

**University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Reaccreditation Self-Study**

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

**Report Submitted by Co-Chairs  
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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In addressing the overall question of “what does it mean to be a great public university in a changing world,” Team 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 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 is 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 reimagining UW–Madison as a *public purpose university*—a hybrid form that 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.

## II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Wisconsin–Madison has been known as a *great public research university* for as long as the term has existed. Not only does excellence in research pervade all of the university’s activities, but classes are taught by people actively engaged in the creation of new knowledge, and the public is served by experts eager to apply their discoveries to social and economic problems.

Over its long history, the university has faced many challenges. It has survived two world wars and a great depression. It has flourished during periods of student apathy toward politics and during periods of protest and activism. It has enjoyed periods of financial prosperity and it has weathered periods of deprivation. Through all of this, it has been committed to its core values of research, teaching, and public service.

The university has excelled by adapting to the changing environment in which it has found itself. It is not an easy feat, because adaptation always involves predicting the future and taking chances. But by remaining true to its primary mission, “to create, integrate, transfer and apply knowledge,”<sup>1</sup> the university has flourished even as it has adapted to new circumstances.

Today presents just such a moment of change in which UW–Madison must reconsider and rearticulate its core values, its avowed responsibilities, and its potential for sustainability. Our university and our state both face a changing landscape—political, economic, technological, environmental, and cultural. This report, developed by faculty, staff, and students, with input from within and beyond the campus community, looks both backward and forward, not only to reaffirm the longstanding values and responsibilities of our flagship state research university, but also to boldly sustain them through uncertain times.

In addressing the overall question of “what does it mean to be a great public research university in a changing world,” Team 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.”

To address this question, we developed a core group of nine and an advisory group of fifteen. These groups were made up of faculty, staff, and students, as well as community members. The core group began the process of grappling with the issues and outlined main themes. As themes and ideas developed we convened the advisory group in order to widen the input. We took advantage of existing documents ideas within our charge, engaged in conversation with members of the Wisconsin Alumni Association Board, and examined the thousands of responses to the Web-based survey of campus and community members. We drew on our individual experiences as members of community groups, governance groups such as department chairs, and committees across campus. In addition

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<sup>1</sup> David Ward, chancellor 1993–2000, articulated this simplified form of a longer 1988 Mission Statement found at <http://www.wisc.edu/about/administration/mission.php>.

we listened carefully to the groups assembled specifically by the leaders of the accreditation effort.

Through this process we carefully considered questions of values, ethics, and sustainability. The result is a vision for transforming UW–Madison from a “public research university” into a “public purpose university”—emerging from this moment of challenge with a restructured financial and governance relationship to the legislature, but still focused on and committed to our mission and to the people of the state of Wisconsin.

## A. Values

The first question with which our team grappled was: What values drive UW–Madison faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders?

Although the phrase “Wisconsin Idea” dates from a 1912 book by Wisconsin State Legislative Librarian Charles McCarthy,<sup>2</sup> the notion that the University of Wisconsin must sustain a mutually productive relationship with all the people of its state has been present since the university’s founding, and continues to be reinterpreted and reinforced today. While the model of engagement to which it gave birth is now seen as commonplace, at the time it was regarded as a true innovation guided by the needs of the adult citizens of the state. In considering our university’s institutional integrity and sustainability, it is important to hear the words of Theodore Roosevelt in the introduction to McCarthy’s book: “In Wisconsin there has been a successful effort to redeem the promises by performances, and to reduce theories into practice.” As one historian of the Wisconsin Idea has said, it is “the idealistic and humane concern that knowledge could and should have practical impact on the needs, problems and aspirations of the people.”<sup>3</sup>

In this document we have assembled a core set of values which we feel exemplify the ongoing relevance of the Wisconsin Idea today and call us to a reinvigoration of its guiding principles.

### **1. Academic freedom to question, learn, create, and teach**

The tablet before Wisconsin’s Bascom Hall calls us to the “fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found,” and it is, we argue, our core value—the one from which all others follow. As both an educational and a research institution, UW–Madison values the production of knowledge in all its forms; however, it also recognizes that the most useful and reliable knowledge is that which is always itself subject to further question. Thus we value, support, and strive for excellence in the entire chain of knowledge production: both theoretical formulation and empirical research; both

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<sup>2</sup> Charles McCarthy, *The Wisconsin Idea* (New York: 1912). Available at <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader/Contents/Idea.html> (accessed April 23, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> J. Gooch, *Transplanting Extension: A New Look at the Wisconsin Idea* (Madison, WI: UW Extension Printing Services: 1995), p. 15, Daniel Schugurensky, *History of Education: Selected Moments of the 20th Century*. Available at [http://www.wier.ca/~daniel\\_schugurens/assignment1/1907wisconsin.html](http://www.wier.ca/~daniel_schugurens/assignment1/1907wisconsin.html) (accessed April 24, 2008).

external publication and classroom teaching; both technological innovation and artistic imagination.

However, it is not only faculty and staff who must assert the value of intellectual freedom in their research, teaching, and writing. Students must assert their freedom to enact their own educational plans and take responsibility for wrestling with the content of their courses. And stakeholders from across the state—whether corporate, civic, or citizen—must enact their freedom to challenge and educate the university with their own stories, needs and ideas. Maintaining an environment where such rational discussion, debate, and discovery can be sustained requires a commitment to peer review of knowledge, democratic self-governance, and civil communication.

## **2. Contribution to political, economic, and cultural progress**

As UW President Charles Van Hise put it in 1904, “the beneficent influence of the University” must reach “every home in the state.” But today, through the knowledge-production activities of UW–Madison faculty, staff, and students, that beneficent influence can take many forms. Our goal is that both students and their families value the combined broad liberal education and specific professional training that a UW–Madison undergraduate education offers, with its promise to start a young adult—or even a mature one—on a lifetime of personal and economic well-being. Around the state, we hope that local communities of all sizes value the UW–Madison contribution to general economic growth and informed political debate—both crucial in a political economy that is increasingly technological and globalized. And we need to ensure that crosscutting social communities of all sorts—whether based on shared ethnic heritage or shared political vision—value the university’s commitment to understand and support the diverse cultural histories and achievements of our state’s residents, old and new.

Our relationships with all of these stakeholders cannot be taken for granted. Just as we need the people of our state to value our contributions to their well-being, so do we need to value their comments, contributions, and critiques of our performance.

## **3. Stewardship of environmental, intellectual, and cultural resources**

It is often said that the modern environmental movement started in Wisconsin, with UW–Madison faculty, students, and alumni like Aldo Leopold, John Muir, and Gaylord Nelson. The “land ethic” that was first articulated in Wisconsin reminds us that progress can carry costs—and informed debate about this is increasingly critical in a world subject to both intensified resource use and global climate change. We value not only the stewardship of our natural environment, however; intellectual and cultural resources, whether material archives or indigenous languages, must also be cared for in a world of rapid social change. As an institution, UW–Madison values the ability (and the responsibility) to carefully consider the ecological, intellectual, and cultural capital that must be left to future generations of Wisconsin residents in order to sustain progress over the long term.

This value points to the fact that stewardship on behalf of the state of Wisconsin carries implications far beyond the boundaries of the state. Questions of environmental sustainability and cultural survival are global in nature; thus, our research, teaching, and service related to these issues must transcend the boundaries of the state (and the nation) as well.

#### **4. Diversity with regard to goals, backgrounds, and beliefs**

More than two decades ago, the university initiated its diversity efforts: the 1988 Madison Plan, the UW System Design for Diversity, and the 1993 Madison Commitment, followed by the UW System-wide production of Plan 2008—“a broad and aggressive plan for what we need to do to make institutional improvements necessary to achieve greater diversity on campus” in the new millennium. Simultaneous with this commitment to diversity was a recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary knowledge production, which would bring that same diversity of our faculty, staff, and students to bear on the crucial research problems of the day. The recent and well-deserved attention to such issues can obscure the fact that our state has always been home to a diverse array of cultures and constituencies. Today economic pressures and technological infrastructures make it easier for Wisconsin residents to be exposed to ideas, projects, and communities different from their own—often reaching farther and faster across the globe than ever before. But we must remember that Wisconsin residents themselves, and the interests they hold, are also diversifying in new and exciting ways.

UW–Madison values its role as an intellectual meeting ground at this global crossroads, both for the individual faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders who inevitably bring their diverse life experiences of location, language, gender, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity to bear on their participation in the campus community, and for the diverse range of ideas and projects themselves that these same faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders “sift and winnow” through every day. The university’s twin goals of progress and stewardship through knowledge production depend on both encouraging the constant challenge of diverse viewpoints and enabling the common consensus between diverse individuals.

#### **5. Access to the university without regard to wealth, background, or belief**

Finally, UW–Madison recognizes the fact that diversity without equity is an empty promise. Whether through hiring practices for faculty and staff, or admissions practices for students of all sorts, the university values its role as an institution with not only high standards, but wide access. Historically, when many other universities would not admit Jewish students, the University of Wisconsin did so, demonstrating an early commitment to access regardless of wealth, background or belief. Upholding this value means recognizing the diversity of social conditions—economic, geographic, educational, and cultural—that discourage or even prevent participation by some while enabling and even encouraging participation by others. Claims that UW–Madison contributes to progress and stewardship within Wisconsin are hollow without the assurance of representation and participation for a range of Wisconsin residents as questioners, learners, creators, and teachers.



But mere presence is not enough. All parts of the university community must be allowed to feel that this is where they belong: where they are safe, where they can disagree or dissent, and where their contributions are honored. If we value diversity and access, faculty and staff at UW–Madison must continually demonstrate respect for each other and all students and stakeholders.

## **B. Ethical responsibilities**

Given these core values, the second question the team addressed was: What ethical responsibilities does UW–Madison bear in pursuit of these values?

Although we believe that the values which today follow from the Wisconsin Idea are widely shared by most UW–Madison faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders, enacting such values in daily practice is never easy. Indeed, we discovered in the course of our investigations that many people who joined our community in the recent past did not know the historical importance and uniqueness of the Wisconsin Idea or the Sifting and Winnowing commitment, and thus were less likely to embrace them wholeheartedly. We must be much more intentional in communicating these foundational values.

Conflicts over the best way to achieve our values, especially in an institutional environment of diverse participants, multifaceted goals, and material constraints of time, space, and funds, are inevitable. UW–Madison faculty, staff, and students have developed a myriad of structures designed to create ethical norms and institutionalize ways of acting ethically and with integrity in realizing the university's values and responsibilities. But these structures often seem to split our university community along lines of discipline and authority, tied as they are to a diversity of professions, jobs, and roles that faculty, staff, and students must hold. And however well-constructed and understood they may be, our ethical responsibilities seem to be made visible outside of the walls of the university only when we are shown to fall short of them. This section explores and summarizes our most fundamental ethical guidelines, and suggests some ways in which these ethics might be more fully and intentionally enacted and adapted, and better communicated as both the university and the state move forward together into the future.

### **1. Keep our promises**

For the UW–Madison to have integrity requires that the university does what it says: it must integrate its values, words, and actions. We must keep our promises as articulated in our values. We must not only invest our rhetoric, but also our reality, in facilitating access to a quality university education; in creating a workplace that honors diversity among our faculty, staff and students in all the richness that term implies; in engaging the people of the state; in being accountable for our resources and our actions.

## **2. Speak truth**

The UW–Madison and the members of its community must tell the truth, not only in the conduct of our research and in the exercise of teaching, but in our communications with each other and the people of the state. While state and federal laws and countervailing values of privacy and fairness may preclude complete transparency, being accountable means revealing any conflicts of interest; exposing our mistakes and accepting responsibility for them; examining our lapses with honesty while planning ways to remedy them; and communicating quickly and clearly with our constituencies. It is at this juncture that leadership is most required, for we earn the trust of the people of the state through honest and open dialogue, even when we feel we must articulate and defend a position that is likely to draw public opposition.

## **3. Avoid harm**

Leadership is also required to build and maintain the structures and processes of accountability. A large, complex community like the UW–Madison, more populous and diverse than most cities in Wisconsin, is bound to suffer instances in which the behavior of one member harms others, whether intentionally or not. We are aware, in addition, that the often highly structured distinctions among faculty, academic staff, classified staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students can appear to sanction behavior that creates a harmful work or class environment for some members of the UW–Madison community and damages the whole community. Finding ways to reduce harmful distinctions while preserving essential roles and supporting diversity provides a challenge to existing personnel and governance structures. Students have strongly expressed their desire for a safe environment—physically, intellectually, and emotionally. They too, have an obligation to learn—hopefully from the models we set—their own place as citizens who respect one another.

In engaging our communities in the state, we have a number of safeguards for the protection of research participants, but fewer safeguards for protection of participants in community engagement or service activities. Recent initiatives to improve service learning address some of these gaps. And if we truly value the stewardship of our land and the many cultures that inhabit it, we need to consider safeguards against the loss of irreplaceable environmental and cultural resources. We believe that we must be reflective and have an institutionalized process for querying ourselves about our own integrity, that we must hold ourselves accountable if we fail in upholding this principle. Federal agencies support our efforts to follow ethical principles in funded research; we must find ways to ensure accountability in other areas of our work, such as teaching and community engagement.

## **4. Repair harm when it is done**

Accountability—at every level of the university community from student to chancellor and regent—includes acknowledging when we have done harm and providing reparations

when appropriate. Reparations may mean identifying the causes of our failures and then creating new structures to prevent further harm and to rebuild trust. Again, we are aware that pressures to deny responsibility for a wrong done can be extremely high, especially when reparations may be costly and there may be gradations of responsibility for the harm done, but we believe that the trust built through openness and communication—as well as adherence to our ethical principles—should mitigate our fears of owning our mistakes.

## **5. Practice justice**

The treatment of colleagues both within and without the university and the provision of a system of accountability go to the ethical principle of justice. While justice is a concept that requires tomes to explicate, we here refer to fairness, to equity. The UW–Madison must be, and be perceived to be, fair, to treat its members with equity and without fear or favor in matters large and small. Challenges to fairness no doubt occur in such instances as the lack of domestic partner benefits. They are certainly perceived by the general public when an athlete appears to get less or more punishment for an out-of-class infringement than a nonathlete would, or when a woman junior faculty member is mentored with less attention than her male colleague. Equitable access to both university resources and to university procedures of review, redress, and grievance is critical if we are to maintain the trust and enthusiasm of a diverse university population within a diverse state and nation. While a number of procedures for achieving equity or redressing injustices exist within the university’s governance structures, they are often onerous and protracted, limited by outside forces or slowed by inertia; ways should be sought to improve these processes.

## **III. VISION**

The broad values of our university and the ethical responsibilities required to pursue them are indeed shared by many public research universities. But at Wisconsin they have both a particular history and a specific future:

- We are guests on the land of the Ho Chunk people who lived here before it was “granted” to the university and we recognize that relationship requires our attention.
- Our history is tied explicitly through seminal documents to the Wisconsin Idea and to academic freedom as articulated in the Sifting and Winnowing statement. We have been leaders and models in both community engagement and intellectual freedom since the Progressive Era.
- Our state’s economy is still undergoing a long transition from manufacturing to services, and faces particular challenges in creating a new technological, skill, and knowledge infrastructure for successful global competition.
- Federal grant support focuses attention to the priorities of external funders and thereby runs the danger of reducing the faculty and staff available more

intentionally to carry out our commitment to the activities that make up the enactment of the Wisconsin Idea within the state.

- Our state and our nation are becoming more diverse; newer immigrants look and sound different from the earlier northern and eastern Europeans.
- Increasing costs for highways and corrections compete with health care, human services, and education.
- Our environment is feeling both the effects of rapid and poorly planned urban development and the consequences of intensive agricultural production.
- With growing complexity in both the university and state government—and the competition for available dollars to keep up with increasing costs and expectations—controls on university operations have become more confining, making it more difficult to quickly respond to our next issue or challenge.
- And as a “battleground state” in national elections, our politicians are split not only in their views on all these issues, but also in their views on the role that UW–Madison should play in helping to address those issues.

We need a new sustainable model if we are to successfully strive to enact our values as a *great public research university* in an environment of decreasing state funding and increasing state challenges to our operations. If we are to responsibly pursue our values, if we are to continue to achieve excellence, neither reduced state support nor constraining state regulation seems sustainable. In order to thrive and to engage with and for the people of the state on important issues the University of Wisconsin–Madison needs to become more sustainable in four crucial areas.

A. Sustaining our environment: Responsible resource use and land stewardship

The state of Wisconsin has been the home to some of the greatest naturalists in our nation’s history. It is only logical that the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where many of these great environmentalists worked while students or scholars, should choose to operate in a sustainable way that nurtures and preserves the values of those great founders of the environmental movement—and that respect the sacredness of the lake area to First Nations people. We want to conduct our business of research, teaching and engagement in an environmentally sustainable way that transforms the university—from its energy use to its curriculum—from an “ivory tower” into a “green ivy tower.”

In our 2005 Campus Master Plan we named sustainability as first in a list of major components of a successful university, and that plan, now being implemented, embodies sustainability with its choice of land use values, type of construction, and facilities design so as to reach that “Goal #1: Protect, enhance and celebrate our lakeside setting. Develop sustainability guidelines using ‘green’ building materials and techniques. Reduce our impact on the land and better manage energy use.”

Our first evaluation of the impact of measures already taken reveal significant impacts in cost savings and reduced carbon emissions of adopting more sustainable practices. We need further analysis of the impacts of more sustainable practices on our energy use, land

use, transportation, food services, buildings, recycling and waste management. In addition, we need a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which we incorporate principles of sustainability in our courses and whether there should be a general education requirement related to sustainability.

To accomplish that goal we propose the following initiatives:

**1. Curriculum and research.** Teach in class and by example sustainable environmental stewardship that is technologically and ethically sound that students can carry with them to any other community in the future; focus the intellectual power of the entire university community on solving sustainability needs; and communicate the results.

Sustainability is already incorporated into the curriculum in programs from engineering to environmental studies. The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies has produced a useful Web site that outlines efforts around campus, from A to Z. This extensive catalog shows how disjointed campus efforts are and how often sustainability is pigeonholed into specific classes and groups. Rather, we suggest individual units act in a manner that appreciates that sustainable practice requires a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach with global implications for both research and teaching. It's not a *system* that curriculum and research needs to pay attention to, but the *ecology* of systems that counts, with additional focus on environmental, social justice and economic justice issues.

We propose that the provost lead such a campuswide effort through a focused year of discussions, lectures, visiting fellows, and other university outreach efforts to develop and explain university sustainability goals. The provost should in addition make available monies to encourage, develop, and institutionalize interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students, staff, and faculty focused on sustainability.

**2. Administration and operations.** Conduct everyday business in ways that demonstrate an ethical commitment to sustainable practices. Include a thorough analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that would accompany the adoption of more intensive sustainability initiatives. Review and adopt best use of local resources, including transportation, foodstuff, waste management, and fuel.

We propose a university sustainability coordinator, a sustainability outreach coordinator and other "green" officials involved with procurement, housing and dining, energy, environmental management services (EMS), building and natural areas, among others. The work of these will be aided by sustainability advisory committees on topics including transportation, facilities, EMS, student life, curriculum, energy creation and use, recycling (from coal ash to medical equipment), building construction, construction waste management, surplus, and vendor relations. With the guidance of these groups, and working together with all shared governance groups, the university will create a master plan for sustaining our built as well as our natural environment.

**3. Campus culture.** Engage all UW–Madison faculty, staff, and students, as well as the communities with which we share our governance and our state, in efforts to solve

sustainability needs and to communicate both the problems and the solutions to those beyond our boundaries.

Achieving the goals will require the attention of the entire university community to such mundane things as how we get rid of pests, how we pick up and recycle after football games, how we serve and consume our beverages, and how long we let trucks idle at worksites. We propose expanding and promoting the Nelson Institute Web site as a model for a clearinghouse on sustainability initiatives, including a bimonthly electronic newsletter and workshops for faculty, staff and students.

**4. Community service and engagement.** Be an example of sustainability for other government agencies, businesses, organizations, tribes, communities. Learn from our sister University of Wisconsin campuses their best practices. Engage with all these communities to learn best practices they have discovered and aid in their dissemination.

The university needs to explain its sustainable efforts both internally and externally. With the backdrop of the Wisconsin Idea, the university should begin a “Climate Academy” to coordinate, promote and support educational presentations on campus, including a yearly conference open to all that celebrates the university and community effort to converge private, public, and social sectors to create a sustainable social and environmental benefit.

**B. Sustaining our relationships: Keeping the public’s trust, attention, and support**

In order to embody our historic values and our ethical concerns, the university must be able to gain and keep the public’s trust, attention, and support. In order to gain the public’s trust, we must behave with integrity, honor our commitments, and have structures in place that will support, encourage, or enforce the behaviors we espouse. Creating the structures that will support our values and ethical principles will not be easy; nevertheless, the process to create such a system of support may prove to be as important as the product.

It is time to have a “grand conversation,” with as many of our constituencies as possible, about ethics and values and the structures that are needed to support them. Each of our governance bodies should address the roles we play and how we play them in order to make this conversation fruitful.

We need visible leadership, leadership not only from higher administration and the deans’ level—although most certainly from them—but from all members of the community. We need to invest in learning to communicate both our challenges and our successes. We must communicate in ways that resonate, being proactive and respectful in explaining our values even when we ultimately must agree to disagree with our audiences. Often we are tempted to communicate less when we perceive a possible conflict. We must resist that temptation and communicate more at points of misunderstanding. Leaders must find ways to tell our stories that will deepen the communities’ understanding of the university.

We are obliged to begin a public conversation to redesign the relationship between the state and the university in order that the new relationship be intentional, not determined by the vagaries of the political process. That public conversation must not, however, be confined to a few meetings with invited guests. Rather the university should engage the state's citizens in an ongoing dialog beginning immediately and continuing through the 2012 centennial of the Wisconsin Idea, through projects undertaken in state communities, and perhaps through a statewide conference open to all who wish to attend. We should ask: What would be the shape of a new relationship? How can we sustain the core values of mutual engagement underlying the Wisconsin Idea in that new relationship? With alternate funding or governance models, how can we assure—or reassure—the tradition of access? These are just some of the questions that require public discussion.

C. Sustaining our excellence: Effective, inclusive, and democratic governance

Although the law establishing the University of Wisconsin System outlined the basics of shared governance, through which the roles of the members of the community in relation to each are defined, a growing number of community members feel these guidelines need clarification in order to facilitate our reaching our ethical goals. We hear concerns about faculty members, for example, who rely on *Faculty Policies and Procedures* to describe a “letter” by which they must abide, but who fail to embrace the “spirit” of the document and to behave responsibly in areas that are not precisely defined: who may exclude academic staff from governance; who treat classified staff members badly without consequence, but terminate a classified staff member for behaving disrespectfully toward a faculty member; or who take advantage of their power differential in relationships of one kind or another with graduate students. It is important that we discover where our processes and structures are not aligned with our desired outcomes and design accountability structures or processes to establish and maintain standards of behavior in a way that will help us to create a climate in which all members of the university community can reach their potential.

We need to consider vesting our department chairs with sufficient authority and providing them with enough training to encourage or enforce our shared ethical values. In addition, given short term appointments, department chairs may never learn their role—or may hesitate to exercise what authority they have—as the role rotates through the faculty, thus creating a vacuum in leadership in one of the hardest jobs on campus. These issues of training, authority, and short terms are complicated by the fact that departments in many sectors of the campus are being transcended by centers and institutes, which change the locus of control. We should build on the work of WISELI for search committee training as well as the initiatives of Laurie Beth Clark, vice provost for faculty and staff, and her colleagues, and Maury Cotter in the Office of Quality Improvement, to develop mandatory training for department chairs, including appropriate compensation for their time if held outside the normal nine-month faculty contract period.

In addition, our reward structures should be reconceived so that faculty—particularly junior faculty—are no longer actively discouraged from the kind of community engagement in support of the Wisconsin Idea which we espouse as a central value of the university and in which we must be effective partners. Currently, by the time tenure is achieved, faculty members have their gaze firmly fixed on particular kinds of research or perhaps teaching, but few are focused on enlarging their engagement with the community. While we demonstrate our values by investing in our junior faculty and do not pit one against another for a finite set of tenured positions, we inhibit their engagement in our service ethic by devaluing it. We need to broaden our definition of excellence in research and teaching to include community based research in which the learners may not be in the classroom, or the classroom may not be in the university per se. We need a system that articulates community engagement in the Wisconsin Idea as a basic value and expectation of being a member of the UW–Madison community and encourages faculty to make names for themselves not only as researchers or teachers, but also as “social entrepreneurs” or “public intellectuals.”

If we sustain our environment, enhance and reinvigorate our engagement with the state, rebuild trust, and enhance our governance to support our values more strongly, we will have gone a long way toward sustaining the UW–Madison as a great university. However, to sustain the UW–Madison financially and to provide the flexibility it needs in an increasingly competitive environment, we must also consider new models of funding and governance.

D. Sustaining our funding: Keeping the institution financially strong and agile

As a result of a slowing economy and a lack of substantial economic and population growth, the state annually deals with fiscal challenges. And this is not a new phenomenon. Legislators have long faced tough funding choices for health care, corrections, state infrastructures, K–12 education, and the University of Wisconsin. With funding either cut or flat, the university has suffered from, at best, a lack of certainty at biennial budget times. This uncertainty has created a funding crisis.

Regardless of the data used to measure the impact of several decades of slow fiscal growth, funding for UW–Madison and K–12 school districts has not kept up with increasing costs. It is difficult for observers to recognize a single crisis point in the decline of “real buying power” in state funding. Some of the cuts to overall funding occur as a result of inflation and are not cuts to total dollars, making the reality of the impact even more difficult for the public to understand. This lack of understanding is also the result of the university’s past ability to adapt to cuts in ways that have minimized the impact on undergraduate instruction. There is also a lack of understanding of the distinction between capital building projects or research, where the university has the capacity to raise federal and private funds designated for specific purposes, and the operating budget that funds undergraduate education programs. Thus, it seems to both legislative leaders and the public that the university can be cut with impunity since there are so many publicized discoveries and so much visible construction on campus.



What is not obvious to the public is that reduced support today damages the university over the longer term in ways that may take a generation or more to undo even if funding sufficient to account for inflation and provide for needed program growth is restored—an unlikely probability given the trend data over the past several years and the current economic forecast. When classes are cut; when library collections fail to keep abreast of current literature; when distinguished faculty depart with their grants, their top graduate students, and their capacity for educating Wisconsin undergraduates to go to a better-funded university; when faculty members are not replaced due to lack of funds—the full effects are felt only over the long term.

UW–Madison finds itself in a more complex and competitive higher education sector than thirty years ago. Starting salaries for faculty and academic staff are set by a national market, but annual raises are set by a local market. Thus, on occasion over the past twenty-five years, the state has been persuaded to allocate “catch-up” salary increases. Even so, every year some of our best faculty and staff are lured away by significant salary increases or availability of domestic partner benefits. We in turn try to lure senior faculty to replace them, but often must pay junior faculty higher salaries than those established and productive faculty members who have not sought to leave. This creates salary compression within departments that encourages more outside offers and lowers morale. To make matters more difficult, state rules and labor contracts make it difficult to compete even in the local market for professional and blue collar classified staff.

An outstanding faculty and staff is the foundation of an outstanding university. The faculty is affected not only by low salaries, but also by the loss of the best graduate applicants to universities that are able to provide more attractive funding. This is a continual downward cycle. When the loss of distinguished faculty and promising graduate students is combined with an annual loss of real dollars, it reduces the attractiveness of the university to prospective—and current—faculty members and graduate students and potentially reduces the quality of undergraduate teaching. Once Wisconsin loses its esteemed place among public research universities, it will take generations to regain it, if it ever does.

In addition, although UW–Madison has become quite successful in attracting external funding for capital projects, there is a problem in that even if the project is entirely funded externally, the Department of Administration and the Legislature have created procedures and management processes that significantly increase costs and therefore decrease the scope of what can be accomplished. Processes that are designed to achieve economies of scale for state agencies often fail to recognize the distinctive needs of UW–Madison, which requires flexibility, rapid response and the ability to apply best practices and current technology in the realms of human resources, information technology and procurement in order to function efficiently and effectively and to compete globally. The processes can also negatively impact donors who object to the lack of flexibility and the fees which reduce the overall impact of their generous gifts.

All of these situations have strained the UW–Madison’s partnership with the state and at times with the people of the state. It has left both ends of State Street unsatisfied with the status quo and unable to do meaningful long-term planning. Amelioration of the state’s economic woes may well rest with UW–Madison, but it is hard to create economic growth without stable financial and political support. The partnership is further strained during each biennial budget cycle and what now has become a regular occurrence, the midbudget adjustment. Redefining the partnership with each budget cycle—and sometimes in between—has harmed the relationship and made it difficult for the university to plan and respond to a rapidly changing world.

Just as it is time to reinvigorate the Wisconsin Idea, it is also time to redefine and reinvigorate the financial and governance partnership between the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the state. It is time to reconfirm the historic commitment to provide stable state support for higher education. UW–Madison also needs to make a commitment to this partnership by continually demonstrating that it is a good steward of the funds it receives and responsive to the citizens of the state who provide those funds. UW–Madison’s sustainability depends on its ability to thoughtfully use resources and maximize the value received for the investment made by the state.

A new partnership with the state that includes a new model of governance needs to emerge. This new partnership if done correctly can strengthen the relationship with the state and its citizens, stabilize funding, and release UW–Madison to act quickly to changing conditions and challenges. We must plan strategically to sustain this great university while there are still some degrees of freedom. We should not wait until the losses are substantial enough to forever change the nature of the university and its accessibility to Wisconsin students, its relationship to the people, and its ability to help solve the challenges of the state.

#### IV. IDEAS FOR MOVING FORWARD OUR VISION

In order to achieve these goals of sustaining our environment, our relationships, our excellence, and our funding, we propose reimagining 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 increased competition for resources, committed to enacting and defending the ideals of social justice, academic freedom, and public accountability.

In the recent book *The True Genius of America at Risk*,<sup>4</sup> Katharine Lyall and Kathleen Sell defined this idea of a public purpose university based on *mission*, as distinguished from the current model of a public university based on ownership and regulation. Briefly, a public purpose university must:

- compete in a market that includes private universities, proprietary institutions, and online academies;

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<sup>4</sup> Praeger, 2005.

- stand for social justice by maintaining a broad commitment to access;
- be bold in applying the university’s intellectual resources to social and scientific problems, but cautious about promising sweeping solutions to immediate problems;
- be fierce defenders of academic freedom and the freedom of faculty and students to speak and act on controversial issues;
- work with elected officials to stabilize public investment in the core instructional mission at sustainable levels in exchange for specific, accountable outcomes and services;
- have a governing board that approximates the representation of its major investors: taxpayers, students, research contractors, alumni, and donors;
- have some form of quasi-public status that remains accountable to its stakeholders for appropriate outcomes.

Our team found these imperatives to be quite consistent with the core values and ethical responsibilities of UW–Madison as detailed above. Thus we believe the public purpose university offers a way to effectively address our questions of long-term sustainability, including the key question of economic sustainability.

Thus, most likely, a combination of strategies would need to be developed for this new partnership to work. For example, an agreement might be reached with the state that combines a block grant of tax dollars with a tuition increase and a specified increase in the endowment for financial aid. In this way we might restructure UW–Madison as a “public benefit corporation.” But however it is assembled, a diversity of funding sources means that there is a concomitant diversity of constituencies to which the university is answerable: the students and their parents, who pay tuition; the governor and legislature, even though the portion of the budget supported by state tax dollars is declining; the external funding agencies who have their own agendas; the major donors who expect the university to be reflective of their values; and the general public, who both pay the taxes and have a sense of ownership in the educational enterprise. There is an internal public, too—the students, faculty and staff—without which a self-governing academic institution cannot maintain excellence. It is safe to say that the current system of university governance—from the board of regents down to the academic departments—does not reflect the reality of the changing financial pressures on UW–Madison. Governance should be rethought.

Such changes cannot happen overnight. But there are already models in Wisconsin that incorporate the ideas of the public purpose university. The UW Hospital and Clinics were moved out of the university’s (and state’s) budget and regulatory domain and made an independent public authority at a time when the state’s “equity interest” in the hospital was below 5 percent. The move was driven by the hospital’s need to stay financially viable in the rapidly changing, entrepreneurial environment of health care delivery so that it could continue to treat patients and educate medical students.

Bolder models are found in other states. At the University of Virginia, for example, the law and business schools are now “tubs on their own bottoms” without taxpayer support,

and taxed-back by the university to support core costs (such as libraries, general education, and overhead ). The entire public university system has evolved into a “charter model” that makes each institution responsible for certain public service outcomes and frees it to operate more independently and competitively. Other universities are considering calling for similar steps.

In one way or another, a sound public-regarding solution must fashion UW–Madison into a public purpose university that continues to be based on service to the public good. The university’s long adherence to the Wisconsin Idea and to its land-grant mission provides a solid strategic base for this effort. Philosophical, educational, political, and practical issues must be hammered out. It will be a challenge, but the preservation of a resource that has been built over more than a century and a half impels us to succeed.

In sum, we recognize that many elements must be addressed if UW–Madison faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders are to consider moving toward a public purpose university in a way that would sustainably preserve our core values and ethical responsibilities. We hope to inspire questions and discussion on the following steps:

- examine structural models in other states such as Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota to explore both the state-assisted and constitutional models, which would allow operating outside the rubric of state personnel and other systems;
- identify realistic and reliable additional alternate sources of income for both the operating and capital budgets;
- develop a proactive and fully funded state and university financial-aid approach that ties growth in financial aid to growth in tuition and overall need;
- establish a favorable and separate bonding authority for the university or other substantially increased, capital budget flexibility;
- gradually phase-out state authority over university personnel rules and capital expenditures;
- enhance effective managerial and administrative capacity in the absence of state regulation—including a change in business practices, with the accompanying challenge to develop new information processing;
- create a UW–Madison Board of Trustees;
- create the appropriate legal umbrella of a newly constituted, public purpose UW-Madison, such as a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation; and clarification of the place of UW–Madison within the UW System of higher education.

## **V. REQUESTS FOR ADVICE**

We have argued that an interlocking set of core values, ethical responsibilities, and sustainability concerns point to the need for a redefinition of the University of Wisconsin–Madison as a “public purpose university.” We hope this report can open a wider conversation about these issues, and we invite readers to respond to some critical questions that we have left unanswered:

- Assuming the values that we have articulated are indeed desirable and widely

shared among the diverse constituents of the university, what are some visible ways in which these values might better be embodied in our daily practice of research, teaching, and community engagement and what are we as a community willing to sacrifice to maintain them?

- How might the concepts of teaching and research be broadened to embrace community-based research that helps to enact the Wisconsin Idea?
- What gaps exist in structures and processes that are currently in place to support the ethical responsibilities that we have identified?
- How can the obstacles to equity that seem inherent in our personnel systems be mitigated?
- What kinds of contradictions might exist between the various sustainability goals that we have advocated—for example, when does sustaining economic growth as an institution conflict with sustaining the health of the natural and social environment and the economic well-being of the state?
- When does sustaining a fair and functional form of internal governance make it more difficult to sustain the public trust? How should such conflicts be addressed?
- How can we make issues of ethics, engagement, and the environment part of the everyday conversation and culture of the university community and ensure that these values are also reflected in our research and teaching missions?
- How can we keep track of our progress on issues as pervasive but personal as the ethics and integrity of the university community? What reflective processes of accountability can be implemented?
- What are the first steps to be taken if we hope to move to the model of the public purpose university outlined above?

We recognize that our task to articulate values and ethics within a framework of integrity and sustainability does not lend itself to easy answers, but rather to tough questions. But engaging those questions with seriousness of purpose and generosity of spirit is imperative to the future of the great University of Wisconsin–Madison.

To fail in sustaining our relationships, our excellence, our environment, or our funding within the framework of our historic values and our ethical responsibilities is to decide to relinquish our claim to being one of the world’s great public research universities.

If we succeed, our faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders will appreciate our ethical practices and efforts to build a community of openness and trust. Every Wisconsin community will be aware of the university’s efforts to live in a more responsible and creative, sustainable relationship not only with the soil and Four Lakes on which we sit, but with our many state communities. They will understand that their future is intimately tied with the future of the university—and they will have participated, through statewide conversations, in shaping that future. The University of Wisconsin–Madison will be perceived not only within the state of Wisconsin, but across the country as once again modeling the Wisconsin Idea that the borders of the university are the borders of the state—and beyond. And it will hold claim to being one of the world’s greatest public-

purpose research universities.