Strategic Plan for the Future of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
by Chancellor John H. Schroeder
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"As we weigh our situation . . . we would do well to remember our founders. They too faced hard times, limited resources and formidable obstacles. But they refused to let their problems become their epitaph. We must do no less."

--John H. Schroeder, October 4, 1991

Introduction

When the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was established 40 years ago its founders believed that if Milwaukee were to be a great city, it would need a great, urban public university. A critical element in the creation of UWM was the strong support of the citizens and leaders of Milwaukee. In their minds, this was to be Milwaukee's university.

That same central purpose is evident in UWM's Select Mission, which is centered on meeting the diverse needs of Wisconsin's largest metropolitan area by providing a wide array of degree programs, a balanced program of applied and basic research, and a faculty who are active in public service.

When I launched UWM's strategic planning process, I asked the Academic Planning Committee to keep UWM's urban mission in mind while developing a Vision Statement that would carry the university into the next century. The Vision Statement begins by setting the goal that UWM will be one of America's premier urban universities, recognized for excellence and dedication to the principle that the education of its students is its primary purpose.

The next step in the strategic planning process was to develop a strategic plan, which sets specific priorities for UWM's future direction. The plan evolved through stages as its substance was discussed by the Academic Planning Committee, the Faculty Academic Planning and Budget Committee, other campus committees, community boards, and many individuals. The initiatives set forth in the plan address the realities that public institutions of higher education face, including declining state support, increasing demand for life-long learning opportunities, growing requirements for assessment and accountability, and rapid changes in technology.

This strategic plan will enable UWM to meet the challenges and the opportunities of the next decade. It is entirely consistent with the recommendations made by members of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents in their report on the Study of the UW System in the 21st Century. Among the Regents'
recommendations are preserving and enhancing access to quality, creating new knowledge, fostering career and professional development, and restructuring and improving efficiency. This strategic plan addresses these and other issues.

Every school and college, every division, every department and every individual in the UWM community has a stake in the plan because its implementation depends on long-range plans that address the organization and structure of the university, both biennial and annual budgeting, and day-to-day activities. As a result, some areas of the campus will be restructured and job duties for some may be realigned. Whatever changes are made, however, must be centered on UWM's primary purpose--the education of our students.

Framework of the Plan

As a nationally recognized urban research university, UWM will continue to do the things that have contributed to its dramatic growth and development in its first four decades. They include:

- Providing high quality research and instructional programs.
- Guaranteeing educational access and opportunity for a broad array of traditional and non-traditional students while increasing the diversity of the student population.
- Promoting public service and research efforts directed toward meeting the social, economic, educational and cultural needs of metropolitan Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin.
- Ensuring a campus community that values human diversity, promotes free and open inquiry, and treats each person with respect, tolerance, dignity and civility.
- Maintaining an attractive and safe campus.

These ongoing areas of emphasis will remain basic elements in the campus planning process. The strategic plan will not diminish their importance but will add new initiatives intended to improve and strengthen UWM and move it to the next level of excellence.

Objective of the Plan

The main objective of the strategic plan is to firmly establish UWM as one of the nation’s premier urban research universities within the next decade and thereby
increase the value of a UWM degree and increase the university’s value to
Milwaukee and Wisconsin.

In striving to achieve this objective, UWM will focus on four priorities:

1. Strengthening and more effectively integrating the university’s central
   functions of creating, disseminating and applying knowledge. In other
   words, better using UWM’s strengths as an urban research university to
   enhance the education of its students.
2. Stabilizing the university's enrollment and resources.
3. Dramatically expanding the use of technology across the campus.
4. Enhancing the campus learning and working environment.

When considering the four priorities, it is important to keep in mind that they are
not stand-alone entities. They are interwoven, interdependent and mutually
reinforcing. More closely connecting research and teaching will improve learning.
Improving the campus infrastructure will permit researchers to increase the
volume and quality of their work. Increasing interaction with the community will
promote more research and enhance the educational experience of students.
Stabilizing UWM's resources and keeping the campus up to date in
technology will reinforce all of its academic strengths. Developing a more
collegiate atmosphere for students will encourage higher student enrollment and
retention rates.

Examples of the specific initiatives and tactics that will be used to implement the
plan are listed under each of the four priorities. Some of the tactics already are
being implemented, some require the development of implementation plans, and
in some cases additional tactics will be added as the plan evolves.

**Strategic Priorities**

#1 Integrate the Creation, Dissemination and Application of Knowledge

*Initiative*

*Advance UWM's stature as a center of scholarly excellence and improve its
position in the Carnegie ranking of Research II universities.*

*Tactics*

- Implement and revise, as necessary, the campus-wide UWM Research
  Plan, which sets specific goals for research, scholarship and creative
  activity and promotes collaborative research initiatives.
• Target existing research funding for areas of proven excellence, areas that have the potential for excellence, and those areas that have the demonstrated potential to generate increased extramural funding.

• Restructure the Graduate School so that it can more effectively increase and encourage the university's research efforts.

Initiative

Enrich the learning experiences of UWM students.

Tactics

• More widely organize instruction around a "paradigm of discovery" which engages undergraduate as well as graduate students in research and creative activity.

• Continue to develop new undergraduate and graduate programs responsive to the changing needs of society.

• Provide freshmen and transfer students with a variety of activities, such as the Freshman Scholars Program, that increase contact with faculty.

• Fully implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience.

Initiative

Expand UWM's urban mission and reinforce the university's commitment to enhancing the quality of life and economic base of the Milwaukee metropolitan area and the State of Wisconsin.

Tactics

• Better organize, coordinate and promote partnerships, alliances and collaborations with Milwaukee area businesses, governmental agencies, educational institutions, arts groups and neighborhoods.

• Encourage more research and scholarship that addresses issues and problems confronted by metropolitan Milwaukee and the state.

• Intensify efforts to use the university's metropolitan location to expand the student educational experience by providing more internships, fieldwork, co-op programs and other learning opportunities in the community.
#2 Stabilize Enrollment and Resources

**Initiative**

*Increase student enrollment and retention, better utilize existing resources, and find ways to enlarge the university’s resource base.*

**Tactics**

- Meet UW System’s Enrollment Management III target for the campus of the equivalent of 16,304 full-time students for the year 2000.
- Improve the retention and timely graduation of both traditional and non-traditional students.
- Reallocate existing resources to achieve the initiatives of the Strategic Plan.
- Utilize and, as necessary, revise the existing recognition, reward and promotion structure for faculty and staff to achieve the initiatives of the Strategic Plan.
- Adjust academic program array to maintain high quality and to meet the needs of students.
- Take advantage of opportunities for additional state and federal funding in targeted areas.
- Increase private sector gifts and revenue-producing activities.

#3 Expand Technology

**Initiative**

*Employ appropriate information and communication technology to improve the academic, student service and administrative operations of the campus.*

**Tactics**

- Build a comprehensive campus technology plan that will address near-term goals and long-range potential in areas such as distance education and administrative efficiency.
• Establish a Learning Technology Center dedicated to helping faculty and teaching staff integrate educational technologies into their courses.

• Eliminate areas of deficiency in access to technology.

#4 Enhance the Campus Environment

Initiative

*Improve the support systems and physical facilities that make the campus environment conducive to learning and working.*

Tactics

• Improve quality of and access to scholarly sources and references through the Golda Meir Library and other campus facilities.

• Augment services to students in areas such as admissions, registration, financial aid, career counseling, food service, residence life and child care.

• Continue to update and modernize classrooms.

• Target existing professional development resources for employees, especially faculty, instructional academic staff and teaching assistants, to achieve the initiatives of the Strategic Plan.

• Continue development of the NCAA Division I athletic program.

• Expand residence halls, sports and recreation facilities, and parking capacity.

Implementation and Accountability

Implementing this plan and continuing with the strategic planning process will take the efforts of the entire campus community. We all share in the responsibility of meeting the plan's main objective--firmly establishing UWM as one of the nation's premier urban research universities within the next decade. For this effort to succeed, every individual in every division, every department and every program must play an active and integral role in improving UWM, enhancing its reputation, and promoting the accomplishments of its students, faculty and staff.

UWM Provost Kenneth L. Watters will have overall operational responsibility for implementation of the Strategic Plan. In the next several months he will work with appropriate administrators and faculty and staff governance groups to define more specifically the steps to be taken, to assign accountability, and to determine how results will be measured. An essential part of this process will be the
utilization of the annual campus budget process to accomplish the initiatives and tactics of the plan.

**Annual Report**

Beginning in June of 1997, I will make an annual report to the campus on implementation of this plan. In addition, periodic updates will be provided in the UWM Report and in occasional letters to the university community.