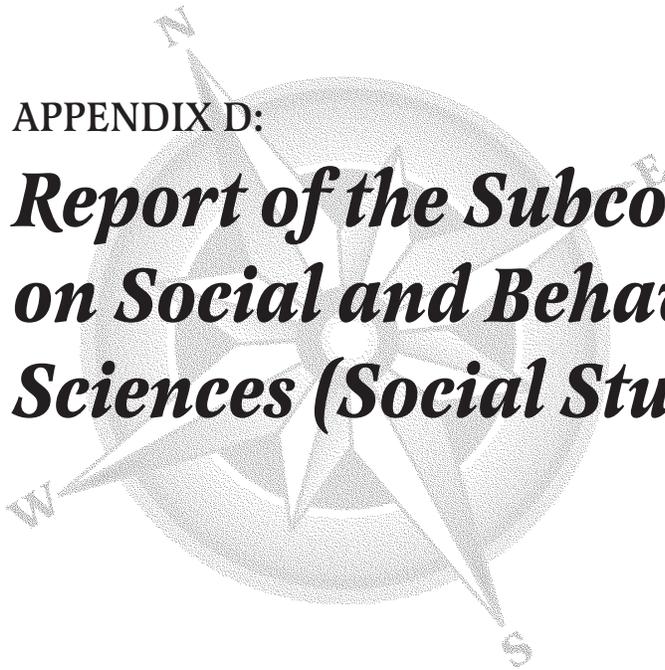




APPENDIX D:

***Report of the Subcommittee
on Social and Behavioral
Sciences (Social Studies)***



“Education for Citizenship”

Subcommittee

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Recommendations

- 1. Provide the necessary resources to maintain UW–Madison’s competitive position among the preeminent research universities of the world.** The University is approaching the limits to which good administration and a devoted faculty and staff can sustain excellence with static financial resources. Among the top priorities must be the targeted restoration of faculty positions to maintain the quality of research and teaching by raising endowments, expanding public support, and/or, if necessary, increasing tuition.
- 2. Encourage multidisciplinary research while maintaining the excellence of core disciplines.** The University should re-examine and reform administrative and governance structures to facilitate and provide incentives for innovative and interdisciplinary research without sacrificing the benefits that accrue to all parts of the University that are supported by the excellence of basic research programs within existing departments.
- 3. Develop and fund new approaches to public communication and dialogue regarding the mission of the University Wisconsin-Madison.** The Wisconsin Idea must be up-dated and reformulated. In particular, the University needs to promote public awareness and recognition of the value and benefits of basic research in the social sciences as well as of the international scope of UW–Madison research and educational programs. Just as the original Wisconsin Idea referred to the application of the expertise of social scientists to the problems of the state, so an updated Wisconsin Idea should take advantage of the strengths of both traditional and newly developing social sciences.
- 4. Reallocate University resources as necessary to recognize the size, scope, and quality of the contributions of the social sciences to the mission of the University.** The “productivity” of the social sciences in numbers of students taught, dollars of external grant money obtained, and contributions to informed discussions of important policy issues has increased in the past ten years relative to the other divisions while the allocation of faculty FTE’s has declined in the same period. Social science productivity cannot continue without adequate institutional support.
- 5. Utilize the knowledge gained through social science research to support diversity, civility, and an enhanced campus community.** Social scientists have amassed a body of knowledge that can and should inform the University’s decision-making about its programs for attracting and retaining excellent students of many backgrounds and ethnicities. In addition, social scientists from a variety of fields have contributed to our understanding of the importance of civility and diversity to the success of an academic community.
- 6. Reward and expand innovative undergraduate teaching and learning programs.** Many recent innovations are under-recognized (e.g., the Teaching

Academy, Writing Center, residential learning communities, etc.) The University should significantly expand research opportunities for undergraduate students through greater utilization of field study, outreach projects, and team learning experiences.

7. Reward existing programs and encourage new undergraduate programs that enhance employment prospects while preserving the life-long values of “education for citizenship.” The University should support the development of multidisciplinary “capstone” and certification programs that allow students to pursue a broad-based undergraduate curriculum while developing a core of marketable knowledge in a specialized area. For example, the Sociology Department has long had the career-oriented “Concentration in Analysis and Research” certificate program which includes an internship and has an excellent placement record.

8. Strengthen graduate education by targeted development of new master’s degree programs and increased support for programs with demonstrated capacity for expansion. Professional programs must also be allowed the flexibility to expand continuing and distance education programs.

9. Increase collaborative research and educational programs with the private sector, non-profit organizations, and government agencies while protecting a fundamental commitment to academic values. The development of partnerships is a key strategy for maintaining the future viability of the University, but one that must also be grounded in the University’s commitment to serve the public interest through the creation and advancement of knowledge.

10. Use outreach and distance education as a recruitment tool to attract outstanding students who must overcome physical, social, or economic barriers to participate in UW–Madison programs. A substantial public investment will be made in distance education during the next decade and UW–Madison should use this opportunity to enhance the diversity of the University.

11. Continue the renewal and updating of physical facilities, including the enhancement of information and learning technologies available to faculty and students. The wise use of learning information technology may emerge as the most cost-effective outreach resource of the University.

12. Expand professional development opportunities for faculty and academic staff. The available options should include “in-house” sabbaticals that would allow representatives of the University to devote more time to teaching innovation and public outreach.

13. Target specific outreach programs on the needs of K–12 schools. Such programs should take full advantage of the Internet to introduce basic research skills and promote student awareness of educational opportunities.

14. Provide adequate staff support for faculty in using learning technologies. Opportunities must be made available for faculty to update their skills; and staff support must be provided to manage intellectual property rights for newly created research and instructional materials.

In an increasingly globalized economy and political culture, the concept of citizenship can be meaningfully applied beyond the boundaries of states and nations to include the social, environmental, and economic concerns of a world community.

“Education for Citizenship”

The theme selected by the Social Sciences Subcommittee for its report is “Education for Citizenship.” Citizenship, in this context, implies both the ability to enjoy the freedoms of fully participating in society and preparedness to undertake the responsibilities of strengthening communities through work and service. In an increasingly globalized

economy and political culture, the concept of citizenship can be meaningfully applied beyond the boundaries of states and nations to include the social, environmental, and economic concerns of a world community. It also suggests the need to cultivate an awareness of the potential for organizations and institutions to build communities and civic culture. In this sense, the University itself can be thought of as an “institutional citizen.”

Education for citizenship at UW–Madison is directed toward preparing students to serve as both engaged members of local communities and citizens of the world. It is a cornerstone of the Wisconsin Idea which envisions the University of Wisconsin–Madison as an institutional citizen concerning itself with the welfare and progress of the entire population of the state and, ultimately, all members of human society.

The social sciences do not stand apart from the other disciplines of the University in educating people to assume the roles of citizenship. However, it is the social sciences that have the specific mission to discover and apply knowledge about how societies are organized and how human institutions function and may be improved. They study, for example, how the interests within society are balanced, how wealth is created and distributed, how human beings learn, how our values and opinions are shaped, and how knowledge is diffused within society by information agencies. The social sciences play an essential role in all types of professional education by contributing to an understanding of the public purposes and social effects of knowledge-based occupations.

The Social Sciences at UW–Madison. The social science departments and programs of UW–Madison have a worldwide reputation for excellence. Whether basic or applied, these programs are engaged in research and teaching that can have far-reaching effects in daily life. The social sciences are addressing issues related to the conduct of education, child-rearing, and the management of the many stresses on families in a modern society. They study the foundations of knowledge that shape public policy, including foreign policy, on any number of issues both in the United States and abroad.

Scholars and social scientists at UW–Madison grapple with such issues as: what constitutes successful aging; how children develop social and emotionally; the impact of welfare reform on children, families, and out-of-wedlock childbearing; and how poverty and inequality affect adolescent male behavior. They investigate such diverse topics as how social networks can influence immigrants’ ability to adapt to a new environment; the role of school libraries in educational reform; the competitive strategies of Health Maintenance Organizations; and the effects of tax policies. They develop understandings of how multiracial peoples develop an ethnic identity; how computer technology affects learning; how human communities modify and adapt to landscapes; how virtual reality may change our concepts of space and time; and how Supreme Court justices make decisions.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison the social sciences encompass the academic disciplines of economics, political science, history, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. They include the professions of law, business, education, journalism, social work, public administration, urban and regional planning, and library and information studies.

Throughout the twentieth century UW–Madison has been a leading institution in establishing multidisciplinary social sciences, including international studies, industrial relations, demography, counseling, vocational education, development, and land tenure studies. Indeed, it is reflective of the institutional commitment of the UW–Madison to multidisciplinary research that this University has played a major role in creating new branches of the social sciences like labor history, history of science, women’s studies, and health administration.

Education for citizenship at UW–Madison is directed toward preparing students to serve as both engaged members of local communities and citizens of the world.

Also in alignment with the Wisconsin Idea, the University of Wisconsin–Madison is widely known for its institutes and centers which have closely integrated research and applied study. These include the Industrial Relations Research Institute, Institute for Research on Poverty, LaFollette Institute of Public Policy, and the Social Systems Research Institute.

The social sciences departments continue to be among the most highly ranked academic programs of the University, and the UW–Madison School of Education is widely considered the top ranked program in educational research.

Graduate Program National Rankings			
National Research Council (1995)		US News & World Report (1996)	
Sociology	1st	Sociology	1st
Geography	2nd	Library Science	6th
History	6th	Social Work	7th
Political Science	9th	Psychology	9th
		Political Science	9th (tie)
		History	10th (tie)

International programs remain an area of particular strength for UW–Madison, which supports six federally-funded Title VI programs. International Programs and Studies is now guided by the ambitious strategic vision of “International Education: Year 2000,” a plan for expanded cross-college cooperation to enhance international education.

UW–Madison has one of the nation’s most advanced information literacy training programs for students developed as a result of collaboration between the campus libraries and the School of Library and Information Studies.

Social science faculty are also active in leadership roles in developing the new residential learning communities on the UW–Madison campus such as the Bradley Learning Center and the Chadbourne Residential College. These new programs build upon strong historical traditions of UW–Madison and have achieved remarkable early success in positively influencing undergraduate student perceptions and expectations of the University. Similarly, social science scholars are prominent in efforts to improve instruction through participation in the Teaching Academy, and in applying information technology to research and learning.

The UW–Madison has gone through a building boom during the last ten years which has been funded by a radical shift from state resources to a reliance on major gifts and fund-raising for capital building projects. The new Law School Building and Grainger Hall are examples of the renewal and expansion of physical facilities that have been funded in significant part by external fund raising. Whatever the sources of funding, the improvement and technical up-grading of buildings and classrooms has been vital to social sciences programs. For example, the renovation of Ingraham Hall has vastly improved the instructional and program capabilities of international, area, and ethnic studies.

Reviewing and Revising Strategic Directions

Faculty in the social and behavioral sciences have widely divergent opinions with respect to the major issues confronting the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The spectrum of views expressed by faculty and academic staff is, at least in part, a reflection of the very real differences among social scientists and the social sciences programs.

Social sciences programs are distributed among all the colleges and schools of UW–Madison. They range from huge academic departments like political science, with hundreds of students and the largest professional schools of the campus, to the very smallest professional and interdisciplinary programs, some operating with five or fewer

faculty where most have joint appointments with another program.

The loss of faculty positions during recent years has hurt all the social science programs but is most acutely felt in the smaller departments and professional schools. These programs are clearly struggling to maintain a strong research capability while offering an adequate array of courses and services for their students.

The large professional schools are perceived to have a much greater ability to control their own destiny if given greater flexibility to manage their resources. In addition to the differences in tuition, the large professional programs are more able to market their programs to the public and, in some instances, much better positioned to raise major gifts and endowments.

However, despite these fundamental differences among social sciences programs and the extensive decentralization of the University, there is a surprising degree of community consensus on common values and goals. Taken together, these values and goals confirm that an institutional “vision of the future” has emerged during the past ten years and continues to be highly influential. This broad agreement on future directions is very much evident in the planning documents produced by departments and schools. Planning has become a regular part of the academic culture and governance systems of the University.

For the most part, there is a close alignment of priorities between the strategic vision of the campus administration and those expressed in plans developed by social sciences programs. This is particularly true of the professional schools, including the School of Business, School of Education, and the School of Library and Information Studies. Not surprisingly, these program planning documents are detailed and often cover a variety of issues that are not addressed in campus planning documents.

It is difficult to make any generalized statement about strategic priorities that would apply evenly to all the parts of a complex institutions like UW–Madison. For example, although a commitment to “using technology wisely” may enjoy strong general support among social sciences faculty and staff, some departments have already achieved substantial progress in applying and distributing information technology within their ranks. Consequently, the campus priority on information technology, while accepted as an ongoing value of the University, may be viewed as a “distraction” from more urgent needs that are critical to the viability of the academic program.

For many social sciences academic departments the key strategy is the aim to be the best program in the field. Indeed, it can be argued that some strategic goals, such as improving the international scope of research and teaching, are more likely to be advanced by focusing on excellence within the discipline. In this example, department and centers may have been ahead of schools and colleges in recognizing the importance of globalization to the future of the University. In any case, there can be very little doubt that an academic department that is nationally ranked number one in its field contributes a wide range of “goods” to the University, many of which align with strategic goals.

Within this context of significantly different points-of-view as well as broad consensus on values and directions, the social sciences community remains strongly supportive of the campus emphasis on research preeminence, undergraduate instruction, maximizing our human resources, and continued globalization of the curriculum.

Globalization of the Curriculum

The UW–Madison’s social sciences historically have contributed to the analysis and understanding of international social, economic, and political phenomena. Campus faculty have produced pioneering studies of such topics as the politics of cultural pluralism, regional political and economic alliances, economic stratification, land tenure, and international labor relations. Since the early 1960s social science faculty have contributed their international expertise toward establishment of the campus’

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nine area studies programs, establishing the UW–Madison as a leading institution for international social science research and training. The campus at large uses its international social science resources to educate students for world citizenship.

In recent years the social sciences have developed new areas of study, methodologies, and modes of operation, to meet changing roles and missions caused by contemporary global change. In doing so, faculty have generated knowledge necessary to understand emerging world systems. They also have helped to reposition the campus to meet the growing demand for globally competent graduates among employers at the state, regional, and international levels. And they have contributed to breakthroughs that have created a new era in international programming on campus including:

- **Establishment of innovative programs with a global focus.** The campus has established several new programs to facilitate multidisciplinary scholarship and education on topics that cut across world regions. Examples of such programs include the Global Studies Program, the World Affairs and the Global Economy Initiative, and the Global Cultures Program. Globally-focused programs complement traditional area studies programs organized around the study of a specific world region. The 1996 creation of the International Institute has facilitated development of the new global programs and enhancement of area studies strengths.
- **Formation of an effective cross-college learning community.** The World Affairs and the Global Economy (WAGE) Initiative has created a vital learning community which studies governance of the global economy. Its members include social scientists and other scholars drawn from the College of Letters and Science, School of Business, Law School, and College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. WAGE has partnered with campus area studies programs to provide briefings and workshops for Wisconsin government and business groups.
- **Creation of global research networks.** Social science faculty have worked to build trans-national research networks to conduct research in new fields that require participation by scholars from several countries. Current global research networks link Madison social science faculty with colleagues in the United States and overseas to study such topics as the legacies of authoritarian regimes, the impact of globalization on labor, the rise of ethnic conflict, and the impact of global media on societies around the world.
- **Internationalization of policy studies.** The LaFollette Institute’s proposal for a strategic hiring cluster in international public affairs was approved for funding from a vigorous campus competition that generated close to 100 proposals. The success of this proposal signals campus recognition that policy studies today must be international in scope and that the campus will best meet this challenge through multidisciplinary hiring and educational partnerships.
- **Deepened commitment to the study of Europe and East Asia.** The campus has made significant effort to strengthen European and East Asian studies in recent years through concentrated hiring and other program-building initiatives.
- **Positioning the UW–Madison for success in funding competitions.** The degree to which innovation can be effected is highly dependent on the availability of funding to underwrite change. At the same time, the organization seeking funding must be credible with funders as likely to succeed in implementing new programs. The new directions discussed above have been significant to several awards under major new programs in the past 18 months. The UW–Madison’s project on the “Legacies of Authoritarianism” was one of 30 institutions selected from almost 200 grants submitted nationally to a major Ford Foundation initiative “Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Area Studies.” In 1998 the institute partnered with the School of Business to secure the campus’ new federally-funded Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). The revitalization of European studies facilitated the UW–Madison’s success in competitions for a Midwest

Center for German and European Studies (DAAD Foundation) and a European Union Studies Center (funded by the European Union). At the state level, the UW System recently made a major joint award to UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee for international education and outreach in which the social sciences will be prominently featured.

These developments illustrate the continuing commitment of the campus and its faculty to continuing innovation and excellence in international studies. Such a commitment is also striking in light of the many counter pressures including budgetary constraints that have forced many institutions to contain or downgrade similar programs. The UW-Madison must continue its leadership in the social sciences and in international studies in coming decades in order to build on these traditional strengths.

Maintaining Research Preeminence

Much that is excellent about the University of Wisconsin-Madison, including the quality of undergraduate teaching, depends on maintaining our preeminence of research. Perhaps the greatest service that the University can give to the people of Wisconsin is to bring the results of basic research into the practical context of ordinary citizens living in a modern society.

The quality of basic research on the UW-Madison campus is an equally important competitive advantage for our professional programs and schools. As Provost John Wiley once observed, the use of the laser in treating eye disease is one of the most important advancements in ophthalmology, yet no amount of applied research on the eye itself would have produced the laser. Similarly, the productive interplay between basic and applied research is a hallmark of the social sciences at University of Wisconsin-Madison which has produced major benefits to society such as the first introduction of workman's compensation for on-the-job injuries and, more recently, problem-oriented policing as a strategy for neighborhood improvement. This kind of discovery and innovation can only take place if the University continues to dedicate a substantial share of resources to the exploration of the frontiers of knowledge in the social sciences.

The social sciences were singled out for praise in the 1989 NCA Evaluation Team Report which noted: "The social sciences in Letters and Science constitute a cluster of exceptional quality within the institution." In general, the social sciences departments within the University have maintained the national ranking to which the 1989 report referred. However, the members of the subcommittee, without exception, agree that the quality of academic life for faculty has declined during the last decade, even as research productivity and reputation have remained high.

The increased productivity of social sciences faculty in producing research funding is significant. During the ten years since the last accreditation review, the dollar amount of research awards in the social sciences more than doubled (from \$17M to nearly \$36M) and increased as a share of total campus research funding from 10% to 13%.

At the same time the UW-Madison social science programs have 13.5% fewer faculty than ten years ago. Some programs continue to lack adequate base budget support for supplies and capital equipment. Among the broad disciplines represented by the divisional committee affiliation (biological sciences, physical sciences, humanities, and social sciences), the social sciences decreased disproportionately in comparison to other divisions and by the largest number of faculty positions—by 88 full-time equivalent positions (FTE).

As one would expect, the reduction of social sciences faculty positions resulting from retirements and turnover has not been evenly distributed among departments. For example, some of the smaller professional schools and academic programs have

25% or more faculty positions vacant, imperiling the ability of the program to offer a range of courses that adequately cover the full spectrum of the discipline.

The social science departments have been hit hard by constraints on faculty hiring, particularly in the College of Letters and Sciences. Relative to their faculty targets, the small professional schools (Library and Information Students; Urban and Regional Planning; the LaFollette Institute; and Communicative Disorders—nearly all social science oriented programs) were 9 below target, compared to similar humanities programs. The social science departments (anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology) were 22.5 positions below their strategic faculty targets, while humanities were 14 below and natural sciences 8 below.

Nearly every discussion of the Social Sciences Subcommittee returned to the issue of diminished resources supporting research and teaching.

Sustainability

Nearly every discussion of the Social Sciences Subcommittee returned to the issue of diminished resources supporting research and teaching. The available productivity data compiled by the University indicates that social sciences faculty are carrying a greater share of the instructional workload of the University with fewer faculty positions and generating a larger percentage of total University research funding.

Consequently, the key issue identified by the subcommittee is *sustainability*. The social sciences programs are at a watershed. There must be a significant realignment of expectations to match the availability of resources. Social science productivity cannot continue without adequate institutional support.

Two specific recommendations of the Subcommittee address this concern with sustainability:

Provide the necessary resources to maintain UW–Madison’s competitive position among the preeminent research universities of the world. The University is approaching the limits to which good administration and a devoted faculty and staff can sustain excellence with static financial resources. Among the top priorities must be the targeted restoration of faculty positions to maintain the quality of research and teaching by raising endowments, expanding public support, and/or, if necessary, increasing tuition.

Reallocate University resources as necessary to recognize the size, scope, and quality of the contributions of the social sciences to the mission of the University. The “productivity” of the social sciences in numbers of students taught, dollars of external grant money obtained, and contributions to informed discussions of important policy issues has increased in the past ten years relative to the other divisions while the allocation of faculty FTE’s has declined in the same period. Social science productivity cannot continue without adequate institutional support.

	UW–Madison Faculty by Divisional Committee Affiliation			
	1987		1997	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Biological Sciences	772	32.6%	705	32.9%
Physical Sciences	537	22.7%	488	22.8%
Humanities	393	16.6%	380	17.7%
Social Studies	652	27.5%	564	26.3%
Other	13	0.5%	5	0.2%
Not Yet Declared	0		29	
Total	2367		2171	

Source: Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis

UW–Madison Extramural Research Awards				
By Discipline (Millions of Dollars)	1987–88		1996–97	
	Count Amount	Percent Percent	Count Amount	Percent Percent
Biological Sciences	87.1	49.5%	134.9	48.6%
Humanities	1.0	0.6%	3.3	1.2%
Physical Sciences	70.5	40.1%	103.8	37.4%
Social Sciences	17.3	9.8%	35.8	12.9%
Total	175.9		277.8	

Source: Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis

Graduate Education and Master's Degrees

Graduate enrollment has declined in recent years, but there can be little doubt that strength of research at UW–Madison will continue to depend on a vigorous graduate education program. Graduate students are the scholars and researchers of the future. They are also essential members of the workforce of a great teaching University, contributing to the institution's ability to conduct quality research at reasonable costs and provide intensive instruction for small groups and seminars. Although the teaching assistant system in research received some justified criticism during the 1980s, it is equally true that the University and the social sciences programs have devoted resources, energy, and attention to the continual improvement of teaching by graduate students. The success of the efforts is confirmed by the satisfaction of students with quality of teaching as represented in annual surveys of student perceptions.

In the future, more students will enter the University expecting that it will eventually be necessary for them to attain a graduate degree or some other professional credential beyond the baccalaureate degree. Opportunities for continuing education and advanced study are increasingly common benefits offered by employers. In many professions and skilled occupations some form of continuing education or recertification is becoming the normal career expectation of the field.

However incomplete and preliminary the evidence, there is a rational basis for the emerging consensus in higher education that there is a substantial, worldwide—and still largely untapped—market for graduate education and credentialing. For some social science disciplines demand for graduate education is increasing and will continue to do so for the next ten to twenty years, particularly for those institutions best able to respond creatively and specifically to this market.

Part of the reason for the growing demand for graduate training is the rise of professionalism in American society. The percentage of the United States population working in professional occupations doubled in the first three quarters of the twentieth century. By the end of this century it is expected that fully one-fourth of the working population will be employed in occupations recognized as professions. There is every reason to believe that economically valuable expertise will continue to become professionalized and require graduate education.

In education and business, the opportunity to increase graduate enrollment is already apparent. Extremely high turnover is expected in the education-related professions. For example, it has been estimated that there will be a teacher shortage of a million positions developing within the next ten years. There is already a shortage of educational media specialists in Wisconsin that the UW–Madison School of Library and Information Studies is unable to fill at its current level of capacity.

Updating the Wisconsin Idea

The underlying concept of the Wisconsin Idea is that all of society benefits when we apply our best minds to addressing the problems and needs of ordinary people.

Most of the recent efforts to recast and reinvigorate the tradition of the Wisconsin Idea have tended to focus on the contributions of the University to scientific progress and technology transfer. However, it must be recognized, without underestimating the great importance of scientific discovery to the state's economy, that the history of the Wisconsin Idea is as much an account of the development of progressive social ideas as the application of new scientific knowledge. The University of Wisconsin's contributions in law, education, economics, social services, and labor relations created public policy models that defined the Wisconsin Idea for the nation.

The underlying concept of the Wisconsin Idea is that all of society benefits when we apply our best minds to addressing the problems and needs of ordinary people. This concept is as much international as it is state-oriented, and particularly relevant to the concerns of many University social sciences programs today.

Because the Wisconsin Idea has been widely appropriated to mean so many different things to different people, the University of Wisconsin–Madison needs to express the ideal of rendering service to society not only by updating the expression of the Wisconsin Idea, but also by reformulating the essential concepts to fit this University's mission of applying research and advanced study in the public interest.

One promising suggestion is to adopt the phrase the Wisconsin Partnership to express the renewal of these fundamental values.

Redefining the Wisconsin Idea as the Wisconsin Partnership

The Wisconsin Partnership is a commitment to an institutional policy of listening and responding to needs and interests of the Wisconsin people, its institutions and businesses, and the wider global community.

- The University must seek collaboration with government, business, labor unions, non-profit foundations, public schools, private and technical colleges to improve the educational opportunities, application of research, and quality of life for all citizens.
- Distance education initiatives should focus on high-demand degree and certification programs, but the Wisconsin Partnership must mean more than exploiting economic opportunities to expand distance education and professional continuing education.
- Outreach programs should be used as a recruitment tool to attract outstanding students who must overcome physical, economic, and time barriers in order to participate in UW–Madison educational programs.
- Learning technology, digital networks, and public databases must be used to expand access to University resources while improving on-campus teaching and communication.
- Specific programs should be targeted to the needs of K–12 schools taking full advantage of the Internet to introduce basic research skills and promote student awareness of educational opportunities.

Supporting Interdisciplinary Research and Study

Awareness of emerging opportunities for interdisciplinary research and study is generally high in the social sciences. In fact, some of the most highly ranked social science departments and programs of UW–Madison have built their reputations on interdisciplinary research and teaching. Collaboration with other academic programs is a long-standing strength of the Law School which established its leadership in research on the foundation of interdisciplinary studies.

A report produced by the Council of Deans entitled “Managing the Matrix:

Sustaining Effective Cross-College Learning Communities” (March 28, 1995) articulates key issues of interdisciplinary cooperation: “The UW–Madison has provided an enabling environment for interdisciplinary activities. Our [administrative] matrix structure permits us to combine disciplinary rigor with interdisciplinary flexibility and evolutionary responsiveness. It needs to be preserved. But we must strengthen the horizontal axis. The basic vertical structure (departments and colleges) is more powerful than the horizontal one (largely institutes and centers). The matrix won’t work unless we can deal with two basic aspects of the imbalance. 1) resources, rewards, and careers; and 2) governance of cross-college activities.”

Whether or not one accepts that the conceptual model of “vertical” and “horizontal” structures to describe the way power flows in the University, there is general agreement that concentration of decision-making authority in the deans’ offices, departmental executive committees, and divisional committees can and sometimes does act as a barrier to collaborative research.

The problem, as identified by the subcommittee, is to find ways of implementing measures to strengthen and fund interdisciplinary research and teaching, while preserving the UW–Madison tradition of faculty and staff participation in decision-making. Unfortunately, many universities have supported new collaborative initiatives by managing reallocation decisions from the top of the administrative hierarchies of the University, often without input from the faculty who are most knowledgeable about the best opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Seed funding for interdisciplinary research is scarce and will almost certainly require reallocation of institutional resources. Therefore, it is essential that the review process make effective use of faculty and staff governance in order to identify the research areas where faculty are taking the lead in advancing emerging fields through collaborative research.

Teaching Excellence and Outreach

Teaching is often the most important form of outreach performed by faculty. Generally speaking, only a small fraction of the students in any given course are being trained as the next generation of scholars in that discipline, let alone in the particular area of academic specialization represented by the course. As such, most teaching faculty members are providing the only sustained exposure to a field of study that their students will ever experience. The wry observation that “an education is what you still have after you’ve forgotten everything you learned in school” reflects the experience of most students who remember the teacher’s engagement with the subject matter far better than the content of the course.

The social science programs are among the largest instructional service providers of undergraduate education. Roughly one-third of total student credit hours and half of all undergraduate degrees are in one of the social sciences. About 25% of first year students express an interest in majoring in a business-related subject.

Members of the campus social sciences community continue to be strongly supportive of the revived concern with the teaching and advising of undergraduate students at UW–Madison. The social sciences have a track record of success in efforts to extend the learning experience beyond the context of the classroom and provide undergraduate students with opportunities for field study and exposure to research methodologies. Similarly, the social science programs have been actively engaged in the renewed emphasis on the development of writing and communication skills appropriate to their respective disciplines.

Using Technology Wisely

One good reason for attaching the word “wisely” to the goals relating to information technology is that unreasonable expectations are often associated with the deployment

Even those members of the academic community who have been most successful in applying new technologies in higher education have found that it requires a substantial investment of human and financial resources.

of computers and digital technology in higher education. For example, both media and government have routinely communicated messages to the public suggesting, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, that:

- Computers automatically improve the quality and availability of education;
- Information resources of all kinds are available “free” on the Internet;
- Information technology reduces the need for faculty and academic staff in higher education.

The application of information technology certainly has the potential to enable universities to enhance quality, reduce costs, and increase productivity; however, even those members of the academic community who have been most successful in applying new technologies in higher education have found that it requires a substantial investment of human and financial resources.

For the near-term future, the great opportunity of learning technologies will be to enhance the quality of higher education rather than to increase productivity. First-rate information technology is essential to remain competitive in higher education. In many social science disciplines, state-of-the-art research and teaching requires access to robust computing power, networks, and information in digital formats. Computers, networks, and digital information are the necessary tools of all knowledge-based trades. Without them UW–Madison programs cannot be in the game.

The University of Wisconsin–Madison has made great strides with the deployment and application of information and digital technologies. Judged by any standard, this University has created a robust IT infrastructure supporting a rich array of networked information resources. Appropriate use of information technology has been the focus of planning in many social sciences programs including the School of Business, the Law School and, not surprisingly, the School of Library and Information Studies and the University library system. The School of Education has developed and is implementing a comprehensive information technology plan which addresses all of the strategic areas where access to learning and digital technologies will be needed in the future.

For most disciplines in the social sciences the availability of computer equipment and access to networks is generally good. However, as the University looks ahead to the next ten years, it will not be enough to replace and upgrade equipment and networks—expensive as that will surely be. Resources must also be adequate to provide:

- Staff support for faculty in using learning technologies, including assistance with technical and clerical tasks involved in setting up web pages or other computerized databases;
- Training opportunities that allow faculty and academic staff to update skills;
- Intellectual property rights management for research and instructional information in a digital environment that fully respects the intellectual work involved in creating teaching materials.

Outreach and Distance Education

Social science courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level are natural candidates for outreach and distance education programming. In education, business, law, and other social sciences disciplines, the essential components are present to develop a coherent series of distance education courses. The School of Business, the School of Library and Information Studies, and several other social sciences programs have already tested scaleable models for distance education that have the potential of becoming degree or certification programs delivered via distance education technology.

Some of the best applications of learning technology have shown considerable promise for enhancing the convenience and accessibility for all courses, either on and off campus. In order to successfully apply learning technologies to distance learning, an environment of support and collaboration must be established. The most fruitful efforts to expand the use of distance learning technologies for both teaching and outreach will:

- Target specific certifications and degrees as pilot programs for distance education.
- Target collaboration with K-12 colleagues in developing distance education programs that interface with college preparation and recruitment.
- Encourage collaboration among academic services to support pilot projects.
- Provide budget flexibility or other financial incentives for successful distance education program development.
- Expand academic staff support for faculty in the application of learning technologies.
- Require the support of multi-skilled academic teams in the development of viable pilot projects.
- Require access to more and more fully-equipped teaching facilities and, more importantly, the staff support needed to implement learning technologies.

Diversity, Civility and Campus Culture

Just as notions of citizenship and community are in a state of continuous transformation, concepts of diversity and identity are rapidly evolving as we enter a new millennium. Population migrations and refugee flows have reshaped the composition of immigrant communities around the world, while growing numbers of multiracial citizens call into question traditional assumptions of racial categorization and diversity at home. Similarly, challenges to definitions of family, sexuality, and gender are producing both change and reaction at all levels of society. And the communications revolution has removed barriers of time and space to join questions of ethnicity, religion, peace, and economic change, across national boundaries. At the same time, historic questions of justice, political access, educational opportunity, and social and economic progress are hotly debated by groups who maintain that promises made to the civil rights movement have not been kept, and groups who argue that the United States has gone too far.

All of these forces exist within a state of dynamic tension between traditional and modern, between the need to change and the need to preserve historic strengths. For the social sciences, this means a concurrent state of debate and dynamic tension as those who study societies grapple with the need to reflect rapidly changing societies in research and curricular programs.

Within this context, it is solid academic practice to affirm the importance of diversity, broadly defined, including:

- 1) Continuing and enhancing efforts to recruit and retain a faculty reflective of larger society as it is likely to appear in the next century rather than as it appeared at mid-20th century. Such efforts should draw on existing mentoring programs and provide additional resources as necessary to prevent isolation and to ensure the greatest likelihood of a positive tenure outcome.
- 2) Recruiting, retraining, and producing social science graduates at all levels that are similarly diverse and representative of the demographic groups that will constitute society in coming decades. Such efforts must recognize the competitive nature of graduate student recruitment and acknowledge the inefficacy of assuming that our national rankings alone will draw students to this institution. As such, it would make sense to conduct a review of the competitiveness of current recruiting practices and recruitment packages offered to highly qualified graduates at the graduate level, and an examination of recruiting practices at the undergraduate level.
- 3) Supporting and encouraging development of courses reflective of the rich tapestry of world society. This would include redressing existing merit and promotion barriers to collaboration with interdisciplinary programs (e.g., ethnic studies, international studies, environmental studies) to allow the greatest amount of creativity possible for faculty and students alike.

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