

2014 UW-La Crosse Academic Staff Excellence Award

Lifelong link

Wirkus helps campus connect through technology

When Terry Wirkus started working in Wing Technology Center in 1996, it was just like coming home.

Wirkus grew up across the street from Wing and both his parents worked on campus. He went to the campus school at Morris Hall through eighth grade, and he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees at UW-L.

Finally, after nearly two decades in local broadcasting, Wirkus joined the UW-L Academic Technology Services staff to develop learning through technology. That was when technological advances were just about to explode with personal computers. Distance learning was in its infancy and the Internet was bringing the world closer.

"The Internet has changed everything," says Wirkus. "The only border now is where the Internet ends."

Enhancing education through technology for better teaching and learning is what makes Wirkus excited about coming to work every day. "That's what I enjoy the most," he says.

It's also what made colleagues honor him with the 2014 UW-L Academic Staff Excellence Award.

Wirkus says his single most accomplishment has been promoting video conferencing throughout campus. "I've helped champion it and to move it forward so that stu-



The Terry Wirkus file

- **Distance Learning Technology Coordinator in Information Technology Services since 1996.**
- **Announcer for Screaming Eagles Marching Band and commencement ceremonies since 1996.**
- **Academic Staff Council chair or co-chair for six years, council member for 12 years.**
- **Awards: Cisco Telepresence Training Award; Crestron Training Award; International Thespian Society Certificate of Recognition; Amateur Radio Relay League Lifetime Member.**
- **Community service: 10 years as a Prayer Partner with Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration; UW-L Foundation Board of Directors; Past Town of Shelby Land Use Committee; Gundersen Medical Center Pediatric Advisory Committee; WTC Vis-Comm Advisory Committee; Freedom Fest Volunteer.**
- **Bachelor of science in mass communications and speech communication, UW-L, 1979; master of science in educational media, UW-L, 1988.**

dents, faculty and staff are able to use it every day," he notes.

In helping the UW-L community connect through technology, Wirkus has promoted video conferencing for classes, meetings, position searches and professional development. "Using video to complement travel has helped us save time, auto, hotel and meal costs," he explains.

Wirkus firmly believes it's vital for all on campus to work together. "All of us have different roles, but we all are integral and necessary to make the university whole," he says.

It's especially rewarding for Wirkus to work with grad students on their thesis presentations, allowing them to share with family, friends and mentors worldwide via technology.

"I feel very proud of their accomplishments and my involvement with them," he says. "I'm able to share their success with their

family. It's wonderful to be a little cog in the wheel to help them with their educational accomplishments."

Wirkus especially enjoys seeing students off when they graduate. "It also brings me a deep sense of satisfaction to read our students' names at commencement," he says.

-Brad Quarberg, University Communications