The Blugold Commitment: Making Excellence Affordable

Value-added learning distinguishes UW-Eau Claire
The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has a distinguished heritage of academic excellence and innovation that has produced generations of civic, business and cultural leaders for Wisconsin. What sets Blugold graduates apart is the value-added experiences they find on our beautiful campus: undergraduate research with full-time teaching faculty, meaningful global and intercultural learning, real-world internships and civic engagement opportunities. Such practices have become known in higher education as “high-impact practices.”

The cost of high-impact practices
High-impact practices that benefit all UW-Eau Claire graduates — and through them, Wisconsin—require an investment. They are provided over and above the standard teaching, research, advising and service functions that state dollars support. They require extraordinary commitment of our most valuable resources, time and people at a time when these resources are stretched to the maximum due to historically low state investment in higher education.

Over the past 10 years, the university has experienced a cumulative state funding loss of almost $50 million. The continuing impact over the coming biennium will be an additional $15 million. This constricts the university’s ability to provide the excellence for which UW-Eau Claire is so well-known. Essential courses are offered less frequently, fewer faculty are available to participate in collaborative research and opportunities for immersion experiences are few and far between. Students, however, understand the competitive advantage that high-impact experiences will give them. Often, students take extra semesters waiting for their chance at these extraordinary learning opportunities. The end result is longer time to graduation, costing students — and Wisconsin—time and money. Even with the increased Blugold Commitment tuition, students who graduate in four years will save almost $4,000 over those who currently take five years to graduate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years to Graduation</th>
<th>UWEC Tuition per year</th>
<th>Fees per year</th>
<th>Room and Board</th>
<th>Student Cost / Yr</th>
<th>Projected Student Costs</th>
<th>Approx. State Contribution per year</th>
<th>Approx. Total State Contribution</th>
<th>Projected Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 year</td>
<td>$5,527 (current)</td>
<td>$922</td>
<td>$5,630</td>
<td>$12,079</td>
<td>$60,395</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$100,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 year</td>
<td>$7,527 (w/$2,000 increase)</td>
<td>$922</td>
<td>$5,630</td>
<td>$14,079</td>
<td>$56,316</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$88,316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UW-Eau Claire students understand the relationship between funding and the availability of high-impact educational opportunities. UW-Eau Claire students pioneered the concept of differential tuition, through which students voluntarily pay higher tuition to support innovative high-impact practices. Today, differential tuition provides $1.5 million for student-directed value-added experiences like collaborative research, internships and service learning. While critical, this investment is not sufficient to provide high-impact experiences for all students, a necessity if Wisconsin is to have more of the globally prepared citizen leaders it needs for our future.
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A pledge for excellence and affordability
The Blugold Commitment asks students to increase their differential tuition investment, phased in over four years. This fall students, parents, faculty, staff and alumni discussions will help to determine the proposed level of investment, ranging from the real to ideal: $1,000-$2,500. In return the university pledges to:

- **Expand high-impact learning for all students**, including providing every student with multiple high-impact experiences while at the university. High-impact experiences include faculty-student collaborative research, global and intercultural immersion, internships, small freshman classes, service learning and capstone classes.

- **Make the UW-Eau Claire degree more affordable** by helping students graduate in four years or less and holding harmless families at or below the current Wisconsin median income. Additional faculty will assure that high-impact experiences are integrated into a four-year degree, advising is enhanced and courses are available for timely graduation. At the same time, increased financial assistance and donor-supported student scholarships will ensure all families can afford a UW-Eau Claire degree.

- **Partner with students to assure results** through expanded student-directed differential tuition and annual outcome assuring reports.

- **Engage alumni and friends in supporting the Blugold Commitment** for excellence and affordability.

The Blugold Commitment will make it possible to invest in:

- **Additional student-directed funding** (above the current $1.5 million) for UW-Eau Claire’s existing student-directed differential tuition process in support of high-value experiences. These currently include collaborative research, first-year experience, internships, capstone experiences and service learning.

- **New faculty and staff positions** to assure more time for student interaction and expansion of collaborative research, internships and immersion experiences for all students. Additional faculty and staff will support enhanced advising, smaller classes and living-learning support, enhancing retention and timely graduation.

- **Expanded financial assistance** will hold low- and middle-income families harmless for the amount of the increased tuition. Today this would include Wisconsin families at or below the current median income.

*The Blugold Commitment is a partnership of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends to champion affordable excellence.*