

Debbie Veglahn's list of campus accomplishments is long

The go to for to do

Take the lead in getting the new online student information system implemented. Check.

Serve as the go-between for the Student Association and La Crosse MTU to get the Safe Ride and U-PASS programs up and running. Check.

Provide oversight for the partnership with Follett Higher Education Group University Bookstore and Textbook Rental operations. Check.

The tasks on Debbie Veglahn's to-do list are as many as they are varied. For more than a decade Veglahn has been the go-to person for the university's vice chancellor for administration and finance. For two decades before that, she helped employees with human resources issues.

Veglahn has found success because of her positive attitude and willingness to take on new challenges, as well as her humble leadership style. "I've always enjoyed helping people with whatever project needs to get done," she says.

Veglahn started working on campus in 1974, shortly after dropping out of college. She had come to UW-L a year earlier, but had to quit because she didn't have money to return. Her future mother-in-law convinced her to take the state's civil service exam. Veglahn did. She passed and soon found herself as a typist and receptionist in the Personnel Office in Graff Main Hall.

Despite holding a full-time job, Veglahn didn't turn from her desire to earn a college degree. She took a class a semester until nearing her management informa-

tion systems degree in the late '90s. Then, she doubled up on classes so she could graduate before her son.

After earning her degree — with honors — in spring 1999, Veglahn was asked by then Vice Chancellor Sue Schoenberger to become her assistant.



The Debbie Veglahn file

- **Began working as a typist and receptionist in the UW-L Personnel Office, August 1974, after completing a year of college on campus. Dropped out because she didn't have any money to continue college.**
- **Took classes while working full time, being a wife and mother of two boys. Earned a degree — with honors — in management information systems in 1999.**
- **Became Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance in June 1999. Has worked on numerous major campus initiatives, including: Growth, Quality and Access; Student Information System; University Bookstore and Textbook Rental changeover; U-PASS and Safe Ride; Image Now initiative.**

She managed a variety of projects for numerous vice chancellors and supervised a number of campus service units. She also championed getting classified staff not on computers online access so they could access needed personnel services.

In 2007, Veglahn became project manager for the new Student Information System. Helping to implement the new student information system was a "huge undertaking," she admits. "But it was a total team effort by the entire project team and we had a lot of support from across campus which helped make the migration a success. We also had a lot of fun along the way."

Following that success, Veglahn began overseeing Follett's operation of the Bookstore and Textbook Rental. She's currently heading up implementation of Image Now, a program for electronic storage of documents as part of UW-L's paperless environment efforts.

If she had an opportunity to start her career over, Veglahn would no doubt pick UW-L. But, she would earn her degree earlier. "I wish I would have stayed in school," she says. "A major motivation was that I didn't want to be turned down for job advancement because I didn't have a degree."

— Brad Quarberg, University Communications