud around here, but you never know.

[00:00:08] **Speaker 2** If you were here about half an hour ago. It was loud. Okay. Just, we have a group called Webpack, which. Power electronics group. And so they have a big industrial consortium. So once a year they, they do their their meeting you know, so there's lots of companies, lots of people who don't care. It's a good thing.

[00:00:30] **Speaker 1** Well we do in here. So for this, just talk to me.

[00:00:34] **Speaker 2** Okay?

[00:00:34] **Speaker 1** Don't worry about the camera.

[00:00:35] **Speaker 2** I know I don't like the camera.

[00:00:36] **Speaker 1** Yeah, we'll just pretend it's not there. That's what I do.

[00:00:40] **Speaker 2** Okay. Because he's not your right. So you're not the one in the spotlight. So it's relatively easy for you.

[00:00:46] **Speaker 1** But no, on Friday I'm on there though.

[00:00:49] **Speaker 2** All right. I'm ready when you guys are. All right.

[00:00:52] **Speaker 1** Well, thank you very much for joining us. Give me a sense of why you decided now was the time to step down as Dean.

[00:01:00] **Speaker 2** So I think as we look back over the ten years that have been the thing that becomes a time you've accomplished things, it just becomes a time when. It's time for someone else to actually take the role of Dean and to lead the college into the next phase of its development. And so I thought this was a good time, because things at the moment are very positive in the college. The trajectories are all in the right direction. So this is is a good time.

[00:01:28] **Speaker 1** Talk to me a little bit about what we've seen in ten years, and then what the next ten years can bring. Because obviously people are talking about a lot of different things in the world of AI and new developments. How much has changed and how much has changes yet to come?

[00:01:42] **Speaker 2** So I'm going to take your question in two parts. I'm going to talk about the educational side first and how the curriculum has changed, how our approach to education has changed. Then I'll talk a little bit about the research and how some of that has changed. So if you were to tour our classrooms today, you would not see stadium seating. And most of the ones that we've renovated right there now designed more for student learning, student focus. So the students will review the course material before they come to class. The class is designed for problem solving. It's a better way for engineers to learn some of the materials. So we've modified our classrooms. We've modified our approach to how we teach our students so that they're better prepared to go out there. If I look at our center for Engineering Education Innovation, they're looking into what's coming next. So augmented reality, virtual reality, digital twins. What role do they have an undergraduate education. Now we're going to evaluate them and say are they going to improve the quality of our education. And if they are, then we will start teaching our faculty and our instructors how to bring these new technologies into the classroom so that we better prepare our students for their career path. So I machine learning, you touched on, I mean, as I was thinking about this, if I go back maybe a couple of decades, it was computer modeling. Computer simulation was a big thing and research and an instruction. I look at that today and it's now widespread throughout our curriculum. I hear from industries, AI, machine learning. Our students need to know this technology as they leave and graduate from here because it's going to be pervasive in every industry. And that's one of the things that we are changing our curriculum is to make sure we incorporate those tools, get the students familiar with using them, and trying to address the types of problems they'll be exposed to an industry using those tools, right. So it's going to change, and we are evolving our curriculum to make those changes today. If I look at the research world, it's also changing. It used to be more focused on individual investigators. Today you're having to assemble large teams, not just the faculty, but now you need industry partners. You need to actually work on workforce development. And it's not just engineers and the R&D specialists, it's also the technicians. So we have partnerships with the community colleges. These are all important as we think about workforce development for the future, how we're going to get enough engineers trained for what's coming next. So the research is changing. So we've had to change our strategy, and we be building these partnerships so that we're ready. I'd say those are some of the biggest changes in the in the instructional side. And on the research side that we've seen over the last decade.

[00:04:37] **Speaker 1** So your school's obviously been in the news a lot in the last year, having to do with the new building and some of the political controversy. Let's talk about the building itself first and what it will mean to what we're just talking about, the ability to evolve into the future of what what the education and the research does.

[00:04:54] **Speaker 2** Yeah. So the new building did take a little bit longer than we were expecting, to get approved. But the good thing is it did get approved. What's it going to do for the state of Wisconsin? We're going to be able to take more students, right? There is a high demand at the moment from students to get an engineering degree from UW Madison. We currently have 4800 undergraduates. We're going to grow to at least 5500. That's going to meet some of the student demand. It's also going to help us meet demand from industries in the state of Wisconsin for more engineers. As I talked to the companies, they're saying, when will you produce more engineers? Because we want to hire them and they have jobs for them. So the new building will enable that part. It's also going to allow us to actually expand our research. Right. We will attract new faculty with the building. They will bring in new areas in environmental sustainability, AI, machine learning, autonomous vehicles, robotics, all areas that are important to Wisconsin based industries and to the nation. So change your research portfolio is going to allow us to do the growth that's actually needed. So I think these are good things for happening. It'll be good for the state.

[00:06:07] **Speaker 1** On the political side, were you surprised when the building became kind of a political football in the budget?

[00:06:15] **Speaker 2** Yes. I mean, it did take longer. Right. And so it was a surprise. But if we look at what really happened. During that whole period, the support we got from companies in Wisconsin, from the people of Wisconsin was actually just amazing. These were all engineering companies that weren't are engineering alone. It was people. Companies say we need more engineers. UW Madison has a plan to attract more engineering students that will meet demand. And they actually voiced their support for the building. So I'd like to just take this opportunity to thank all of them because I can't thank them all in person. So this is a great opportunity for for me to say thank you for all of the support that you gave us to get this new building. We won't disappoint. We will live up to our end of the bargain. We will produce more engineers and will develop great research.

[00:07:08] **Speaker 1** When it came to the final negotiations between the Chancellor and the legislature on how to resolve some of those issues. Were you involved with some of the give and take?

[00:07:17] **Speaker 2** No. This was all by the Chancellor. That's that's the Chancellor's job. And I trust the Chancellor completely in these things.

[00:07:24] **Speaker 1** Some of the things that the UW was asked to give up or to change had to do with Dei. You have a vice chancellor for Dei. You have a very diverse student body within the engineering school. How do those all factor in together in terms of what the students felt about some of those sacrifices?

[00:07:42] **Speaker 2** So. So let me say that the our commitment, the campus commitment to providing an environment that's inclusive and welcoming for all continues. Well, that's not going to change, right? All of us want to work in an environment that's that we enjoy working in, that we enjoy learning in. And it's absolutely essential that we do that here in the College of Engineering. When I talk to industries, they tell me that it's important that they hire a diverse workforce. Right. They say that the products that they get at the end are better if they bring in different perspectives. And so we need to do the same. The other part I think that's important is that engineering is facing a challenge in attracting more people. We currently have shortages in the number of engineers that we produce. If I think what's coming with the Chips act of semiconductors coming back in the manufacturing, come back to the US. The advances in clean energy sustainability, we're going to need more and more engineers than we can produce, not only here in Wisconsin but nationwide. So one of the challenges I see, and why the hopes, is that we can get more people excited about being engineering and saying, this is a great career path, because I can have an impact on society if I take this career. So we need to do all of these things.

[00:09:05] **Speaker 1** When it comes to the title of DTI, it seems like the title itself is more controversial than any of the policies. So will there be a change for the students that see the value in those programs, or will just be a semantic change?

[00:09:19] **Speaker 2** No, it's not a semantic change. I mean, what we've done in the college is we've we've we've regrouped the programs so that all of our programs that serve all of our students are in one location. Right. And I think that's important. So if people look for where we do our tutoring services, it's all in one location. Do we have different programs in within our tutoring programs? Absolutely. Because students learn differently. So you need to have different opportunities for them to learn the way that's best for them. That requires that you don't just have one size or one form of tutoring, you need multiple forms for it. And that's what we do. And we're doing that with with the other activities. So I don't see there been any change in the services that we provide our students.

[00:10:05] **Speaker 1** We were here earlier this year for a job fair. And the diversity in terms of the employers and the students was was amazing. It it almost fulfilled the promise of what people want to see when it comes to that diversity. Do you think people outside of that, that don't come into those job fairs understand that that's already here?

[00:10:23] **Speaker 2** I hope they do. I mean, it's very important to us that they see that diversity. If they're not, we'd like to invite them to come and visit the College of Engineering and actually see the things we do. I mean, if anybody wants to visit anytime, they're always welcome. We're always happy to showcase what goes on in engineering.

[00:10:42] **Speaker 1** You have a number of affinity groups within the College of Engineering, for students of black, Hispanic, queer and transgender. Some of them are housed in the building that will be torn down. Will they find a new home within the new building, or what will happen to them and their their space to thrive on campus?

[00:11:01] **Speaker 2** So we are knocking down 1410. And we're working now and sort of moving all of the people who are in there. We are committed to making sure that our student groups have the species that they need, and we provide space to a lot of the student groups, because they're an important part of the education element. So the student center will be relocated into a new space, not in the new building, most likely in this building.

[00:11:29] **Speaker 1** As you look back on the process that you went through. Do you think I mean, you talked about the positives of the business community in the state rallying around you, but did it also kind of turn you off to see the political element inject itself into a learning environment?

[00:11:46] **Speaker 2** I mean, it's part of a process, right? And again, it was a process. It was more complicated than we thought it would be. But you have to look at the positive outcome, and the outcome is where we should be. The other part that's important there again, is all of that support that we received. I mean, if you didn't get that kind of support. I'm not sure we'd be sort of celebrating and looking forward to a new engineering building. So I look at it more. There was a process, more complicated but positive outcome, and an awful lot of support from people in the state.

[00:12:23] **Speaker 1** So what's next for you?

[00:12:26] **Speaker 2** That's a really good question, and I'm not sure I have the answer to that today. You know, I'll take some time to figure out. So you go back and learn some of the research that I've, not done for a few years and catch up with where the field is. And I'm looking forward to returning to my home Department of material science and Engineering and and contributing to their success just in a different way from being the dean.

[00:12:48] **Speaker 1** What advice would you have for the next dean, given all that you've experienced and learned?

[00:12:54] **Speaker 2** I. So their advice for the next thing. You've got great faculty, you've got great staff, you've got great students. They're going to help you be successful. They are the reason there's some people say, I've been successful. It's all down to the people. And we have. An incredibly talented faculty. We have dedicated staff and the students we attract here. They're amongst the best in the nation. So keep working with them. The other thing that I find is that they have Badger Engineering alumni. They're fiercely loyal, the fiercely proud of their engineering degree. They'll tell you that it's why they're successful. But then they'll also say, how can I help you maintain that success, that excellence in the education? They'll work with you. So the new dean should work with them, get them engaged. They've been a tremendous help to me and any of the successes we've enjoyed in the college. The alumni base has always been there for us, and they'll be there for the next thing.

[00:14:02] **Speaker 1** It was it was fun to see all the different Badger spread around the world and how they showed their pride, no matter where they're working.

[00:14:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I mean, I've gone worldwide and visited offices, and I'm always surprised at how much badger engineering things are in their offices and their points of pride for for our alumni. They are, they'll tell you and they tell me the educational experience they got here. It's why they're successful. And it doesn't matter if they're engineers, business, health care, lawyers, they always come back and say that Badger engineering education was just superb. So I think that's. That's a great thing. It's our legacy. It says we produced good engineers and good people.

[00:14:49] **Speaker 1** All right. Anything else that you'd like to add?

[00:14:52] **Speaker 2** I think just the last part, again, is those alumni. They've been when we've asked them to help. They've always stepped up and helped and they help in many different ways, right? They come in our classroom, they teach our students, they do design projects with our students. They seven at advisory boards, they've helped the renovations of the college. They've helped with scholarships. They're helping with the new building funding. I'm not going to get a chance to thank them all personally. And the next six months are going to take this opportunity to, again, just say thank you to all the alumni for everything they've done to make this a great college of engineering. That's been a great experience for me.

[00:15:35] **Speaker 1** All right. When do we break ground on the new building?

[00:15:38] **Speaker 2** We're hoping sometime in 2025 we will break ground. We will probably pull down 14, ten sometime late fall. And to get the site prepared for the infrastructure project upgrade. And then the start of the new building.

[00:15:55] **Speaker 1** Are all the Badger football fans going to have to worry about getting their parking?

[00:16:02] **Speaker 2** Yeah. The College of Engineering is going to be this, this space is going to be a little difficult to navigate through for the next few years.

[00:16:10] **Speaker 1** Which is a more dangerous political group, football fans or the legislature.

[00:16:17] **Speaker 2** I think there's going to be a fair amount of frustration from the football fans as they try and come through into Camp Randall and again day. Just because of all the construction that's going on. But hopefully when they come back through and 2028 when we take occupancy, they'll go. It was worth it. Right? All of that trouble, all of that sort of congestion that we had to go through, was worth it. When they see this new engineering building, it's going to be pretty spectacular.

[00:16:44] **Speaker 1** All right, so the interview part's over. We'd like to change out your microphone to a wireless so you're not connected to cord, and then have you kind of show us around your model here. Okay, that sounds good. Great.