

Strategic Governance Fuels WARF's Next Century of Innovation

MADISON, WI, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation celebrates its 100th anniversary, Board Chair Deborah Keller and CEO Erik Iverson reflect on the evolving role of WARF's Board of Trustees in a new essay, "A Century of Leadership: [The WARF Board's Evolving Role in Advancing Innovation](#)."

The piece explores how WARF's governance model has transformed from a traditional oversight body into a strategic partner in innovation. Keller and Iverson highlight the Board's deep expertise across sectors—from life sciences and venture capital to institutional investing, law and philanthropy—and its critical role in launching initiatives like:

- WARF Therapeutics – Accelerating drug discovery by bridging academic research and industry.
- WARF Accelerator – Advancing early-stage technologies toward market readiness.
- WARF Ventures – Supporting startups emerging from UW-Madison research.

"Today's challenges—climate change, energy, AI, to name just a few—demand bold, forward-thinking leadership," says Keller. "Our Trustees are not just advisors; they are active participants in shaping WARF's strategic direction."

The essay also underscores the unique independence of WARF's Board, which operates outside the university's administration. This structure, established by WARF's founders in 1925, allows the Board to focus on long-term impact while remaining deeply committed to the Wisconsin Idea: that research should benefit people far beyond campus.

"As we look to the next century, our mission remains clear," says Iverson. "To empower UW-Madison researchers, foster innovation and ensure that discoveries improve lives and our



As WARF marks its centennial, a new essay by Board Chair Deborah Keller and CEO Erik Iverson highlights how strategic governance has transformed the foundation's Board into a driving force for innovation.

environment around the world.”

Throughout the year, WARF will publish additional essays from various thought leaders, each offering unique perspectives on the impact of university research on global challenges. These essays, available at warf.org/WisconsinIngenuity, will highlight the importance of long-term investments in university innovation and the transformative potential of academic-industry partnerships.

About WARF

Celebrating a century of service in 2025, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) patents and licenses discoveries from UW-Madison research, manages an investment portfolio generated from licensing and investment proceeds, and provides annual grants to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Morgridge Institute for Research to support further scientific investigation and research. By driving collaborations among researchers, investors, industry and entrepreneurs, WARF commercializes innovations from campus through various initiatives. WARF Accelerator improves the commercialization potential of university intellectual property through industry engagement and investment in proof-of-concept milestones to validate market potential, demonstrate commercial value and de-risk technology. WARF Therapeutics partners with UW-Madison and Morgridge Institute researchers employing an industry-focused approach to improve the value propositions of drug candidates. WARF Ventures is an early-stage venture fund that invests in startups based on UW/WARF technologies. Learn more at warf.org.

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