

## **UW-Eau Claire – Barron County**

### **Mission**

We inspire the intellectual, cultural, and personal growth of students through innovative education in the liberal arts, experiential learning opportunities, responsiveness to community needs, and an inclusive social environment focusing on the individual learner in a global community.

### **Vision**

We will be the first choice in higher education for a diversity of learners in northwestern Wisconsin who recognize the value of a strong, comprehensive liberal education.

### **Core Principles**

Accessibility  
Community  
Inclusiveness  
Innovation

### **Strategic Plan Narrative**

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – Barron County opened in September 1966 as Barron County Campus of Stout State University. It was a two-year access institution that aimed to bring higher education and the Wisconsin Idea to northwestern Wisconsin. Students took foundational liberal education courses in the close-knit and inclusive community as they earned their associate degrees and prepared for the next steps in their lives, from beginning their careers to completing their baccalaureate degrees at their chosen transfer institutions. Faculty and staff supported students in their classroom and co-curricular endeavors through innovative methodologies that responded to student and community needs.

In 1972, Barron County became part of the statewide system of two-year campuses and was known as UW Center-Barron County. A third name change to UW-Barron County occurred in 1997. Throughout the years, this campus remained true to its mission of access, transfer, and teaching excellence.

The statewide network of two-year campuses, known as the University of Wisconsin Colleges, was dissolved in July 2018, and each campus joined a UW System four-year comprehensive institution. Barron County became the branch campus of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Together, the two campuses are collaborating to continue providing an excellent education to the students of northwestern Wisconsin and serving the needs of the community.

It is within this context that UW-Eau Claire – Barron County is setting its strategic plan for the next five years and, in turn, building its future. We remain committed to providing access to high quality education programs in a strong and inclusive community, where innovation allows faculty, staff, and students to respond to changes in student and community needs. Our strategic plan will position us to better serve our students and our community while becoming financially sustainable.

#### **1. Serving our students better**

We take pride in providing the first two years of a college education and preparing our students to take the next step in their lives. As we plan for the next five years, we will transform the associate degree student experience. This transformation centers around: 1) providing an engaging, integrative, and

applied academic experience that meets students where they are; 2) enhancing student support; and 3) increasing campus vitality.

*1.1 Providing an engaging, integrative, and applied academic experience (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan, 2.1 – 2.2, and Academic Master Plan (AMP): LE, HIPs, CE, and Advising)*

A UW-Eau Claire – Barron County education will be a liberal education that prepares students to be engaged and responsible members of their communities who find success in tomorrow's global economy. This will be accomplished partly through exploring big questions from multiple points of view and developing one's own answer through applied study.

We will intentionally incorporate a “Common Question, Exceptional Answers” program across the curriculum and in co-curricular learning opportunities. A yearly common question will be woven through multiple courses, allowing students to explore the question from multiple disciplinary perspectives and to integrate multiple understandings into their own exceptional answers. There will be potential for first-year experience courses that focus on the common question to give students and faculty additional time and opportunities to understand the common question and pursue exceptional answers. Furthermore, co-curricular programming will provide students with complementary opportunities to think about the common questions. As each academic year concludes, the students will coordinate and participate in a public academic symposium to share, discuss, and debate their exceptional answers to the common question.

A liberal education is an applied education. UW-Eau Claire – Barron County students will learn and apply essential and universal skills that will help them succeed as students, as employees, as entrepreneurs, and as community members. The skills of metacognition, information literacy, and civil and academic discourse will be mapped across the curriculum, ensuring students have opportunities to practice each skill. Furthermore, students will gain additional important skills, confidence, and experience as they participate in experiential learning opportunities. These opportunities will range from service learning to undergraduate research to field work and will be offered in class, on campus, and in the communities where they live.

As the institution of access in northwestern Wisconsin, our students come to us with wide variation in academic preparation, career readiness, life experience, and economic and cultural backgrounds. Through enhanced holistic advising, students will develop individualized learning experiences to match their educational and professional goals. They will choose from a robust and wide array of courses essential to the associate degree and to transferring for a four-year degree. Content and pedagogy in the first-year seminar courses will be adjusted in order to better match students with the support they need. The support could include career exploration, development of important academic skills, and/or instruction in navigating the college experience.

To offer our students greater flexibility, the wide course array will be delivered via multiple modalities including face-to-face, distance education, online, and hybrid courses with some courses being delivered in collaboration with personnel from UW-Eau Claire. Distance and online education have long been strengths of UW-Eau Claire – Barron County, and we remain committed to growth and continued innovation in these areas. Our instruction to high school students via distance education will remain central to how we serve our local school districts. A full array of online liberal education courses will provide time and location flexibility to our associate degree students, help UW-Eau Claire students avoid bottlenecks in their curricular progress, and serve students literally where they are – whether in Rice Lake, Eau Claire, Hayward, or Houston, Texas.

## Measures of success

By 2024:

- 50% of students actively participate in the “Common Question, Exceptional Answers” annual symposium.
- 100% of students, with guidance from their advisors, develop individualized learning experiences based on their academic and professional goals.
- 75% of students participate in a first-year seminar.
- 60% of courses include embedded experiential learning opportunities.
- All associate degree and high-demand transfer courses are routinely offered via at least one modality.
- A majority of liberal education courses are available online.

1.2 *Enhancing support for students* (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan, 2.1, 3.2, and AMP: Advising, EDI) Strengthened student support will begin with the enhanced holistic advising. Through holistic advising, students and advisors will discuss more than course selection; they will have discussions of personal and professional goals within the context of the “whole” student. The dynamic conversations between advisor and advisee will provide the campus community with important information about how we can better serve our students, to allow us to be responsive to their needs, and to innovate to meet their levels of preparation.

For academic preparation needs, we will enhance English Language Learning (ELL) support, academic tutoring, and instructor office hours. Our ELL offerings will be broadened, as necessary, to meet the needs of our local community and our international students. We will continue to offer tutoring in English and mathematics and then routinely and intentionally add additional subjects, such as biology, psychology, or chemistry. The additional subjects may be offered on-campus by UW-Eau Claire – Barron County students and virtually by students at UW-Eau Claire. Furthermore, as our online offerings expand, we see potential to develop online tutoring that would be accessible to all students, no matter their location. Lastly, visible office hours will help instructors become even more accessible and reduce artificial barriers between instructors and students when a significant portion of instructors hold at least one office hour per week in a central, visible location.

To address the quickly changing world that our students live, study, and work in, we will also enhance our library and information literacy and career preparation support. It is vital that students know how to efficiently and effectively locate necessary information, and we will help them in this endeavor by incorporating library instruction sessions into a significant portion of courses and offering topical training sessions throughout the academic year. We will reopen a career office on campus, where students will be able to receive one-on-one and small group assistance in learning about career possibilities, internships, resume writing, and interview skills.

Additionally, with information from advisors and through cross-campus collaboration, we will identify other potential barriers to student success in order to remove, or at least lessen, those barriers. This could be as straightforward as ensuring that forms can be readily understood by all students and that housing offerings match student needs. The barriers could be more complex, such as lessening the stigma associated with two-year campuses and developing a more robust student life experience to better engage students in their overall college experience. Our goal is to make a UW-Eau Claire – Barron County associate degree accessible to all students.

## Measures of success

By 2024:

- 100% of first-semester students meet with their advisors at least twice during the semester.
- Increased student access to and use of student success services, such as tutoring, library services, ELL, and office hours.
- Career office is open at UW-Eau Claire – Barron County and offers relevant services for students.

1.3 *Increasing campus vitality* (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan, 2.1, 3.1 – 3.3, 4.3 – 4.4, and AMP: Undergraduate Array, Advising, EDI)

Creating a robust student life experience includes increasing campus vitality, and this can be partly accomplished through initiatives that address student and community needs. We will increase sustainability practices across campus, healthy food options in the café, evening and/or weekend programming, and collaborations with community organizations. Furthermore, we will address student and community needs by offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) completion program and exploring additional baccalaureate degree opportunities. The BSN students will provide a new and different perspective to the campus community, which will increase vitality.

A vital campus is a diverse and inclusive campus. Diversity of the student population enhances the student life experience and significantly increases campus vitality. Therefore, we will continue to recruit international and local multicultural students in addition to diverse staff and faculty to maintain and broaden the diversity of our campus. To ensure that all are welcome on campus, we will provide equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) professional development opportunities to students, staff, faculty, and community members on a yearly basis.

## Measures of success

By 2024:

- Development and implementation of sustainability policies and practices throughout campus.
- Monthly evening and/or weekend programming.
- Development and implementation of BSN completion program.
- 100% of students, staff, and faculty participate in EDI professional development each year.

## 2. Serving our community better

As part of the University of Wisconsin System, UW-Eau Claire – Barron County is committed to serving the public through education of students, sharing of knowledge and expertise, and collaboration to improve life within the community and state. As we plan for the next five years, we will continually strive to better serve our community through communication, connection, and partnerships.

2.1 *Communicating and connecting* (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan 4.2, 4.4)

A significant piece of our strategic initiative is to simply communicate and connect better with our community. We will accomplish this through off-campus presentations, marketing of campus services, and providing relevant and interesting programming on campus.

To communicate, we will offer routine presentations at local civic organizations and chambers of commerce. These presentations may include the latest campus news, a sampling of campus services available to the public, and conversations around new collaborations. Additionally, a marketing plan for campus services will be developed and rolled out in the local communities. This will help residents better understand what we can offer them, including plentiful free library resources, meeting room rentals, and healthy food options at our café on the Red Cedar River.

Bringing the community to campus will be integral to making strong connections. Our campus offers multiple venues in which we can connect. The Fine Arts Theater will serve as a practice and performance space for local school groups in addition to evening lectures on topics relevant to the community, performances by local artists, and moderated debates. Public presentations will also be encouraged in the Blue Hills Lecture Hall. Our Joel Hayden Salter Art Gallery will continue to host work by students and scholars. Meetings with a view will be held in the Cedarside Conference Room, and outdoor events from concerts to weddings will be held west of the Student Center to take advantage of the river view.

We will break ground on a campus community garden as another way to connect. People will connect as they work their rented garden plots and learn together about gardening and other relevant topics. And as our campus literally becomes greener, we will endeavor to better serve our community through initiatives that make us a more sustainable and environmentally-conscious campus.

### **Measures of success**

By 2024:

- Development and implementation of marketing strategies for campus facilities and services.
- Provide quarterly presentations to civic and community groups that highlight campus initiatives and opportunities to connect the community and campus.
- Increased public use of campus facilities and services.

### *2.2 Building partnerships (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan, 2.1, 4.2, 4.4)*

A strong and successful future for UW-Eau Claire – Barron County demands building and strengthening partnerships within our community.

To provide students the chance to apply skills learned on campus, we will offer experiential learning opportunities within their communities. Through partnerships with local organizations, our students will engage in service learning, internships, and other learning activities off campus. Students will gain valuable experience while at the same time providing partners with additional personnel. There is further symbiotic benefit: the potential for a future employer-employee relationship between the community partner and student. Facilitation of experiential learning partnerships will be coordinated through an on-campus office in order to better serve students and community partners. Yearly, we will celebrate these partnerships and our students' growth at an on-campus event.

Furthermore, with the transformed associate degree experience, our students will develop skills viewed as essential by local employers. They will be able to engage in important conversations, view situations from multiple perspectives, and reflect upon their learning as part of their continuous improvement process.

We will also explore community partnerships that connect UW-Eau Claire – Barron County to business, industry, and the community. This may include the two-way sharing of expertise, collaboratively addressing community needs, and working together for our collective futures.

### **Measures of success**

By 2024:

- Experiential learning partnerships in a majority of communities where students live.
- Increased partnerships with community partners to help them address their needs.

### **3. Becoming financially sustainable**

It is essential that UW-Eau Claire – Barron County work toward financial sustainability so we can maintain, and strengthen, our service to students and community. Such stability will be positively influenced by the work to better serve our students and community but will also require development and utilization of master plans related to key aspects of campus.

#### *3.1 Enrollment, recruitment, and marketing (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan, 3.2 – 3.3, 4.3)*

We will develop and employ an enrollment, recruitment, and marketing plan. This comprehensive plan will provide the foundation for growth in the associate degree programming, both on-campus and online, the BSN completion program, and potential future baccalaureate degrees. As we recruit, enroll, and retain larger numbers of students in these programs, our financial sustainability will rise. To further ensure our sustainability, we will match the overall UW-Eau Claire – Barron County budget to student credit hours.

As this plan is designed, we will ensure that barriers to access are removed or lessened. How we market the UW-Eau Claire – Barron County student experience will directly influence student and family perceptions of a two-year campus and how they understand the differences between liberal education and technical education. Recruitment and enrollment of international students will be clearly delineated and will reduce accessibility barriers – from language in paperwork to transportation to our rural campus. Taking these steps will allow for growth of this vital campus population.

#### **Measures of success**

- By 2022, create and implement a comprehensive enrollment, recruitment, and marketing plan.

By 2024:

- Increase associate degree enrollment to 400 FTE.
- Enroll a cohort of students in the BSN completion program.

#### *3.2 Academic, student success, and fiscal master plans (aligned with UWEC Strategic Plan 4.1)*

To provide context, integration, and guiding principles for the goals and aspirations described in this five-year strategic plan, we will develop three Master Plans: Academic, Student Success, and Fiscal. These plans, which will be complete by 2020, will provide the frameworks for the immediate, short-term, and long-term plans to allow us to reach the visionary goals we have set forth.

#### **Measures of success**

- By 2020, develop and implement three Master Plans: Academic, Student Success, and Fiscal

By 2024:

- Implementation of policies and procedures to actualize the master plans.

### **Conclusion**

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – Barron County will be the first choice in higher education for a diversity of learners in northwestern Wisconsin who recognize the value of a strong, comprehensive liberal education. We will achieve this through our commitment to provide access to excellent higher education programs that give students the opportunity to develop individualized learning plans that match their personal and professional goals and the support necessary to achieve those goals. Students will prepare to be engaged and responsible community members of Wisconsin as they develop their answers in our “Common Question, Exceptional Answers” program and practice essential skills through experiential learning opportunities. Students, staff, and faculty will do this work in collaboration with the communities served by UW-Eau Claire – Barron County so that the lives of all residents are improved.

## Academic Year 2019 – 2020 Action Plan

### 1. Serving our students better

- Develop Academic and Student Success Master Plans by December 2019. Then begin implementation of the plans.
  
- 1.1. Providing an engaging, integrative, and applied academic experience
  - Create a “Common Question, Exceptional Answers” group (students, staff, and faculty) to:
    - o Define path for identifying and approving the Common Question (CQ). Then use this path to select the 2020 – 2021 CQ by May 2020.
    - o Identify opportunities for staff and faculty professional development related to the Common Question topic and how to best incorporate the CQ into courses and on-campus experiences. Collaborate with UW-Eau Claire CETL staff.
    - o Identify methods to expand CQEA beyond the curriculum with Student Affairs programming, library services, etc.
  - Identify and provide support for service-learning opportunities to students, staff, and faculty. Likely partner with Benita Wagner at UW-Eau Claire.
    - o Make connections with potential community partners in order to provide additional learning opportunities to students.
    - o Begin discussions around definition of, and expansion to, experiential learning.
  - Develop and deliver initial slate of online LE courses. Build four-year curriculum map for online courses. Identify instructors for courses to be added in 2020 – 2021.
  - Academic Chair and UWECBC Curriculum Committee collaborate with UW-Eau Claire to ensure the full array of associate degree courses and high-demand transfer are available in the modalities that meet the needs of UWECBC students.

### 1.2. Enhancing support for students

- Ensure that we have enough advising staff to accommodate the additional first-semester meetings with students in a timely manner
- Encourage faculty to incorporate at least two of the following into their classes to enhance student success:
  - o at least one open office hour per week in the Learning Center or Commons,
  - o invite a librarian to provide an information literacy session,
  - o incentives/reasons/etc. for students to use services in library (tutoring and/or information literacy).
- Begin (or continue) conversations with UW-Eau Claire partners regarding:
  - o maintaining and enhancing library services,
  - o sharing of tutoring services across campuses,
  - o career center on the Barron campus.
- Investigate potential student barriers to access and success:
  - o Housing near campus
  - o Transportation around Rice Lake
  - o International student recruitment and transition
  - o Richer student experience
  - o Two-year campus stigma

### 1.3. Increasing campus vitality

- Offer at least one evening and/or weekend program per month to students and community. Offer at minimum, or no, charge to students. *(Same as in 2.1)*
- Work with food service and other relevant parties to explore other healthier food options in the Café.
- Work with UW-Eau Claire to identify and take the first steps to implementing the BSN completion program.
- Collaborate with UW-Eau Claire to provide EDI professional development opportunities on the Barron campus.
- Ensure that enrollment, recruitment, and marketing plan purposefully addresses increasing the diversity of students. *(Same as in 3.1)*

## 2. Serving our community better

### 2.1. Communicating and connecting

- Build directory of surrounding civic and community organizations. Begin quarterly visits.
- Work with IMC to develop:
  - o signs for west sides of campus buildings to increase visibility to those on walking trail. Highlight resources for community.
  - o marketing for library, café, and rental spaces.
- Collect data to determine a baseline for community use of campus spaces in order to set a measurable goal of increased used by 2024.
- Offer at least one evening and/or weekend program per month to students and community. Offer at minimum, or no, charge to students. *(Same as in 1.3)*
- Create a Campus Garden committee that will:
  - o research campus garden options, regulations, and grant opportunities.
  - o work with Facilities & Grounds to identify resources available and required for a garden.

### 2.2. Building partnerships

- Survey and connect with organizations local to where students live in order to identify potential experiential learning partners. Ideally, this is done by a UWECBC staff member who will coordinate connections between community partners and students, staff, and faculty.
- Continue conversations with Marshfield Clinic Health System, Rice Lake Area School District, and other local entities to identify areas of collaboration.
- Collect data to determine a baseline for community partnerships in order to set a measurable goal of increased partnerships by 2024.

## 3. Becoming financially sustainable

### 3.1. Enrollment, recruitment, and marketing

- Continue development of a robust plan that clearly defines and markets the UW-Eau Claire – Barron County experience and helps potential students differentiate a two-year degree from a technical degree.
- Ensure that enrollment, recruitment, and marketing plan purposefully addresses increasing the diversity of students. *(Same as in 1.3.)*

### 3.2. Academic, student success, and fiscal master plans

- Identify work groups and give them their charges to build the three plans by the end of 2019.
- Use information gathered during Strategic Planning process to inform the plans.

## **Thank you**

This plan for the future of UW-Eau Claire – Barron County was developed through collaboration. We are thankful for all those who participated in the various conversations – formal and informal – that were held along the way. Thank you also to the following groups at UWECBC: Steering Committee, Collegium, and Student Government Association and to the following UWEC groups: University Planning Committee, Chancellor’s Cabinet, University Staff Council, and University Senate.

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