



CONCLUSION



Vision for the Future: Successes and Challenges

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee originated in the 1956 merger of the Wisconsin State College Milwaukee (a state teacher’s college) and the University of Wisconsin Extension Center–Milwaukee. It is one of the two doctoral campuses in the UW System. The university is located in the most densely and diversely populated part of the state, and it expanded rapidly as the demand for college education grew in the post-war years in Wisconsin. Initially the campus had a student capacity of about 6,000 and it has grown to serve about 27,000 students in 2004-05.

This history contributed to the development of two major themes in UWM’s development. One theme is the University’s role in serving the public of southeastern Wisconsin by providing an accessible range of degree programs. This was reflected in the rapid expansion of degree programs and student enrollment in the 1960s. The other is the desire to build a major research presence in a range of disciplines, in part through developing the doctoral degree array.

The two themes converge in the University’s vision to be a premier public research university. This vision is multifaceted but brings together the variety of work done at the institution. As a public institution, the University has a responsibility to respond to the educational needs of the state—specifically, to present opportunities to the urban center in which the University resides. The campus goal is to be a center for research and knowledge creation across a broad range of disciplines. Many of the successes detailed in this report contribute to this integrated vision, but significant challenges remain.

Successes: The Case for Accreditation

This Self-Study demonstrates that the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee meets the five criteria for reaccreditation established by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.

UWM has stayed faithful to its mission, articulated almost 50 years ago, to take advantage of the opportunities and fulfill the responsibilities that derive from its location as the population, cultural and economic center of Wisconsin. This mission has been reaffirmed in the 1986 report entitled *UWM and the Future of Metropolitan Milwaukee* and more recently in the Investment Plan and the Milwaukee Idea documents. Supported by the policies of the UW System, governance of the University is shared among administrators, faculty, staff and students.

Shared governance provides a powerful mechanism that ensures that UWM will continue to be faithful to its mission.

One of UWM's major successes in the last decade was the development of a strategic planning process that started with the 1996 Strategic Plan, and which resulted in the *Investing in UWM's Future* document (2000). In combination with the Milwaukee Idea, the Investment Plan led to an infusion of new state funds, to efforts to increase extramural and gift income and to specific plans at the school, college, and division levels. A significant outcome of these planning efforts is the addition of three new Ph.D. programs—the first since 1985. Although state revenue has not kept pace with enrollment increases since 1996, income from tuition, gifts and extramural sources has increased substantially.

UWM is committed to ensuring that students complete programs with knowledge and skills identified as essential by the faculty. All programs have articulated and publicized learning goals and have either implemented or are in the process of implementing assessment procedures. Reviews of undergraduate and graduate programs incorporate student-learning outcomes. Learning outcomes and assessment processes for the general education requirements are currently under faculty review and implementation is anticipated before the end of the 2004-05 academic year. The goal is to incorporate reviews of general education courses into our regular review process.

The campus also recognizes that student achievement of learning outcomes requires effective teaching and ongoing faculty development. The Center for Instructional and Professional Development and the Learning Technology Center indicate an institutional commitment to providing the resources necessary to support faculty and staff in their teaching responsibilities.

UWM has an academic culture that supports discovery, inquiry and creativity by faculty, staff and students. This is evidenced by an array of seminars, colloquia, visiting artists, internal awards supporting faculty research, the Chancellor's Graduate Student Fellowships, and support for new faculty in the form of reduced teaching loads, summer stipends and startup packages. Most departments provide opportunities for undergraduate research and creative expression and many require a research project as part of the major. Despite significant resource issues, UWM has done well during the past decade in keeping its research momentum going, almost doubling extramural funding between 1994-95 and 2003-04.

UWM takes its responsibility for engagement and service very seriously. Such work has long been part of the institution's activities but more recently the Milwaukee Idea has provided a broad structure for enabling effective university-community connections and is the umbrella for numerous partnerships. As examples, there are

neighborhood health centers sponsored by the School of Nursing and the Milwaukee Partnership Academy collaboration with the Milwaukee Public Schools. The Office of Partnerships and Innovations (headed by a Vice Chancellor) has been created to foster and maintain collaborative civic engagement. New academic programs (such as the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management) have been formed in direct response to community needs and requests. On a broader front, programs such as Cultures and Communities provide students with flexible options to pursue service learning.

Future Challenges: The Work Ahead

This self-study enabled UWM to identify several challenges that will need to be addressed as it realizes its vision to be a premier public research university. These challenges cut across the institution and affect how it meets its core educational and research missions.

Financial Resources

The University's limited financial resources have a major impact on its development. Financial constraints affect areas as diverse as program development, student support, support of instruction and research, and faculty recruitment.

The history of revenue growth reveals an important shift through time: There has been an ongoing decline in state support and an increasing reliance on tuition revenues. State funds provided 32.7 percent in 1995-96, 28.1 percent in 2002-03, and 24.3 percent in 2003-04. At the same time, tuition's share of revenues increased from 18.1 percent in 1995-96 to 23.1 percent in 2003-04. State funding is unlikely to return to its previous level as a percentage of UWM's revenue base, and will probably continue to represent a smaller share of overall university funding in the near future. Recent state budgets have required the UW System to rely upon tuition for a greater part of its income because of a structural shift in state funding priorities (for example, more state funding was directed to local schools).

The challenge to the University is how to maintain a resource stream that allows it to conduct the range of instructional and research activities that are in keeping with its vision and without compromising quality. Over the last decade, enrollment growth, tuition increases, and federal student aid and grants have played a major role in maintaining the revenue stream. UWM remains relatively inexpensive compared to other public universities in the Midwest despite some sharp tuition increases, but additional large tuition increases will restrict student access to the University. In addition, the significant resource increase generated by extramural grants is, in part, due to increased investment in research infrastructure in the sciences and engineering. One concern is how budget constraints will affect the institution's ability to continue these investments.

Another concern is the retention of faculty and staff in the face of small (1%) or nonexistent salary increases, as has occurred over the last two years. This is a System-wide concern that must be negotiated with state government.

One component of the Investment Plan was a major effort at raising private gifts. Although gifts have increased substantially, the level of support is below the original target. This is one area that needs more attention. The success of the capital campaign will be a determinant of UWM's ability to achieve excellence.

Thus one of the major challenges for the University is developing realistic budget forecasts and fiscal models that are integrated with academic planning to identify appropriate investment choices for the University's future.

Strategic Planning

The Self-Study review of the strategic planning efforts of 1996-2000 indicates that the efforts were successful and produced important investments, but it also reveals several areas that require additional attention.

At a basic level, the designs of key information systems (such as budgets and financial records) reflect their heritage as paper records. Analyses of data through time generally require consultation of numerous annual reports and compilation of the discrete data (as was done for this report). The annual campus budget summary, the campus financial summary, and the UW System "Red Book" budget are all separate documents that present annual snapshots. Better-integrated information systems and continued development of the data warehouse are needed to attain a broader understanding of the University's fiscal resources, ongoing budgets, and enrollment trends.

The University needs to develop tools to assess the impact of past investment decisions. Such assessments are complex because they involve a wide range of interrelated effects (such as research productivity, program development, student successes, community engagement). Improved information systems would enhance such evaluations, but better assessment structures are needed. This will require the identification of clear goals and outcome measures for both new initiatives and ongoing programs.

Planning experiences also indicate the need for designating the responsibility and authority to conduct planning exercises within the University's governance structure. Major planning efforts require administrative leadership and collaborations among administrators, faculty, staff and students. A variety of models have been used, and new governance bodies (most notably the Academic Planning and Budget Committee) created. UWM needs to identify which governance bodies and administrative offices will collaboratively be responsible

for planning, which will be responsible for the implementation of those plans, and which will assess and review the progress of a plan's implementation. A well-articulated planning, implementation, and evaluation process focused on advancing UWM's standing as a research university will help UWM articulate its goals and resource needs internally as well as externally to the Board of Regents, the UW System and the people of Wisconsin.

Finally, the emerging culture of collaboration needs to be fostered. Most of the action plans developed during the Milwaukee Idea and Investment Plan planning processes were interdisciplinary and many cut across school and college boundaries. This allowed the University to develop new research initiatives at the intersection of disciplines where much of the most interesting research and program development occurs (as well as where new funding opportunities arise). One idea would be to make a deliberate choice to fund interdisciplinary work over single-unit projects.

Enrollment Management

UWM's enrollment has varied over the last decades. In the early-to-middle 1990s, undergraduate enrollment dropped below state-mandated levels and resulted in budget cuts. Enrollment has grown steadily since that time and the associated increase in tuition revenues (80% retained by campus) helped fund additional instructional activities. At the same time, graduate enrollment remained relatively unchanged. These enrollment increases allowed the University to improve its budget situation while meeting student demand.

The size and composition of the student body directly affects the instructional needs, research activity, and fiscal resources of the University. The changes in the student body reflected in the enrollment data affected how the University used its resources (for example: the demand for courses created a need for lecturers and graduate TAs, etc.). These resource shifts were not part of an overall strategy to move UWM toward its vision of being a premier public research university, but a response to the immediate needs to serve the student body.

In December 2003, UWM began to take a careful look at enrollment with the goal of developing a management strategy that fits the campus vision for its future. The initial phase identified important goals such as capping enrollment at around 27,000 students (the approximate fall 2004 enrollment), increasing student diversity, increasing retention and graduate rates, and expanding the number of graduate students to around 25 percent of the student body. A second phase is underway to convert these goals into specific action steps supported by a financial plan. It is clear that UWM will need to carefully weigh its approach to recruiting and retaining students to meet its goals.

Diversity

Providing opportunity and access to a high-quality education to all members of society is a core mission of UWM. Excellence in educational and research programs at all levels is integrally connected with our diversity goals, as clearly articulated by Chancellor Carlos Santiago in his January, 2005 Plenary address to the campus:

The reality is that if we do not become a more diverse community that welcomes all members of our society, we will never become a truly premier research university. Academic excellence and diversity are the pillars upon which this institution will thrive and achieve the prominence that was envisioned by its founders. Our diversity complements academic excellence and the growth in research that is our goal. “Diversity” is an issue that is of paramount importance both to our university and to our larger society.

As UWM moves into Phase II of the Milwaukee Commitment, campus services and academic units will need to be aligned to the action steps outlined in *Closing the Achievement Gap: Retention and Graduation*. The University has identified the resources that will be dedicated for that purpose, and we have made the commitment to hold ourselves accountable in meeting diversity goals.

Assessment

Sound assessment practices are essential for all university planning, and provide the basis for understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of all the activities at a university. In recent years, UWM has stressed the development of a comprehensive assessment program for academic programs. Parallel efforts in student academic services such as advising have provided a broader basis for evaluating varied functions at the University.

Assessment of academic programs should inform the combined efforts of faculty, staff and students to improve the learning environment and to provide effective advising and other campus services and opportunities. Effective use of assessment results is closely linked to student retention and academic success.

Similar to many research institutions, UWM has sophisticated input measures, but has paid less attention to processes for direct and indirect assessment of student learning, and the use of such data to make informed decisions about program changes. Some departments have conducted program assessments for years, but many others have only recently developed assessment processes. At present, all programs have processes in place to collect assessment

data. Program reviews now include requirements for reporting on assessment activities, including how assessment data are actually used to evaluate and modify programs. Although all departments informally track the quality of their programs, they are at different points in using program-level assessment results for program improvement. Departments with a long history of assessment provide good models of how such feedback benefits the department.

The most problematic area has been the assessment of general education requirements. These requirements are important because they form the core of the liberal arts education of the University's graduates. An ad hoc committee developed student learning outcomes and assessment procedures based on the original Faculty Senate legislation. New procedures for course approval and program assessment were instituted to link reviews of general education courses to relevant program reviews.

More broadly, UWM needs to cultivate and sustain an institutional culture that values assessment across all aspects of its activities. Assessment plans should be an integral part of the development of new initiatives or the plans for the allocation of significant resources so the institution can track its successes and learn from its missteps. The ability to assess past decisions is vital to making informed future decisions.

Finally, UWM should examine its administrative and governance structures and assess their effectiveness. Historically, resource allocations have been made at the school and college level, leading to competition among units. Formal governance bodies are generally set up to respond or react to proposals, not to develop new ideas or approaches. Some of these assumptions should be reexamined. Is the current school, college and department structure the best way to organize the institution? Do the governance structures build collaborations among administrators, faculty, staff and students as envisioned in Chapter 36 of Wisconsin statutes?

Scholarship

Scholarship is the heart of a great university. It spans the breadth of the academic work from the discovery of knowledge to the application of those insights in the broader community and the education of the next generation of scholars. An emphasis on excellence in the University's scholarly work is the basis for integrating the two components of UWM's mission.

As a campus of opportunity, UWM seeks to build a diverse academic community with a wide range of excellent programs that prepare students for the modern world. This will require investments in programs and facilities that recruit top-notch students, help at-risk students, and lead to students' academic success. These concerns

are reflected in recent efforts to increase scholarship funding, revise student services, and examine the student experience. The enrollment management work will attempt to align the size of the student body with the University's ability to provide essential services to students.

As a research campus, UWM must continue to hire exceptional faculty and find ways to support creative work across the schools and colleges. Experiences with engagement helped expand the University's vision of the range of scholarly activities in ways that affirm its commitment to the state of Wisconsin and the Milwaukee metropolitan area. Research initiatives such as the Milwaukee Idea and Chancellor Santiago's strategic research investment plan point the way toward targeted investments to enhance the institution's research profile.

The most basic challenge will be to increase the faculty's scholarly productivity while maintaining the University's commitment to the teaching and community engagement. This may require the campus community to expand revenues and align budget decisions toward strategic investments in research clusters.

The preferred model for instruction has traditionally stressed the use of faculty as lecturers and graduate students as discussion and laboratory instructors. Lecturers are used if faculty members are not available, usually on an ad hoc basis. Workloads are based on the number of in-class contact hours or courses. In recent years, alternative instructional models have developed in the form of online, hybrid courses, and computer-based instruction. Research practice in some units is dominated by the traditional model of individual faculty members developing individual projects and supporting a group of students who work in their laboratories. This model is also changing with the emergence of interdisciplinary research groups, in part in response to campus or federal funding for research clusters.

These changes raise several questions about how UWM will adjust to accommodate more varied instructional and research approaches. Can assessment results be used to evaluate the appropriate use of different educational models? (Some subject areas may be suitable for online offerings, others will not.) What roles will faculty, academic staff and graduate students play under alternative instructional models? How will this affect the composition of UWM's workforce? (For example, there may be a need to hire additional permanent academic staff members.)

How can the University promote and reward research clusters that cut across schools and colleges? Are workload policies designed to maximize individual contributions to the collective goals of effective teaching, research and service? Is a more flexible model for faculty productivity needed that incorporates the varied nature of faculty work?

In the long term, enhanced visibility as a research university will require an increased level of scholarly activity. This may require the institution to establish research and scholarship productivity goals, and focus resources on achieving these goals. Sustained and significant investments in the research infrastructure will be needed to reach such goals.

A Final Word

In his first Plenary address to the campus community in September 2004, Chancellor Santiago described UWM's distinctive role and set an ambitious agenda for the future:

As I see it, the challenge facing this institution, at this point in its historic trajectory, is to fundamentally enhance our academic profile. We do that in an environment that is less than optimal from a budgetary perspective, but I believe we have real strengths with which to accomplish our goals.

The key will lie in our ability to expand and diversify our sources of funding to the campus, primarily through the expansion of extramural support for our research and donated or philanthropic funds.

I firmly believe in our mission and mandate: We are a public research university. We are one of only two public institutions in the state to be designated a doctoral-granting research university.

We are the second largest university in Wisconsin. We have a duty to the citizens of this state to fulfill our responsibilities. Not only does UWM disseminate knowledge through teaching, but UWM also creates knowledge and transfers our discoveries to the public and private sectors so that society can benefit from our endeavors.

This is our mission.

Our basic strength lies in the quality of our faculty and staff and the shared belief among all that this is an institution that plays a transformative role in the life of its students and in the community in which it resides.

We must build on that strength to increase the academic and research profile of this great institution. We will do this by collaborating internally across disciplines and externally with other institutions of higher education, and the public and private sectors. This collaboration will allow us to increase the amount of funded research on campus and develop more doctoral programs.

The beneficiaries will be our students, who will receive an education from a nationally ranked University; our faculty, who have the resources to carry out cutting-edge research; and all of Wisconsin, which will benefit from our participation in the knowledge-driven economy of today's world.

This Self-Study report details how UWM can more fully enact its mission and reach the shared goals voiced by Chancellor Santiago.