This is a draft document being circulated and discussed for input. Consultation and approval from campus governance groups will be sought during spring semester of 2017.

Serving Our Community, State, & Region:

An Academic Plan for Growth

The primary purpose of this document is to provide a plan that will guide future academic planning at UW-Whitewater and outline a process that would bring that plan to fruition. This document is only a guide for academic planning and it should be recognized that the factors that impact academic planning decisions are often dynamic and unpredictable. There will likely need to be academic growth in areas at UW-Whitewater that does not necessarily fit the confines of the priorities and processes described here.

To create this document, a committee made up of campus administrators, faculty, and staff reviewed academic program arrays, the Campus Master Plan, our campus mission and strategic plan, the changing demographics of students and employees, the changing workforce needs in our region, and proposed a set of academic goals that can guide our educational programs toward 2025. With this input, we were ever mindful of how best to provide outstanding education for our students and prepare them to contribute to the changing economic and social needs of our region.

The Academic Plan Committee:

- **Jo-Ellen Burkholder** (Faculty Senate)
- **Greg Cook, co-chair** (Provost's Office)
- **Denise Ehren** (University Staff Council)
- **Ed Frederick** (College of Arts & Communications)
- **Jeff Herriott, co-chair** (College of Arts & Communications)
- **Nadine Kriska** (Academic Staff Assembly)
- **Elena-Levy Navarro** (College of Letters & Sciences)
- **Seth Meisel** (Graduate Studies & Continuing Education)
- **David Munro** (College of Business & Economics)
- **Annie Stinson** (College of Education & Professional Studies)
- **David Travis, co-chair** (College of Letters & Sciences)
- **Elizabeth Watson** (Student Affairs)

PURPOSE

In the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea, this document is intended to provide direction for sustainable and meaningful campus growth that will prepare students to solve problems and address the concerns of the citizens of Wisconsin in an increasingly diverse and evolving global community.

Introduction

The academic plan provides a vision to guide future academic program planning. It affirms enduring aspects of a UW-Whitewater education while recognizing how our special missions, the anticipated changes in the student body, our commitment to a meaningful process of academic assessment and curricular improvement, mean that we must plan for continuous change in order to best serve our students. It fully supports shared governance and the importance of disciplinary expertise and recognizes that the diversity of programs, perspectives, and individual contributions are essential for a thriving University.
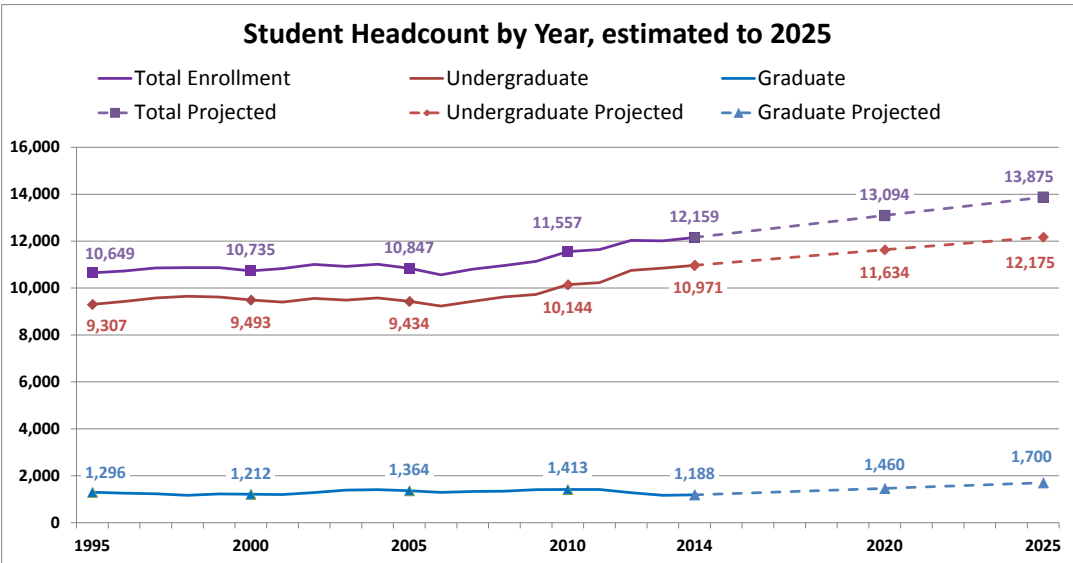
As a university made up of multiple academic colleges and other essentials units, all of which support the success of our students, faculty, and staff, it is important that we follow a process of academic planning that is inclusive of all potential contributors and allows a proper assessment of resource availability to ensure that current and future programs are properly supported.

Academic Values & Commitments

Anticipated university growth and changing demographics

UW-Whitewater is committed to serving the needs of our region and Wisconsin at large. Using research into the demographics of the region and the college-ready population, we project that UW-Whitewater's enrollment will increase to nearly 14,000 by 2025, with a student population that is increasingly diverse.

Student Headcount by Year, estimated to 2025

Legend: Total Enrollment, Undergraduate, Graduate, Total Projected, Undergraduate Projected, Graduate Projected

Total Enrollment: 1995: 10,649; 2000: 10,735; 2005: 10,847; 2010: 11,557; 2014: 12,159
Total Projected: 2020: 13,094; 2025: 13,875

Undergraduate: 1995: 9,307; 2000: 9,493; 2005: 9,434; 2010: 10,144; 2014: 10,971
Undergraduate Projected: 2020: 11,634; 2025: 12,175

Graduate: 1995: 1,296; 2000: 1,212; 2005: 1,364; 2010: 1,413; 2014: 1,188
Graduate Projected: 2020: 1,460; 2025: 1,700

Goals

1. Develop programs to meet the growing needs and changing demographics of the region.

2. Utilize contemporary models of student success to develop programs that increase retention and graduation rates for all students, with particular emphasis on closing the equity gaps for minority students.

We actively recruit students who meet our campus mission, including minority students, military veterans, adult-returning students, and students with disabilities.

UW-Whitewater is nationally recognized for serving students with disabilities, with approximately 8% of the undergraduate students identifying as having a disability. An emphasis has also been placed on recruiting more undergraduate students in the portion of the region that extends into northern Illinois and more national and international students, in particular, into our online professional and graduate programs.

To serve this growing and increasingly diverse population, we will need to prepare academic programs that are both immediately appealing and supportive of a variety of needs. UW-Whitewater is committed to adjusting curricular and extra-curricular programs as necessary to better suit the needs of this changing student population. We aim to provide an educational environment that supports all student groups, enhancing their success and closing the equity gaps in year-to-year retention and graduation. We will continue to develop programs that incorporate academic survival skills, pre-college initiatives, and tutorial services.

We are committed to *Inclusive Excellence* as a principle to assure high-quality education for all students by establishing an intentional, coordinated, comprehensive process that focuses specifically on fostering greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and accountability at every level of university life. We employ emerging models and technologies to support alternative approaches to delivering programming to a diverse set of constituents. Inclusive Excellence is a central component in providing a high-quality educational environment and addressing the current equity gaps in student access, retention, and graduation.

Guiding values and principles
The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is committed to providing a high-quality education that prepares students for careers, citizenship, and life in a world that is becoming ever more complex and diverse. An education at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater will instill in students knowledge, creativity, technical skills, integrity, and the ability to pursue scholarly inquiry. This education includes a combination of field-specific knowledge and a broad range of skills developed through both a disciplinary and a general education curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, written and oral communication, intercultural knowledge and competence, aesthetic appreciation, teamwork, ethical decision-making, and the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge in complex real-world settings. Knowledge and skills acquired will not only make graduates workforce ready but also prepare them for lifelong learning and engaged citizenship. For fields that require professional licensing and an advanced degree, the

university offers students pathways to meaningful professional credentials and fosters a commitment to continued learning and professional development.

In 2010, the governance groups and campus administration adopted the "Essential Learning Outcomes" associated with LEAP (*Liberal Education & America's Promise)*, which "champions the importance of a twenty-first century liberal education" (www.AACU.org/leap). In support of this, faculty, staff, and students have been working intensively to incorporate the following elements of LEAP into the curricular and co-curricular programs at UW-Whitewater:

- Essential Learning Outcomes
- Principles of Excellence
- High-Impact Educational Practices
- Inclusive Excellence
- The VALUE Assessment Rubrics

Goals

3. Improve the integration and support of the LEAP essential learning outcomes from general education and continuing throughout all undergraduate majors and minors to graduation

4. Provide graduate and professional programs that offer our students the opportunity to develop into professional leaders within specific fields of expertise

We actively engage with LEAP at UW-Whitewater as a way to enhance the quality of education that all students receive as they prepare for citizenship and careers in a world that is ever more diverse, complex, and globally connected.

Our graduate and professional-oriented programs foster in students an ability to apply a combination of discipline-specific skills and knowledge to real-world contexts. We also value highly developed functional skills and behaviors necessary for maturing professionals including self-direction, problem solving, decision-making, collaboration, and the capacity for networking and leadership.

UW-Whitewater seeks to increase opportunities for experiential learning by actively engaging students in exploration, scholarship, creativity, and the application of knowledge and skills both in and out of the classroom. This is supported by expanding pathways to participation in high-impact educational practices for all students. We promote meaningful interactions across diverse international and domestic student backgrounds to support the navigation of cross-cultural encounters and to help students explore, foster, and develop cultural literacy and identity. We cultivate student success, co-create learning environments that extend beyond the classroom, and develop the emotional, social and cognitive aspects of learning. Our work in these areas is driven through innovation, learning, and use of data and information.

Goals

5. Develop innovative programs that are designed to improve student access, reduce time to graduation, and increase likelihood of success for all student groups.

6. Develop academic programs that forge new regional partnerships through short-term, self-supporting credit and non-credit courses and certificates.

UW-Whitewater embraces the power of technology and innovation as a means to improve education and increase access for all student populations. We strive to be nimble – technologically, pedagogically, critically, and otherwise – to allow us to adapt to the changing needs and opportunities across all disciplines. Additionally, for programs that are technologically driven, it is crucial that they be designed in such a way as to expose students to the latest technology and give them opportunities for hands-on experience.

We maintain and continue to build strong relationships with community and regional partners, allowing our students opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge in a variety of diverse professional, community-based learning, and community service settings. This is facilitated through programs that mutually benefit students and their community and provide ongoing education opportunities for citizens at any point in their lives.

Process for Academic Development and Growth

We are committed to providing a high-quality education that prepares students for careers, social responsibility, and life in a world that is becoming more complex and diverse. Given the fast paced changes in our society, our students require specialized knowledge and expertise as well as a wide range of skills demanded by the twenty-first-century employer. These include critical thinking, written and oral communication, intercultural knowledge and competence, teamwork, ethical decision-making, and the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge in complex real-world settings. Moreover, it is important that students realize their potential to develop into leaders through graduate school, continuing education, and pursuit of lifelong learning.

In order to fulfill this commitment, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater engages in a regular process of reviewing its academic programs through Audit & Review every five years. This faculty-based review process ensures maximum program effectiveness while helping to recognize areas where new programs may be needed. It also recognizes where programs may no longer be essential and potentially should be abandoned or substantially redesigned. Audit & Review will continue to be an important part of the Academic Planning process and should inform potential program development beyond the program being reviewed.

To be effective, academic planning needs to be an organic process guided by a number of factors including evolving student interests, workforce projections, demographics, a focus on programs that build the skills necessary for long-term professional and personal growth, and a consideration of available resources. To facilitate this process, each academic college should complete a Program Array review process a minimum of once every five years. This process reviews the array of current programs existing in each college and determines their alignment with academic priorities. Potential new program needs can thereby be identified and redundancies eliminated through revisions made to existing programs. Program Array reviews should be done at the college level both independently and in conjunction with other colleges to recognize opportunities for interdisciplinary program development.

Goals

7. Evaluate and refine systems of academic assessment to improve teaching and learning throughout the curriculum and assure student success in all academic programs and support services.

8. Develop new programs and continuously evaluate the program array, adjusting programs as necessary to meet employer, societal and student demands.

Because the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is an inclusive, collaborative, creative, and entrepreneurial learning community, it is essential that we are responsive to regional community needs, including workforce development. The University proactively surveys the environment to identify not just the changes needed to keep existing programs strong and vibrant, but also the unmet needs for all future professionals. This includes providing greater access to our programs from previously underserved populations, such as underrepresented minority, veteran, and adult students, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, it is necessary to develop programs that are nimble and can provide more specialized training and certifications while still providing the students with the broad educational foundation that is necessary in this ever-changing world.

Growth and development of robust academic programs can only be accomplished through proper resource support. It is necessary when doing any academic planning to ensure that the appropriate faculty and staff are in place along with additional resources that would be needed to support their infrastructure and growth. In addition, successful program approval through the curriculum review process on campus requires that appropriate resources be identified.

Goals

9. Work with regional employers to understand workforce needs and identify educational and academic partnerships.

10. Utilize innovative approaches and new technologies for the design and delivery of courses, programs, and pedagogical practices to assure high-quality and affordable educational experiences.

When considering any new program development it is important to consider the intended audience. This should not only be viewed as serving the on-campus student population, but also other populations that have been traditionally underserved such as non-traditionally aged students, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities. New programs should consider innovative approaches to course design and delivery, program support, and academic advising to ensure maximum accessibility and affordability to a broad range of audiences

Through consideration of recent program array analyses, market demand, and student interest, as well as to consider the Academic Values and Commitments provided earlier, it is anticipated that academic growth will occur in each of the areas listed below.

UW-Whitewater Academic Growth Areas
(with examples of similar type current programs)

1. Interdisciplinary Programs
   * Programs that are based on collaborations across two or more disciplines or fields of study (e.g. Multimedia Arts Game Development; Environmental Sciences)

2. Applied Professional Programs
   *Programs that are designed to prepare students to go immediately into professional careers (e.g. Early Childhood Education; Accounting)

3. Certificate and Credentialed Programs
   *Programs that provide credentialing opportunities other than traditional bachelor's degrees (e.g. Data Analytics; Diversity Leadership)

4. Programs with Innovative Course Delivery Opportunities
   *Programs that are designed to utilize alternative course design and/or delivery options to provide greater access to previously underserved populations (e.g. Law Enforcement Degree Completion Program; Liberal Studies Online Degree Program)

Although we are confident that growth will occur in some or all of these areas, it is crucial to recognize that there are many unknowns that will ultimately drive workforce demand and future student interest. Moreover, the past has taught us that it is not always possible to project future growth areas and the best workers are those who are nimble enough to adapt to future change. We also recognize that the necessary resources needed to support growth may be limited.

Conclusion

This academic plan is intended as a living document that will continue to evolve over time to meet the changing needs and interests of the communities UW-Whitewater serves. What should remain in evidence, regardless of such changes, is our commitment to providing well-rounded educational opportunities to a broad range of students through curricular and co-curricular programs that are both rigorous and innovative. Through these programs, we strive to be a source of knowledge, expertise and professional development as well as a center of intercultural understanding, artistic expression, and academic inquiry for our students as well as the broader public.