



Growth Agenda Action Steps Overview

Derived from the Advantage Wisconsin Strategic Framework

Revised January 30, 2009

1. Commit to Shared Learning Goals for all UW undergraduates

The UW System will articulate succinctly and clearly what its undergraduates ought to know and be able to do as competent citizens in a 21st-century, knowledge-based, global society.

2. Create the Student Engagement Portfolio

The UW System's commitment to student success is shown not only in the content of classroom instruction captured in the traditional academic transcript, but also in out-of-classroom learning that is such an important part of student development on all UW System campuses. The new Student Engagement Portfolio will serve as a tool to help students synthesize all of their educational experiences, allowing them to understand and demonstrate the value and breadth of their academic and co-curricular experiences to potential employers or graduate schools.

3. Transform research into leading-edge jobs and economic vitality for Wisconsin

Compared to other states, Wisconsin lags in business start-ups and workers in high-tech, fast-growing industries. The UW System will step up efforts to connect academic research with the private sector to transform ideas into new jobs and new businesses that will attract and employ college-educated workers. It will forge campus-industry collaborations to develop next-generation technologies and products, and encourage experiences with undergraduate research and entrepreneurship for all students.

4. Model inclusive excellence in UW System education and employment

The UW System must prepare its students for responsible, ethical, and engaged citizenship to meet the university's broad goal of promoting excellence in professional, civic, and personal life. Inclusive Excellence, the UW System's successor to Plan 2008, builds on the Equity Scorecard and Campus Climate projects to close the achievement gap and integrate the core value of diversity into everything the UW System does to develop a bright future for students and the entire state.

5. Offer UW New Pathways Degrees to Wisconsin's adult population

To expand the percent of Wisconsin residents with undergraduate and advanced degrees, the UW System must seek ways to open more learning opportunities to working adults, many of whom “swirl” into and out of its universities to achieve a credential, update their skills, enable a career shift, or pursue learning for the pure pleasure of it. This initiative will create more flexible and affordable pathways for a greater number of students, as well as new degree opportunities specifically designed for working adults.

6. Build a Wisconsin KnowHow2GO Network, enlisting undergraduates as mentors to kids

The UW System is a leader in KnowHow2GO, a national campaign to raise college aspirations in young people and teach them how to get there. Working with UW campus colleagues and student government leaders, the UW System will call upon the generous volunteer spirit of undergraduates to become mentors and carry the KnowHow2GO message to young people and families statewide. This will build upon other efforts supporting young people's aspirations for college, including the Wisconsin Covenant, a program promising students who get good grades and are good citizens a spot in a Wisconsin college, enhanced by generous support from the Great Lakes Higher Education Assistance Corporation, and the Fund for Wisconsin Scholars, a private endowment established through a major gift by John and Tashia Morgridge to provide scholarships to lower-income UW and technical college students.

7. Collaborate with the PK-12 community to enrich college preparation in math

Greater collaboration between the higher education community and the PK-12 education community will increase the number of students who enter the state's universities prepared for success. The UW System is working actively with colleagues in the schools to address math preparation for Wisconsin students as they progress from school, to college, and beyond. The focus is on identifying competencies needed for college preparation and aligning those with academic standards for high school.

8. Expand the UW-Madison Connections Program

UW-Madison cannot accommodate all of the academically strong students who currently apply for admission at that campus. Beginning in 2001, UW-Madison piloted the Connections Program, in partnership with four UW Colleges campuses, to allow applicants who are Wisconsin residents to begin their education at a two-year UW Colleges campus and finish their bachelor's degree at UW-Madison. The UW System has expanded this opportunity to other two- and four-year campuses, ensuring that Wisconsin keeps more academically talented students in the state.

9. Ramp up operational excellence and efficiency to focus more resources on the Growth Agenda for Wisconsin

To focus its limited resources on the Growth Agenda, the UW System is committed to keeping its administrative costs among the lowest in the nation. The university must take operational excellence to the next level through a business process redesign that will make the UW System an even more efficient system of higher education. Institutions are collaborating to identify business practices that can be standardized, streamlined, simplified, and automated across the UW System. They are looking to other institutions of higher education as well as to the private sector to identify better ways to conduct business, while improving the UW System's service to students and the entire state.

10. Establish New "Wisconsin Idea" Public Policy Forums that bring the University's best research to bear on Wisconsin's biggest challenges

The Public Policy Forums focus UW System resources on Wisconsin's most vexing social, environmental, and economic challenges. In the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea, these forums will inform the debate around selected current issues confronting Wisconsin residents by bringing objective, research-based information to the dialogue. Plans are underway to hold two Public Policy Forums annually at UW System institutions beginning in Spring 2009.

11. Increase private need-based financial aid to supplement state and federal assistance to students

Compared to other public universities, UW System tuition is low, but aid to needy students lags. To ensure that college is possible for all students, regardless of financial resources, the UW System is advocating for increased private investments in need-based financial aid. The goal is to double the university's current levels of this privately funded aid. The UW System's statewide fundraising efforts will build on recent campaigns, including the Morgridges' Fund for Wisconsin Scholars and the Great Lakes Higher Education Assistance Corporation's private contribution to the state's Wisconsin Covenant program.