

# **University of Wisconsin Colleges**

## **Access and Success for the University of Wisconsin System Growth Agenda**

**Investing in the University of Wisconsin System's Premiere Institution for  
Serving Historically Underserved Freshmen and Sophomore Students as the  
Foundation for the Wisconsin Idea**

# Underfunding Task Force: Executive Summary

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In October 2008, Chancellor David Wilson formed a task force to examine current levels of funding and funding formulae for the University of Wisconsin Colleges. The task force was charged to

- Examine and understand overall funding patterns compared to others in UW System (comprehensives and research)
- Gather information and data to document similarities/disparities/inequities
- Document value Colleges add to undergraduate experience
- Based on mission and value-added, propose reallocation of GPR

## **Timeline and Approach**

Between October 2008 and May 2009, the task force met five times. The task force identified three primary areas of focus:

- Current levels of funding for UW Colleges compared to other UW institutions
- The value that UW Colleges adds to the UW System
- How UW Colleges could improve and increase the value it brings to the UW System if funded differently

## **Process**

The Underfunding Task Force gathered and analyzed data in the following areas to help it assess the above primary areas of focus:

- Comparative funding for various UW System institutions
- Comparative student retention and graduation rates
- Nation data concerning educational trends, including curricular practices and student demographics
- UW Colleges demographics
- UW System mission and goals
- Cost efficiencies
- Innovative programs in UW Colleges
- Community relationships
- UW Colleges and UW Extension relationships

Using the above data, the task force analyzed UW Colleges funding patterns compared to other UW institutions; identified similarities, disparities, and inequities; documented the value UW Colleges adds to the undergraduate experience and UW System; and proposed increased funding and more flexible funding formulae for UW Colleges.

## **Audience**

The task force compiled the data and proposals into a report whose intended audience is Chancellor David Wilson, and Chancellor David Wilson has sole discretion for determining when and how the information contained in the report will be disseminated.

## **Underfunding Task Force Membership 2008-2009**

Gene Biby, Assistant Professor of Communications/Theatre Arts, UW-Rock County  
Chase Boruch, Student Representative.  
Elizabeth Hayes, Department of Biological Sciences Chair, UW-Fond du Lac  
Rick Hein, Chair, Associate Professor of Biological Science, UW-Manitowoc  
Mark Klemp, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, UW-Marinette  
Richard Krupnow, Lecturer in English and Communications/Theatre Arts, UW-Fox Valley  
Greg Lampe, Interim Vice Chancellor for UW-Colleges  
Gregg Nettesheim, Staff Support Person, UW-Colleges  
Evertt Newberry, Building Superintendent, UW-Richland  
Jim Perry, Campus Dean/CEO, UW-Fox Valley  
Rosemary Potter, Director of Government Relations, UW-Colleges/UW-Extension  
Joanne Robis, Assistant Dean of Administrative Services, UW-Waukesha  
Zora Sampson, Director of Library, Information, and IIT, UW-Barron County  
Steve Wildeck, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, UW-Colleges/UW-Extension

## **UW Colleges: Investing in Growth and Success for the UW System**

“The nation’s future, employers contend, depends on the United States’ ability to help a much larger fraction of Americans achieve high levels of knowledge and skills.”

--Carol Geary Schneider, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “Liberal Education and High-Impact Practices: Making Excellence – Once and for All – Inclusive” (2008).

Data from the November 2008 report of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) demonstrate that the landscape of higher education is changing, and if public institutions of higher education are to remain competitive, they must find ways to adapt to this changing landscape. For example, smaller private-for-profit institutions of higher learning have “the highest rate of enrollment growth” in both face-to-face and online courses. This is not difficult to understand when we realize “A drive around any major urban area shows that for-profit educators have been busy creating attendance centers close to the population” (19).

The NASULGC report notes that enrollments of adult learners into online courses occurred at a rate that was “six times the growth rate in college age students” (19), and national projections indicate the percentage of adult learners among college-level students will continue to increase. The same report identifies trends of increased enrollments among traditionally disadvantaged populations:

. . .over the last decade Hispanic enrollment at community colleges increased 173 percent, black enrollment increased 207 percent, and white enrollment 35 percent. At public very high research universities, Hispanic enrollment rose by 51 percent, black enrollment by 22 percent and white enrollment by 14 percent. At private very high research universities, Hispanic enrollment rose 40 percent, black enrollment 22 percent, and white enrollment 11 percent. (10)

We believe in order for the UW System to remain competitive innovative approaches to course delivery must be implemented while maintaining high standards of educational quality, expanding proven educational programs and strategies, and minimizing expansion costs. The following report explains how UW Colleges is best positioned as UW System’s premiere gateway institution and by association with its sister institution, UW Extension, to reach across the state into the communities of Wisconsin; to provide meaningful opportunities for higher education, draw more Wisconsin citizens from diverse populations into higher education, and provide them with the skills necessary to transfer to and succeed in the comprehensive and doctoral institutions of the UW System; all at the greatest cost efficiency within the UW System.

## **Funding Patterns**

Section One of this report, “UW Colleges Funding: Missed Opportunity for Sustainable Growth,” explains that UW Colleges receives the second lowest funding per student among UW System institutions; yet UW Colleges is the premiere entry point into the UW System, serving more part-time and full-time freshmen than any other UW institution. Further, data show that current funding formulas, in which the UW Colleges are more GPR/tuition dependent than other UW institutions, limits flexibility resulting in more dramatic cuts to core personnel and programs in times of declining state support. This directly reduces the UW Colleges’ ability to increase student populations for successful transfer to other UW institutions, creating a bottleneck at a main entry point into the UW System pipeline.

## **Best Value**

Section Two of this report, “UW Colleges: Premiere Gateway to Success for UW System,” substantiates that UW Colleges has traditionally and is currently serving those populations identified by the NASULGC report as the fastest growing student populations, namely traditionally underserved students. By serving these student populations, UW Colleges provides what could arguably be the most important entry point into the UW System for students who stand to gain the most from a UW education. Further, data demonstrate that UW Colleges has a proven track record of helping underserved students succeed at higher rates than other institutions both within and outside of the UW System when they transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

Delivery of higher education has a cost, regardless of the entry point. If UW System wishes to pursue its stated Growth Agenda money will need to be provided for that growth. UW Colleges is the best place for an investment for reasons cited above and because counties and/or cities where Colleges campuses are located provide for capital expenditures, such as buildings, while the state provides operating costs. Thus, the UW System receives the greatest value for expenditure of *state* resources, over which it has stewardship. Increased investment in staffing and programmatic delivery will increase UW Colleges’ ability to serve more students and concomitantly increase the number of UW System baccalaureate degree holders with little System and state infrastructure increase.

## **Foundation for Growth and Success**

Section Three of the report, “UW Colleges: Investing in Sustainable Growth and Success,” identifies existing programs and strategies that would benefit more students if funding were available to expand those programs and strategies, and provides an explanation of how a flexible

funding formula would allow UW Colleges to be more responsive to student and community needs. Further, it identifies innovative approaches that could be implemented through community partnerships for expanding access to higher education at point-of-need within communities across the state while minimizing costs by tapping the unique relation UW Colleges has with UW Extension as a sister institution operating under a single administrative umbrella.

## **UW Colleges Funding: Missed Opportunity for Sustainable Growth**

Three lines of evidence from UW System budget and enrollment reports indicate it has missed the opportunity to utilize as fully as possible the UW Colleges as a cost-effective entry point into the UW System:

1. Funding per student
2. Authorized employment level
3. Overall budgetary flexibility

None of these indicators, on its own, is sufficient evidence for underdevelopment of UW System's premiere institution for affordable access to higher education. When considered together, however, they form a clear and aggregate pattern of consistent underdevelopment of UW Colleges resources for serving traditionally underserved populations and, therefore, an inability to more effectively grow student enrollment across the UW System as traditional populations (students immediately out of high school) shrink.

### **Funding per Student**

The most straightforward measure of relative funding levels across UW System institutions is cost-per-student, as calculated by the UW System Administration. Despite UW Colleges having 13 different locations, it receives the lowest level of funding per full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student of all UW System institutions. System calculations consider the amount of GPR and tuition support, which is allocated toward the general program operations for each institution, and divides that total by the number of FTE undergraduate students attending each institution.

In 2008-09, UW Colleges received \$7,891 per FTE undergraduate student, \$907 below the UW comprehensive weighted average (Table 1). By multiplying this deficit by student FTE, it is possible to estimate the extent of underinvestment for UW Colleges below the UW System average. When this is done for the UW Colleges, the institution is approximately \$8,035,113 below the average annual funding level of all UW System institutions.

<b>UW System Cost-per-Student 2008-2009 GPR-Supported Students Only</b>				
<b>Institution</b>	<b>GPR-Supported FTE Students</b>	<b>Support-Per Student FTE</b>	<b>GPR Supported Headcount Students</b>	<b>Support Per Student Headcount</b>
Superior	1,981	\$ 12,878	2,623	\$ 9,726
Parkside	3,753	\$ 10,893	5,078	\$ 8,051
Platteville	6,065	\$ 8,508	7,476	\$ 6,903
Green Bay	4,667	\$ 9,534	5,588	\$ 7,962
River Falls	5,564	\$ 8,924	6,320	\$ 7,856
Stout	6,804	\$ 9,473	8,804	\$ 7,321
Stevens Point	8,009	\$ 8,965	8,880	\$ 8,085
Eau Claire	9,577	\$ 8,909	10,889	\$ 7,836
La Crosse	8,227	\$ 8,282	9,269	\$ 7,351
Whitewater	8,820	\$ 8,035	10,831	\$ 6,543
Oshkosh	8,957	\$ 8,095	11,227	\$ 6,458
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>8,859</b>	<b>\$ 7,891</b>	<b>13,071</b>	<b>\$ 5,348</b>
Average		\$ 8,798		\$ 7,147

**Table 1:** Total GPR/tuition support per student in 2008-2009. Source: UW System Cost-per-Student tables, updated with final fall 2008 CDR data.

It might be tempting to argue that UW Colleges investment totals result simply from the fact that it is less expensive to educate students in their freshmen and sophomore years compared to comprehensive institutions. There are three important counter-arguments that must be considered before so concluding:

1. UW Colleges has relatively small class sizes for first and second year students compared to the comprehensives because it draws upon a smaller student population base dispersed across 13 campuses.
2. Although it has many centralized administrative service functions, UW Colleges cannot take advantage of some cost economies of scale because it supports 13 geographically disparate campuses. However, despite having 13 different geographic locations, UW Colleges is cost efficient for the UW System.
3. Most of the costs of operating the university are driven by student headcount rather than student FTE. Each student, regardless of course load, requires a core set of non-instructional services. UW Colleges has the highest proportion of part-time students in the UW System, the largest headcount among the non-doctoral institutions, and the lowest level of funding per FTE or headcount student. UW Colleges has the highest proportion of part-time students in the UW System, and therefore a disproportionately higher student headcount. Regardless of whether they are full time or part time, each student requires the same support services. Thus the support per FTE is disproportionately low.

Therefore, it is reasonable to compare UW Colleges cost-per-student with the total undergraduate cost-per-student of the UW comprehensive cluster. Doing so reveals the UW

Colleges receives less financial support, per-FTE or per-headcount student, than all of the UW comprehensive institutions.

### Overall Budgetary Flexibility

Traditional residential campuses have a wide array of support functions and large auxiliary enterprises such as residence halls, parking utilities, food services, bookstores, and other self-supporting programs. While these revenue sources cannot be used directly to support the core academic programs, they provide a larger budget base upon which to allocate and charge back pro-rated costs for institutional infrastructure and centrally provided services. When GPR budgets are cut, this expanded total budget base provides greater flexibility and cushion because fixed costs are, to a greater extent, shared across program revenue units in addition to the GPR/tuition base. When the proportion of GPR-based tuition to total budget is low, the level of budgetary flexibility is high. UW Colleges has the highest proportion of GPR/tuition to total budget, and thereby has the least flexibility when GPR cuts from the state take place.

<b>GPR/Fee Budget Compared to Total Budget 2008-2009 UW System Redbook</b>			
<b>Institution</b>	All 101/102/103 Funds	Total Funds	101/102/103 Funds as % of Total
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>66,641,798</b>	<b>96,228,027</b>	<b>69.3</b>
Parkside	38,793,567	71,766,448	54.1
River Falls	48,157,414	95,133,290	50.6
Green Bay	39,382,444	79,508,703	49.5
Platteville	48,246,235	98,414,918	49.0
Eau Claire	85,361,195	174,583,885	48.8
La Crosse	70,785,637	145,029,819	48.8
Oshkosh	80,967,872	167,927,058	48.2
Stevens Point	70,731,876	147,717,680	47.8
Stout	63,799,176	141,615,206	45.1
Superior	25,414,667	58,354,487	43.6
Whitewater	72,196,676	191,776,562	37.6
<b>Average</b>	<b>59,206,546</b>	<b>122,338,007</b>	<b>48.4</b>

**Table 2:** Total budget for each UW-System institution and the amount that is comprised of GPR-based funding for FY09. Data source UW-System Redbook.

### Authorized Employment Level

A third way to examine funding patterns is to compare the authorized number of GPR positions to the number of GPR-supported students within each institution. Comparison of authorized positions to student enrollment is not straightforward, but student headcount is a generally accepted basis upon which to make this comparison for non-instructional positions, while student FTE is a generally accepted basis upon which to make a comparison for instructional positions. Because the UW System does not allocate GPR positions by category (instructional vs. non-instructional), we can only make overall comparisons. Close attention to student headcount is

warranted because 37.2% of UW Colleges students are part-time in 2008-2009 compared to a System average of 14.2% (the second highest is UW-Oshkosh with 27.3%).

Comparing authorized GPR position level to student headcount, UW Colleges supports 18.1 students per position, which is by far the highest number of students per employee in the System. This places extreme stress on support functions like advising, technology support, learner services, and building maintenance among others.

Conversely, UW Colleges supports 12.2 FTE students per position. While not the highest in the System, it is 1.5 over the average for the UW System comprehensive institutions (Table 3).

<b>Students per Authorized GPR Employee Fall 2008 Enrollment</b>					
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Authorized GPR positions</b>	<b>GPR-supported student headcount</b>	<b>Student headcount per GPR position</b>	<b>GPR-supported student FTE</b>	<b>Student FTE per GPR position</b>
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>13,071</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>8,859</b>	<b>12.2</b>
Platteville	510	7,476	14.7	6,065	11.9
Whitewater	773	10,831	14.0	8,820	11.4
Stout	672	8,804	13.1	6,804	10.1
River Falls	485	6,320	13.0	5,564	11.5
La Crosse	721	9,269	12.9	8,227	11.4
Green Bay	443	5,588	12.6	4,667	10.5
Oshkosh	897	11,227	12.5	8,957	10.0
Eau Claire	881	10,889	12.4	9,577	10.9
Parkside	424	5,078	12.0	3,753	8.9
Stevens Point	764	8,880	11.6	8,009	10.5
Superior	279	2,623	9.4	1,981	7.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>8,237</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>6,773</b>	<b>10.7</b>

**Table 3:** A comparison of GPR-supported positions to GPR-supported students for FY09. Data source UW-System budget information and final fall 2008 CDR data.

### **Funding Conclusion**

1. UW Colleges is under-resourced
2. Investing in UW Colleges is cost effective
3. Investing in UW Colleges increases the student base for all UW institutions, maximizing the return on UW System investment dollars

## **UW Colleges: Premiere Gateway to Success for UW System**

The University of Wisconsin Colleges prepares both traditional and non-traditional place-bound students for baccalaureate success. The Colleges are accessible and affordable, and advance the Wisconsin Idea by bringing the resources of the University to many underserved citizens of Wisconsin, including: students of color, adult students, students from low income families, and students whose academic records and test scores often preclude them from entering the UW System through its baccalaureate institutions.

### **UW Colleges Demographics: Underserved Students**

UW Colleges serves students from four key growing student populations:

1. Ethnically diverse students
2. Returning adult students
3. Low-income students
4. Underprepared students

UW Colleges serves the four racial/ethnic groups identified by the UW System as underrepresented in the overall UW student population: Blacks, Hispanic/Latinos, Native Americans, and Southeast Asians. By comparison to other UW institutions, UW Colleges enrolls the fifth largest population of Black students, the fourth largest population of Hispanic/Latino students, the fourth largest population of Native American students, and the third largest population of Southeast Asian students.

UW Colleges serves the second largest population of returning adult students, only behind Milwaukee. The top seven UW institutions for enrollment of adult students are: Milwaukee (4838), UW Colleges (3020), Madison (2497), Oshkosh (1719), Green Bay (1250) and Parkside (1226). Returning adult students are more likely to be place-bound than traditional students. Thus, Colleges provides a point of access to the UW System for a growing student population.

UW Colleges is the premiere gateway for low-income students. Periodically the UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research gathers income data from ACT test takers and summarizes these data by UW institution. The most recent available report includes income data from 2006. Given the recent economic downturn these data may have changed significantly. However, the comparisons still provide a useful measure of the relative prosperity of the families served by each UW institution.

Focusing on the bottom two quintiles and on the proportion of the overall new freshman test takers represented by these two income quintiles, the top seven UW institutions serving low

income students in 2006 were: Superior (50.3%), River Falls (48.8%), Parkside (47.4%), UW Colleges (45.6%), Green Bay (41.9%), Platteville (39.1%) and Stout (38.1%).

Extrapolating these percentages to freshman classes for fall 2008, the numbers of students from low income families served by UW institutions are: UW Colleges (1898), Milwaukee (1449), Madison (1362), Whitewater (693), Eau Claire (665), River Falls (656) and Oshkosh (630).

UW Colleges provides access for underprepared students. Nearly half of all new freshmen entering UW Colleges ranked in the bottom half of their high school graduating classes. These students whose academic records identify them as underprepared would lack access to a UW education without the Colleges. Yet, UW Colleges turns the bottom half of high school graduates into successful college students poised to become baccalaureate-holding citizens. Those students whose academic performance in high school would have otherwise prevented them from earning a college degree are able to use UW Colleges as the gateway to a successful academic career, earning baccalaureate and even graduate degrees, acquiring higher wage earning potential, and becoming more productive citizens within their communities.

UW Colleges serves more part-time freshmen than all other UW institutions combined. Additionally, UW Colleges serves more full-time freshmen and more part-time sophomores than any other UW institution. (Table 4)

<b>UW System Student Enrollments Fall 2008 Freshmen and Sophomores</b>				
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Full-Time Freshmen</b>	<b>Part-Time Freshmen</b>	<b>Full-Time Sophomores</b>	<b>Part-Time Sophomores</b>
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>6,281</b>	<b>1,764</b>	<b>1,931</b>	<b>1,461</b>
Milwaukee	5,366	364	5,265	522
Madison	5,254	28	6,115	85
Eau Claire	2,610	38	2,188	97
Oshkosh	2,591	163	1,774	200
Whitewater	2,387	46	2,538	89
Stevens Point	2,331	58	1,655	59
La Crosse	2,260	19	1,803	52
Platteville	2,182	124	1,247	47
Stout	2,126	44	1,411	67
River Falls	1,829	38	1,230	47
Parkside	1,260	267	834	233
Green Bay	1,165	55	1,109	165
Superior	488	35	370	53
<b>System Average</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>2,105</b>	<b>227</b>

**Table 4:** A comparison of the number of full and part-time freshmen and sophomore students within each institution in the fall of 2008-2009. Junior and senior students are omitted since no

comparison with Colleges applies. Data from UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research student statistics reports.

More than one-third of UW Colleges students are part-time (Table 5). Because many traditionally underserved and underprepared students are from lower income families, they cannot afford to attend college full-time. UW Colleges serves as the premiere entry point into higher education for the largest percentage of such students within the UW System.

<b>UW System Part-time Student Enrollments Fall 2008 Freshmen, Sophomores, and Special Students</b>	
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Part-time Students (%)</b>
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>37.2</b>
Oshkosh	27.3
Parkside	27.2
Green Bay	19.5
Milwaukee	16.0
Superior	15.4
Madison	11.2
Platteville	9.1
Eau Claire	6.9
River Falls	6.5
Stevens Point	5.7
La Crosse	5.4
Stout	5.2
Whitewater	4.7
<b>System Average</b>	<b>14.2</b>

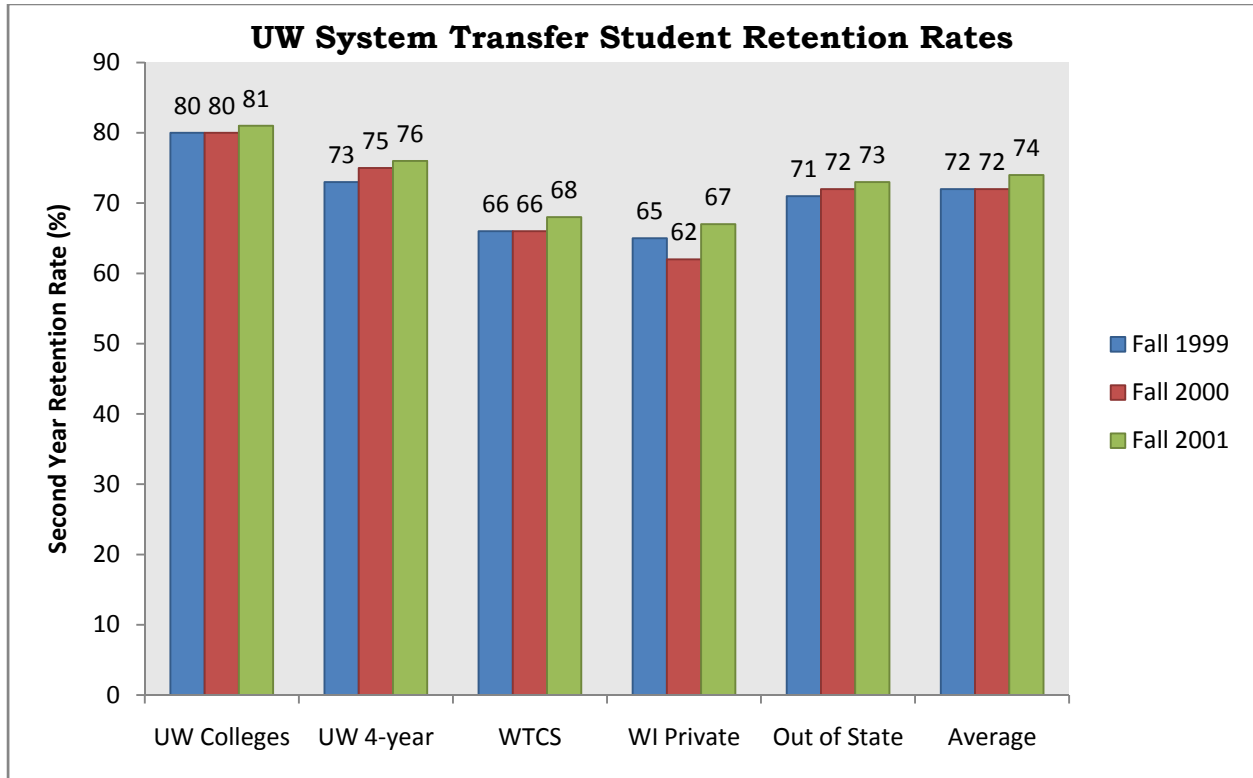
**Table 5:** A comparison of the percentage of part-time freshmen, sophomore, and special undergraduate students for each institution from the fall of 2008-2009. Junior and senior students are omitted since no comparison with Colleges applies. Data from UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research student statistics reports.

### **UW Colleges Succeeds: Student Retention and Graduation Rates**

UW Colleges produces the highest student retention rates among transfers into the UW System. The UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research Transfer Outcomes Report for 2007-2008 demonstrates statistically that UW Colleges is a sound investment for UW System based on Colleges' proven success rates.

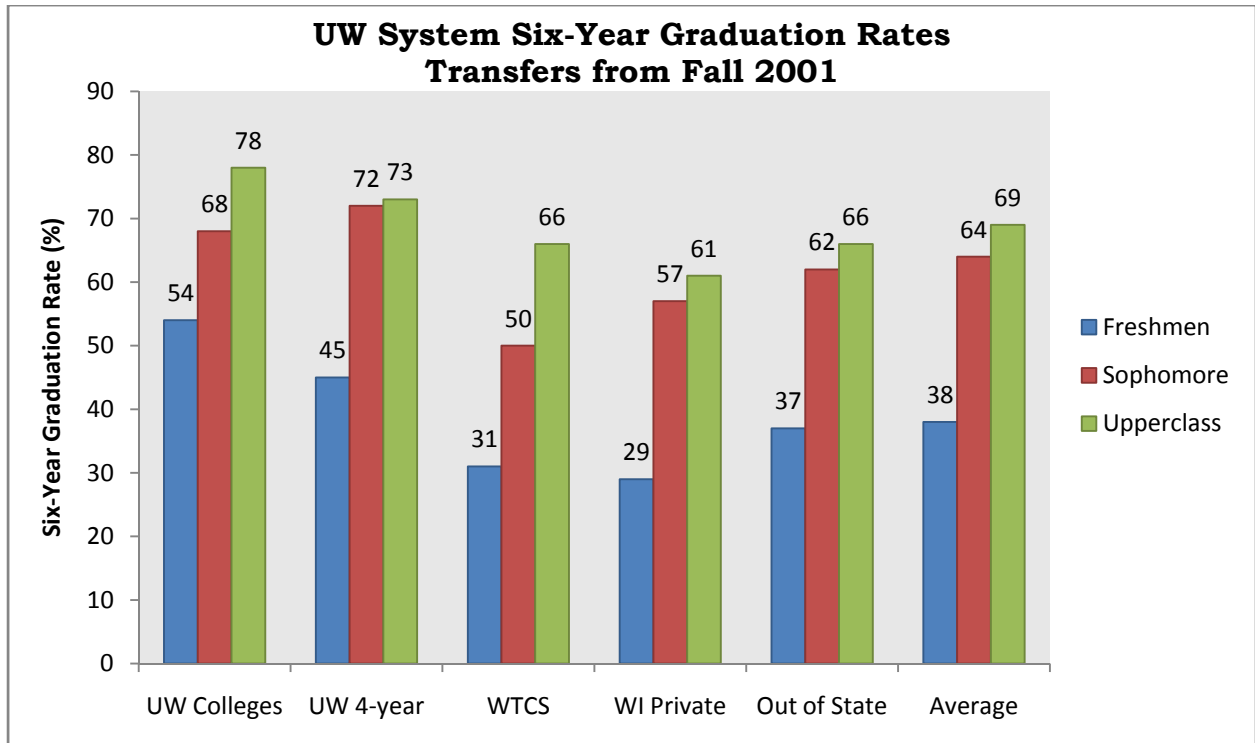
A significant measure of both student and institutional success is the Second Year Retention Rates among students who transfer into a UW institution offering a bachelor's degree. Fall 1999 to Fall 2001 measures of this indicator demonstrate that UW Colleges has the highest retention rate of all transfers (81% in 2001 vs. 74% overall, Figure 1). These data include students who transfer from one UW to another, from WTCS schools, private colleges and universities, and out of state schools to UWs.

While students who transfer from their originating institution as freshmen are generally retained at lower rates than students who transfer as sophomores or upperclassmen, UW Colleges has the highest retention rates even among freshmen who transfer: 78% compared to an overall rate of 63% among UW System institutions.

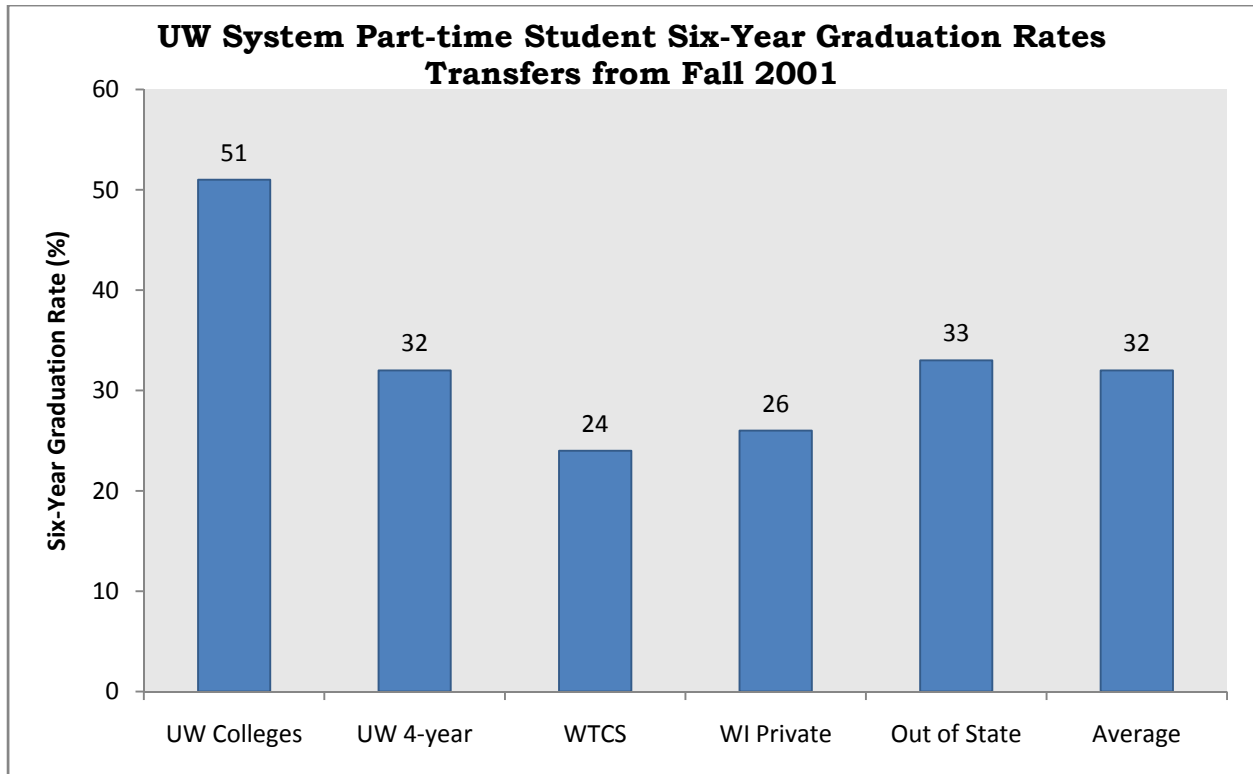


**Figure 1:** A comparison of the average second year retention rates for cohorts of students from different institutions transferring into any UW-System institution. Data from UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research report entitled "Undergraduate Transfer Students: 2007-08."

Further evidence of the quality of preparation for baccalaureate work is found in the six-year graduation rates of UW Colleges students after transfer compared to other UW institutions. Our freshmen and upper-class transfers graduate at a substantially higher rate than any other institution and our sophomore transfers graduate at a rate only slightly below transfers from UW baccalaureate institutions (Figure 2). Additionally, graduation rates increase dramatically for students that remain in the UW-Colleges for two (or more) years rather than transferring after their freshmen year. Finally, part-time students, for which the UW Colleges serves as a critical entry point into the UW System, graduate at by far the highest rate of all institutions (Figure 3)



**Figure 2:** A comparison of the average six-year graduation rates for cohorts of freshmen, sophomore, and upper-class students from different institutions transferring into any UW-System institution in the fall of 2001. Data from UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research report entitled "Undergraduate Transfer Students: 2007-08."



**Figure 3:** A comparison of the average six-year graduation rates for cohorts of part-time students from different institutions transferring into any UW-System institution in the fall of 2001. Data from UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research report entitled "Undergraduate Transfer Students: 2007-08."

**UW Colleges/Community Partnerships:**

UW Colleges/Community partnerships add value to UW System’s investment in higher education and the state of Wisconsin because improvements to UW Colleges facilities do not compete with other UW System institutions for building funds. UW Colleges building renovations and additions are funded by the cities and counties that originally built the campus buildings. The current value of these facilities exceeds \$320 million. In the last five years alone, a total of \$ 48,827,894 has been invested by local communities to support local UW Colleges campuses by making campus building additions, renovations, and maintenance a top priority. Community commitments to local UW Colleges campuses despite tight finances over the decades that Colleges has been in existence demonstrate that Wisconsin citizens value higher education, in general, and the quality of instruction and other services UW Colleges brings to local communities. This partnership has provided, and continues to provide, the single most cost effective access to higher education in the UW System.

## Overall Conclusion

1. UW Colleges is a good investment because it serves a unique population and more full-time and part-time incoming Freshmen than any other UW institution, increasing the student population base for transfer to all UW institutions.
2. UW Colleges is a good investment because UW Colleges' students have the highest retention and graduation rates of all transfer students in the UW System.
3. UW Colleges is a good investment because its facilities are funded through counties and cities, essentially providing UW System with an infinite return on facility-investment dollars.

# UW Colleges: Investing in Sustainable Growth and Success

This report has identified data showing that those student populations historically and currently served by the institution are among the fastest growing, both nationally and within the state of Wisconsin. As UW System's premiere gateway institution, UW Colleges has a proven track record of developing the skills necessary to succeed in traditionally underserved student populations. UW Colleges transfer students have the highest success rates of all transfers, from public or private universities and colleges, either within or outside of UW System.

The unequivocal demonstration of effectiveness in light of funding substantially below what it should be relative to other UW institutions begs the question of what the Colleges might accomplish if resources were more equitably allocated.

- **Investment Opportunity: Expand High-impact Educational Practices Institution Wide**

Recently, Indiana University's George Kuh has published the results of educational research that identifies specific pedagogical practices that substantially increase the likelihood of student retention and success, especially for populations similar to the Colleges population's profile. These are documented in *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C., 2008).

Kuh notes that to increase student success in college it is necessary to "make it possible for *every* [emphasis ours] student to participate in *at least two high-impact activities* during his or her undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one taken later in relation to the major field" (2008, p.19). These practices include 1) First-Year Seminars and Experiences, 2) Common Intellectual Experiences, 3) Learning Communities, 4) Writing Intensive Courses, 5) Collaborative Assignments and Projects, 6) Undergraduate Research, 7) Diversity/Global Learning, 8) Service Learning, Community-based Learning, 9) Internships, and 10) Capstone Courses and Projects.

Some of these practices are taking place within the Colleges, but they are occurring on the margins, are not inculcated into the culture and/or institutional structure, are not being practiced widely, are not reaching their potential when they are being practiced, and are reaching far too few students for reasons that will be further addressed in this section.

### ○ **Learning Communities and First-Year Seminars**

Included prominently in Kuh's list of high-impact educational practices are Learning Communities. This pedagogical technique is currently only marginally implemented within the Colleges. From national data and our own limited experiences, we have strong evidence that block scheduling linking two or more courses into learning communities helps students better understand the connections between concepts across disciplines and establishes a stronger sense of community for students. Residential living is impractical for many UW Colleges students, many of whom are married and have children, so strategies for building a greater sense of community on Colleges campuses, such as Learning Communities, can strengthen retention rates by fostering positive learning experiences for UW Colleges students.

Another effective high-impact strategy for retaining students and improving student graduation rates is the First-Year Seminar. Currently even though UW Colleges has a First-Year program, it is unable to offer sufficient numbers of sections because of workload demands on faculty and staff. UW Colleges must offer the courses in a one-credit format because of budget constraints despite the fact that "results of the First-Year Initiative (FYI) benchmarking survey of first-year seminars, conducted in 2001 by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, showed that students in courses with only one contact hour per week, compared to two or three contact hours, reported lower gains on all but one outcome factor. The factors included such outcomes as improved study strategies, improved connections with peers, increased out-of-class engagement, satisfaction with college or university, and sense of belonging and acceptance. This indicates that increased contact hours can have a positive impact on learning outcomes and student satisfaction with the first-year seminar." (Hunter, Mary Stuart, and Carrie W. Linder. "First-Year Seminars." *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*. Ed. M. Lee Upcraft, John N. Gardner, and Betsy O. Barefoot. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005. 275-91.)

### ○ **Experiential Learning**

Undergraduate Research that can incorporate service learning and capstone projects is another high-impact practice that should be more fully implemented by UW Colleges. Evidence that this practice is significant in increasing recruitment, retention, and transfer success of our students comes from the recommendation for funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a proposal by UW Colleges biologists Rebecca Abler and Rick Hein. The objective of "Opening the Portals of Discovery: Increasing Opportunities in STEM through Collaborative Research" is to create a pipeline through the UW Colleges to a baccalaureate degree. This project will support the creation of collaborative research, mentorship, and instructional programs across the 26 University of Wisconsin campuses. It will achieve the goal of increasing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors by creating a seamless pipeline of STEM

education that bridges high schools, UW Colleges, and four year campuses. It will increase students' hands-on experiential education through active research projects, creating teams of faculty and peer mentors with representation from the two- and four-year campuses, targeting talented and underrepresented populations of students through recruitment and outreach. It will attract these students into the STEM pipeline through the creation of scholarships and developing new curriculum that will increase STEM skill sets early in the students' college careers.

While extramural (such as the NSF) support is appropriate, specific efforts such as these could be greatly enhanced by greater investment in the UW Colleges and by creating infrastructure and budgetary flexibility to support their development, providing time for more faculty to seek extramural funding, and to provide seed money for preliminary work that could result in more extramural support.

We need to increase high-impact practices to increase our effectiveness. In the long run, investing in a comprehensive implementation of high-impact practices will be more cost effective than continuing down the present path and losing students who *could* be successful if they had greater access to high-impact educational practices.

This is substantiated by Terry T. Ishitani's in "Studying Attrition and Degree Completion Behavior among First-Generation College Students in the United States," published in the September/October issue of the *Journal of Higher Education* (2006). Ishitani found "First-generation students were 51% and 32% less likely to graduate in the fourth and fifth years than were students whose parents graduated from college" (2006, p.17). Report data show that UW Colleges serves more of these traditionally under prepared at-risk students and does so more successfully than any other UW institution. Additionally, research data clearly demonstrate that "historically underserved students tend to benefit *more* from engaging in educationally purposeful activities than majority students" (Kuh, 2008, p.17). Increased investment in UW Colleges to increase investment in high-impact curriculum will increase success rates of traditionally underserved students for transfer, retention and graduation.

Imagine the reaction of legislators and the public if we said, "We know that the students who come to the Colleges are at risk of not making it, and the money you and they spend on one or more years of education is to some degree wasted. So we're going to do something different than the rest of the academia: We're going to do everything in our power to make sure these students succeed, and one way we're going to do it is to in essence put them through a boot camp that gets them to the point where they *can* and *will* succeed."

That would require a real commitment on the part of the faculty and staff in Colleges, on the part of UW System, and on that part of legislators and the governor of Wisconsin.

- **Investment Opportunity: Invest in Faculty**

UW Colleges faculty are developing high-impact educational strategies throughout the institution. However, implementation of those practices is sporadic because faculty and staff are also presently fully engaged in a current academic model that cannot be abandoned wholesale. Put another way, implementation of high-impact educational practices needs to be additive rather than substitutive, building upon existing programs that are necessary and effective but insufficient in themselves to achieve greater effectiveness among underprepared students. High-impact practices are time-intensive; time commitments on the part of faculty and staff have a corresponding monetary cost. However, the return on investment in high-impact educational practices within UW Colleges, the UW System's preeminent gateway institution, will outweigh initial investment costs by increasing access to higher education for traditionally underprepared student populations, and increasing transfer, retention and graduation rates for those students who transfer to other UW System institutions.

- **Increase faculty time**

The resource most lacking is time. While it is obvious that increased numbers of faculty will increase available time – due to sharing nonteaching responsibilities across greater numbers – discussing faculty time constraints and limited faculty numbers separately draws attention to the subtle distinctions in a valuable way. First, freeing up faculty time allows faculty to commit more time to developing effective high-impact practices such as learning communities, first-year seminars, and undergraduate research. There are varying means by which some of the high-impact educational practices could be accomplished, but the *best* way, the way that offers the most opportunity, is by hiring additional tenure-track faculty to share nonteaching responsibilities, so more focus can be devoted to developing high-impact curriculum. As a simple example, increased faculty resources would allow faculty to become full participants with each others' courses in Learning Communities, strengthening the effectiveness of that proven educational practice.

But access to such opportunities is limited because Colleges faculty, teaching 24-28 contact hours per academic year, have the highest disciplinary teaching loads in the UW System. (While some of the comprehensive campuses might publish the same teaching loads, they are able to reduce those loads by various methods such as utilizing teaching assistants.) Colleges' scholarly expectations are equivalent to (and in some cases exceed) those of the UW comprehensive campuses. Moreover, Colleges faculty must also participate in governance on the campus, departmental, and institutional levels. With 13 campuses, this effectively adds 12 repetitions of a governance responsibility that would occur only once at other UW System institutions, which are not geographically dispersed across the state.

- **Increase number of faculty**

Though clearly related to faculty time, the number of faculty does involve a nuanced difference: curricular development. Short of hiring additional faculty to participate in First-Year Experiences and Learning Communities, we *could* hire additional IAS. Currently, Colleges is relying heavily (~37%) upon Instructional Academic Staff. The reason for this high reliance on IAS is due to limited resources. While it is clear that these are high quality teachers, they have no responsibility to share in governance responsibilities and no requirement to participate in scholarly inquiry that might involve undergraduate research, one of the noted high-impact educational practices.

Colleges has the curriculum to support many more tenure-line faculty than it currently does, and could reduce its reliance on IAS and increase faculty participation in high-impact curriculum by hiring more tenure-track faculty with the clearly expressed expectation that these new faculty will develop and engage in high-impact courses. This would allow Colleges to institutionalize first-year seminars and experiences, requiring them for *all* entering UW Colleges students. With additional resources we would hire faculty who would teach three disciplinary courses. The remainder of their instructional load would be part of an ongoing first-year seminar course. National educational data indicate this would increase student engagement, especially for our commuting and underprepared students, and have a corresponding positive effect on student success. In essence, the investment of resources by both the individual student, the UW System, and the State of Wisconsin would be less likely to be squandered when students fail to complete the bachelors degree because they have not been nurtured as well as they could have been at the beginning of their educational experience.

Increased faculty resources would allow UW Colleges to institutionalize undergraduate research, increasing one-on-one interaction between faculty and students and providing the very best experiential learning available to our students. However, at present, there are zero resources available for start-up funding for new faculty who wish to engage in these educational practices. Our sister comprehensive institutions don't hire faculty and provide nothing for them to work with, yet expect active scholarship that involves undergraduate students. Additional resources for Colleges' faculty to develop proven high-impact educational practices must be a part of the equation for meaningful numbers of undergraduates to experience these opportunities.

- **Investment Opportunity: Expand High-impact Partnerships**

Improving the resource allocation models to provide Colleges the tools for increasing student retention and success is one means by which we can assist the UW System to achieve its goals,

but not the only way. Considerable heretofore untapped potential to enter new markets of completely underserved populations exists.

- **Strengthen community partnerships**

As noted previously, for-profit private institutions have experienced more rapid enrollment growth than public institutions of higher education. This is because they have taken their courses to the people rather than expecting the people to come to them. The UW System has a similar, although perhaps less aggressive, tradition that has always been fundamental to its mission. We are all familiar with The Wisconsin Idea. While Charles Van Hise had slightly different thoughts in mind when he provided the basis for what has become the Wisconsin Idea, it has evolved to mean providing the services of the university to every citizen of the state.

Many UW Colleges campuses were first established as outreach centers for UW Madison, and with 26 campuses across the state, UW System continues to champion the Wisconsin Idea. But it has yet to be fully realized. UW Colleges is uniquely positioned, in cooperation with UW Extension, to expand the Wisconsin Idea and provide even greater reach into more areas of the state, many of which are currently not served or are underserved by UW System campuses. Appropriate resource allocation and acquisition of flexible funding models will allow our administratively integrated institutions to provide greater UW access to higher education opportunities at point-of-need.

Geographic expansion of these programs and courses into urban areas, where many high schools participate in interactive television networks and integrated public transportation systems exist, poses fewer obstacles than expanding into regions of the state not readily accessible through existing delivery modalities. To reach many of our communities and potential students within these underserved communities, UW Colleges needs to be innovative while maintaining its record of cost efficiency.

UW Colleges data suggest students' decisions about where they will continue their education to obtain a bachelor's degree are based more frequently than not on proximity. UW System data indicate that the large majority of graduates remain in the state, often close to the communities where they grew up and attended school.

The prospect of expanding local education, either in UW Colleges communities or in other locations where the UW does not have a presence, has enormous potential. Students, particularly those who are place bound at the time of enrollment (typical of Colleges students) are likely to remain in the local region after completing their education. This can be used to our advantage to stimulate an investment by businesses and communities to grant access to facilities and existing resources, such as computers, to increase access to higher education for area residents. It may

even stimulate philanthropic giving. Witness the enormous success of the collaborative engineering programs at UW-Fox Valley and UW-Rock County, where the local business communities stepped forward to provide facilities for these programs.

- **Expand UWC/UWEX partnerships**

With offices in every county in the state of Wisconsin, the joint effort between UWEX and the Colleges could utilize community and business connections within counties to arrange dialogs between Extension and Colleges faculty and staff, and local business owners, community leaders, grade school and high school staff, school board members, students, and average citizens. These partnerships could facilitate assessment of local community needs and how UW Colleges might best serve those needs. Such efforts are already underway. UW Extension faculty and staff and UW Colleges faculty and staff are, for example, working with local businesses and school district officials in Waushara County, one of the poorest counties in Wisconsin, to identify what employers most want and need from employees, and developing strategies for delivering educational programs and Colleges courses at locations within the county to address those needs.

But such efforts are limited by the combination of limited funding, limited faculty resources, and inflexible funding models that do not allow for rapid response to community requests for educational programs from the Colleges. Increased funding, increased faculty resources and flexible funding models will allow Colleges to increase its work with UW Extension and local communities to find innovative ways to deliver courses at point-of-need in cost effective ways by joining the resources of Colleges with the resources of local schools, libraries, governments, and businesses. A course might, for example, be offered in the evenings within a room in a county courthouse or at a local high school. Or a course might be offered during the day at a local business to meet the needs of that business and its employees. To minimize the risk of a course being canceled due to low enrollment in a specific community, multiple delivery modalities could be used to deliver a single course. For example, a single composition course might be offered face-to-face, broadcast via compressed video, and as an online course to achieve the number students needed for the course to run.

Programmatic expansion can be achieved with an increase to resource allocation and flexible models for implementing reallocation of existing resources when and where necessary. Partnerships between local communities, UW Colleges, and UW-Extension will play a vital role in minimizing costs while meeting the educational needs of communities across the state that are not currently adequately served or served at all by existing higher education delivery structures. The possibilities are real, and are within the vision of the Colleges and Extension. They can become reality with modest investment by UW System, increasing UW System's return on its investment many-fold when increased numbers of currently underserved students enter the UW

System through its premiere gateway institution, in cooperation with System’s premiere institution for working directly with community governments, businesses, organizations and citizens; and having those increased numbers of students better retained and, ultimately, graduating from UW institutions in larger numbers.

Such increased direct investment in the businesses, communities and citizens of Wisconsin will increase the percentage of baccalaureate degree-holding citizens in Wisconsin while directly increasing employer access to local workers whose skills more directly meet their needs; increasing employment rates, worker and business productivity; increasing the number of families for whom higher education can become a family tradition; creating an upward spiral that UW System, and the government and citizens of Wisconsin can be proud of.

- **Investment Opportunity: Expand Access to the Wisconsin Idea**

To remain competitive in higher education, UW System needs to seek innovative ways to engage increasingly diverse populations – both underprepared traditional aged students and the currently underserved adults around the state. With resources allocated to the Colleges at a level appropriate for the institution, the goals of increasing educational attainment throughout the state can be realized in the most effective and efficient means available to the System. In association with UW-Extension we are uniquely positioned to be the vehicles for delivering on the promise of the Wisconsin Growth Agenda.

Hearing “increased funding” at a moment in history approaching that of the Great Depression might seem illogical, but it is not inexplicable. Historically, during times of economic downturn, citizens have returned to college or entered college for the first time, to acquire the skills they need for gainful employment. This, in turn, increases earning potential which, in turn, increases tax revenues within the state. UW System should not waste the opportunities presented by the crisis. Rather, System needs to be visionary and part of the solution, investing appropriately with the most efficient vehicle at its disposal – the UW Colleges and UW-Extension.

UW System will demonstrate through action, increased delivery of proven educational practices in innovative ways, that we are not merely concerned with community growth and development in vaguely conceptual ways, but are genuinely concerned and engaged by proactively being present in those communities; by actively listening to and assessing community needs; and by taking constructive action to bring the resources of the university directly to the citizens of those communities.

UW System has a responsibility to Wisconsin’s citizens. Indeed, we are ready to take pages from the playbooks of private for-profit institutions as part of that responsibility. Investing in UW

Colleges, the UW System's premiere institution for access, is an investment in the UW System, the state of Wisconsin, and the nation as a whole.