

CRITERION TWO

Preparing for the Future

Opened in 2007, the new University Center incorporates numerous “green” elements, including a white roof to reflect sunlight, south facing windows for solar heating, and a 48,000-gallon rainwater collection system for use as grey flush water. Students insisted on and assumed the costs for these sustainable features. The building represents one way that UWRF is shaping the future.



A goal without a plan is just a wish.

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery



Preparing for the Future

- *The University of Wisconsin-River Falls' allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.*

Based on our mission and vision statements, the university has developed a strategic plan titled “Living the Promise” to help us meet the obstacles and opportunities ahead. By careful planning and prioritizing the use of our limited resources, we are poised to respond to the challenges and changes we face.

A 2006 [workshop](#) was the seminal event in creating UWRF's new strategic plan. The effort began in June when the strategic planning committee met with Dr. John Dew, one of the founders of the [National Consortium for Continuous Improvement](#) and a consultant on the strategic planning process. That August Dr. Dew conducted a workshop attended by 65 campus leaders and university representatives. We shared stories about significant university events, recalling our traditions and reconfirming our strong culture of learning and teaching. We completed a SWOT analysis, noting such challenges and opportunities as our dynamically growing region and our limited resource base. We generated and began prioritizing preliminary goals consistent with our mission, vision and values. The two-day workshop created momentum for our fall semester planning efforts.

We are poised to respond to the challenges and changes we face.

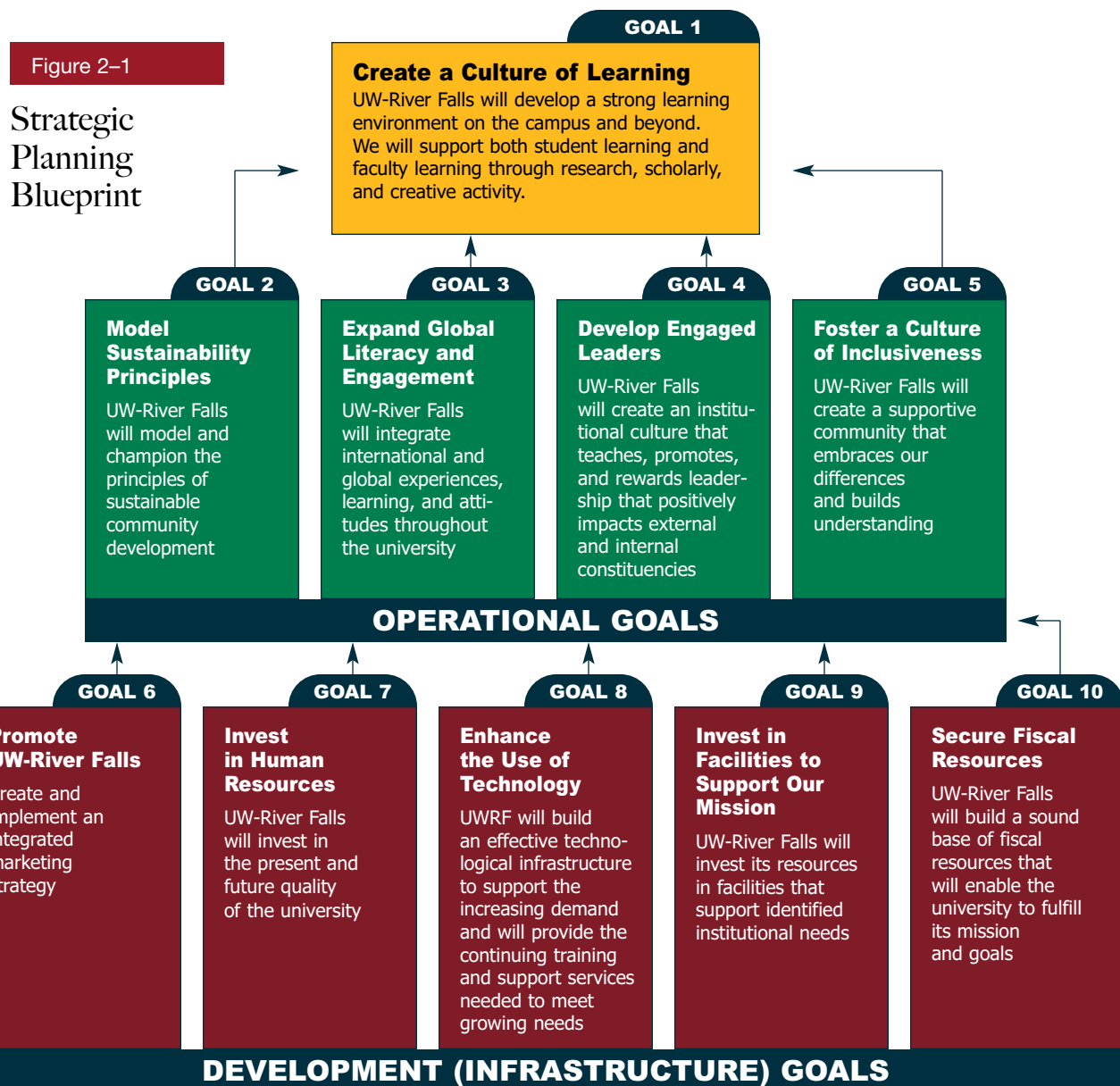


CORE COMPONENT 2A

- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING

UWRF’s strategic plan “Living the Promise” is grounded in the mission, vision and values the university developed in the fall of 2005. In May 2006 the chancellor established a strategic planning steering committee to create a blueprint for the future. After the August 2006 workshop and fall semester discussions, the campus articulated 10 goals for the strategic plan:





The plan's operating paradigm can be expressed in the four principles that undergird the strategic planning process. First, we are committed to measuring the performance of units across campus. Second, we are committed to a culture of continuous improvement. Third, we will define funding priorities for the university. Fourth, we will use solid information in future decisions about how we allocate and use resources.

The following [planning assumptions](#) provided the basis for the process:

- **Growth:** UW-River Falls will incorporate creative, collaborative, multi-institutional, multi-state and multi-national growth strategies in its planning. Because of its location in one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, UW-River Falls must focus on new and existing programs that will meet the needs of the region, state, and beyond. Growth plans must be grounded in securing sufficient resources to sustain and enhance quality.
- **Students:** UW-River Falls will focus on strategies and models that sustain access and affordability for students even in a time when decreasing state and federal funding adds pressure to increase tuition.
- **Resources:** UW-River Falls will achieve its strategic planning objectives by reallocating existing resources; generating additional revenue from external resources such as grants, contracts and gifts; and utilizing human resources in more creative ways. State resources relied upon in the past are not likely to increase substantially.
- **Facilities:** UW-River Falls will identify facility needs, including deferred maintenance projects, and aggressively pursue funding for them. Space needs must be balanced with the ability to maintain the facilities.
- **Academics:** Academic programs at UW-River Falls will concentrate on helping students achieve defined learning outcomes, preparing them to succeed in a global economy, and encouraging them to assume their roles as responsible citizens and exceptional leaders. Our academic programs will undergo constant assessment and be guided by the principles of continuous improvement.

During the 2006 fall semester, the Faculty Senate assigned strategic planning goals to appropriate committees. Committees identified initiatives under each goal and further broke down those initiatives into a number of specific, measurable tasks. This work was formally ratified by the Faculty Senate in January 2007. The completed strategic planning document was returned to the strategic planning steering committee, which prioritized the goals, initiatives and tasks; organized the document into one operating paradigm with five operational goals and five infrastructure development goals; and identified "champions" to lead the implementation efforts. The plan was completed by March 1, 2007. The previously cited [2007 faculty-staff survey](#) indicates the high level of involvement and awareness of the process.



Progress on “Living the Promise” is posted on the campus Web site. The university is currently in the first phase of the plan’s implementation. Following the recommendations of consultant Dr. Michael Middaugh, assistant vice president for institutional research and planning at the University of Delaware, the campus further prioritized the operational and development goals to focus on the items of greatest urgency. The 2007-08 priority strategic planning goals, developed by the University Planning Group and approved by the Faculty Senate, include:

- Invest in human capital by improving compensation, further clarifying performance expectations, and expanding professional development opportunities for faculty and staff
- Assess programs, set priorities, and base budget decisions on priorities
- Enhance support for key student-focused programs (the First-Year Experience, Honors Program, and Academic Success Center)
- Create and implement an integrated marketing program linked to university priorities

“With respect to planning and assessment, the university is to be commended for substantial progress made in the development of a planning framework for the institution. The planning process is broadly participatory, and has resulted in the production of a Strategic Planning Grid containing institutional planning goals and initiatives that are innovative and, appropriately implemented, will move the institution forward.”

— Michael Middaugh, higher education consultant and director of institutional research at the University of Delaware, in a report on UWRF’s planning, assessment and institutional research efforts

PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

Two planning efforts preceded “Living the Promise:” “Reach for the Future” (1995-2000) and Long Range Planning (2001-2005).

Under Chancellor Gary Thibodeau, “Reach for the Future’s” overriding objective was to reallocate funds from personnel expenditures (93.1 percent of the GPR budget at the time) to under-funded supplies and equipment (S & E) lines (then 6.9 percent of GPR funds). By 2000 this initiative was able to increase S & E allocations to 10 percent of the GPR budget. Of 43 planning objectives, 39 were achieved or in process near the end of that initiative. In the years following, the university completed a number of additional action steps that began with Reach for the Future: the revision of the general education program; the creation of a School of Business and Economics, which eventually became the College of Business and Economics; and the remodeling of historic South Hall to house that college.

From 2001-2004, the campus engaged in long-range planning under Chancellor Ann Lydecker. A long range planning committee (LRPC) drafted nine goals in the spring of 2002. Additional input to shape those goals was gathered in an open session for the campus community. The LRPC remained active in 2002-03, specifying action plans, assigning responsibilities and identifying benchmarks. In June 2003 a plan with goals and action steps through 2006 was developed. With Chancellor Lydecker’s death in March 2004, the LRPC effort was placed on hold. A transition year ensued in 2004-05 during which progress toward goals was monitored at the unit level.



“LIVING THE PROMISE” THEMES

“Living the Promise” reflects themes of previous planning efforts and also articulates new priorities. Themes in common with previous planning initiatives are:

- **An emphasis on creating a culture of learning.** UW-River Falls has long understood that our primary obligation is to deliver a high quality educational experience. Essential to this obligation is the cultivation of a supportive, scholarly, creative, and open environment. We acknowledge and embrace our role as change agents who transform individual lives and improve society.
- **A commitment to invest in our human resources.** UW-River Falls seeks to recruit, retain, and continually develop a community of high-performing faculty and staff. We believe quality learning experiences flow from a dedicated, knowledgeable, effective collection of teachers and learners. A vital element of this investment is the development and effective use of technology.
- **A focus on being an inclusive and welcoming campus.** UW-River Falls continues to foster a campus climate that embraces differences and builds understanding across the real and perceived barriers of race, class, gender, culture, disability and other factors of a diverse society. Preparing productive individuals who can engage and succeed in today's multicultural and increasingly global society is a paramount issue.
- **A commitment to providing service and promoting the development of our region and the St. Croix River Valley.** UWRF will be an engaged university collaborating with our external stakeholders to serve the region, state, nation and beyond with a special focus on the St. Croix Valley. This vision has been a consistent theme in all three planning efforts and guides our current strategic planning.
- **An effort to identify, pursue and realize additional fiscal resources that can help the university fulfill its mission.** More than two decades of declining state support makes this a crucial goal. Numerous avenues of support—grants, contracts, partnerships, gifts, fees—are being examined to minimize the impact of tuition increases on students and to maximize the quality of the educational product we offer.

These five common themes reveal that, over the three planning initiatives between 1997-2007, there has been a consistent understanding of the defining nature of our campus. New themes that are articulated in “Living the Promise” include a commitment to globalization, to sustainability, and to leadership development for students, faculty and staff.



GLOBALIZATION

Goal three of our strategic plan states that we will:

- *Expand Global Literacy and Engagement: UWRF will integrate international and global experiences, learning and attitudes throughout the university.*

Under the leadership of Chancellor Betz, UWRF is significantly expanding its international efforts. The university added an international studies minor in 1998 and upgraded it to a major in 2005.

Since fall 2001 the UWRF [Global Connections](#) office has increased staff support from 0.75 FTE to 2.5 FTE and added a student peer advisor position to support study abroad awareness and advising. Since 2001 UWRF has also expanded full semester, international direct enrollment and exchange programs, and short term international opportunities in the programs noted below:

- [Study tours](#) increased from two short-term international study tours in 2001 to 20 in 2006-07, increasing the number of participants from 40 to 175-300 students annually.
- [International agreements](#) increased from two to 50 through exchange and consortia agreements such as the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) and Instituto Tecnológico Y De Estudios Superiores De Monterrey (ITESM). Other direct exchange agreements developed in the past five years involve institutions in 22 countries, including Taiwan, China, Korea, India, Germany, Mexico, Bolivia, and Bahrain.
- [Full-semester study abroad](#) opportunities have expanded from two programs to 12. The long-standing [Wisconsin In Scotland \(WIS\)](#) and [Semester Abroad-Europe \(SA-E\)](#) programs have added a number of options. Expansion was accomplished in several ways, including a combination of developing our own programs, such as the fully-enrolled [International Traveling Classroom \(ITC\)](#), entering into international exchange agreements with other institutions, and sending students through other institutions in Wisconsin and nationwide to destinations that meet their personal or academic interests.

“Europe was the best classroom of all. Living, learning and experiencing different cultures changed my outlook on life. I made friends that I will keep for a lifetime and learned things that I use constantly.”

— Morgan Jindrich, political science major, on the International Traveling Classroom program

These programs have increased the number of UWRF students who study abroad for a full semester from approximately 50 students pre-2001 to between 120 to 150 students annually. Short-term study tours and international exchange options combine to accommodate an additional 150 to 300 UWRF students studying internationally each year.

A total of 368 students were involved in an international study experience last year (fall 2006 through summer 2007). The goal of the current strategic plan for 2012 is that 50 percent of our students will have an international experience prior to graduation. In 2006-07, 17.4 percent of our graduates had studied abroad, in comparison to just 6.7 percent who had an international study experience in 2002-03.



UWR students distribute school supplies and books to grade school students at Cristo Rey School in western Belize as part of a service-learning project. Student groups have been traveling to Belize for several years.

SUSTAINABILITY

Increasing numbers of people in the state, nation, and world are becoming aware of the importance of developing approaches to living and working that will ensure our sustainability and reduce our dependence on non-renewable resources. As a future-oriented institution, UWR is taking leadership in this important area and has made sustainability a major emphasis in our new strategic plan.

Sustainability principles are defined in the broad context as encompassing economic, ecological, and social justice principles, and focusing on using human and physical resources to meet current needs without decreasing opportunities for future generations.

In September 2006 Wisconsin Governor James Doyle selected UWR as one of four campuses in the UW System to become [energy self-sufficient by the year 2012](#). The intent of the initiative is to focus the ingenuity of the UW campuses to provide the groundwork for a cleaner, more energy-efficient future in Wisconsin. In his announcement, Governor Doyle said:

“UWR is obviously a natural to be selected for this pilot. This is a campus that has been devoted in so many different ways to conservation and to renewable energy. This is a campus that is a model in the country for recycling, and a model in the country for green building.”



UW-River Falls has a rich history of supporting sustainability on campus and in its service area. We have demonstrated our leadership in this area in many ways, including the following:

- UWRF has monitored energy efficiency for more than 30 years. Lighting and flooring replacement projects in residence halls are contributing to energy savings as well as reducing maintenance and replacement costs. Masonry repairs, roof replacements, window replacements, and plumbing repairs are resulting in tighter, more energy efficient buildings.
- The campus has had an extensive recycling program for over a decade. In 2005 the campus recycled a combined 185 tons of plastic and styrofoam containers, paper products, and food waste. Thousands more items also were recycled, including: batteries, tires, computer components, appliances, light tubes and incandescent bulbs, and pallets. Over 150 cubic yards of compost and chipping were produced.
- Sustainability principles are incorporated into many courses and programs at UWRF. We offer:
 - A major and minor in environmental science; majors and minors in conservation and geology, and a minor in hydrogeology
 - One of the first courses in sustainable agriculture in the nation, and a sustainable agriculture option in crop and soil sciences
 - A graduate certificate program in wildlife recreation and nature tourism, and a master's degree option in sustainable community development
 - The ethical citizenship requirement in our general education program requires that students “will make and defend judgments with respect to individual conduct and well being, citizenship, and stewardship of the environment”
- The new University Center, discussed in the introductory chapter, is a model of sustainability.

The “Sustainability Starts With You” display in the University Center, also known as the “green” kiosk, includes a wealth of information about green lifestyle choices through touch-screen multi-media technology and panels about energy consumption, recycling and more. The kiosk is sponsored by UWRF, Wisconsin Public Power Inc., and River Falls Municipal Utilities.





- UWRF, River Falls Municipal Utilities, and Wisconsin Public Power Inc. have established a formal memorandum of understanding that outlines our intentions to develop renewable energy and energy conservation programs on campus and in the community.
- UWRF is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. In June 2007 Chancellor Don Betz became one of the founding signatories of the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's \(AASHE\) American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment](#), and he is a charter member of its [Leadership Circle](#).
- The Student Senate, [ECO Club](#) (Earth Consciousness Organization), and other student groups promote energy efficiency in the residence halls. In the first two years of the program, we have achieved a three percent reduction each year overall in regard to our electrical, water, and steam consumption.
- In April 2007 UWRF created the [St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development](#) to address sustainability concepts and approaches. The institute also will coordinate the efforts across campus as it implements a major institutional initiative to become an energy sustainable, self-sufficient campus.

The students of UW-River Falls are committed to environmental stewardship. In November 2006, this community voted to purchase the electricity needed to operate the University Center from renewable energy sources. With this one important step, UW-River Falls will help reduce carbon dioxide emissions—which contribute to climate change—and keep the air that we breathe cleaner.

— from the “Sustainability Starts With You” display in the University Center

In November 2007 the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education](#) (AASHE) recognized UWRF's sustainability efforts. The association Web site stated: “University of Wisconsin-River Falls is our current spotlight campus! Its St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development is a “walk the talk, think and do tank” that works to integrate students, faculty, staff, and administrators in the application of sustainable community principles across every facet of university design, operations, programming, and outreach.”

LEADERSHIP

Developing the next generation of administrative and faculty leadership at UWRF is a high institutional priority. It is articulated in goal four of the current strategic plan:

- *Develop Engaged Leaders: UWRF will create an institutional culture that teaches, promotes and rewards leadership that positively impacts external and internal communities.*

The goal indicates that we will “support the present and future quality of the university by recruiting and retaining excellent faculty and staff, supporting their continuing professional development, articulating performance expectations for them, and rewarding their excellence.”



Consistent with this goal to develop a broad base of campus leaders, the Leadership UWRF program was initiated in fall 2006. Current university leadership was asked to identify faculty and staff poised to move into leadership positions in the future. Twenty-four staff members participated in a yearlong leadership program coordinated by Human Resources. As a culminating experience, participants worked in teams to complete a development project for the campus. The 2006-07 leadership class teams are working to develop a standard employee orientation and mentoring program, build community partnerships, promote a sustainability focus throughout the campus, and enhance student connections to the institution. The program was expanded in 2007-08 to allow increased participation by faculty members.

An example of a student leadership initiative is the Chancellor's Global Leadership Colloquium, a credit-bearing course in global leadership. The course was held in Dalkeith, Scotland, in the summer of 2006. The international venues enhance students' intercultural skills and awareness, important components of global leadership.

RESPONDING TO GROWTH

In February 2006 the UW System launched a [growth agenda](#) with plans to increase the number of students during the next biennium. The goal is to graduate more Wisconsin residents, attract more out-of-state students to Wisconsin, and grow the knowledge-economy job base in Wisconsin. When [introducing this initiative](#), System President Kevin Reilly presented his vision: "The University of Wisconsin System should be the state's premier developer of advanced human potential, of the jobs that employ that potential, and of the

communities that sustain it." The state and UW System initiatives stimulate and parallel [UW-River Falls' growth agenda](#).

In 1987 the UW System began a policy of enrollment management that was designed to limit enrollment growth in order to keep it in line with available resources. A revenue management policy was put in place to penalize institutions if they were too far below or above their enrollment target. In order to facilitate the

growth agenda, the practice of enrollment and revenue management ended in 2005-06. Institutions are now encouraged to increase enrollment and, as an incentive, are able to keep 100 percent of the revenue generated by additional enrollments above their target.

Our location in a rapidly growing region makes UWRF well positioned for active involvement in this state initiative. With the [support and approval of Faculty Senate](#) and the [Academic Staff Council](#), Chancellor Betz incorporated the growth agenda into the [strategic planning assumptions](#). The ability to grow is

UW-River Falls will develop creative, collaborative, cost-effective, multi-institutional, multi-state and multi-national growth strategies. Focus on programs, both existing and yet to be determined, which have a capacity to grow will be a necessary part of the planning process.

— from "Assumptions for the Strategic Planning Process" on growth



predicated on increased support and additional resources from the legislature to meet this state and regional need.

With this change, UWRF has experienced significant growth in enrollment. The fall 2007 enrollment of 6,457 represents a high-water mark in the history of the institution. Continued enrollment growth is part of our future projections. With controlled growth we anticipate that we can increase enrollments by approximately two to three percent annually, if necessary resources are forthcoming. Simply increasing the retention and graduation rates of our current students will provide additional graduates for the state. We anticipate that our growth will come from three main areas: traditional and non-traditional students in the St. Croix Valley service region; students attracted to our quality programs; and international students coming to the institution as our international efforts increase.

TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATES

Given our current facilities, we are approaching capacity for traditional undergraduate enrollment. Based on an analysis by the campus planner, the campus has a shortage of large and medium sized classrooms. That analysis indicates that some of the classrooms do not meet contemporary teaching standards and should be replaced. The table below traces our current classroom use.

Fall Semester	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Classrooms	72	70	70	70	72
Average hours per week	29.37	32.38	32.94	33.17	35.13
Percent of Usage*	84%	93%	94%	95%	100%

Figure 2-2

Classroom Space Utilization

* based on 35 hours per week standard for classroom scheduling

Substantial growth in the number of traditional undergraduates requires a capital investment that could take several years to complete. Unless more state aid is forthcoming (something that does not appear likely) our ability to handle significant enrollment growth in traditionally scheduled classes is limited. In order to continue to serve traditional undergraduate students and maintain effective learning, we might:

- Re-examine options for expanding the hours during which classes are offered
- Re-examine how available faculty and classrooms are used
- Plan to add additional large-capacity classrooms in areas where disciplinary approaches can sustain learning outcomes
- Develop budgeting models that allow money to follow enrollment
- Increase J-term and summer session enrollment
- Increase non-resident enrollment, including international students to provide increased tuition income
- Increase our use of distance education technology, including online and hybrid courses and programs.



The Enrollment Services division annually updates its recruitment plan, articulating enrollment goals that create a strategic mix of new undergraduates, transfer students, students of color, in-state/out-of-state students, students with special talents, and students planning to major in selected disciplines. Enrollment Services meets with college and department administrators to review the current class offerings, course demand, and classroom scheduling to meet the challenges of increased enrollment.

NON-TRADITIONAL/ADULT LEARNERS

If growth in traditional undergraduate enrollment is limited, the non-traditional/adult market may offer opportunities that also have the potential to generate additional revenue. The following options represent possible avenues for us to explore:

- Increase distance education technology, including online and hybrid courses and programs
- Expand [service-based pricing programs](#). Currently, we have two service-based pricing programs: the master of management and the educational specialist in school psychology
- Add new majors and degree programs that appeal to non-traditional and graduate students
- Expand course offerings in evenings and weekends
- Increase resident graduate enrollment
- Increase non-resident graduate enrollment, including international students

We have begun to develop new courses and programs that make use of asynchronous and online education, like our [wildlife recreation and nature tourism](#) certificate program, offered totally online. But we have not had a systematic method of supporting the development of online courses. In 2006 UWRF, in cooperation with Chippewa Valley Technical College, received a [Title III grant](#) to develop Internet learning opportunities to serve non-traditional and adult learners. The grant, one of only five joint awards that year, has three objectives: 1) to deliver substantially more courses via alternative methods by 2011; 2) to retain students in alternative delivery courses at rates equal to the institutions' rates for students in traditional courses; and 3) to implement joint CVTC/UWRF BA/BS degrees utilizing alternative delivery by 2009, and to graduate 200 students by 2011. The grant will provide faculty training and support for offering the additional courses and will provide online and evening services and advising for those students.

RESPONDING TO SHIFTS IN REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS AND EDUCATIONAL DEMAND

Our immediate region, the St. Croix River Valley, is one of the fastest growing areas in the country, transitioning from a predominantly rural area to an ex-urban one. These [demographic shifts](#) have informed our institutional planning efforts. The development of the master of management degree in response to needs of area employees and businesses is an example of our response to changing conditions. Recognition of regional growth has been



incorporated into the university's (and UW System's) diversity plan. [Phase II of Plan 2008](#) notes that UWRF is advancing the seven goals of Plan 2008 by including "the demographic changes occurring in western Wisconsin, diversity strengths and challenges at the university, and the institution's priorities."

Since 2000 several [economic forums and conferences](#) have been held to address how the university and the region can better collaborate to meet the needs created by the rapidly changing demographics. These forums have included, among other topics, discussions on arts, health care, labor, education and rural/urban interaction. Action steps were formulated to enhance economic development, promote tourism, establish partnerships, write grants, and continue dialogue on collaboration among institutions of higher learning in the region and the business community.

Given the rapid growth in the St. Croix River Valley, it is not surprising that environmental scanning has been a regular component of UWRF's planning efforts. Several institution-wide and department-specific environmental scans and SWOT analyses have been conducted in recent years:

- A 1999 survey of area businesses revealed the need for a graduate degree in business
- In the spring of 2002, the Chancellor's Council met to engage in a SWOT analysis as part of long range strategic planning efforts
- During the recent [planning workshop](#) that served as the starting point for the current strategic planning efforts, Dr. John Dew led the group through a number of steps, including a SWOT analysis.
- [Presentations](#) by the university to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents have utilized environmental scanning to make the case for a growth agenda
- The academic program review process incorporates an environmental scan when an academic program is reviewed (see chapter 3 for more)

RESPONDING TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

Improved use and availability of technology has been an ongoing institutional goal. In response to recommendations made by a team of external reviewers in March 2006, Information Technology Services has engaged in an [IT Redesign Project](#) with comprehensive planning processes starting in May 2006. A cross-functional team composed of faculty, staff and students guided this effort, which yielded a series of tactical actions and identified strategic issues to be addressed. In the fall of 2006, as part of the university's strategic planning process, these issues were addressed through a number of initiatives under goal eight of "Living the Promise:"

- **Enhance the Use of Technology:** *UWRF will build a strong technological infrastructure to support every aspect of university life and will provide the continuing funding, training, and support services needed to make technology work for faculty, staff, and students.*

Under this goal are three specific initiatives, one focused on teaching, research and learning; one on technology infrastructure; and one on operational efficiency. The tasks associated with each of these goals have been identified,



and progress on completing them is underway. The newly formed [Information and Instructional Technology Council](#) (IITC) will guide the implementation of the ITS strategic plan going forward.

To maintain technological viability, the university has long operated a campus-wide computer replacement program with the primary goal of providing a computer that is less than five years old to every permanent staff member with a 50 percent appointment or greater. Since 1997, more than \$1,375,000 has been allocated to ensure that all employees are working on reliable, up-to-date equipment.

RESPONDING TO OUR MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Diversity has long been a high priority for UW-River Falls, as demonstrated in our institutional values and planning efforts. Inclusiveness is a core value of the institution: “We create an environment of mutual respect, professional behavior, academic freedom, appreciation of individual differences and rich cultural diversity.”

One of the goals of the current strategic planning effort is to:

- **Foster a Culture of Inclusiveness:** *UWRF will build a supportive community that embraces our differences and builds understanding across barriers of race, national origin, religion, socio-economic status, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.*

Examples of tasks in the current strategic planning effort include:

- Administer [Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation](#) (MAP IT) to faculty, staff and students in spring 2007 to help us analyze strengths and areas of need
- Participate as a pilot institution in the [UW System Equity Scorecard](#) project to address the achievement gap for historically underrepresented students
- Explore current diversity-related course offerings and assess how relevant those offerings are to this region and the goal of preparing global citizens
- Increase early outreach efforts in the Twin Cities including fundraising for pre-college program scholarships
- Develop [hiring procedures and training processes](#) that will allow UWRF to attract and retain an increasing number of applicants of color for faculty and staff positions

[Plan 2008](#) described in chapter one is a UW System and campus diversity initiative intended to increase the number of Wisconsin high school graduates of color who apply, are accepted, and enroll at UW System institutions. UWRF has developed and monitors specific campus actions to achieve the goals of the plan. Examples from the complete [UWRF action plan](#) include expanding spring/summer pre-college camps, pursuing more funds for student scholarships, supporting a section of the New Student Transition Seminar for students of color, providing translation assistance for families at area high schools, and increasing academic support and tutoring for English language learners and students from targeted populations.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Preparation for the future shaped by the forces outlined above will require careful planning and allocation of our human resources. The college deans, in consultation with the provost, have primary responsibility for planning related to faculty and teaching academic staff positions. Requests for replacement and new tenure-track positions, as well as short-term hires, begin at the department level. Deans assess those requests in light of college planning, and the provost acts on those requests in the context of overall university priorities and budget parameters. The vice chancellor for administration and finance exercises financial oversight and also signs off on position requests. Program demands may result in increasing faculty hires in a given area. For example, additional tenure track positions have been added in business administration to meet the requirements for AACSB accreditation. Because our total position allocation is controlled by the UW System, new positions in a given unit are allocated very carefully and generally must be garnered from position reductions in other areas of the university.

[Hiring procedures](#) follow guidelines of the human resources and [equity and affirmative action](#) offices. With classified positions, all requirements of the [Wisconsin Civil Service system](#) must be met as well. In 2006 the university began using the [PeopleAdmin](#) software suite to facilitate all hiring processes. The software creates more process consistency, streamlines the approval process, and facilitates communication with applicants. The database that results from using an online approach enhances our reporting capability.

When openings occur in existing non-instructional and classified positions, departments must first request approval to refill the position. This provides an opportunity for a department to look at its changing needs in relation to the needs of the university to determine whether the position should be modified to better meet organizational needs. Supervisors submit staffing requests to the relevant director, who makes a recommendation to the vice chancellor for administration and finance. Hiring decisions at all levels are made by considering the unit's anticipated needs and the university's strategic planning priorities.



CORE COMPONENT 2B

- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls' resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Although we continue to face significant fiscal challenges, the university carefully manages resources to maintain quality and meet institutional priorities.

Our annual budgetary allocations are provided by the State of Wisconsin and allocated by the University of Wisconsin System. The state operates on a biennial budget process.

The total 2006-07 budget for UWRF was \$86.2 million from the following sources:

● General purpose revenue fees (GPR):	\$26.4 million (30%)
● Tuition:	\$25.5 million (30%)
● Self supporting operations—program revenues (PR):	\$25.6 million (30%)
● Federal aid:	\$ 8.7 million (10%)

FTE faculty and staff totaled 610.29 (all funds). Salaries and fringe benefits account for 89 percent of the operating budget; supplies, services and capital expenditures account for 11 percent (GPR only).

Students pay approximately 52 percent of their instructional costs. Undergraduate resident tuition and segregated fees for 2007-08 total \$5,885.

[Budget highlights](#) summarize key budgetary planning issues for 2007-09.

UWRF'S RESOURCE BASE: LOOKING BACK

Like many public universities in the country, UWRF's last five biennial budgets have been marked by reductions in the levels of financial support from the state, continuing a trend stretching back into the 1980s. Thirty years ago, one-half of UWRF's operating budget was provided by the state; today state support constitutes only about one-third of the total. When program revenue funds are included, state allocations account for only 20 percent of total campus spending.

As the following table demonstrates, over the decade from 1997-2007 funding for the UW System has grown by less than the growth in the overall state budget (45 percent for the overall budget compared to 22 percent for the UW System) and has not kept pace with the country's rate of inflation (CPI increased by 27 percent over this period).



Percentage Change in State GPR Dollars, 1997-2007				in millions
	FY 1997	FY 2007	Increase in Dollars	% Increase
Total GPR	9,025.70	13,105.40	4,079.70	45%
School Aids/Crs	3,527.60	5,299.50	1,771.90	50%
Local Aids	1,327.90	1,413.90	86.00	6%
Medicaid	865.60	1,704.40	838.80	97%
Corrections	494.00	1,037.50	543.50	110%
UW System	853.40	1,039.50	186.10	22%
CPI (inflation rate)	450.60	574.20	123.60	27%

NOTE: Local Aids has many components, including school aids. Therefore, the total GPR figure will be less than the computed total. Each category is analyzed by itself, not in relation to the total.

Figure 2-3

UW System Declining Percentage of State Support

Since 2001 the university has experienced budget cuts of \$3.7 million and a loss of 20.47 positions. Wisconsin is one of the few states in the country that has allocated both dollars and positions to each campus. That has meant that we could not hire additional personnel, even if we were able to find the funds. In recent years that policy was changed slightly to allow us to add new FTE positions, but only if we can cover both salary and fringe benefits.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Budget Reductions	(\$452,186)	(\$510,400)	(\$1,502,399)	*	(\$1,236,850)

* For the 2003-05 budget, the campus took the entire budget cut in the first year of the biennium as there had been fears that additional reductions might be enacted in the second year.

Figure 2-4

Budget Cuts Since 2001

In most of the years, the campus allocated these budget cuts across the campus based on each area's percentage of the total budget. The impacts of the reductions were minimized by taking as much as possible from the institutional reserve. In 2001-02 the library was protected from the reductions. In 2005-06, at the direction of the Board of Regents and the legislature, instructional budgets were spared. Without a strategic plan designating funding priorities, allocating the cuts across-the-board was the most feasible solution. In the future, the institution will follow the goals and the initiatives set forward in "Living the Promise" as a guide for any budget reductions, reallocations or undesignated increases in our funding.

As UWRF plans for 2007-08, the campus is guided by the priorities of the new strategic plan and is changing the budget process to better support priorities.

The volatility of the state budget continues to be a challenge. In recent years the university budget has been one of the points of contention between the two political parties. In 2007 the state legislature was split, with each of the parties



controlling one house in the legislature. Conflicts between the two houses delayed the passage of the state budget (for the period starting July 1, 2007) to the end of October. Consequently, we are just clarifying the 2007-08 budget as this self-study is being finalized. This situation complicates our abilities to shift funding in the middle of an academic year.

SALARIES AND BENEFITS

A major ongoing challenge at UW-River Falls and for the UW System is providing unclassified staff salaries that are: 1) competitive within the UW System and 2) competitive with peer institutions outside the state.

UWRF has made gains in increasing faculty salaries at the assistant and associate professor levels so that we are more competitive within the system at those ranks. However, average salaries for our full professors are the lowest in the UW System. Until the mid 1990s the university often took the approach of hiring new faculty at low salaries and having relatively rapid promotion policies. However, the salary increases associated with promotion were minimal (\$1,000 in 1998). A consequence of this history is that salaries for senior faculty at the full professor rank have remained depressed. In the late 1990s that approach shifted to trying to offer competitive initial salaries, a more rigorous promotion track, and increased salary adjustments for promotion. While this has impacted our lower ranks, there have not been comparable adjustments for those who were promoted earlier. The following table illustrates salary averages by rank in comparison to other UW institutions.

Figure 2-5

UW System Faculty Salary Comparisons

UW System Comprehensive Campuses					
Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor	
Parkside	\$73,067	Parkside	\$59,529	Parkside	\$55,990
La Crosse	\$72,899	Whitewater	\$58,222	Whitewater	\$54,054
Whitewater	\$71,941	Oshkosh	\$58,033	Eau Claire	\$51,119
Stout	\$71,874	La Crosse	\$57,698	River Falls	\$50,918
Oshkosh	\$70,610	River Falls	\$56,672	Oshkosh	\$50,589
Eau Claire	\$68,869	Platteville	\$55,732	La Crosse	\$50,157
Platteville	\$68,486	Eau Claire	\$55,679	Stout	\$49,699
Green Bay	\$67,503	Stout	\$55,515	Platteville	\$48,935
Stevens Point	\$66,911	Green Bay	\$55,486	Superior	\$48,860
Superior	\$64,602	Stevens Point	\$54,862	Green Bay	\$45,999
River Falls	\$64,473	Superior	\$53,122	Stevens Point	\$45,740
System Average	\$69,211		\$56,734		\$50,203

2006-07 AAUP Faculty Salary Survey.



Salaries must also be evaluated within the context of peers from outside the state. In that regard, the entire UW System’s faculty and administrative salaries have been lagging behind comparable institutions in the region. In 2006-07 System peer median for unclassified salaries at all campuses was 8.5 percent below peer group medians. UW System academic staff salaries were 20 percent below peers. The [2006-07 AAUP salary survey](#) revealed the following comparisons between the UW System comprehensive universities and IIA colleges in our four neighboring states. Again, the discrepancy for full professor salaries is the most dramatic. The state is proposing raises of two percent annually for 2007-08 and 2008-09, with an additional one percent in April 2009. This means that Wisconsin will likely fall further behind our peers. Salary comparisons tell only part of the story; the situation becomes more pronounced when factoring in the relatively high cost of living in the Twin Cities metro area.

Comprehensive IIA Institutions UW System compared to neighboring states (Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota)			
	Professor	Asso. Professor	Asst. Professor
UW System	\$69,211	\$56,490	\$50,236
Neighboring States	\$75,700	\$60,830	\$50,590
UW as a percentage	91%	93%	99%

Figure 2-6

Peer Institution Faculty Salary Comparison

Another area of great concern has involved recent changes in health benefits. Prior to 2003, the cost for family coverage for the most commonly chosen (Tier One) health insurance plan at UWRF was paid totally by the state. In 2003 state employees began to be required to contribute an average of \$55 per month for the same group family health coverage. For 2007 there was no longer a Tier One plan available for River Falls, and insurance premiums increased to \$150 per month for the same coverage. For the 2008 calendar year the health insurance companies attempted to reduce costs by changing the provider network, eliminating a large number of doctors and specialists, particularly those in Minnesota. The health plans, negotiated for the state in Madison, failed to realize that the majority of UWRF employees depend on medical professionals based in Minnesota. Awareness of the changes and the loss of trusted providers caused a great deal of consternation on campus. University administrators and governance groups were very active in advocating for changes in these options, but without success. In order to retain the ability to see trusted specialists in 2008, some employees will be required to pay \$358 per month for a family plan that doesn’t provide dental or vision coverage. While there is hope that concerns about specialist coverage can be resolved for the future, a proposed 15 percent increase in health care premiums for all plans for 2009 will create additional problems. Frustrations among faculty and staff are significant regarding these changes in our benefits package.

A key goal of “Living the Promise” is to create compensation and benefit plans for all UWRF employees that will enable the university to attract, hire and retain excellent faculty, academic and administrative leaders, and



academic and classified staff. A significant improvement in unclassified salaries is essential to achieving this goal. UWRF does not determine classified salaries; they are negotiated at the state level.

The university is working to reduce inequalities. The [University Planning Group](#) has made “Goal 7: Invest in Human Resources” one of the [top priorities for 2007-08](#). Goal 7 indicates that “UWRF will invest in the present and future quality of the university” by striving to enhance compensation and benefits plans for all UWRF employees. Tasks to accomplish that goal include: “acting to reduce salary compression” and “acting to reduce benefits inequalities.”

THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET: CHANGING THE PROCESS

Tying institutional planning to budgets is among the highest priorities of the current institutional strategic planning effort, which declares that “UWRF will engage in continuous quality improvement and assessment, define its priorities, and use solid information to make future decisions about how to use its resources.”

With implementation of a new strategic plan, the budgeting process is undergoing a series of changes to insure that resource decisions serve planning objectives. A brief budget process history provides the context for the current process.

In 1996 the university moved to a decentralized budgeting process for the colleges to encourage more efficient spending and an entrepreneurial attitude. Previously, money from salary savings reverted to the institutional reserve; savings from 1996 forward were kept by the colleges. The budgeting process itself continued to operate as before. At budget hearings for each major campus unit, administrators shared highlights, financial challenges, and future needs. The chancellor and vice chancellors then established priorities and made allocations to each unit. Each dean or unit director then allocated funds to their specific department budgets.

The process we are initiating now ties budgets more closely to institutional planning priorities and is consistent with a continuous improvement model. Beginning in June 2006, a team of five UW-River Falls staff members (the vice chancellor for administration and finance, campus planner, dean of COEPS, dean of CAS, and the director of assessment) participated in the [Society of College and University Planning](#) (SCUP) Institute, a three-part certificate program that focuses on an integrated planning model for academic, financial, and facilities planning. In January 2007, using the knowledge gained at the planning institute, the UWRF chancellor’s council adopted the SCUP planning principles and discussed ways to implement the model at UWRF. Particular attention was paid to how the resource allocation process would follow the strategic academic and facilities plans of the institution. The resulting five-step process is being instituted. Due to this process being recently developed, and this being a transition year, the time frame for 2008-09 planning has been slightly altered.



- **STEP 1:** The planning cycle begins in July with a planning retreat. Members of the chancellor’s council meet for two days to review progress on the strategic plan’s goals and tasks; review and renew the mission statement; review academic plans; review data and information on institutional benchmarks; review emerging issues at the national, state and local level; revise the budgeting process and procedures as necessary; and develop the annual plan for the following academic year. This retreat is an opportunity for the administration to look at the progress it has made in the previous academic year, predict the upcoming academic year, and set priorities for the following academic year.
- **STEP 2:** During the fall, the chancellor presents the priorities and the annual plan for the following academic year to the campus community. All campus groups and constituents will have opportunities to provide feedback on the plan.
- **STEP 3:** In November, based on campus feedback, the chancellor’s council establishes final priorities for the annual plan.
- **STEP 4:** In January the annual plan is finalized and the budget is designed to reflect the annual plan.
- **STEP 5:** In late spring, the institution begins to gather the data and information that will be needed at the July retreat. The campus will conduct a needs assessment to gather information on resource and programmatic needs. The following diagram illustrates the planning and budgeting cycle being implemented in 2007-08. This emphasizes the ongoing and interdependent interactions among planning, budgeting, and evaluating outcomes.

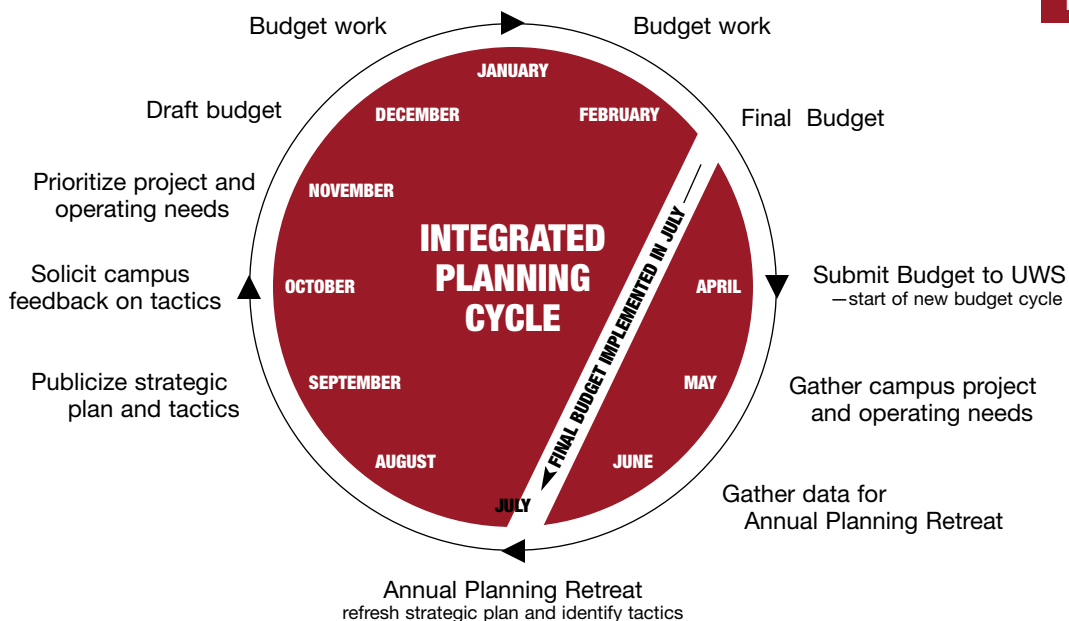


Figure 2-7

UWRF Planning Process



UWRF'S RESOURCE BASE: LOOKING AHEAD

In response to our budgetary challenges, UWRF is taking action to seek alternative funding sources to maintain a high level of academic programs and services.

Significant tuition increases over the past several years have offset some of the state budget cuts while allowing us to maintain educational quality. Annual tuition increases between 1998 and 2008 averaged 7.7 percent. In 1998, 44.6 percent of the university's operating budget came from state tax dollars and 21.1 percent from tuition revenue. By 2007, state tax dollars had decreased to 31.1 percent of the operating budget, and tuition revenue had increased to 29.6 percent. Increased university enrollment along with the new tuition levels will help provide additional revenue. Nevertheless, compared to many other universities, the tuition is still relatively inexpensive for state residents. Wisconsin [2006-07 undergraduate tuition and fees](#) were \$2,723 per semester for 12 to 18 credits, which puts us \$606 below the midpoint of our peers.

In April 2007 the Board of Regents and the UWRF Student Senate approved a differential tuition fee that, under [system guidelines](#), permits campuses to levy a fee in addition to the base tuition rate with the resulting revenue dedicated to special initiatives. The [UWRF differential tuition program](#), named Campus

Connections for Success, focuses on funding for expanded library and computer lab hours, additional electronic library resources, the creation of a testing and tutoring center, and funding for undergraduate research, scholarly, and creative activities. The goal of Campus Connections for Success is to expand and enhance support services for undergraduate students and, in the process, increase the retention of those students.

“Enhanced library services and resources are a major component of Campus Connections for Success. Funding has allowed the library to offer extended hours as well as 24/7 access to authoritative, online research resources.”

— Library Director Valerie Malzacher on the differential tuition program spearheaded by UWRF students

UW-River Falls has aggressively sought additional funding through the competitive grant process. Progress/success has been steadily realized. Grants received from off-campus sources have increased from \$1,612,000 in 1997-98 to \$3,650,000 in 2006-07. The [Office of Grants and Research](#) provides support for grant applications and regularly reports on the progress. In 2006-07, 75.4 percent of the grant applications were successfully funded.

Recognizing that we can no longer rely on financial support from the State of Wisconsin, UWRF has been proactive in fundraising.

The [UWRF Foundation](#) has a board of directors that is responsible for reviewing and generating private support for the university, managing the assets of the foundation, and providing grants to the university. Because of the board's work, the university has received critical funding for scholarships, academic programs, and facilities through increased contributions and returns on investments. The foundation and Office of University Advancement work with college



and departmental advisory boards and alumni boards by educating and engaging alumni and donors in work that provides resources for the university. Special alumni volunteer groups support initiatives, such as the [Falcon Action Network](#), a group of alumni and friends of the university who are committed to advocacy with Wisconsin's legislators and other decision-makers.

The Office of University Advancement and the foundation have developed a multi-year plan for a comprehensive campaign. The ultimate goals of the campaign will directly support the mission, vision, and priorities of the strategic plan. The staff has developed fiscal year plans for development, alumni relations, advancement services, and advancement marketing. The UWRF Foundation's assets under management in 1997-98 were \$8,714,000. As of the 6/30/07 foundation financial statement, our total assets were \$14,945,667 and our total liabilities were \$235,188, yielding net assets of \$14,710,479. The endowment (permanently restricted fund), which is part of the net assets, was \$11,387,183. Under new leadership, we are planning our first endowment campaign to significantly increase that total.

The mission of Falcon Action Network is to provide the means for you to be an effective grassroots advocate to ensure that resources and sound public policies are in place so that future generations of students also may flourish here.

— from the Falcon Action Network Web site

The rise in gift giving from the private sector over the past decade has allowed the UWRF Foundation to expand scholarship dollars to students and support research and equipment purchases for the university. In 1997-98 the foundation awarded \$250,000 in scholarships to students. By 2006-07 that figure had risen to \$460,174. Given an environment with steadily rising tuition and a lack of state-sponsored scholarships and other aid, it becomes essential that we continue to increase scholarship assistance.

FACILITIES PLANNING

As we respond to recent growth and look ahead to the potential for continued enrollment increases, it is essential that we examine the capacity of our current facilities and plan for future space needs. The space planning committee, the deans' council, and the chancellor's cabinet have consistently included space needs on their planning agendas. The campus planner's August 2006 analysis, [Campus Physical Plant Capacities](#), examines the space capacity of our facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, offices, computer labs, library, assembly space, maintenance shops, residence halls, and the student center.

The university submits a [Long Range Campus Development Plan](#) to UW System biennially, with additional updates as appropriate. Winning approval to plan for a new health and human performance building is our most recent success in our planning for new facilities. Other high priority planning issues include classroom modernization, updating and expanding our science spaces, expanding parking capacity, and bringing several student services together to



create a “one-stop shop” for enrollment services. The campus planner has outlined the need for renewed and additional facilities in a presentation to the University Planning Group in November 2007. The campus currently has a space deficit and forecasts greater demands as enrollments continue to increase. In addition to the need for additional spaces, garnering the funds necessary for operating expenses and addressing deferred maintenance issues remain as major challenges.

LIBRARY PLANNING

As we examine our resource base and plan for the future, we must ensure that we can provide access to the learning resources required to support our educational efforts. The Chalmer Davee Library has developed initiatives that correlate directly with the university’s mission and strategic plan. The university’s strategic Goal 1, Create a Culture of Learning, serves as the first of six themes that form the core of the [library’s strategic planning process](#). By expanding library resources and services and by fostering information literacy, the library supports student and faculty learning that is an integral part of the university’s culture.

UWRF contributions to the [UW System Library Shared Electronic Collection](#) guarantee access to a [large collection of online databases and journal articles](#) that are too costly to be funded individually at the local campus level. UW System funding (\$1,567,488 in 2006-07) combined with collaborative campus cost sharing (\$134,000 across the system with \$3,220 from UWRF in 2006-07) provides access to 24 authoritative online databases. These resources provide a variety of general as well as scholarly, peer-reviewed materials that support undergraduate, graduate, and faculty research.

CORE COMPONENT 2C

- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Many areas on the UWRF campus provide essential services and support for both students and faculty. These areas regularly evaluate and assess their programs to verify they are contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of our institution. This section of the self-study contains examples of the ways that the various areas utilize assessment tools to analyze and improve their ongoing efforts. Chapter 3a looks at academic assessment of student learning outcomes.



UW SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

One set of indicators of institutional effectiveness is included in the UWRF accountability report titled “Achieving Excellence,” which annually updates the Board of Regents and UW System administration regarding our progress on system-wide goals. This process requires continuous assessment and provides clear data and benchmarks for measuring institutional progress. Examples of goals and required indicators follow.

Figure 2–8

Achieving Excellence Report

Goal	Measure	UWRF Performance	Comments
1. Provide access to higher education for Wisconsin citizens	1.1 Enrollment plans	2006 FTE enrollment of 5,846 exceeded system target of 5,500	Enrollment has exceeded FTE targets for the past 3 years
	1.2 Increasing diversity	Percent of non-white students has increased from 4.08% in 1999 to 6.6% in 2007	Although still relatively small, the total number and percent of non-white students have shown a steady increase over the past decade. The number of students of color increased by 83% and the number of international students increased by 120% since 1998
2. Provide academic support services that facilitate student success	2.1 Progress toward second year retention targets	UWRF retained 75% of the 2006 fall cohort	UWRF has provided support to the First Year Experience (FYE) program and freshmen advising to attempt to improve these figures
	2.2 Six-year graduation rate	UWRF (for the fall 2000 cohort): 56.2%; system target: 57.1%	UWRF’s graduation rank was fifth highest among system comprehensives for both white students and students of color in 2006. We ranked third highest in the system for four-year graduation rates*
3. Provide a campus environment that fosters learning and personal growth	3.1 Student involvement in planning out-of-class experiences that promote learning and good citizenship	NSSE indicated UWRF students significantly exceeded the national average in participation in extracurricular activities (<.05)	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data indicated UWRF students closely matched the national average in plans to do practicum, internship, clinical or field experiences. (NSSE is administered every other year—last administered in 2006)
	3.2 Student study abroad participation	17.4% of UWRF students participated in a study abroad experience in 2006-07	This compared to 7.5% in 2000-2001; the 2006-07 participation rate was the fourth highest among UW comprehensive institutions*
4. Utilize resources in an efficient and effective manner	4.1 Progress in reducing credits to degree	UWRF’s credits to degree average is 132 (a minimum of 120 are required)	This has been the lowest (most efficient) among system comprehensive institutions*

from the **UWRF 2007-08 Achieving Excellence Report**.

*System comparison data is not available for 2007-08.



A major advantage of the Achieving Excellence Report is that it provides a unified reporting system that allows us to readily make comparisons with other UW institutions. Based on this knowledge, we adjusted and expanded our retention efforts. Preliminary figures indicate that retention has increased by nearly five percent for the fall of 2007.

In addition to campus-wide accountability, the major support units across campus also undergo regular evaluation and assessment of their work to maintain and improve the quality of their services.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Following an on-campus analysis of Information Technology Services (ITS) in the fall of 2005, a three-person external review team was invited to campus in spring 2006 to conduct an on-campus assessment of the information technology environment. The team evaluated the operations and structure of technology services and support and made [recommendations](#) regarding organizational, operational, and strategic changes needed to improve the overall information technology environment on the UWRF campus. Based on the recommendations, Vice Chancellor Halada replaced the director with an interim director of IT Services to work with faculty and staff during the 2006-07 academic year to implement the team's recommendations.

Specific ITS redesign goals included: 1) increasing departmental effectiveness and efficiency; 2) improving communication between ITS and the campus community; 3) optimizing performance of departmental personnel; 4) creating appropriate organizational structures and work management; 5) assuring a stable and secure infrastructure; and 6) building a sound planning, budgeting and assessment process. Numerous tasks were identified; many members of the campus community served on work groups to address concerns and issues.

[Accomplishments in 2006-07](#) included:

- Establishing a process for prioritizing and planning IT projects
- Defining an annual IT planning and budgeting process
- Developing and gaining approval for an IT strategic plan
- Initiating an instructional technology strategic planning process
- Implementing a major upgrade to the back-up system (Net Back-Up)
- Migrating e-mail architecture to an updated platform (Solaris 10)
- Completing wireless connectivity for 2/3 of the campus with the remaining buildings in progress
- Establishing a budgeting and funding model that eliminated charge backs to departments for network connections and site license software
- Continuing work to launch a flexible, expandable, Web-accessible file storage network called Falcon File

Review team recommendations that were not addressed in 2006-07 were incorporated into [Goal 8 of UWRF's strategic plan](#): Enhance the Use of Technology. Responsibility for continued attention to the recommendations of the review team moved from the ad hoc ITS redesign team to the newly formed [Information and Instructional Technology Council](#) in 2007-08.



LIBRARY SERVICES

To assess the quality of their services, the Chalmer Davee Library director used the national [LibQUAL+](#) survey in spring 2004 to measure user perceptions and expectations of library service quality in three dimensions: affect of service, information control, and library as place.

The [UWRF LibQUAL+ report](#) revealed only small gaps between what services users want from the library and what they think they get. All of our user groups (undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty) gave the library good scores on the questions dealing with “affect of service” and “library as place.” Faculty rated library staff very highly on the following dimensions: instilling confidence in users, giving users individual attention, consistently showing courtesy and care, willingly responding to questions, and providing help. However, faculty and graduate students expressed a desire for more printed and electronic library resources. The library staff identified that as the key item to address in strategic planning.

Initiatives resulting from the survey included:

- Improvements in the systems used to share library resources across the state:
 - Universal Borrowing allows libraries throughout the state to share books and AV materials quickly and efficiently
 - Daily van delivery service allows books to arrive from other UW libraries more quickly
 - The use of commercial document delivery sources for difficult-to-fill article requests
 - The introduction of electronic delivery of interlibrary loan articles
- Collaboration with the Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries to maximize journal and monograph resources available in the UW System
- Pooling of local monies to purchase additional resources for the System-funded collection of electronic resources that all libraries can share (this project resulted in the purchase of a collection of online psychology journals, for example)
- The introduction of updated software
 - Metalib allows for searching multiple databases or library catalogs simultaneously
 - SFX simplifies the process of locating the full text of an article



The Chalmer Davee Library has been able to expand hours of operation and online research resources through a differential tuition program sponsored by students in 2007.

A spring 2007 survey of faculty and staff produced results consistent with the LibQual survey; 86 percent of faculty and staff said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the helpfulness of library staff and 90 percent were satisfied or



very satisfied with the adequacy of library resources. The library plans to administer the LibQual survey again in the spring of 2008 to monitor progress on strategic initiatives developed following the 2004 survey.

THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS (SA)

In summer 2005 a new dean of students and a new executive director of student services and programs were hired. In January 2007 the university reorganized the Office of the Dean of Students and the Department of Student Services and Programs into the Division of Student Affairs. An associate vice chancellor for student affairs was named with the following departmental responsibilities:

- Student Life
- Residence Life
- Dining Services
- Campus Recreation
- Student Conduct/Judicial Affairs
- University Center
- Falcon Shop/University Bookstore
- Student Health and Counseling Services
- Conference Services
- FredNet, IT Programming, and the Card Office
- The First Year Experience Office
- The CHILD Care Center
- Hunt/Knowles Recreation Complex

The student affairs assessment committee, formed in 2001, is responsible for coordinating the assessment efforts of the unit. Below are examples of assessment efforts in the various units that comprise the Division of Student Affairs.

Student affairs hires an estimated 250 student employees and volunteers through a joint process by functional areas. They identify learning outcomes not only for employment in the division, but also for the recruitment and selection process itself. Supervisory evaluations of student staff performance are conducted each semester and used to guide employment decisions.

Student Life involves student activities and programming, multicultural programming, student organizations, Greek life, leadership and service programs. The [Cooperative Institutional Research Program \(CIRP\)](#), a national longitudinal study of American higher education, is administered every two years during the summer. The [summer 2006 study](#) of UWRF students revealed that our students were more likely to be concerned about paying for their college education than national averages, and were much more likely (UWRF: 63.8 percent; national average: 46.4 percent) to expect to get a job to help pay for college. Approximately 45 percent of our students indicate that they have no savings to pay for college and just over one-quarter expect no financial help from their families. We will be doing more to emphasize financial aid options and to raise more funds for student scholarships.



In Student Activities, event reports are gathered regularly. Participant surveys have been used and participation numbers are tracked regularly to determine where changes should be made. The Fraternity and Sorority Life committee includes representatives from each of the Greek letter social organizations, who plan and coordinate events for nearly 400 participants. Academic success is prized, and each semester students and groups with high academic achievement are recognized.

Residence Life: UWRF administered the [Educational Benchmarking Incorporated](#) (EBI) Resident Satisfaction Survey in 1998, 2003, and 2005 and is currently on an every-other-year cycle. In the two most recent administrations, over 80 percent of residential students completed the survey. UWRF generally rates very high compared to its peers in satisfaction with staffing and general facilities. Areas of concern related to living and dining facilities, as well as basic amenity issues, such as availability of study space and temperature control in the residence halls, have been noted and changes have been made. The new University Center is providing updated dining facilities and [Facilities Management](#) is undertaking projects to provide more effective temperature control on campus. Focus groups have been used in conjunction with the past two administrations of the EBI to further gauge strengths and concerns. The Residential Living Committee, comprised of students from each residence hall, has used the data to make policy decisions to improve conditions. Students have been heavily involved with the planning for the new residence hall.

Dining services are currently contracted through a private company, [Chartwells](#), which conducts focus groups and surveys to assess student needs and market trends. In addition, the campus liaison works with the Student Dining Advisory Committee (SDAC) and conducts regular benchmarking surveys and focus groups. Results are discussed with SDAC and are used to guide policy decisions as well as to provide feedback for Chartwells. Menu options have been changed and hours have been adjusted in response to these discussions. Students provided extensive input on planning for the new University Center and its dining facilities.

In fall 2007 the campus surveyed students on the features of a campus meal plan that are of greatest importance to them. A key outcome of this survey was a desire by students for increased variety of food offerings. A majority of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that they supported environmentally-friendly products, even if it increased the cost. The results will be used in negotiating the new food services contract (the existing contract expires in May 2008).

Campus Recreation is responsible for [intramurals](#), the [Body Shop](#), and [KinniConnections](#), which provides outdoor recreation and sponsors a climbing wall. Annual reports for Campus Recreation are gathered each year with a detailed breakdown of milestones, participation numbers, and sponsored programs and events. The program works closely with the Recreational Activities Committee. Ideas for new activities and program changes, including the addition of sports like ultimate Frisbee and Halloween dodgeball, have been made with guidance from this student-run committee.



FredNet and IT Programming: FredNet is the student focused information technology service that provides telephone, television and computer support for residence halls and student affairs administrative staff. (The name is derived from our mascot, Freddy Falcon.) FredNet staff conducts periodic comprehensive surveys and follow-up calls to customers to gather information and assess effectiveness of its service. Based on data received from the surveys, changes have been made in services, like the array of available channels on the campus television network and the development and support of wireless access in the residence halls.

The **First Year Experience** (FYE) program is designed to help new students make a successful transition to and through the university. FYE monitors and addresses first-year student issues and trends and makes program improvements based on assessment.

FYE administers summer registration satisfaction surveys to both family members and student participants. The response rate for students is nearly 100 percent and approximately 75 percent for parents. Feedback is gained from the summer registration facilitators and immediate changes are made, if necessary, to the next day's program. **Weeks of Welcome** (WOW) orients new students to campus at the start of the academic year. The staff meets each morning to discuss and debrief the activities of the previous day for immediate feedback on any changes that need to be made. In early October, an online survey is administered to all new students seeking information about the WOW program, as well as general transitions to college. The **2006 new student transition survey** revealed improvements over the 2005 responses in nearly every area. Students report that they felt more knowledgeable about the

New students participate in Weeks of Welcome at the beginning of the fall semester. The orientation program is designed to ease the transition into college life and improve retention.





academic expectations of the university and more prepared to register for the second semester. The 2007 survey yielded even more positive responses. At the end of the first month of classes, 93 percent were aware of resources to assist them if they had academic concerns, 94 percent agreed that customer service was a strength of UWRF, and 97 percent agreed that they enjoyed their experience at UW-River Falls.

In 2006, FYE administered the [Cooperative Institutional Research Program \(CIRP\) Freshman Survey](#) to all first-year students for the first time. As a result of concerns expressed about managing money and paying for college, FYE developed [Smart Money Week](#). Based on survey responses, more clearly defined objectives were also established for [Academic Day](#) activities. The FYE program is clearly demonstrating its ability to utilize assessment to improve service.

CAREER SERVICES

Career Services uses the following assessment tools to determine the success of content, scheduling, delivery, and effectiveness of programs and individual consultations. Based on the feedback, adjustments have regularly been made.

- **Career Fair evaluations:** The day of the week and timing have been changed, and several logistical adjustments have been made to provide effective professional booth space; and a “Career Fair 101” program has been instituted to help students be better prepared to participate. Feedback following the first fair in the new University Center revealed several logistical problems that will be addressed for the next event.
- **Student utilization data:** Tracking student visits to the office and the Web site has allowed Career Services to plan for student needs and anticipate demand on human resources. Relationships with counseling services have been enhanced, as more students need assistance with personal mental health issues.
- **Client satisfaction surveys:** Based on these surveys, service hours have been adjusted and extended into the evening once a week. This has proven to be particularly appreciated by graduate students and student teachers.
- **Employer satisfaction surveys:** Employers have been generally very positive about UWRF students and the work of Career Services. Mock interviews and portfolio development workshops have helped our students be better prepared.
- **Event and workshop evaluations:** Timing of events have been altered and refocused. The fall Career Road Map is now focused for first and second year students and the spring workshop is geared for graduating seniors.



Career Services sponsors a career fair each fall as an opportunity for students and employers to meet one-on-one regarding position vacancies, opportunities, and internships. More than 100 employers participated in this 2007 fair.



The etiquette dinner has grown from an annual event for 30 students to a highly anticipated evening offered every semester for approximately 280 students. Based on feedback, the Student Teacher Professional Development Day has added a panel of recent graduates to respond to questions and is now offered every semester for approximately 300 students.

STUDENT HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES (SH&CS)

All of the following assessment tools are or have been used regularly by SH&CS:

- [American College Health Association–National College Health Assessment, UW System Alcohol and Other Drug Use Survey](#)
- [Spring 2007 UWRP Employee Health and Wellness Survey Data](#)
- Core Faculty and Staff Environmental Alcohol and Other Drug Survey
- Core Drug and Alcohol Survey
- Surveys tracking the utilization of services at each location

The annual health fair promotes healthy living choices and preventive health care measures while presenting resources available to the campus community. Attendees can have their hearing screened, their blood pressure checked, their spines scanned, and their body fat analyzed.



Assessment data from these instruments are utilized by SH&CS to prioritize campus health needs, establish and measure progress on goals, allocate resources, plan programming, formulate health-related policies, tailor services, design strategies for marketing and interventions, and identify and track protective and risk factors associated with academic performance.

As a result of health needs identified through assessment data, SH&CS has received several collaborative grants to address identified health needs and established goals. The university received \$64,500 in federal grant funding from 2002 to 2007 for substance abuse prevention in collaboration with the River Falls Public School District (River Falls Partnership for Youth). In collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, SH&CS received \$2,500 in 2005-06 and



\$10,000 in 2006-07 from the [Association of American Colleges & Universities \(AACU\)](#) to [address student mental health issues](#).

Based on its goals, SH&CS utilizes data from the above assessments to identify pertinent health and mental health concerns and to address these issues through collaborative health programming, services, and policies. Recent initiatives include:

- Establishing a 25-foot smoke-free radius policy for all campus buildings in January 2004 as a result of student data and campus input that indicated support for this policy.
- Adding a full-time personal counseling professional as a result of data indicating increasing utilization of and need for counseling services and data indicating increasing mental health concerns among students.
- Instituting a variety of efforts to address the identified health needs of alcohol binge drinking and smoking. These efforts included activities like sending 21st Birthday cards to encourage safer birthday celebrations, simulating a house party to educate students about risks, and tailored social norms marketing. Data indicates binge drinking and smoking have been gradually declining.

DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT SERVICES

In September 2005 the chancellor created the Division of Enrollment Services under the leadership of the associate vice chancellor of enrollment services. The offices included in Enrollment Services are: the undergraduate [Admissions Office](#), [Office of the Registrar](#), and the [Office of Financial Assistance](#). The reorganization was designed to serve new students more efficiently as they transition into college life. As part of the new division, a transition team was created in 2006 to bring ideas, reorganize resources, and better prepare and develop this division for future success. The transition team developed a year-long (2006-2007) plan of ideas, business processes, and goals for Enrollment Services. In January 2006 members of the division created a [vision, mission and values statement](#) that defines the way the unit serves students. All of the offices in Enrollment Services—admissions, financial assistance, registrar—conduct regular assessment, analyze the data, and make adjustments in processes and services.

Based upon survey responses from students and families after they have visited campus, the admissions office has adjusted tour guide training to improve campus tours. The office is also implementing a program called “Find a Falcon,” based on survey feedback. The program will make it easier to connect with friends to learn more about the university.

With the hiring of a new director of financial assistance (fall 2006), new financial aid counselors, and a new assistant director in 2007, all financial assistance processes have been examined and evaluated. The staff has been reorganized and many of the processes have been automated to meet the needs of increasing numbers of aid recipients. The percentage of students receiving financial assistance has grown by more than 50 percent since 1999-2000.



Based on feedback from students and other administrative offices, the financial assistance office amended its definition of terms to allow J-Term awards to be disbursed before the end of fall semester. They also developed a brief registration form completed by those who come in to the office, and a large sample group from the registration is contacted one to two days later to determine whether further assistance is needed. They have automated the disbursement of alternative loans.

A new registrar was hired in fall 2006. Through his leadership, the office has improved the use of the degree audit report (DAR) for students, faculty and staff advisors. In 2004 the registrar's office made the "What If DAR" available electronically. The "What If DAR" provides course and placement information for students considering changing colleges, majors or minors, to show how their current academic record would be applied to a new set of requirements.

OUTREACH SERVICES

UW-River Falls offers activities such as senior outreach, programs for children and youth, community classroom, and programs designed to meet educational or economic needs of specific groups. These activities are assessed through satisfaction surveys and self-reporting by the participants. Programs are rated on their perceived value, effectiveness, and personal impact. Program managers review feedback and implement changes and new programs based on the information received. For example, senior outreach programs are selected on the basis of feedback from the people in the program, and other noncredit courses have been continued, cancelled, or adjusted based on the response of participants. Following the model of several successful youth programs in the area, we began offering a four-day-a-week summer program for students in grades 3 to 8. Based on feedback from the students and parents, we will return to a five-day program in summer 2008.

In addition to local assessment efforts, the outreach programs participate in the [UW-Extension Impact Report](#) that identifies the number of program participants and estimates community impact by identifying specific changes (behavioral, social, economic,) that have occurred as the result of program participation. The outreach office is also using the [Noel-Levitz Adult Student Priorities Survey](#) to collect data from our credit-seeking students.



CORE COMPONENT 2D

- All levels of planning align with the university's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

As described earlier in this chapter and in chapter one, most of the campus community and many members of the broader community were involved in the development of the university's mission, vision, and values statements and in the strategic planning process. Our strategic plan speaks directly to the university's mission and to the resources, environment, and infrastructure necessary to fulfill it.

Grounded in the campus mission, vision and values, the plan's 10 goals reflect university traditions and objectives of previous planning initiatives: stimulating student learning, supporting outstanding teaching, valuing diversity, serving external constituents, maximizing resources, and enhancing technology. Commitment to developing leadership, adopting global perspectives, and supporting sustainability are newly articulated goals consistent with societal needs and campus interests. The plan emerged from a collaborative and open process with many people working to articulate specific action steps.

UNIVERSITY PLANNING

The [University Planning Group](#) (UPG) was created in the spring of 2007. This larger and more representative committee replaced the Strategic Planning Steering Committee created in spring 2006. The UPG was created to review, communicate, monitor and facilitate the progress of the strategic plan, "Living the Promise." The [UPG membership](#) includes administrators and representatives from the faculty, academic staff, and student governance groups, chaired by the provost. Faculty Senate appoints 50 percent of the members.

The work of the UPG is based on an [operating paradigm](#) of continuous quality improvement and assessment tied to the allocation of resources. Although we have been involved in ongoing planning initiatives, as an institution we have had few resources devoted directly to planning support. This includes minimal staffing, with a one-person office for campus planning, and the lack of a consistent and effective institutional research office.

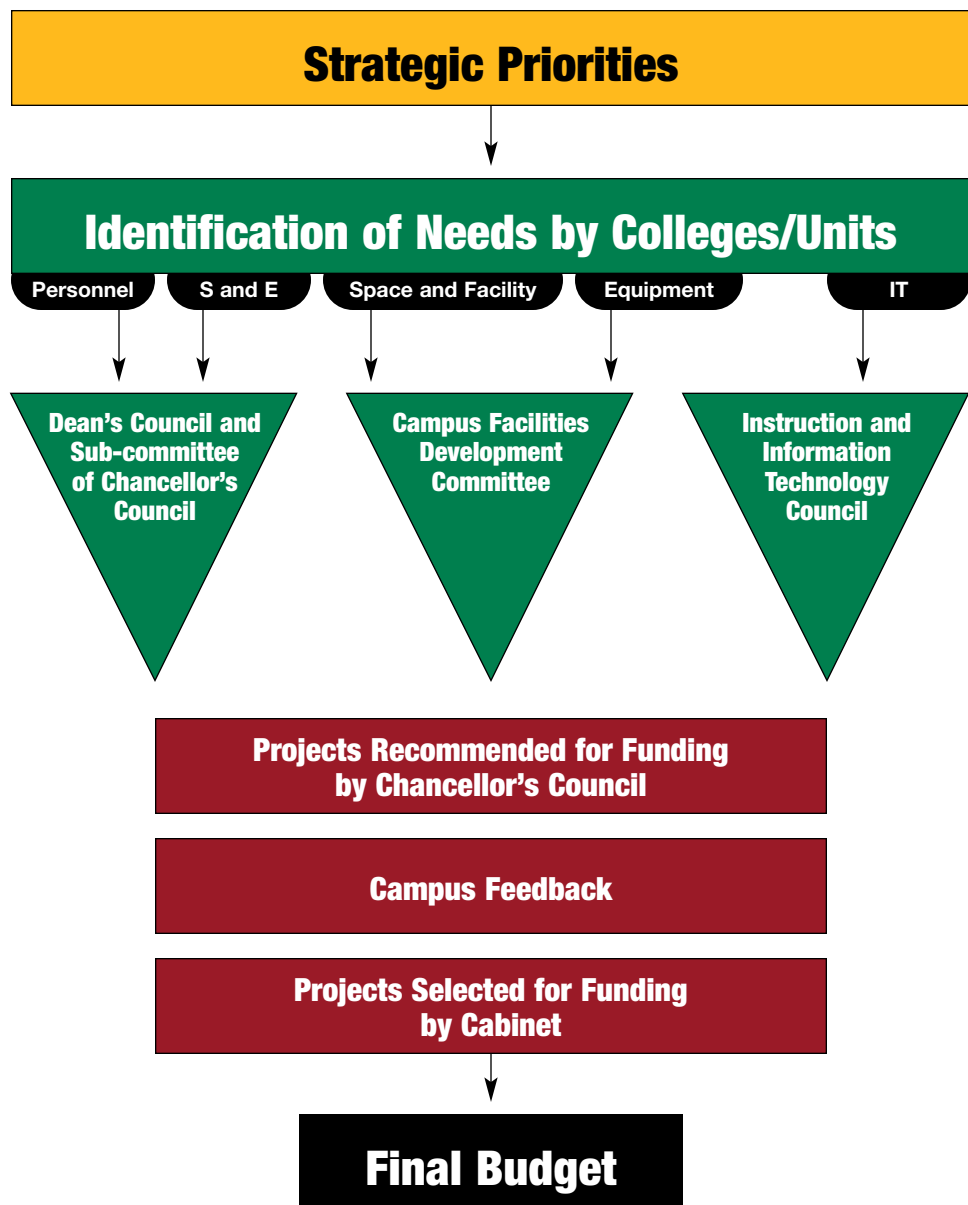
To advance our current effort, we began by committing time and resources to increase our knowledge of planning. Campus administrators discussed best practices and information from Robert Dickeson's book, [Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services](#). Five leaders were supported to attend the [Society for College and University Planning Institute](#) (SCUP) and bring back ideas and approaches to integrated planning in higher education. Another group of five are now enrolled in the next session of the SCUP Institute. We brought planning consultants John Dew and Michael Middaugh to River Falls to increase the participation and knowledge of the strategic planning process across campus.



To support an integrated planning cycle we needed a process to capture the short and long-term resource needs of the campus. As a result of these efforts, we developed the cycle described in 2b: “The University Budget: Changing the Process.”

Previously, we had separate allocation processes for laboratory and classroom modernization projects, general computer access support, and major equipment funds. Applications and decisions about allocations were made separately and were often based on unit, rather than institutional, priorities. By unifying the budget process, broader institutional goals and longer-term strategy can be considered. The new unified budget process is diagramed below.

Figure 2–9
UWRF
Unified
Budget
Process





The [report by Michael Middaugh](#), following his seminar on campus in July 2007, advised the campus to determine which of the strategic planning goals have the most immediacy. The University Planning Group has identified four [key priorities](#) for 2007-08 to enhance our strengths and address areas of greatest concern. Central to maintaining our ability to continue offering first-rate opportunities for our students is our commitment to assessing programs, defining priority areas, and allocating resources accordingly. Our commitment to student-focused programs builds on our mission and our tradition as a teaching institution. Developing a marketing plan linked to our programmatic priorities will enable us to continue attracting high quality students and provide a gateway for first-generation students to gain a college education. Finally, improving compensation, further clarifying performance expectations, and expanding professional development opportunities for faculty and staff will be critical to our future well-being as an institution.

COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT AND UNIT PLANNING

University-wide planning informs and guides planning overall, but the colleges and other units within the university have also undertaken planning initiatives targeted toward their respective domains and clientele. Most campus units have been very intentional about adopting new or revising their existing [mission and vision documents](#) to align more closely with the university mission and strategic plan.

Coinciding with the university's strategic planning process, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) engaged in refining its [mission and articulating a vision](#) for the future. Then every academic program in the college created a [departmental strategic plan](#) for the next three to five years, based on the college and departmental missions. The college leadership is using the college and department plans to guide decisions about allocating resources such as budget, personnel, and space. In CAS, every request to the dean for funding must explain how the allocation will fulfill the department's, college's, and university's strategic goals.

A recent application from the chemistry department provides an excellent example. Through extensive conversations on planning in connection with the university's mission of "helping students learn," the department determined that they needed to revise their introductory chemistry curriculum. This major curricular revision formed the center of its strategic plan. When one of their faculty members announced his retirement, the department could advocate that, on the basis of their strategic plan, they needed to hire a faculty member with expertise in the new curricular focus.

Another example of mission, planning and action integration is the Division of [Enrollment Services](#). Formed in 2005 by combining the offices of admissions, the registrar, and financial assistance, the reorganization is designed to more efficiently serve new students as they transition into college life. As part of its initial planning, the new unit developed [mission documents](#) that define the way it will serve students. Many of the values it has adopted reflect the core values



established by the university as a whole—continuous improvement, building a sense of community, and focusing on respectful, professional service.

The [ITS redesign project](#) provides clear evidence of our ability to assess an overall situation for a chosen department or function, determine the problems, and make plans to correct them in line with the priorities of the campus. Information Technology Services faced problems of leadership and direction, staff morale, resource allocation, and inefficient project management. As a result of an internal investigation and external consultant reports, the chief information officer (CIO) was replaced with new leadership that provided a vision of what the unit can and should be for our campus. The university committed resources and created a [broadly based redesign team](#) from across campus. The redesign process involved project management training for team members. As individuals began appreciating and applying its principles, project management methods began to be utilized in planning activities in other units across campus. The ITS redesign project provides an excellent example of unit planning which provided positive impacts on the entire campus (see [accomplishments](#)).

MULTIPLE UNIT COOPERATION

Some of our planning spans multiple university units and functions. Our commitment to sustainability is a prime example of coordinated goals and actions from many segments of the university. UW-River Falls has a rich history

of [supporting sustainability](#) both on campus and in its service area of the St. Croix Valley. We have demonstrated our leadership in this area through campus and academic programming, facilities and infrastructure, and partnerships. Many of our campus sustainability initiatives have been described in criterion 2a above.

A campus sustainability council is exploring curricular and co-curricular programming, operations and maintenance practices to develop policies, procedures, programs and benchmarks. In April 2007 UWRF created the [St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development](#) to address sustainability concepts and

approaches. The institute will coordinate the efforts across campus as it implements a major institutional initiative to become an energy sustainable, self-sufficient campus.

“The Sustainable Community Development focus is indicative of our belief that all global issues can ultimately only be solved at the local level—community by community and region by region. Sustainability comes down to a community’s ability to be as self-sufficient as it can be in providing the energy, water, food, employment, and other resources necessary for citizens to collectively and equitably contribute to the well-being of each other and future generations.”

— Kelly Cain, director of the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development



Curricular efforts clearly involve commitment from the faculty and academic colleges. The vision statement for our [College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences](#) states that they will “be widely recognized for excellent programs that educate students in wise agricultural practices and judicious use of the earth’s resources.” Within CAFES, we offer a major and minor in [environmental science](#), described as “an interdisciplinary major designed to prepare students to face increasingly complex environmental challenges in the context of environmental quality management and sustainable development.” As an interdisciplinary program, the major involves the cooperation of six different departments (agricultural engineering technology, biology, chemistry, geography, physics, and plant & earth science). The requirement that all ethical citizenship courses in our new general education program include a component on “stewardship of the environment” involved governance units and faculty across the university.

Other aspects of our sustainability efforts have required planning and commitment of time and resources from across the campus and beyond. Physical Plant and Facilities Management are actively involved with energy efficiency efforts, and the students have made a major financial investment in the environmental features of the new University Center. UWRF faculty and staff are partnering with external partners, like Wisconsin Public Power Inc., Xcel Energy, and non-governmental organizations, to create opportunities for academic programming and implementation of energy conservation and options for alternative energy generation.

In addition to our sustainability efforts, our commitment to meeting other initiatives, such as the UW System growth agenda and the university’s globalization goals, will require the involvement of individuals, academic departments, and other units from all parts of the campus.

The faculty-staff survey indicated high levels of knowledge about the development of the strategic plan and satisfaction with their involvement in the process. The planning and the focus on mission have extended across the campus in and between units, enhancing our ability to respond to the strategic goals.



EVALUATION

STRENGTHS

The development of the university's strategic plan, "Living the Promise," positions UWRF and our students, faculty and staff to meet 21st century challenges and demonstrates our commitment to HLC Core Component Two: Planning for the Future.

- The university has a clearly articulated strategic plan with goals that have been widely disseminated and accepted by the campus. Faculty and staff were extensively involved in the development of the plan and joint committees of administrators, faculty, staff and students are working on task forces to carry the goals forward. The University Planning Group has identified four key goals that we will focus on in the coming year.
- The university has been actively involved with planning since the time of the last re-accreditation visit, with several common themes that indicate the campus has a clear identity and a consistent sense of purpose.
- Our location in a rapidly growing and changing region positions us to participate in the UW System growth agenda. The social, economic and cultural transformations that accompany this growth in our region will increase the need for our expertise and provide additional opportunities to serve students and organizations in the region.
- We are demonstrating our commitment to areas that will be essential for the institution and for our students to survive and thrive in the future.
 - We are taking leadership in the area of sustainability, and are making strides to model efficient, environmentally friendly practices
 - Our international efforts are tied to our mission to produce students with "an informed global perspective" and our strategic goal to "Expand Global Literacy and Engagement." All students are required to take a global perspective course in order to graduate, and we are expanding both the international study options and the number of students who experience learning in another country
 - Consistent with our mission and strategic plan, we are intentional about our efforts to develop leadership within our faculty and staff and in our students
- We have taken steps to create a new budget process that will allow us to make more informed decisions about allocating resources to meet our strategic goals.
- We are reaping benefits from our evolving assessment practices and project management methods. Units across campus are collecting data from the people they serve, and they are assessing that data to make changes that are improving their efficiency and effectiveness.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The university's primary challenge is simply to acquire sufficient resources in a period of funding reductions and uncertainties from the state. While university enrollment increases will generate more tuition revenue, additional students also generate more expenses. Flexibility in student tuition and fee levels have aided program support, and UWRF students have initiated fee increases to support identified needs. The university will need to become much more entrepreneurial and proactive with respect to resource development. Future years will likely see the development of a greater variety of service-based and other pricing strategies; even greater participation in the competition for grant and award dollars; a greater concentration on service delivery mechanisms that can enhance fiscal efficiencies; and the university's first comprehensive fundraising campaign. Finally, the university will have to continue making the case to state politicians and the public that investments in the University of Wisconsin System are central to the current and future prosperity of the state.

Another major challenge for the university is the need for coordinated and comprehensive data gathering. Our work in preparing for HLC/NCA re-accreditation has highlighted problems in our institutional research function. As this report illustrates, there are areas in which we have solid data, e.g., UW System accountability measures and budget figures, and there are several areas in which improvements need to be made in our data collection and evaluation, e.g., the creation of a unified personnel database, the compilation of campus-wide assessment data, and basic program data.

The university clearly recognizes the need to improve its capacity to gather, organize and coordinate data through an effective institutional research office. In 2003 the position of director of institutional research, which had remained vacant since 2000, was reconstituted as a full-time position. A half-time classified support position was added in 2006. The position had been vacant because of the significant budget and position control constraints the university experienced in the 1990s. (Prior to 2000, the institutional research role had been filled as a 0.5 position.) Since 2003 there has been turnover, with two different people in the role. The position has been vacant for over one-and-a-half of the last three years, including the final stages of the development for this self-study.

With our commitment to data-driven decision making and to institutionalizing sound strategic planning, we recognize the need to hire an effective director of institutional research and to provide needed support for that office. In July 2007 Dr. Michael Middaugh came to UWRF as an institutional research consultant. Based on [Dr. Middaugh's report](#), the university has committed to fully staffing the institutional research office with two full-time professional positions. A search is being conducted in the fall of 2007 for a data analyst, and we will be conducting a search for a director of institutional research in early 2008. We plan to have both positions filled by the time of the campus visit, spring 2008.



Other significant challenges include:

- Placing increased reliance on tuition will cause significant problems in maintaining access for lower income and underserved populations, unless we are able to provide increased financial aid for those students.
- While the increase in the salary levels—in comparison to our system peers—for our assistant and associate professors provides promise for our future, it is creating current difficulties for our senior professors. Salary compression is a problem, and in some high-market areas, salary inversion is occurring. The spread between disciplines is also increasing at a campus that had been more egalitarian. When combined with the problems with our health benefits package, maintaining faculty morale could be problematic.
- UWRF has been “administratively lean.” Some of our departments do not have full-time administrative assistance during the academic year or administrative assistance in the summer. Our assessment coordinator and graduate studies director are part-time positions, and we are one of two campuses in the UW System without a full-time affirmative action/equity and compliance officer. According to our 2007 [IPEDS](#) data feedback report, we devoted \$987 per FTE enrollment for “institutional support” in comparison to \$1,481 for our peer institutions. One of the recent rounds of cuts from the legislature mandated that the largest percentage of reductions come from “administration.” With the state’s control of both positions and budget, this has meant that we have had little flexibility. However, we have been creative and have been organizing for maximum efficiency.
- Continued growth will place strains on our facilities, faculty, and staff resources. If we are unable to obtain flexibility in hiring additional tenure-track faculty, we will become more dependent on temporary and part-time instructional staff. We will need to develop more programs for non-traditional delivery. Although that can provide long-term benefits, the time and resources necessary to develop those programs can also create stresses.
- Finally, a key challenge will be to sustain the current planning process, implement identified action steps, and fund our highest priorities. The university has experienced many changes over the past 10 years—in leadership, in organizational structure, in our general education program, in assessment initiatives, in technology, in outreach and service—all with decreasing state support. Maintaining morale, encouraging collaboration, rewarding success and clearly investing in agreed-upon priorities are essential for keeping the university advancing toward its defined goals. If resources do not follow priorities, it will be very difficult to maintain campus motivation and accomplish our goals.



SUMMARY

The revisions in our budgeting process, tying funding to priorities, may be both our most significant strength and our biggest challenge. Goals of previous plans were not always realized because resources did not follow priorities. The development of a clear process has been a significant accomplishment. It will be essential that we keep communication channels open and the priorities and decision-making transparent. The challenge will arise as we follow that process and some individuals discover that their favored programs are considered to be lower priority. If we are to accomplish the goals of “Living the Promise,” we must support those goals in principle and practice.

We have taken steps to clarify and solidify our mission and have developed a solid strategic plan for the future. We continue to work in an environment of limited resources, though we have a very committed faculty and staff, and within those limitations we have taken the actions described above. Our strategic planning, our budgeting process, and our internal assessments will keep us focused on moving the university forward to continue to serve our students and other constituents.