



University of Wisconsin Colleges
Strategic Plan 2012-2017

University of Wisconsin Colleges

This is a paradoxical time for the UW Colleges. The economic recession of 2008 has rippled through to the state budget, resulting in major reductions to public support for the University of Wisconsin System, requiring us to review and reorganize the way we do our work. As the State reduces funding to the University of Wisconsin, legislators and other stakeholders question the economic return on the public investment in the UW System. That same economic downturn has sent thousands of students to higher education classrooms – real and virtual – as students strive to update their skills and prepare for secure, meaningful work in the 21st century. We have the highest numbers – ever – of constituents who want education from us. Our challenge is to adapt our educational programs, delivery, and organizational operations, so that we serve our Wisconsin stakeholders and thrive as an academic community. At this time of intense and rapid change, we will be directed by our core values.

Background

The external challenge to the University of Wisconsin Colleges is strong. Economic recovery is predicted to be slow, both nationally and in the State of Wisconsin. The UW System base budget was dramatically contracted in the 2011-13 biennium and continues to be reduced as state revenues decline. Public re-investment in the University of Wisconsin System is not expected for at least five years. Public officials increasingly require economic impact data (“return on investment” or “ROI”) as a basis for making appropriations. We must carefully identify our strategic priorities, strengthen financial management, and find innovative methods of fulfilling our mission to cope with reduced state support.

Changes in the economy, especially growth in health care and other service sectors has led to additional need for higher education, particularly bachelor’s degrees. These factors, added to the stalled housing market, mean that many citizens are eager to continue their education and earn a bachelor’s degree, but are place-bound and have limited financial resources to invest in education. Businesses, local government, school districts, and non-profit organizations are all looking to the University of Wisconsin for leadership, knowledge and expertise, and educational outreach to help with economic recovery.

While faced with daunting financial problems, the UW Colleges is remarkably well-positioned to serve Wisconsin citizens: First and foremost is the deep foundation in liberal arts learning provided by its membership in the University of Wisconsin. The university faculty and curriculum are inextricably connected to those of the other campuses of the University of Wisconsin System, which guarantees quality and transfer for students. The 13 campuses of the UWC are powerfully engaged with the local communities that provide their facilities, which makes the local UW Colleges campus a natural center of learning, culture, service and support for the community. Many of the UW Colleges alumni return to the community where they began their university career, making UWC campuses an engine of economic development and a beacon of civic engagement. The geographical dispersion of the UW Colleges and its early adoption of technology-mediated instruction position it well to serve the state through an updating of the Wisconsin Idea in the 21st century. Optimizing the productivity and accessibility offered by technology-mediated instruction will be a key to fulfilling our mission in the face of deep base budget reductions.

As an institution, we must realize the opportunities for innovation and new definitions of excellence offered by these rapidly changing circumstances. For example, the expansion of competing higher education institutions to meet higher educational needs in the community is a model for new delivery modes. For-profit universities such as Phoenix, Ottawa, and Herzing have boldly established both on-line and bricks-and-mortar presence in Madison, Milwaukee, and many other communities in which UW campuses are located, including campuses of the UW Colleges.

Private universities, such as Cardinal Stritch and Concordia, are establishing satellite operations in communities beyond their home campuses; these include those of the UW Colleges. The Wisconsin Technical College System is very deliberately repositioning key campuses as local collegiate institutions (e.g., the rebranding of Madison Area Technical College to “Madison College”). On the national and global levels, the “unbundled education” and “open educational materials” movements enabled by Internet and mobile technology are testing the relevance of the traditional methods of organizing, delivering and certifying post-secondary education, as well as the business model of classroom instruction provided by ranked faculty. Building upon its historic commitment to the Wisconsin Idea, the UW Colleges must streamline its operations, and expand the scope and delivery of its quality programs to fulfill its mission.

UW Colleges Leadership

As described in Chapter 36 of Wisconsin State Statutes, responsibility for governing the University of Wisconsin System is shared among its legal constituents. In the University of Wisconsin Colleges, the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and University of Wisconsin Extension, along with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the Vice Chancellor for Administrative and Financial Services, provides institutional leadership. The Chancellor and his executive team are primarily responsible for:

- Establishing institutional direction, as expressed in the vision statement. The Chancellor and his staff represent the UW Colleges to the University of Wisconsin System and its Board of Regents, as well as to other UW institutions, and external stakeholders.
- Providing institutional stewardship by fulfilling the UW Colleges’ legal and fiduciary duties. The Chancellor and his staff oversee the execution of strategies and operations that advance the UW Colleges in their mission, while assuring institutional integrity.
- Delivering services that are most effectively provided at that institutional level and providing value-added support and expertise to campuses. The Central Office endeavors not to duplicate or impede activities that fulfill the institutional mission on campuses or through direct service to learners, but to support and guide those who serve our constituents.

As the Chief Administrative Officers at the campus level, Campus Executive Officers/Deans execute responsibilities delegated by the Chancellor. Each of the deans has guided his or her campus through a parallel strategic planning process, which is linked in a complementary way to this institutional plan for the UW Colleges.

For more, see: <http://www.uwc.edu/catalog/uwc/administration/>

Strategic Questions

Within this context, the UW Colleges must answer a number of strategic questions as it plans its future:

- What strategies must we undertake to increase student academic success – especially earning degrees – in the current environment?
- Given the withdrawal of state financial support, limits on tuition increases, and increasing demand for UW services, what strategies must we develop to make wise choices and responsibly manage our resources?
- How do we update our execution of the Wisconsin Idea for the 21st century to meet the economic and social challenges of the next five years?
- Specifically, how do we account for the economic value that the UW Colleges campuses contribute to their local communities and the State of Wisconsin? How will we maximize the economic impact of our activities and account for return on investment (ROI)?
- How do we respond to the demand for increased access to higher education at a time of decreased financial support, accelerated technological change and global interactions?
- What changes must we make in how we operate to be competitively responsive to current and future demands for educational programs and services to Wisconsin stakeholders?

In responding to these emerging challenges, the UW Colleges will work within its mission and will be driven by its core institutional values in formulating the strategic goals and objectives to realize its vision for 2012-2017.

Strategic Importance

The University of Wisconsin Colleges is important to the State of Wisconsin because ...

... we offer the best higher education value within the State.

... we transform people's lives by giving them the opportunity to earn a college degree while remaining in their community.

... we offer thousands of Wisconsin residents who were refused admission to other colleges and universities, or who dropped out or delayed their college education an opportunity to receive quality UW instruction from quality faculty.

... we provide students with individual attention, a personalized academic experience and significant support from highly qualified faculty and staff.

... we enhance the value of local economies and the economy of the state by producing innovative, committed, and well-educated graduates who are primarily committed to remaining in their community.

... we offer this high quality education at a lower cost than at any other institution in the state (including other University of Wisconsin campuses), resulting in a unique, cost-efficient investment in advancing the State's economic competitiveness.

Strategic Purpose (Mission)

The University of Wisconsin Colleges is a multi-campus institution committed to high quality educational programs, preparing students for success at the baccalaureate level of education, providing the first two years of a liberal arts general education that is accessible and affordable, providing a single baccalaureate degree that meets local and individual needs, and advancing the Wisconsin Idea by bringing the resources of the University to the people of the state and the communities that provide and support its campuses.

For more, see: <http://www.uwc.edu/catalog/uwc/mission/>

Strategic Direction (Vision)

We will be Wisconsin's institution of access, innovation, and quality in teaching, learning, and community service.

For more, see: <http://www.uwc.edu/catalog/uwc/vision/>

Institutional Values

These value statements inform how we conduct ourselves as individuals, within our institutions, and as institutions.

- **ACCESS:** We ensure access to degree programs, information, knowledge, and learning opportunities of the University of Wisconsin for all residents of the state.
- **ENGAGEMENT:** We actively seek collaborative, trust-based and reciprocal partnerships in the pursuit of the common good.
- **EXCELLENCE:** We strive for excellence in all that we do.
- **INCLUSIVITY:** We value open and accepting environments in which the diversity of individuals, groups, and points of view are respected and engaged.

- **INTEGRITY:** We respect freedom of inquiry and expression as the hallmark of our academic community, hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional conduct, and strive to be transparent, open, and accountable for our actions.
- **SCHOLARSHIP:** We value scholarship, in its many forms, as the foundation for learning and our service to our stakeholders and partners.
- **STEWARDSHIP:** We take seriously our responsibility to maximize the potential of the human, intellectual, and fiscal resources entrusted to us.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** We will continuously seek to balance environmental, economic, and social factors in our efforts to address the needs of our global society.

Strategic Goals

1. **Clarify and communicate the UW Colleges' position** within the Wisconsin higher education market by identifying our value position and by communicating our economic value to the State, our students, their families and our communities.
2. **Enhance the student experience** by extending high-quality University of Wisconsin education to learners throughout the state and assuring student success and degree completion.
3. **Strengthen our stewardship** by effectively using the university's faculty and staff time and expertise, its educational and financial assets, and campus and online environments and infrastructure.
4. **Enrich our communities** and the State through outreach, engagement, entrepreneurship, innovation and inclusion.
5. **Increase our programs, the number of degrees granted, and our service** to communities through range of programs, creative delivery, and effective assessment.