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Co-founder of Axios and POLITICO Leads Keynote for 50th Anniversary of UW Oshkosh Journalism on Friday

OSHKOSH, WI, October 15, 2018 – Oshkosh native Jim VandeHei, co-founder of Axios and POLITICO, will be speaking at his alma mater at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's 50th Anniversary for the Department of Journalism on Friday, Oct. 19 at Sage Hall, among about 20 sessions free and open to the public.

VandeHei, a 1995 UWO graduate, will lead the event's keynote at 3:30 p.m. in Sage 1214 with "Facts Matter: Inside My Wild Ride Through New Media with POLITICO in ObamaWorld and Axios in TrumpLand." He will host a breakfast for students at 8:30 a.m. in Sage 3000 with advice and trends on what it takes to work in media today, and participate in a media panel about fake news at 12:30 p.m. in Sage 3234.

VandeHei was raised in the Oshkosh area and graduated from Lourdes High School. He chose to stay local and attend UWO where he graduated with a double major in journalism and political science. During his time at UWO he interned with Democratic Senator Herb Kohl, which ultimately led to his decision to get involved in political journalism.

After college, VandeHei worked as a sports reporter for the Oshkosh Northwestern. It was after this job that he decided he needed to get closer to politics and Washington D.C. He worked for multiple prominent publications including Roll Call, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post before co-founding POLITICO in 2007. He left POLITICO in 2016 to co-found Axios.

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Dr. Sara Steffes Hansen, UWO journalism chair and associate professor, said VandeHei is a dynamic speaker whose career exemplifies great journalism, core values that are emphasized consistently in journalism education and the evolution demanded through changing technology.

“Jim VandeHei is one of our most successful alumni, as a national political reporter and innovative founder of two media organizations that have shaped the way news is covered at the highest levels of government and delivered to audiences using the latest digital methods,” Hansen said.

Dr. Vincent Filak, UWO journalism professor, said VandeHei's continued coverage of politics at the national level should be of great interest to anyone with a passion for journalism, politics and the truth.

“I'm always amazed at how well he boils down complex and troubling issues into simple and direct information that matters to the audience,” Filak said. “We are really lucky to have him at the 50th and I can't wait to hear what he has to say.”

“I'm excited to be back at UWO, honoring the school that helped me cut my teeth in journalism,” VandeHei said.

Schedule information on VandeHei's sessions and other national and local speakers for the 50th events is available at <https://uwosh.edu/journalism/50th-reunion/>. The public is welcome to attend, with RSVPs requested. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. Pro talk sessions from 10 a.m. to noon will cover topics on politics, sports, entertainment and digital marketing, including speakers from Facebook, ESPN, Green Bay Packers, Disney ABC and other national and local organizations. Media panels from 12:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. will feature media thought leaders exploring fake news, entrepreneurial work, digital storytelling, versatile media skills for branding, grasping the changes of social media and community journalism. VandeHei's keynote will start at 3:30 p.m.

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The Department of Journalism at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh was founded in 1968 within the College of Letters and Science and is nationally accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. The department offers three areas of study in multimedia journalism, public relations and advertising. Its mission is to create a vibrant, professional environment that teaches core journalism principles, encourages creativity, keeps pace with technology and provides hands-on experiences for students to step into dynamic media careers. In 2015 the department launched the first public relations major in the UW System, and in 2018 it created the multimedia journalism major. The department's points of pride include the graduation of 2,800 majors, 87 percent of students graduating with one or more internships and 88 percent of recent graduates landing a job in the field.

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