

To: MJ Brukhardt  
Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Strategic Planning

From: Marc Goulet and Vicki Funne Reed  
Work Group 4: Enhancing the Campus Community, co-chairs

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The focus points have divided into two categories: work-life-family-career issues and campus ecology issues. The latter would consider both biological and institutional dimensions.

### **Work-Life-Career**

#### Environmental Scan

**Strengths:** UW–Eau Claire already has countless dedicated, career-long employees who work diligently to pursue the duties asked of them. Employees know they can count on one another to complete the required tasks.

**Weaknesses:** We share an unethical work ethic: we tend to work too many hours, at too great a cost to our family and home lives, spending far too much of our time complying with busy-work accountability trivia instead of accomplishing mission-related objectives. Policies and procedures reveal an underlying assumption of mistrust and a paternalistic obsession with monitoring compliance, micromanagement, and squelching creative thinking. Meanwhile, many of these compliant employees see themselves as underpaid, mistrusted, and trapped in a tradition-bound bureaucracy that cares less about educating students than about following procedure.

**Opportunities:** These employees remain loyal and committed to the educational mission. They are eager for change and will respond quickly and enthusiastically to any sign of progress. They have learned to do much with little and yearn to apply such strategies to genuinely useful work.

**Threats:** Our bureaucracy loves the answer “No, that’s not how we do things,” and that answer is comfortable, safe, secure, and seemingly irrefutable.

#### Proposed Outcomes

We propose a variety of outcomes that will represent an ongoing revolution in the overall ethic that guides our principles, our policies, our procedures, and our decisions. We believe this begins with intentionally adopting the following assumptions about all university personnel and their work with us. UW–Eau Claire will adopt and act upon the following official assumptions about its personnel:

We hire talented, creative, capable people;

We foster an environment that encourages invested and engaged participation;  
Our employees are more productive because we respect their rich lives away from work;

We can trust people to do good work, do the best they can, and take pride in what they do;

We recruit, admit and enroll top-quality students;

Our administrators/leaders are committed to practices that are just and consistent;

Our administrators/leaders hold university-oriented beliefs.

UW – Eau Claire will adopt and act upon the following official assumptions work/life issues:

Our students are the center of our mission; all procedures advance their education;

Work is an important part, but only a part, of the whole human being;

Our work is guided by the abilities/dreams and commitments of our people;

Our work changes according to the genuine best interests of students, the community and the mix of faculty/staff;

Our work life is guided by ethical principles;

Our work enhances our lives;

Leaders in our organization role-model kindness, compassion and thoughtfulness;

Every aspect of work life is open to questioning – no “trump card” held by tradition;

We always assume trust between and among divisions, departments and colleges;

We encourage connections between and among departments, divisions, colleges and students.

### Implications for Proposed Outcomes

As a result of these new assumptions, UW – Eau Claire will adopt or enact the following specific changes:

### Policies

Campus policies should be reviewed to determine whether or not the policy adds value to the mission of the university. Policies should be put into place to support and enhance the fulfillment of the mission rather than to prohibit employees from carrying out our mission. Also, our policies are not conducive to the encouragement of family life nor work life. Our policies should reflect our values. We propose our values be based in the assumption that people can be trusted to do the best work they can. Policies should be just and consistent, and designed to enhance the life/work of all workers, while assuming the good will of the majority of workers.

Our internal policies can create difficulties for work/family life. For example: We have a telecommuting guideline that is very rarely used. We should allow more flexible work schedules by allowing staff to work from home when necessary and possible.

There is not enough child care offered on campus (and no care for children who are ill and not able to attend day care or school). We propose the development of birth to 5 child care, with arrangements for children who are sick.

The lack of convenient parking prohibits employees from running errands at lunch time, scheduling medical appointments, and simply getting off campus for lunch occasionally. We propose changes to campus parking to allow for all staff/faculty who purchase parking to have a space.

More flexible work schedules and class schedules need to be implemented. It is virtually impossible for an employee to get a degree here because of the limited times classes are held. We should strongly consider more on line courses and more evening/weekend classes.

Our custodial staff works primarily during “non-work” hours. If they worked during the day, they would feel more engaged in the workforce. They would be visible, and part of the team. We propose elimination of the overnight shift, and implementation of overlapping shifts between 5am and 10pm.

#### Performance Reviews; Departmental, College, and Unit Reports

As an integral part of making all of these cultural changes real, we believe we must enact them specifically into our review procedures. Individual performance reviews should assess each person’s contribution to the work environment. All administrator performance reviews must ask if the administrator’s decisions and methods remain true to our professed assumptions. All annual reports must show that departments, colleges, and units act upon those assumptions.

#### Committees

Our work should be worthwhile. Therefore, we should implement a “sunset” review of all committees to determine if there is enough substantial purpose to carry forward. If a committee cannot provide proof of purpose or substantive accomplishment, it should be disbanded. We should ask ourselves:

- Is the committee required by external policies?
- Is the committee required/recommended because of internal policies and objectives?
- Is this committee helping make our work more productive, efficient and fulfilling?

Valid committees should be encouraged to meet face to face only when absolutely necessary, and should keep the time to a minimum. Committees should be discouraged from meeting during key times. For example, finals week, over break times, the beginning weeks of the semester, over the summer if has academic implications, etc.

## Procedures

Our procedures should reflect our values. Over the years we have created our own bureaucracy and seem to be caught up in our own bureaucratic web. Procedures should be designed with the assumption that people can be trusted and take pride in their work. They must not be punitive in nature or approach. They should be designed to reflect the more common experience, not the possibility of a rare, problematic one. In this light, internal procedures should be reviewed and streamlined. During this review, we should ask ourselves:

Why is this procedure in place; is it necessary?

What value does it bring to our mission?

Does the procedure assume that someone will break rules?

Was the procedure instituted because of an isolated issue?

Was the procedure instituted because of something that might go wrong sometime?

What would the ramification be if we abolished the policy or changed it to a guideline and allowed for more flexibility?

## Paperwork

Each department should review its internal forms and all campus-wide forms should be reviewed. Too many signatures are required on some forms; the process is held up needlessly. Is there a way we can combine forms and create less time reviewing and signing forms? If we assume that people can be trusted and take pride in their work, we can eliminate the numbers of people needed to sign off.

## **Campus Ecology**

### *A Strategy: Foster a Sense of Place*

Part of the "green" philosophy has to do with caring for and about place. Thus, this particular idea has to do with trying to create a place that outwardly reflects and fosters personal growth, intellectual exploration, and a commitment to maintaining what Yale president Bart Giamatti called the "space apart" of a university. The three components below (and more could no doubt be added) are all prongs of the same initiative, and they take as their central assumption that place is not separable from pedagogy, that one's environment is part and parcel of one's philosophy and approach to learning. If the place has no character, no cohesive identity of its own, then the education will tend to be similarly character-less, sterile, interchangeable with numerous other institutions' offerings. In this scenario, a university is simply a delivery system, a physical plant in which to house and disperse education-as-product. But if the place has character, has identity, then it will resonate with and reinforce the character of its faculty and staff, and with the developing identities of its students. It will truly be a coherent *environment* that encourages an attitude of preservation and conservation among its students and its employees. In this way, focusing on place is inherently "green" in intent and in outcome.

1) Get rid of Sodexo (and its ilk), and its brand-name food franchises. Instead, contract with local entrepreneurial chefs/restaurateurs to create one or two small, original eateries that reflect Eau Claire and its region (rather than looking like Anywhere, USA), and use local goods and products whenever possible. Those franchises create/reinforce a fast-food, throwaway mentality. Not only does that undermine a "green" philosophy but it works strongly against the simplest practical concerns of recycling and the thoughtful use of resources. Let's borrow some tips from the "slow food" movement and put our emphasis not on speed and cheapness but on quality and the importance of place. We should minimize the use of disposable trays, plates, utensils, etc.

2) Get rid of Barnes and Noble and create an actual, unique UWEC university bookstore, with actual books, and with an explicit dedication to celebrating knowledge and making it available to students and faculty/staff. Communicate to all who enter the bookstore that the university cares foremost about education and offering a space apart for intellectual and creative activity, and not so much about the selling and buying of disposable goods, about profit margins, and about cutting corners based on efficiency models. Our bookstore is an embarrassment; it communicates low-end commerce, not learning. Like the food court, it says "bland" and "cheap" and it insults any idea of place as important. There's nothing "green" in that message.

3) Make ALL the classrooms welcoming places. This does not mean, "Put more technology in them." We give students cinder blocks, sterility, and Power Point, institutional buildings without character, and then claim we're "delivering" a top-notch education. This doesn't foster a sense of, or even a respect for, place. Could we put less money into the constant updating of technology and more into making classrooms feel like places you're happy to spend time in, places where creative, imaginative, intellectual exploration occurs? For now, we're stuck with the bland exteriors of our buildings (there wasn't much "vision" behind their design). But the interiors could reflect a new vision of education here, a holistic philosophy that rejects product delivery (and the technology that supports that strategy) as the aim of education and offers instead an actual welcoming space apart for thinking, imagining, discussing, exploring, becoming a whole person. This is what a "green" campus ought to do.

4) Convert Garfield Avenue into a pedestrian mall that highlights the river. Attend to campus grounds in ways that make more use of native plants, restores Little Niagara Creek, favor green spaces over parking lots, favor gardens/natural areas over lawns.

5) Use alternative energy sources to supply campus energy needs. Increase energy efficiency, develop a green fleet, become carbon neutral.

6) Maintain and improve the University's collaboration with EC Transit. Enhance the campus' access for bicyclists – consider adding covered parking and access to bicycle maintenance on campus.

*Strengths:* Draws on and contributes to an identity unique to Eau Claire, the

Chippewa Valley, Wisconsin, and UWEC.

Emphasizes coherence and connection across the university.

Supports learning and intellectual exploration, the central agendas the university ought to stand for.

Fosters “green” attitudes about caring for place.

Uses the variety of natural environments (river, creek, ponds and forests) and garden landscapes on or close to campus.

*Weaknesses:* Requires financial commitment to significant refurbishing of campus buildings.

Requires attitude shift on the part of administrators, especially those who contract with suppliers.

*Opportunities:* Creates a unique, philosophically-coherent university.

Distinguishes UWEC from most of its comparable institutions, attracting students and staff alike.

*Threats:* Davies Center reconstruction is up in the air; the initiative discussed here might very well depend on that funding coming through.

Budgetary constraints that might lead to minor cosmetic changes to buildings and classrooms, rather than a holistic overhaul intended to communicate a cohesive university identity to those who are here already and those who are considering coming here.

## **WORKING COLLABORATIVELY ACROSS INSTITUTIONAL SILOS**

*A Strategy: Encourage the Shift using a few “Lead Faculty/Staff”*

As with any of our strategic planning ideas, getting people out of their silos will require not cosmetic logistical revisions, but a significant shift in mindset from the bottom up and the top down. If we’re going to cross disciplines in meaningful ways, those forays must be built *into* the curriculum and the university philosophy (and budget!), not *added on*. But true interdisciplinarity raises challenges for faculty/staff—who have traditionally remained safe within their narrow boundaries—that many of us won’t be prepared (or willing) to face, partly because of our training, partly because learning new material and adopting a new, wider perspective takes more time and energy than many of us possess.

If we're going to work collaboratively with colleagues from distinct specialties and departments (even colleagues in different colleges or units), that may require a certain level of prerequisite knowledge in other fields. It won't be enough simply to insert disparate faculty/staff into segments of a course and call that "interdisciplinary." We ought to be in the same room at the same time, in conversation with each other, modeling for our students the dialogues that cross disciplinary lines. But that requires that we become conversant with each other's methods of pursuing knowledge . . . and again, that requires time and energy. Simply put, not everyone will want to sign on to these changes. And the fact is, the university can't mandate pedagogy; faculty must have the freedom to develop their own curricula, as they always have. The only way interdisciplinarity will take hold is if it grows organically among the faculty themselves.

To encourage such growth, departments/disciplines/units (with the backing of the separate colleges and the university) should offer the opportunity to some of their faculty/staff to take the lead on developing courses and programs with members of other departments/disciplines. Those who are excited by the prospect of leaving their silos should be given time and money to do so. During the academic year, for example, this might take the form of time reassignment, freeing an individual from part of his or her teaching load in order that s/he might pursue curricular and program development. During the summer, support might take the form of money for travel and research. In any case, if the university can't offer time and/or money as incentive, faculty/staff members cannot be expected to do the hard work necessary to accomplish the mindset (and content) shift we're hoping for. And that support must continue with the offerings of the courses themselves; that is, those new courses must be part of the faculty members' teaching loads, not added on. Without this commitment at the administrative level, the idea can't succeed.

*Strengths:* Starts the process among those who care about it and are willing to lead—presumably their energy will carry them through the initial stages, and that energy may inspire others to get involved.

Takes advantage of an enlarging circle of faculty who have already begun the process in ad hoc ways over the last couple of years (e.g., integrative learning discussion groups, sciences and humanities discussion groups).

Puts money and time behind the process; the university commits to the change and its prerequisite effort.

*Weaknesses:* Difficult to get people out of their comfort zones, even people who are generally motivated.

There are advantages to having disciplines, and specialties within disciplines—don't we risk watering them down?

Difficult to commit to learning brand new, extra-disciplinary

material at this stage in our careers.

*Opportunities:* Some of these are implied in the paragraphs above.

The greatest single opportunity involves re-energizing faculty, engaging them in conversation with each other on a daily basis, reminding us that we truly are co-travelers in the same intellectual pursuit. As we become increasingly enriched by that activity, and by a mindset that celebrates our overlaps (and sees disciplinary boundaries as useful but artificial and therefore permeable), we will similarly enrich our students.

*Threats:* Lack of financial backing at department, college, and university levels. (Will they put their money where their mouth is?)

Lack of interest among a sufficient number of faculty/staff, partly due to workload demands and some cynicism about where these sorts of initiatives have led in the past—including a fear that what *really* happens is that interested, committed faculty/staff end up taking on new responsibilities with only lip-service support from administrators (see the history of Women’s Studies and American Indian Studies).

*A Strategy: “A College Within a College”: Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies?*

Perhaps this idea comes after we have identified various interested faculty/staff, and some new curricula have been developed. Or perhaps this is the “carrot” that helps to bring us out of our silos to begin with. In any case, we need more than a few scattered interdisciplinary courses; the IDIS prefix hasn’t been all that successful in the past. A free-standing entity within the university, with its own budget and infrastructure, drawing on the expertises (and avocations?) of people across the campus, would lend authority to UWEC’s commitment to working collaboratively. It could also act as a “magnet” for both prospective faculty/staff and prospective students, those who are excited by opportunities for networks and interconnectedness (another version of the “green” campus), for a truly liberal-studies experience that they can’t find at any other institutions—what David Orr calls opening students and faculty/staff “to the world of ideas, the Great Conversation.”

Institutes within universities generally have their own charter and are almost without exception cross-disciplinary in spirit and in fact. The Newcomb College Institute at Tulane University, for example, “is a dynamic interdisciplinary academic center designed to enhance undergraduate women’s education at Tulane.” It has its own executive director and administrative offices. Massey University in New Zealand has broken a number of its colleges into multi-disciplinary institutes: the Institute of Natural

Resources, for example, within the College of Sciences; or the Institute of History, Philosophy, and Classics within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. These institutes often consolidate a number of departments under a single umbrella and thereby help focus faculty/staff on new research and teaching opportunities. Each entity has its own vision for what joins the disciplines within it, and each reaches across disciplines for interconnected expertise.

Again, a UWEC Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies would rely at first on interested faculty/staff who are already here and who, with financial support (time and/or money), would be eager and willing to help create the vision and substance of the Institute. At the same time, hiring committees could begin looking for more broadly-trained candidates whose teaching assignments might include one or two Institute courses each academic year. Again, affiliation with the Institute must be part of the expected workload, not an add-on, requiring that Personnel Committees value and reward the work being done outside the disciplinary parameters of particular departments or programs.

The Institute could take advantage of ideas already put forth for truly collaborative teaching, with the faculty/staff in the same room at the same time, building on each other, challenging each other, modeling for students the different modes of inquiry as well as the ability to find common language. It could also, for example, promote cohorts of students (learning communities) who take the same pod of courses and are therefore encouraged to discuss ideas across those courses with each other. Again, this configuration would depend on faculty/staff also knowing what each other are doing and integrating each others' courses into their own.

*Strengths:* Takes advantage of varied expertises across campus.

Contributes to unique identity for UWEC.

Promotes collaboration and the escape from silos.

Builds interdisciplinarity into the curriculum, rather than adding it on as an overload; this also ensures that Personnel Committees will value the work as part of the individual's responsibilities.

Supports creative curricula with time and money.

*Weaknesses:* Departments must share faculty/staff with the Institute, meaning some courses within a department don't always get taught.

No incentives for classified staff to get involved?

Many departments are already overloaded; for this reason, they might forfeit their presence in the Institute, leading to a kind of class division between departments that can afford to participate and those that cannot.

Need for another administrative entity: the Institute would require its own Dean (or Director), its own offices and administrative support staff, its own separate budget.

*Opportunities:* Implicit and explicit in the paragraphs above.

Also, the chance to create something truly new and unique here at UWEC, something that would contribute to a spirit and excitement campus-wide, for employees and students, and that would attract people from outside as well.

*Threats:* Lack of financial backing (time and money) at department, college, and university levels.

Lack of Personnel Committee support for extra-disciplinary work.

Turf battles about who the Institute “belongs” to, who should be responsible for its oversight.