

Comments about the Draft Strategic Plan

The following comments were submitted online.

1. What do you like about the draft strategic plan?

Response 12: I like that many issues are being addressed in the new vision and planning. For instance, UWEC is known not to be as friendly to incoming students and parents. I think by some of the focus on community as a partner, brings forth a different attitude of needing to work together and with each other to provide a great educational institution in this area. Overall, I was very pleased with the areas addressed and the "aura" portrayed of the university being more "community orientated."

Response 11: Looking into and planning for the future of the University is commendable.

Response 10: I like that the campus is trying to make positive change for itself.

Response 9: I am supportive of the sections on connected and intentional learning. (I am wondering what we will not do that is done presently in order to free up time and resources to create new learning modes.) I do think that a focused effort to enable new faculty members to develop into scholarly teachers faster would be an investment that would pay off handsomely. The other thing that will work well is to enable small groups (2 or 3) of faculty members to pursue curricular ideas that they believe in. Take away constraints and give them the resources they need. That's how the place will change. We will also need to grow a culture of assessment to insure that the changes lead to improvements.

Response 8: Thank you for the hard copy of UW-Eau Claire's Strategic Planning Draft and soliciting our comments. After reading this draft we noticed that Goal: # 6, Fostering Equity and Diversity was deleted. At first glance it appears that issues relating to equity and diversity are lumped into Goal #1: Accelerate Global Learning.

Response 7: I think the foundational goals and first level goals as outlined on the inside front cover of the printed draft are excellent. They provide a good framework to begin looking at how the University should adapt to the future.

Response 6: I love the idea of "gateway colloquia" - I think this could be a great way to get our student's to focus on the possibilities their liberal arts education holds. I also like, under Goal 2, the strategy of connecting the university with the community in pursuit of more learning opportunities. I also think, under Goal 4, revising the Faculty/Academic Staff handbook is a good idea - especially with streamlining in mind.

Response 5: It's clear, it focuses on some concepts that can be used to set the university apart, and contains some good overall goals (looking at how budget can be better linked to planning, realigning general education with overall goals rather than departments wanting to protect past practice). The process does feel different than in the past – that something meaningful really will happen this time. It's certainly time for that.

Response 4: The mere fact that the University is sincerely attempting to do strategic planning

Response 3: The Transform Learning goals are right on! The Transform the University goals even more so if that is possible.

Response 2: The plan is great. I hope we can move through the next few months as a single family of faculty/staff/students committed to protecting the future of UWEC.

Response 1: That it presents an arena for the exchange of ideas that will lead to positive change.

2. How would you improve the plan?

Response 18: In Goal 4, add an action strategy of improving the university performance review and compensation system. Today, the system in place, based on tankings and ratings, is counterproductive and suffers from all the potential defects the literature warns about. One element of our plan is forced ranking. Pfeffer and Sutton (Stanford) show that forced ranking results in lower productivity, inequity and skepticism, negative effects on employee engagement, reduced collaboration, damage to morale, and mistrust of leadership. Add to this the fact that merit pay tends to float to the top of the organization. We need real performance management that focuses on rewarding collaboration, teamwork, initiative, coaching, and communications. How can UWEC use a constrained system for better results? Peter Scholtes writes that "95% of an organization's problems derive from your systems, processes, and methods, not from your individual workers."

We must create systems that routinely allow excellent work to results from the ordinary of ordinary people.

Response 17: I would like to see some specific focus on the rural, lower economic students who could be accepted at UWEC in a specific cohort/class/program to reach out and provide educational opportunities in areas that do not have higher education. The basic fact is that if UWEC doesn't look at this soon, other universities are discovering ways to satellite and provide distance education to these areas/students to meet their higher educational needs. Also non-traditional students in rural areas are seeking opportunities where they can attend classes either at their work site, or distance education to begin a new career, begin a college degree as a working adult and/or to continue with education.

Response 16: Enter wording that guarantees inclusiveness. Specifically populations such as persons with disability. It is not enough to state that the plan is "inclusive or diverse. To too many people, diversity is culture and ethnicity. Purposely build universal design into the plan.

Nowhere, nowhere are the words "classified" included. "Staff" is another word that brings to mind the instructional and non-instructional ACADEMIC staff. Classified staff contributes

to keeping the university flowing, and the strategic plan does not recognize that major segment of the university community.

Classified staff need professional development and opportunities to update and keep current their skills. The role of the classified must be acknowledged for the success of the university's long range planning.

Response 15: I would like to say, as a non-traditional student who works 40 hours a week, there needs to be more classes offered in the later afternoon and evenings. I am not referring to GE classes, those are not too hard to get. But department specific classes that might only be offered every other semester or less should be in those later/evening times. This is the problem I am having right now, I can adjust my work schedule a little to take classes, but I can't get off between 8am and 1pm to get to campus at all. Many classes I need to finish my major keep falling in those periods and it does not help me or many other non-trads I know.

Response 14: Overall, I think most of the ideas outlined in the strategic plan are worthy goals. I will not comment on the areas where I agree with the vision of UWEC in 2016. On the other hand, I will comment on the one aspect which causes me great concern.

I have little interest in the opportunity for UWEC “to be the premier provider of graduate education and focused (applied) research in Western Wisconsin.” My disinterest stems from the fact that I believe an increased focus on graduate education would not improve the quality of our undergraduate programs and could, in fact, make it more difficult to sustain and improve our existing offerings. Frankly, in a time of increased demands and dwindling resources, growing graduate programs is the wrong move for a primarily undergraduate institution. The intro to goal #6 in the draft strategic plan states that “we cannot be all things to all people.” As a primarily undergraduate institution, graduate programs are not a “core programmatic strength.” Growing graduate programs does not sound like focusing institutional resources, it sounds like dilution and a recipe for gradual erosion of quality of existing programs. The idea that these would be “self-supporting” programs seems like wishful thinking to alleviate the concerns of those of us who view additional graduate programs as diverting resources from “old” undergraduate programs. Therefore, I would advocate for new graduate offerings only when the program would address a clearly identified need with significant demand from the community.

Imagine if UWEC decided to build on the success of the 2007-2008 Women’s basketball team and move up to Division 1 in the name of improving the program. Next thing you know, the UWEC women’s basketball team is a perennially bad Division 1 program instead of a good, competitive Division 3 program. Should the strategic plan advocate such a change?

Response 13: Please consider the draft action strategy that you have in #1 to also be included with some modification and used in Goal #4 Nurture Human Resource "Develop and conduct employee climate surveys every two to three years."

Response 12: Include specific strategies to implement Fostering Equity (see work

Group 6). One of these strategies must include integrating persons with long-term “limited-term” positions into full-time or part-time permanent positions with the full complement of benefits. That most “limited-term” positions are held by women is, of course, no accident. Why do UW-Eau Claire and the UW System participate in and perpetuate the pink collar ghetto? It is time to demand change for the betterment of the human beings who work in UW-Eau Claire’s “limited-term positions.”

Response 11: Fostering Equity and Diversity needs to be re-instated in the Strategic Plan. This is important and is not something that is assumed from goal #1 Accelerate Global Learning. We also need to take the focus away from defining diversity as students of color—there is more to diversity than that, it is an overall theme and attitude and includes more than the color of our skin. Getting more diversity on campus is great but we should put some of the focus on embracing and enhancing what we DO have already here on campus rather than just continually saying that we do not have it and we need more of it.

Response 10: I reject the "grow the graduate programs" comment. This is an excellent undergraduate institution and piling on graduate programs will split the mission and dilute resources. I predict mediocre graduate programs that are trying to serve political purposes will be the result of growth.

Response 9: The definition of “Global” education can be interpreted and implemented differently by administrators and policy makers. A “global” education does not necessarily include an education that fosters equity and diversity. Given the goals of the current strategic plan, we suggest the following changes

- Add Fostering Equity and Diversity to Goal #1 (page 7 of the draft)
For example, Goal #1 should read: “Fostering Equity and Diversity and Accelerating Global Learning”
- We strongly request that Fostering Equity and Diversity be added to Goal #1 in UW-Eau Claire’s Strategic Plan for the best interest of all students, faculty and staff.

Response 8: Simpler language. We struggle to get students to write simple declarative sentences and then we as faculty turn out this plan, using language that is subject to misinterpretation. There is nothing to be gained by using terminology like "intentional learners" instead of simpler descriptions.

Response 7: Eliminate the buzzwords. I am especially offended by "intentional learners", "intentional learning", etc. Just because we know what intentional learning is doesn't mean that terminology should appear in an official University document. Plain English does a much better job of portraying competence and relevance to the public. If you can't use words easily understood, it leaves a lot of room for misunderstanding and confusion even within the University.

A greater distinction between the foundational goals and the draft action strategies need to be drawn. I would rather the first stage of the process work on approving the foundational goals and the resulting priorities, and only then work on the best action strategies. The draft

implies an acceptance of the Draft Action Strategies under each of the Goals, but I think this is giving very short shrift to important discussions which must occur before we will be ready for the action stage. For example, I have no problem with reinventing general education but am far from convinced that "gateway colloquia" are the best way to accomplish the priorities. I am not certain about the desirability of "greater integration of general education and the major" and believe this sort of thing will require a more extensive exploration than the approval timeline for the overall plan will allow.

Response 6: Accessibility isn't addressed as explicitly as I think it should be. I believe it has a place under Goal 7, physical resources. I also think not to mention disability under "Inclusiveness" in the Our Values section is to leave out a part of our population. There is a big difference between minimally accessible and fully accessible, and I don't think we are there yet.

Response 5: I'm not convinced we can have our students be global leaders when they're coming from a 100-mile radius of Eau Claire and hopefully staying in the area/state. Perhaps better language might be that we're looking to help generate globally-aware leaders, or language similar to that?

Response 4: Flesh out the parts that require technology support and prioritize these alongside the needs of all the upcoming systems conversions

Response 3. It might be nice to see liberal education more highlighted.

Response 2. Be mindful of the business practices--if processes are changed all factions involves still need to be communicated with.

Response 1. I believe that not enough is stressed in the plan regarding how the Aspirational Values (pg 2) are to be applied to the plan. Also how Aspirational Values should be applied to every mission and vision statement of the institution. I'll illustrate with a simple story: *If my wife leaves me a message to pick up a half gallon of milk on the way home from work, there are many choices, but possibly only one if I apply our family's Aspirational Values. I might choose skim, 1%, 2% or whole; I could buy plastic containers, cartons, even glass; I could choose "no BGH", unlabeled, organically produced, local dairy or something produced in CA or FL; I can buy into a cow and get whole unprocessed milk directly off the farm; I could buy chocolate or strawberry flavored; I could buy soy milk, or even buy a box of powdered milk and mix it up at home. To some this choice is nonsense, for me it's 2%, locally produced organic, in returnable glass, un-homogenized milk - it's very tasty, creamy (enough), and good for me and my family. Except once and a while we also love the same product in whole-chocolate - Wow is that ever great too!*

3. Additional questions or comments.

Response 14: I just watched the "Why change video" or at least part of it. It is way too long, too boring, too many talking heads, and the opening sequence really destroys some great photographs by paying no attention to screen quality and too rapid changes.

Response 13: Although UWEC has high academic standards as there should be, I believe UWEC has missed out on opportunities to engage rural, lower socio-economic youth. I know several youth who went to neighboring universities because of lack of support and encouragement when they inquired about UWEC's opportunities. These youth applied and were accepted at universities who supported them through this admission and first year of school and found ways to engage these youth who are now indeed succeeding...and are juniors in colleges nearby. Pursuing additional grant funding, developing programs to extend to youth who are "borderline" or "not meeting expected admission criteria standards" might be something to consider more specifically. Thank you

Response 12: I do not like changing group 1. Having an international experience graduation requirement sets such a bold and unprecedented statement that this university is ready for real change. It is very upsetting that the committee or whoever, decided to remove it and I think less of the strategic plan because of this.

Response 11: We need to be really careful as to what our motives are to accomplish some of the goals in the strategic plan, we do not want it to be for the sole purpose of getting a higher ranking but we need to do it to better our campus community. Also we need to make sure that tuition is not increased just to help with getting the ranking higher as well as recruiting more diversified students - students are here for some reason or another so we need to make sure that the current students are still being focused on and their tuition is staying affordable (one of the reasons so many people are at this school).

Response 10: Add the following as a Draft Action Strategy to Goal #7 Steward Physical Resources: "Create and implement a campus transportation plan that defines traffic and facilities issues for pedestrians, bikers and other wheeled commuters, City buses and cars. Give clean commuters highest priority."

The "front door" of the university (described in Goal #2) must be a full-function physical place where visitors will come, conveniently and comfortably. The physical "front door" will be part of the transportation plan. (*Bob Eierman, Chemistry*)

Response 9: On February 8, 2008, all Deans, Chairs, and Directors received Andrew Soll's e-mail addressing Governor Doyle's Budget Management Measures. We need to weigh-in on this issue. In Soll's memo, he stated that before a vacancy is filled, the position must be approved and demonstrated to be essential to the university's mission. What does this mean? Who approves and determines what is essential to the university's mission concerning issues of diversity and equity on our campus? The current draft of the Strategic Plan does not include equity and diversity in its vision and main goals. We are concerned that human or financial resources for diversity and equity programming could be eliminated or frozen because equity and diversity are not deemed as "essential to the university's mission."

When a budget has to be trimmed it may be easier for the university to ignore its need to address issues of equity and diversity; issues that challenge the current privileged majority. Funding for equity and diversity issues may find its way to the bottom of the university's

agenda.

Goals can only be attained if they are identified as being valuable. The 2016 vision on page 4 reads, “Signs written in a score of different languages help the hundreds of international students on campus feel at home...” This vision also sees scholarships and partnerships that make it possible for “almost three out of four of our students to study internationally or in multicultural settings in the United States.” The 2016 vision does not describe the successful integration of its multicultural student body. Nor does it address having met the needs of its multicultural faculty, staff and students. In 2016 we should expect to see UW-Eau Claire faculty and staff receiving consistent and sufficient support to implement their multicultural curriculum. Our campus will have more advantages for students if we meaningfully embrace and implement strategies that are productive for all students; i.e., international, student of color, disadvantaged and majority.

We should be moving forward with our original plans to include Equity and Diversity as one of our main goals. Especially, since it is well-known that the demographics of our country are changing. Now we have an even greater responsibility to prepare our homogenous population to be educated to successfully interact with other underrepresented groups.

UW-Eau Claire’s student body will benefit from opportunities presented by culturally diverse and fairly grounded ways of thinking and doing. Our students will graduate with skills that enable them to work and live in the 21st Century as productive citizens. This will be true because these students have had opportunities to learn from a diverse community of faculty, staff, students and learners and thinkers. The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Almanac (<http://chronicle.com/weekly/almanac/2007/nation/010180.htm>) reported that 64% of new students in the U.S. at 4-year colleges “expect to socialize with someone of another racial or ethnic group” during their years in school.

Response 8: Maybe say something about we want students to learn collaboratively so that they make contacts that last a lifetime.

Response 7: I'm concerned that the Begin Now section focuses primarily on top-down activities (activities done by administration and committees) that change the overall processes, structure and rules, as opposed to activities done by individuals within the larger framework of the university and its plan. I've seen our neighbor UW-Stout focus on top-down activities (Baldrige Award, laptop initiative, polytechnical designation), and while these are great for publicity, there seems to be less focus on helping departments actually grow in quality, and from being there in the past and from talking to friends there now there seems to be few resources filtering down to really help the departments improve (from what I've heard, this has also negatively affected morale in at least some cases.) Can we also start tracking, documenting, sharing and encouraging faculty and staff activities that are consistent with these goals? For example, under Goals 1 and 2 (re: Global and Connected Learning), I've seen a few shining examples of faculty activity: Paul Kaldjian leading a Geography class on immigration issues that included a trip to Mexico, and Matt Germonprez in Information Systems leading a class that includes software development with project ideas from students

at University of Nebraska-Omaha, further specification by his students and development by students at JIIT in India.

I strongly believe that the quality activities that make a strategic plan work come from everyone in the organization, not just the top. Starting early to find ways of encouraging and supporting a model of teaching and service to our students that's consistent with the strategic plan should be a priority.

Response 6: Too frequently people fail to recognize in a concerted way, the impact that planning will have upon limited technological resources. We cannot expect to create new systems supported by technology (PASSPORT, changes in degree requirements, etc.) at the same time we are implementing brand new support systems. How will these competing needs be balanced?

Response 5. I don't know if we plan to revise our "Excellence ..." slogan, but I like the idea of adding "Inclusive" at the beginning - perhaps as handwritten insertion (see the postcard for the Arts & Sciences Diversity Advisory Committee for an example). This would seem to put the message of inclusiveness front and center. Congratulations to everyone involved on a job well done.

Response 4. At the breakfast meeting the idea of a longer new faculty orientation was mentioned. I believe long-standing faculty could also benefit from such a session.

Response 3. Thanks for an enjoyable, informative breakfast meeting. I wholeheartedly support the strategies to explore wellness practices and programs and engage in environmentally friendly practices and policies. I rode my bicycle to work every day during the fall semester, until the snow fell. I had never done this before. I was doing it mostly as a small way of making Eau Claire more sustainable, but in the process gained so much more. Most of the gain would be hard for me to easily communicate, but I did become more energetic and confident. Both of these made me a better professor. How many others might benefit themselves and the environment if this campus was more "friendly" to people exploring alternative means of transportation?

Response 2: After attending the presentation of the Strategic Plan as a faculty member, I would like to make a few positive comments and voice a few concerns.

- 1) Under goal 4, there is mention of professional development. I think summer sessions where art faculty members could learn new technologies are sorely needed. LTS could provide short seminars. Software I would like to see included in such sessions are: Dreamweaver, Flash, and Illustrator, as well as possibly Adobe Premiere.
- 2) One of the committee members or writers of the plan mentioned a possible shared arts facility. I am all for this. Recently, I attended a community forum, hosted by Pizza Plus and Volume 1, and voices there raised the need for a state of the art performing arts venue as well as a gallery space for the community that rivals the Hyde Center in Chippewa Falls.
- 3) I have discussed the downtown development project with a member of the City Planning Committee, and he mentioned that Eau Claire, desperate to lure developers has no tree preservation clause in its ordinances. I am in full support of making our campus go green, as

well as encouraging this voice within the community. We don't want to be another suburban strip of chains.

4) Issues came up about the mission and identity of the University and how the plans follow this. Concern was also voiced about the plan following a business model. This is a concern I share, as acting in a progressive, ethical and conscientious manner does not always include making immediate financial gains. The University is supposed to be a place that questions systems, and yet, the Capitalist urge is never put into question when it comes to the growth of the University.

5) Discussion was also voiced about the interchangeability of the words liberal arts and global thinking. These in my mind need to be distinguished. One refers to a cross discipline experience, in the sciences, arts, languages, etc. The other refers to a willingness to think across borders and invite cultural diversity. They are closely linked and both are needed, but they are not the same. You can have a liberal arts education by studying Hume, Shakespeare, Adam Smith and Constable, but that is not a global perspective. Likewise, you can travel abroad studying art from Russia, Brazil and China, but that may not be a liberal arts education. We need to make sure both are present and that one does not replace the other.

Response 1. The presentation this morning (2-5-08) was well-planned and presented. Kudos to all involved in the process. The goals were presented in an open, non-threatening manner. Very well done! Personally, I was moved by the energy and excitement of the possibility of improvement and action.

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