

University of Wyoming FY 2006 Annual Report

Mission and philosophy

The University of Wyoming aspires to be one of the nation's finest public land-grant research universities, dedicated to serving as a statewide resource for accessible and affordable higher education of the highest quality, rigorous scholarship, technology transfer, economic and community development, and responsible stewardship of our cultural, historical, and natural resources. In the exercise of our primary mission to teach and educate students, we seek to provide academic and co-curricular opportunities that will:

- Expose students to the frontiers of scholarship and creative activity, and the complexities of an interdependent world;
- Ensure individual interactions among students, faculty, and staff;
- Nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity, free expression, academic freedom, personal integrity, and mutual respect; and
- Promote opportunities for personal growth, physical health, athletic competition, and leadership development for all members of the university community.

As Wyoming's only university, we are committed to outreach and service that extend our human talent and technological capacity to serve the people in our communities, our state, the nation, and the world.

The primary vehicles for identifying the specific actions and resource allocations needed to achieve this complex mission are the university's *Academic Plan II*, *Support Services Plan*, and *Capital Facilities Plan*, each revised on a five year cycle.

Results of outcomes

The *University of Wyoming Academic Plan II, 2004-2009 (APII)* is the university's strategic plan, the blueprint for the future of the institution. The planning process and the resource decisions made support the academic mission. As one form of accountability, an *Academic Plan Report Card* is published annually to document the cumulative progress on the 141 action items in *Academic Plan II*. At the end of this second year of the *Plans* implementation, the University of Wyoming (UW) has addressed 73 of the 141 action items. Both *Academic Plan II* and the *Report Card* are posted on the Academic Affairs web site at http://www.uwyo.edu/AcadAffairs/Acad_Plan_Implementation/Acad_Plan_Implementation.asp.

At the heart of AP II, there are a set of six areas of distinction, which define the long-term academic strengths that the institution will continue to emphasize, and a set of eight institutional issues, which are critical challenges that the university must address to advance its mission. In this report, the outcomes are organized according to these two major elements or goals of *Academic Plan II*:

- **Areas of distinction, and**
- **Institutional issues**

AREAS OF DISTINCTION

Private gifts, the state's match, the University's funds and specific actions identified in the Academic Plan are each directed to strengthen the University in identified areas.

A record 26,778 alumni and friends contributed \$24.3 million to the University of Wyoming during fiscal year 2006. The Distinction campaign, which officially concluded on June 30, 2005, raised over \$200 million for academic and athletic programs.

In 2001, the Wyoming Legislature established a fund of \$30 million to match gifts of \$50,000 or more for UW endowments. In only two and a half years, UW secured donations to match the entire fund and the 2004 Legislature voted to allocate an additional \$18 million, bringing the total state match to \$48 million.

A strategic plan for intercollegiate athletics was also completed in 2004 (<http://www.uwyo.edu/UW/athleticsplan/>) and the legislature provided further support to UW with a \$10 million fund established to match gifts of \$25,000 or more designated for athletic facilities.

Academic Plan II Areas of Academic Distinction

Approximately one-fourth of the action items in AP II are aimed at advancing UW's prominence in six areas of academic distinction. These areas, listed alphabetically, are (1) cultural endeavors, the arts, and humanities; (2) environment and natural resources; (3) history and culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region; (4) life sciences; (5) professions and issues critical to the region; and (6) science and technology. The areas of distinction help focus decisions about the allocation of institutional resources, the number and scope to allow most academic programs to contribute to promoting academic distinction. During 2005-2006, UW completed six action items that directly advanced four of the six areas of distinction.

- ***Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)*** – The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources (recipient of a \$3 million endowment from Helga Haub) and the William D. Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources are UW's most visible commitments to ENR. Many mainstream disciplines in several colleges are fundamental to the university's long-standing commitment to teaching and research in this area. During academic year 2006, the Office of Academic Affairs continued its support for strengthening this area of distinction by authorizing ten ENR-related faculty positions in the Colleges of Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering (action item 5).
- ***Life Sciences*** – During the first year of AP II, UW implemented a revised, more rigorous, and current curriculum in general Biology and established new interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs in Ecology and Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences (MCLS). During the second year of AP II, the Dean of Agriculture assumed oversight of the undergraduate degree program in Microbiology, working in cooperation with the Deans of Arts and Sciences and Health Sciences. The 2006 faculty position allocations included two positions dedicated to Microbiology (action item 18).

- ***Professions and Issues Critical to the Region*** – UW has a natural leadership role in professional development and statewide articulation with all sectors of the educational system, both to address the growing shortage of secondary teachers in critical subjects and to build a more seamless K-16 system. During the second year of AP II, the College of Education focused on aligning its curriculum with teacher-preparation standards for secondary and middle-school certification. Fifteen concurrent majors for secondary education majors—all of which meet the 128 credit hour maximum—were proposed and approved. The College also streamlined a bachelor's-plus-master's program by reconfiguring a five-year dual degree in special education and elementary education as a five-year bachelor's in elementary or secondary education plus a master's in special education (action item 21).
- ***Science and Technology*** – This area of distinction encompasses: earth and energy sciences, materials science, and computational sciences. In fall 2006, the Board of Trustees approved a faculty-driven interdisciplinary effort to integrate earth and atmospheric sciences, ecology, and the social sciences to form a baccalaureate earth-systems science curriculum (action item 30). This interdisciplinary degree program is under the aegis of the Dean of Engineering, working in cooperation with the Deans of Agriculture, Arts and Sciences and Education. In response to a request from the Wyoming Legislature, UW developed a proposal for a new School of Energy Resources (action item 32) during 2005, and in 2006, the Wyoming Legislature authorized funding in the amount of \$12.1 million for the 2007-2008 biennium to allow UW to establish the school. Finally, UW faculty and stakeholders also examined the feasibility and timeliness of establishing an interdisciplinary doctorate in material science. While the time is not ripe to implement such a degree, faculty members and administrators are pursuing ways to strengthen the existing foundation and infrastructure for materials science (action item 33).

Institutional Issues

Eight broad institutional issues were identified as requiring attention through the iterative process by which Academic Plan II was developed. Institutional and programmatic accreditation, (by our regional accrediting body (The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association) and discipline specific accrediting bodies) is an overarching institutional issue. The following update represents continuation of data reported in earlier annual reports.

Accreditation

Of the 27 University of Wyoming programs for which accreditation is sought from national accrediting bodies, 100 percent hold current accreditation (cumulative). UW is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association through 2009. The accredited colleges include the Colleges of Business, Education, Engineering, and Law. Individual programs in dietetics, rangeland ecology and watershed management, the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, chemistry, music education, clinical psychology, counselor education, architectural engineering, chemical

engineering, civil engineering, computer science, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, dental hygiene, family practice programs in Casper and in Cheyenne, nursing, pharmacy, kinesiology and health, communication disorders, and the social work bachelor's and master's programs are fully accredited.

Licensure exam pass rates/scores

Another gauge of programmatic quality relative to external measures is the comparison of pass rates/scores on licensure examinations for programs in which such exams are available and administered. Exams for eleven programs at UW are currently administered. Of those programs, nine had pass rates or scores greater than the national averages for the exam, two did not. (Some of the comparator scores are not available for one or two years after the exams are taken. The engineering, business and law exams are given two times each year. The following data is from the exam which was taken for the first time by the greatest number of students.) Exam results for students in UW programs compared with national average percentages or actual scores are as follows:

- Business students' major field test (Spring 05), 161.2 mean score compared with 151.5 mean nationally
- Counselor education students (AY06), 117.8 average score compared with 105.3 nationally
- Dental hygiene students (Spring 06), 84.2 percent compared with 94.4 percent nationally
- Engineering students (spring administration Spring 06), 79.3 percent compared with 75.5 percent nationally
- Family practice residency students in Casper (CY 05), 100 percent compared with 96.2 percent nationally, and in Cheyenne (CY 05), 100 percent compared with 96.2 percent nationally
- Law students, spring multistate bar exam (FY 06), 141 compared with 146 nationally
- Nursing students (CY 05), 92 percent compared with 86 percent nationally
- Pharmacy students (CY 05), 97.9 percent compared with 92.9 percent nationally
- Speech-language audiology students (FY 04), 635 median compared with 630 median nationally
- Speech-language pathology students (FY 05), 698 median compared with 660 median nationally

Progress on the action items relative to each of the eight institutional issues follows.

1) The Learning Environment

Much of the groundwork for UW's educational mission occurs before students arrive at the university. This fact underscores the need for strong articulation between UW and other educational institutions — high schools in particular. In the first year of AP II, several university departments, including the Biology, Mathematics, and Art departments, extended their annual articulation conferences with community colleges to include high school teachers (action item 36). In the second year of AP II, UW expanded

the annual high school principal-counselor conferences held at UW to engage faculty members, department heads, and staff members. The effort is to involve them in decisions affecting student preparedness, curriculum, and performance expectations (action item 37). Additional emphasis on alignment of curriculum, particularly across grades 8-14, is a high priority in implementing the Hathaway Scholarship program. High school teachers can be connected with the university through articulation activities, such as those described above, and also through innovative initiatives such as faculty internships for high school teachers. In this respect, the plan and budget for the new School of Energy Resources include funds to support salary replacements, benefits, and travel and moving allowances for up to three distinguished teaching internships per year for Wyoming school teachers (action item 39).

Learning communities are critical to effective student learning. The Honors Program is perhaps the most outstanding example of a formal learning community at UW. The Office of Academic Affairs increased the Honors Program and Summer High School Institute budgets by \$21,000 per year in fiscal year 2006 and by \$30,000 per year in fiscal year 2007. In addition, planning is under way for a \$1 million renovation of the former Kappa Sigma house to accommodate a new residential facility for the Honors Program (action item 41). UW's Learning Resource Network (LeaRN)—which grew out of an idea advanced in AP I—has an ever-stronger role in ensuring academic success for students at all levels of preparedness. UW's Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning contributes to enhancing student learning with regular programs for faculty designed to share best practices in pedagogy. In the second year of AP II, the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning organized programs in collaboration with the Division of Information Technology and the Office of Academic Affairs that specifically focused on enhancing teaching in larger classes, including the use of “clicker” technology and other strategies that help “make large classes small” (action item 44).

- **Student satisfaction with academic services** - Students responding to a range of academic and facilities questions are satisfied or very satisfied: course content in the major field (78.0%), instruction in the major field (76.6%), out-of-class availability of instructors (74.8%), attitude of faculty toward students (78.3%), variety of courses offered (71.0%), class size (81.6%), advisor availability (70.3%), and value of the information provided by your advisor (64.9%). These percentages indicate UW students in general express a high level of overall satisfaction with the institution's academic programs.
- **Student overall satisfaction** - In the FY06 ACT Student Opinion Survey, 82.4 percent of the students (n=636) expressed overall satisfaction with their University of Wyoming experience.
- **Student satisfaction with support services** - Student satisfaction with support services averaged 66.0 percent: admissions (68.5 percent), career planning (67.6 percent), financial aid (68.9 percent), job placement (54.5 percent), orientation (63.9 percent), personal counseling (66.7 percent), registration (64.2 percent), and student health services (74.0 percent).
- **Student satisfaction with administrative services** - The average student satisfaction with administrative services was 57.8 percent: billing (61.0 percent),

buildings and grounds (68.1 percent), bookstore (67.5 percent), food services (58.2 percent), parking (18.4 percent), safety (70.0 percent), and staff attitude (61.1 percent).

- **Student satisfaction with the social and cultural environment** - The students reported 68.5 percent average satisfaction with the social and cultural environment: student government (33.2 percent), athletics facilities (71.1 percent), campus media (51.5 percent), cultural programs (81.8 percent), housing programs (57.9 percent), recreational programs (90.8 percent), social events (80.2 percent), student involvement (62.7 percent), and the student union (87.5 percent).

2) Scholarship and Graduate Education

External awards - The University of Wyoming's reputation hinges in part on the robustness of its research enterprise and graduate education. UW faculty members have continued to receive national recognition for their research accomplishments to make the university a research institution of international standing. In FY06, UW reached a new record in external funding, \$70 million. The total research dollars per tenure-track faculty (excluding financial aid funding) was \$104,913 In FY98, this number was \$58,451.

Technology transfer - The Research Product Center has heightened the level of technology transfer, with 20 provisional patent applications filed (USPTO); 18 utility patent applications filed (US, foreign or PCT); 2 patents issued; and 4 option, license or assignment agreements signed that convey rights to university-owned patents.

Graduate education - During the second year of AP II, the Dean of the Graduate school completed several initiatives. One initiative was the development of graduate-program goals for graduate degrees (action item 55). During 2006, almost all UW departments with graduate programs completed vision statements summarizing program goals, benchmarks and projected outcomes. The Graduate School also took on a stronger role in attracting graduate students to UW by establishing a competitive grants program open to departments seeking to enhance their recruitment budgets (action item 57). As a component of its effort to recruit and retain top graduate students, the Graduate School also formulated a New Parent Accommodation policy.

The establishment of goals for graduate degree programs requires identifying metrics for assessing progress toward those goals. Assessment of graduate degree programs was another focus of the second year of AP II (action item 58). The Graduate School Dean joined the University Assessment Coordinator Committee and helped to incorporate graduate program learning outcomes into annual department reports. Another initiative completed during 2006 expanded the responsibilities of the Graduate School for ensuring the successful administration of the interdisciplinary graduate programs. These programs are critical to establishing scholarly depth and national prominence at a small university like UW (action item 59). An administrative model was developed to provide each interdisciplinary graduate program with sustainable and flexible budget support.

The funding of the new School of Energy Resources (SER) will advance UW's

research infrastructure substantially. AP II called for a concerted effort to pursue matching funds for programmatic federal grant opportunities (action item 61). The budget for the SER, discussed under action item 39, includes \$1 million per year in matching funds for federal grant programs.

3) Enhancing Diversity, Internationalization, and Access

Among UW's greatest challenges are the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty and the infusion of diverse perspectives into the curriculum. Goals for the second year of AP II included clarifying diversity-related hiring policies (action item 63) and strengthening the American Indian Studies, African-American Studies, and Chicano Studies programs (action item 64). In spring 2006, the Office of Academic Affairs allocated permanent funding for a distinguished visiting position in African-American Studies that is designed to attract promising young scholars in various disciplines to spend a year visiting UW to conduct teaching and research relevant to African-American studies.

To reduce some of the significant barriers to diverse hiring, UW's Employment Practices Office has developed a new, more flexible Affirmative Action Plan (action item 68). The plan is viewable at: http://www.uwyo.edu/EmploymentPractices/affirmative_Action_Plan.asp. Among other measures, the revised affirmative action plan contains more inclusive policies for approving exceptions to the mandate to advertise all position openings.

To facilitate the internationalization of its student body, UW has decided to co-locate programs and services related to international affairs (action item 70). International Programs, International Student Services, International Studies, English as a Second Language faculty, and the contractual program provided by ELS Language Services will soon be located together in space formerly occupied by the School of Nursing. The west half of the former Student Health and Nursing Building will be renamed the Cheney Center for International Studies, with renovation for the space provided by a gift from Vice President Richard Cheney and his wife Lynn.

Promoting accessibility for site-bound and nontraditional students, as well as those with special financial or physical needs, is another important institutional goal. In the second year of AP II, the Academic Deans Council approved a proposal, initiated by the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) and the College of Education, for a graduate certificate and minor in disabilities studies (action item 74).

4) Structure of the Curriculum

AP I spurred the review, revision and streamlining of UW's core undergraduate curriculum, known as the University Studies Program or USP 2003. One of the goals of AP II is to monitor the adequacy and curricular impacts of the newly revised USP (action item 81). USP course enrollment patterns and wait lists are now monitored during freshman orientation and during fall and spring advising weeks, to allow for the addition of sections in high-demand required courses. At the same time, it is important to discontinue unused courses (action item 85). The Academic Deans Council has approved

a process for reviewing courses not offered for five consecutive years. In the absence of written justification, such courses will be automatically dropped.

The curriculum must also capitalize on areas of distinction and interdisciplinarity. To promote this end, cross-college undergraduate interdisciplinary majors will now be administered by a committee of the affected college deans. Microbiology and Earth Systems Science are the first programs to be administered in this new way.

Finally, the transition to annual department-level academic planning updates is now complete (action item 89). A template for annual department reports is available at the following URL:

http://www.uwyo.edu/AcadAffairs/PolicyStatements/An_Rep_Fmat05-06.doc

5) Faculty Development and Program Planning

Specific issues associated with the management of faculty resources include the consistency of faculty job descriptions, the utility of UW's post-tenure review regulation, and fine-tuning of the processes for faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion. During spring 2006, the Office of Academic Affairs and college deans, with input from academic department heads, developed a set of policies and guidelines for faculty job descriptions (action item 94). The document is available on UW's website at the following URL:

http://www.uwyo.edu/AcadAffairs/PolicyStatements/job_desc_guide_06.doc

6) Education Infrastructure

The changing role of technology in instruction is a significant issue in higher education. In spring 2006, Academic Affairs allocated \$140,000 per year, beginning in fiscal year 2007, to fund staffing and a centralized office for audiovisual and instructional technology services (action item 103). The new office will reside in the Division of Informational Technology, but will cooperate closely with Academic Affairs units to provide leadership in integrating instructional technology into the curriculum.

In addition, the 2006 Legislature provided \$3.2 million in one-time funding and \$3.2 million in recurring funds, in part to support instructional computing and data networking at UW.

The completion of new facilities for the College of Health Sciences freed space for the relocation of UW's ethnic studies programs in close proximity, on two floors of Ross Hall (action item 106). The programs will enjoy shared computing lab facilities and support office space. Other space management decisions include a commitment for permanent office and lab space for the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WySAC) in the UW Office Annex Building (action item 107) and groundbreaking for a new Anthropology Building, located north of the center of campus on Lewis Street, with an estimated completion date of March 2007 (action item 109). The space formerly used for the Science Library has been converted to high-density storage with compact shelving and other renovations, to enhance rapid access to library resources (action item 110).

The College of Education completed its Facilities Plan, which is available for viewing at <http://ed.uwyo.edu/documents/FacilitiesPlanDRAFT.doc> (action item 111). Completed projects include the renovation of the second floor of the Education Annex and renovation of the lower south wing in the Education Building.

The 2007-2008 major maintenance budget has funds for the repair and upgrading of the Centennial Complex, which houses both the American Heritage Center and the Art Museum (action item 112). The 2006 Legislature also provided funding to meet long-standing security staffing needs in the Centennial Complex (action item 113).

7) Outreach, Extension, and Community Service

For almost 30 years, UW has served Wyoming communities by offering degree programs through the University of Wyoming/Casper College Center (UW/CC). The UW/Casper College partnership is remarkably successful; however, as UW's presence in Casper has grown, so have the space needs. During 2005-2006, UW and Casper College administrators discussed the future of the UW/CC facilities (action item 128). These discussions, slated to conclude later in 2006, have focused on a joint building project, the location and size of the building, and possible funding sources.

8) Enrollment Management

Wyoming's Hathaway Scholarship Program, established by the 2005 and 2006 Legislatures, provides extraordinary support for Wyoming high school graduates to attend college in Wyoming. The scholarship program also addresses an important goal of AP II, which was to increase need-based student scholarships (action item 133). Details of how UW is administering the Hathaway Scholarship program can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/hathaway/>.

Among UW's core commitments is expansion of enrollment and access to the campus in Laramie and through the UW Outreach School. Student recruitment, retention, timely graduation, and access to academic programs are of primary importance to the institution and to the state. UW continues to make progress in recruiting and retention efforts. During the fall of 2004, UW experienced continued growth in student enrollment. After five-years of development with the community colleges and the Wyoming Department of Education, a \$21 million Federal GEAR-UP grant was awarded to the University of Wyoming during the past year. The grant is designed to promote higher education to Wyoming K-12 students and enhance the college-going rate of Wyoming high school graduates. The State of Wyoming and the community colleges have matched the federal award, bringing the total funding available for the six-year grant to \$42 million.

The UW and Wyoming community college financial aid directors in cooperation with the UW Foundation were successfully funded by the Daniels Fund to deliver a college opportunity grant program to provide scholarships to non traditional and adult students.

To help build the "pipeline" for younger Wyoming students to consider college, a program with The Wyoming Student Loan Corporation and UW called "College for a Day", was hosted on the Laramie campus for 6th grade students. This program, delivered for the third year, gives elementary children an experience on campus to foster their interest in going to college.

UW is also committed to assisting students with their transition to college through a number of programs including New Student Orientation that is held prior to the start of each semester; Weeks of Welcome a transitioning program that is held at the start of fall semester; and a variety of mentoring and support programs.

The following data gives a snapshot of enrollment statistics over the last year:

- **Total student enrollments** (standardized at the end of the fall semester) - The total fall 2005 semester headcounts, including outreach and online students, increased to 13,126; exceeding the target of 13,000 students.
- **New-student enrollments** (first-time, full-time freshmen and transfers) - 2,443.
- **Minority and international student enrollments** - Minority and international students comprised 11.4 percent of the student enrollment.
- **Third-semester retention rate** - The third-semester retention rate for the freshman cohort entering in the fall of 2004 and retained until the fall of 2005 was 73.8 percent. (Standardized retention data are always delayed one-year.) National retention data for similar institutions fluctuate between 83 and 84 percent for 1994-99.
- **Six-year graduation rate** - The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen matriculating in the fall of 1999 and graduating by the summer of FY05 increased to 57.7 percent. (Standardized six-year graduation rates are always delayed one year.) National six-year graduation data for students entering similar institutions between 1989-94 range between 61 and 62 percent.
- **Six-year graduation rate for student-athletes** - The six-year graduation rate for student athletes (entering in fall 1999 and graduating by the summer of 2005) was 61.5 percent compared to the overall student body, 57.7 percent.

Strategic plan changes for next year

UW will continue to provide outcomes and benchmarks to measure the progress made in bolstering the Areas of Distinction and advances on the Institutional Issues of Academic Plan II with the Academic Plan II report card for next year. The Support Services plan will align support activities with the key elements of Academic Plan II.