



uw academic plan
IMPLEMENTATION

REPORT CARD

1999 — 2004

MISSION

*The University of Wyoming
aspires to be one of the nation's
finest public land-grant research
universities, dedicated to serving as a
statewide resource for accessible and
affordable higher education of the highest
quality, rigorous scholarship, technology
transfer, economic and community
development, and responsible stewardship of
our cultural, historical, and natural
resources.*

(UW Mission Statement, April 2002)

Initiation of the Planning Process

In his installation address in October of 1997, University of Wyoming President Philip L. Dubois called for the university to focus its strategic planning more sharply on academics. Stating that the development of a comprehensive academic plan was the university's most fundamental challenge, he charged the academic community "to launch a discussion with widespread involvement and an open exchange of ideas to promote an understanding of the environment in which UW is likely to operate in the future, to generate ideas about how to respond to that environment, to choose among the ideas brought forth in an ongoing and iterative process, to develop the courage to be selective in our focus on excellence, and to strive for a collective institution-wide perspective."



In January 1998, the university community began the academic planning process, defining its purposes, scope, and expected outcomes. The discussion continued throughout the academic year 1998-1999. Following lively on- and off-campus discussions, the Office of Academic Affairs circulated draft academic plans for further input.

INITIATION



The *UW Academic Plan 1999-2004* (<http://uw-docs.uwyo.edu/theplan/>), approved by the Board of Trustees in July 1999, had the twin goals of increasing learning opportunities available at the university and increasing the value of the university to the state. The plan also introduced new mechanisms for linking resource allocations to the ambitious academic agenda. Since then, the university's administration has guided the implementation of 168 action items. Each summer, acting upon the recommendations of the university's Executive Council, the President identified high-priority sets of action items for the coming year. Some decisions and actions had simple, obvious solutions; others required in-depth discussion and preparation of position papers or policy statements. Committees comprising faculty, staff, and students addressed the most complex issues. Related documents can be found on the Academic Affairs web site at <http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs>.

UW has made unprecedented progress implementing the *1999-2004 Academic Plan*. In just the first year, 40 percent of the action items showed progress or were fully accomplished. As of August 2003, 93 percent of the plan has been completed or is well underway; many of these actions are processes or activities that require ongoing attention. Seven percent (seven university-wide action items and six college action items) are yet to be addressed. The following paragraphs provide a summary of key accomplishments to date.

SUMMARY



Summary of Implementation during the First Planning Cycle

University-wide Administrative Issues

Approximately 30 percent of the action items in the *UW Academic Plan* involve fundamental administrative changes. These action items fall into five categories.

- **Workforce Management** – More than three-quarters of the university budget is dedicated to salaries and employer-paid benefits. Several action items initiated profound changes in the management of these resources. In all, Academic Affairs implemented 15 of the 16 action items in this area. A central position management process was established to direct faculty resources from retirements and resignations to areas of highest priority and greatest need. The Office of Academic Affairs instituted a uniform system of faculty job descriptions. Other action items include considering enrollment patterns in the allocation of positions; improving the assessment of faculty performance; enhancing faculty development; eliminating superficial formula-driven approaches to performance appraisals; developing flexible salary policies for externally funded employees; including off-campus teaching in job descriptions; and reassigning certain academic positions. An action item concerning incentive bonuses for faculty and staff was examined but not undertaken. Funding of staff reclassifications—an issue transcending the academic units—will be considered in the future.

LEADERSHIP



- ***Tuition Structure and Administration*** – Tuition and fees provide approximately 20 percent of the university’s revenue, so reviewing the administration of tuition and fees was essential. Four complex action items related to tuition structure have been implemented. To encourage efficient use of instructional resources and to ensure greater equity between part-time and full-time students, UW has adopted a new tuition policy to convert to per-credit billing. The conversion to the new system will be cost-neutral for students taking average credit loads. An educational dividend plan to reward students for progress toward completion of a degree will be revisited after the new tuition structure is implemented. In addition, the Trustees approved a single tuition rate and delivery fee for UW’s growing core outreach programs, and a flexible tuition policy is now in place for innovative and entrepreneurial outreach courses.
- ***Recruitment, Retention, and Financial Aid*** – Increasing enrollment, financially supporting students, and improving access to higher education are of primary importance to the institution and the state. Since 1999, UW has made remarkable progress in enrollment management. In offices across the campus, 22 of the 23 action items in this category have been addressed. They involved changes in administration and staff, the implementation of integrated marketing, and increased funding for the Admissions Office. In addition, policies for the awarding of undergraduate

scholarships and graduate assistantships have been overhauled; additional private scholarships have been generated; recommendations from a 1998 report on the summer session have been implemented; collaboration between academic programs and the Center for Advising and Career Services has increased; and the number of living-learning communities has been expanded to enhance the first-year experience. Issues remaining for the next planning cycle include fiscal connections between enrollment and instructional resources and the refinement of UW's enrollment goals.



- ***Diversity and Internationalization*** – Students will enter a society and a global workplace characterized by increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, with greater demand for cross-cultural and transnational competence. The *1999-2004 Academic Plan* contained nine action items to promote diversity and internationalization on the campus, all of which have been addressed. Through such initiatives as the President’s Advisory Council on Minority and Women’s Affairs, the Academic Affairs Diversity Funding Pool, the Enrollment Management Council, and the persistent efforts of college deans and department heads, UW has made significant strides in diversifying its faculty and student body, in making diversity a more visible priority in its decision making, and incorporating diversity into the curriculum. Also, cooperative efforts involving International Programs, International Student Services, International Studies, and several other academic programs have begun to integrate an international perspective into academic programs. These efforts have helped to develop broader options for study, work, internships, and research abroad; focus and enhance international initiatives by increasing global links with foreign institutions; and articulate to public schools the need for foreign language instruction and international competence.

ACADEMICS



University-wide Academic Issues

The crux of the academic plan is the enhancement of academic programs. Many of these actions are necessarily ongoing. They fall into six groups.

- **Curriculum** – As a land-grant institution, the university has a special commitment to promote liberal and practical education in the arts, sciences, and professions. Every course of study must prepare the student for a lifetime of personal and professional growth and citizenship. To advance this goal while streamlining the core curriculum, the faculty adopted a revised general education curriculum (the University Studies Program) in March 2000. The new curriculum is dynamic, adaptive, and adaptable. UW and the Wyoming community colleges adopted a general education articulation agreement that facilitates the transfer of credits for students completing the associate's degree. In addition, 17 other action items addressed the university curriculum. Sixteen of them have been completed or are currently underway. For the next planning cycle, departments and colleges have evaluated and, where appropriate, modified their course requirements. Assessment of student learning is being more clearly defined or refined at the department and program levels. To focus and strengthen academic programs, colleges have eliminated unused courses and underutilized undergraduate degrees, and course withdrawal policies have been fine-tuned to accommodate the new tuition structure. Efforts are

now underway to design an academic success center to support all UW students, and targeted intervention programs are in place.

- ***Areas of Distinction*** – Environment and natural resources (ENR), life sciences, computational science, and material sciences are of preeminent importance to Wyoming and are prominent areas of science and engineering worldwide. Although UW possesses strong foundations in these fields, it has unrealized potential for even greater distinction.

All 13 of the actions relating to these areas have been undertaken. New

ENR major and interdisciplinary ENR graduate programs are



now in place. Academic Affairs has begun outlining new responsibilities for the Graduate School in overseeing interdisciplinary graduate life-science programs. The faculty have taken steps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of undergraduate life-science instruction. UW has expanded its capabilities in geographic information science, natural resources, materials and composites, computational science and information technology, energy technology, and reclamation ecology. Key tools in these efforts have been several large programmatic grants from federal agencies, including NSF, EPSCoR, and the BRIN and COBRE initiatives at NIH.

- ***Graduate Education*** – A university’s reputation hinges in part on the robustness of its research and graduate enterprises. Of the 11 action items concerning graduate education, nine have been addressed. Among these are the implementation of selected new professional and interdisciplinary master’s degrees, the examination of UW’s doctoral programs and Ph.D. production, and the elimination of underutilized graduate specialties. Refinement of these initiatives will play a prominent role in the next cycle of academic planning. Notable from the *1999-2004 Academic Plan* has been the commitment made to growing stronger Ph.D. enrollment in the engineering sciences. Two actions are yet to be initiated: early-entry graduate programs and an institutional cap on the years of eligibility for state-funded assistantships.

- ***Libraries, Museums, and Collections***– UW maintains the largest and most significant array of cultural resources in the state. Ten action items focused on preserving these state resources and strengthening the university’s role as one of the region’s most important cultural centers. After a careful external study, the Office of Academic Affairs decided not to undertake two actions (an administrative umbrella for Libraries and the American Heritage Center, and membership in the Association of Research Libraries). Actions currently underway or completed include linking the Art Museum more closely with art education; installing an integrated information access system in the Libraries; initiating a trial library program for electronic journals; and examining budgetary and space needs as well as archival policies in the American Heritage Center. All of these units have new leadership, stronger connections with academic departments, and more visible statewide outreach activities.



- ***Public Policy and Economic Development*** – As Wyoming’s only university, UW has a singular responsibility to conduct research and provide technical expertise to advance the state’s economic development. Twelve action items linking the university with business are completed or underway. Highlights from this part of the *1999-2004 Academic Plan* include strength-

ening energy-related research; establishing the Wyoming Research Products Center; developing a prospectus for the Wyoming Technology Business Center; promoting economic development and commercialization of science and technology; planning for a statewide public-affairs research center; creating a university-wide economic development roundtable; and working with the Wyoming Heritage Foundation to develop a program to nurture the next generation of Wyoming's leaders (i.e. Leadership Wyoming).

- **Outreach** – Among the university's core responsibilities is serving students who are not on the Laramie campus. Meeting this responsibility requires a combination of new technologies and traditional delivery modes to offer courses, research, conferences, and cultural programs. During 1997-1998, the Dean of Outreach oversaw a university-wide review of outreach programs. This review produced more than 60 recommendations that are currently being implemented. In addition, 10 actions pertaining to outreach were part of the *1999-2004 Academic Plan*. Eight of these items have already been addressed. They include the completion of a statewide education needs assessment; development of new certification programs; enhancement of community college articulation; investigation of alternatives to compressed video; and development of mechanisms to cover the costs of distance education. Remaining to be undertaken is the establishment of an incentive-based tuition and salary scale for entrepreneurial outreach programs.

COLLEGES



College-specific Issues

Although colleges and departments have been implementing their own comprehensive academic plans, additional actions related to specific colleges emerged in the university-wide plan.

- ***Agriculture*** – Five actions within the oversight of the College of Agriculture have all been addressed in the first planning cycle. Notable among these are improving course articulation and cooperation between Agricultural & Applied Economics and Economics & Finance; streamlining the degrees in Family & Consumer Sciences; strengthening collaboration in Child & Family Studies with Human Nutrition & Foods; and broadening the scope of the Cooperative Extension Service. Further connections between Outreach and Cooperative Extension will be a topic for the next cycle of planning.
- ***Arts and Sciences*** – The College of Arts and Sciences has completed or initiated all of its 12 action items. These included eliminating the Broadcasting option in Communications and the M.S. in Recreation & Park Administration, initiating a B.S. degree in Geology & Earth Sciences, revitalizing the undergraduate program in Physics, and developing a management plan for the infrared telescope. The Anthropology Department developed a new Ph.D. program. Three actions pertaining to foreign language requirements and recruitment have been initiated but are not yet completed. The Departments of Mathematics and Statistics decided

not to pursue a cooperative graduate-group structure in their M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

- **Business** – The College of Business had 10 actions in the university plan. Nine have been addressed, including implementing a new system for job descriptions, retaining the college advising center, reinstating the M.S. in Accounting and the Management Information Systems Program, implementing a new entrepreneurship program, and assessing the demand and costs for an undergraduate program in tourism. One item—the development of performance goals for the M.S. in Finance is yet to be completed.



- **Education** – The College of Education has taken action on the four items in the plan. It has eliminated certain undergraduate programs; combined two off-campus master’s programs; streamlined fast-track (alternative) teacher certification; and produced individual department plans, reflecting the 1998 restructuring of the college.
- **Engineering** – Four of the five action items for the College of Engineering have been addressed: strengthening computing, articulating more closely with the community colleges, establishing an undergraduate engineering business course, and enhancing teaching and research in water resources. The Department of Computer Science moved to the College of Engineering, and the former Department of Electrical Engineering now houses a new program in computer engineering. The need for two M.S. courses, one to be offered via distance-learning technology, remains to be explored. Efforts to increase Ph.D. production in engineering have begun to show results.
- **Health Sciences** – With the drafting of the university-wide plan, seven issues faced the College of Health Sciences. Increased pursuit of extramural funding, closure of the medical technology program, lowering tuition for the M.S.W. program, and assessment of the viability of a health education major were among the most important actions undertaken. Growing the dental hygiene program has been postponed for now. A plan to manage pharmacy enrollments has not yet been developed.

FUTURE



The Future of Academic Planning

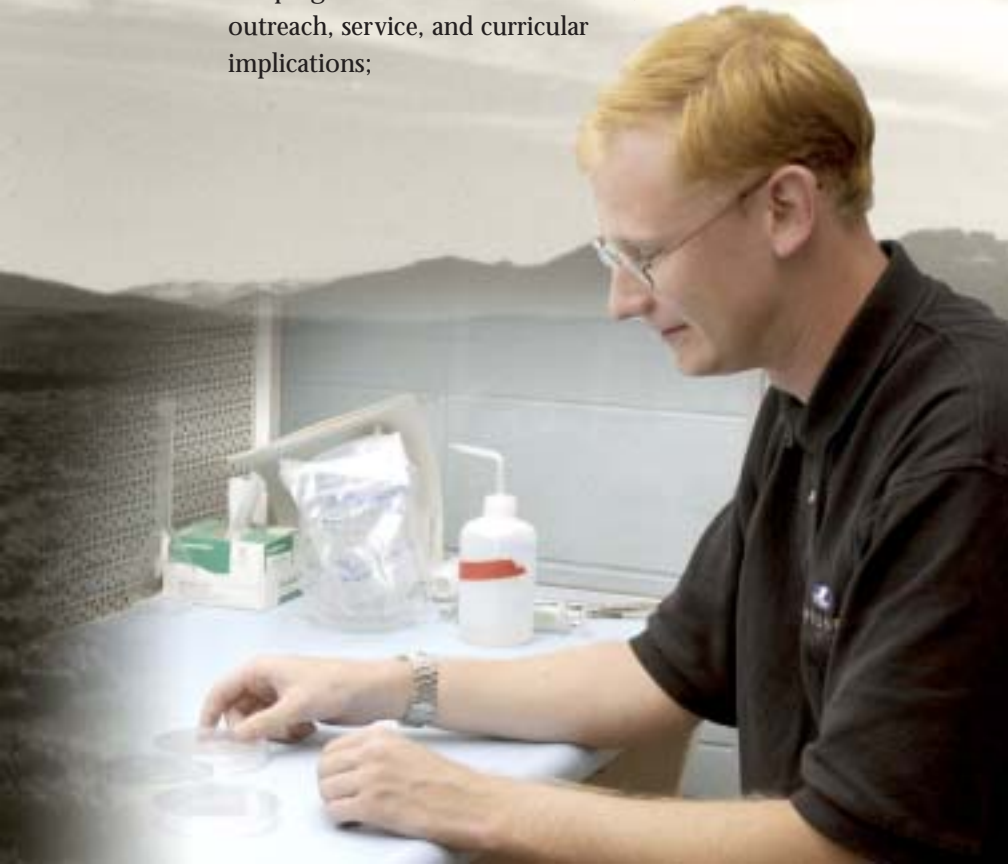
UW must continue to strengthen key academic areas and capitalize on interdisciplinary synergies. Our five-year planning cycle is an important vehicle for these efforts. The institution must also continue to reinforce planning with resource-allocation decisions.

In the spring of 2002, the Office of Academic Affairs distributed a draft document entitled *Moving Forward*. With continuing commitment to a collaborative process, Academic Affairs reviewed comments and advice from on- and off-campus constituents through two iterations before releasing a final document, *Moving Forward III*, in March 2003. This document establishes the major themes, issues, and timelines for the next academic plan.

In the upcoming planning cycle, UW will continue to focus on excellence in a carefully defined set of academic areas. The areas include: 1) environment and natural resources; 2) life sciences; 3) critical areas of science and technology; 4) professions and issues critical to the region; 5) statewide leadership in cultural endeavors, the arts, and the humanities; and 6) the history and culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region.

University-wide challenges to be examined include:

- **Learning Environment:** assessing student learning, promoting personalized education, and further development of an academic success center;
- **Scholarship and Graduate Education:** bolstering graduate studies, stronger interdisciplinarity, and research infrastructure;
- **Diversity, Internationalization, and Access:** developing their concomitant research, outreach, service, and curricular implications;



- **Structure of the Curriculum:** refining the credits required for degrees, the breadth of offerings, curricular complexity, and the structure of the core curriculum;
- **Faculty Positions and New Programs:** budgeting and planning for new positions and interdisciplinary programs;
- **Technological Infrastructure:** evaluating current support programs, planning, and funding new technologies;
- **Outreach, Extension and Community Service:** organizing, financing, and assessing services; and
- **Enrollment Management:** creating enrollment targets, developing budgets, and refining student recruitment and distribution strategies.

Guided by *Moving Forward III*, UW's colleges and departments are formulating first drafts of new academic plans. These unit plans will inform the second five-year *University of Wyoming Academic Plan 2004-2009*, which will be in place July 1, 2004. It is our intention that the ongoing academic planning process—supplemented by support services planning and facilities planning—will ensure that the University of Wyoming will be forward-looking, positioning the institution to serve our students' learning, our state's development, the nation's intellectual capital, and the worldwide quest for new knowledge.

Website References

University of Wyoming Academic Plan 1999-2004

<http://uw-docs.uwyo.edu/theplan/>

Academic Planning and Implementation Website

<http://www.uwyo.edu/AcadAffairs/>

[Acad Plan Implementation/](#)

[Acad Plan Implementation.htm](#)



Policy Related Documents

<http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/policystatements.htm>

- Audio-Visual Services Review Committee Report
- Central Position Management
- Curriculum
- Diversity
- Earth Systems Science Report
- Graduate Education
- Hiring Practices
- Life Sciences Report, 2002
- NCA Proposed Criteria for Accreditation
- Ph.D. Enrollment Report, 2001
- Personnel Policies
- Research Centers
- Tuition Structure
- Unit Review Guidelines

Assessment of Student Learning

<http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/ASSESSMENT/index.htm>

Learning Communities

http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/Learn_Comm/default.htm

University Studies Program

<http://www.uwyo.edu/unst/>

UW Self-Study Report for North Central Association Reaccreditation, 2000

<http://www.uwyo.edu/NCA/Selfstudy/Html.htm>

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

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