

Team 6: Institutional Integrity: Being a Responsible and Sustainable Public Institution

Executive Summary

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In addressing the overall question of “What it means to be a great public research university in a changing world,” the team for Sub-Theme #6 was charged with considering issues of “institutional integrity,” or how UW-Madison could ensure that it operates as “a responsible and sustainable public institution.”

As we discussed the issues surrounding institutional integrity, we challenged ourselves to engage with three related **questions**:

- What values drive UW-Madison faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders?
- What ethical responsibilities does UW-Madison bear in pursuit of these values?
- What must UW-Madison do to sustain its ability to ethically pursue its values as a great public research university?

The **values** which we propose to reaffirm and rearticulate are:

- Academic freedom to question, learn, create, and teach
- Contribution to political, economic, and cultural progress
- Stewardship of environmental, intellectual, and cultural resources
- Diversity with regard to goals, backgrounds, and beliefs
- Access to the university without regard to wealth, background, or belief

UW-Madison faculty, staff, and students have developed structures designed to institutionalize a way of acting ethically and with integrity in realizing the university’s values and responsibilities. The **ethical responsibilities** that accompany these values--beginning with our responsibility within the university to one another and extending outward to our community, our State, and to the global community--are to:

- Keep our promises: Integrate our values, words, and actions and keep our promises as articulated in our values.
- Speak the truth: Practice truth-telling in conduct of research, teaching, and service. Leadership needed to build trust with the people of the State.
- Avoid harm: Provide a safe and welcoming community for all.
- Repair harm when it is done: Acknowledge and amend mistakes.
- Practice justice: Be and be perceived to be fair.

These values and ethical responsibilities point to a **vision** of four different types of sustainability, each of which we believe will be crucial to the ethical pursuit of our values in the twenty-first century:

- Sustaining our **environment**: Responsible resource use and land stewardship. Creating a campus culture of stewardship through teaching, research, and engagement.

- Sustaining our **relationships**: Keeping the public’s trust, attention, and support through increased engagement, communication, and leadership. Reinvigorating the Wisconsin Idea.
- Sustaining our **excellence**: Effective, inclusive, and democratic governance. Enabling more effective leadership and bolstering or modifying reward structures to support our values.
- Sustaining our **funding**: Keeping the institution financially strong and agile. Negotiating a new partnership with the State that will support undergraduate education, keep us competitive, and facilitate planning.

In order to achieve these sustainability goals, we propose re-imagining UW-Madison as a “**public purpose university**” — a hybrid form which is able to thrive in a new global environment of knowledge production under conditions of declining state support, but which is still willing and able to defend those ideals of social justice, academic freedom, and public accountability that have been the hallmarks of this great public research university.