

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS

ESTABLISHED 1874

2008 Self-Study REPORT

prepared for
The Higher Learning Commission
of the
**North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools**

Don Betz, Chancellor



PREFACE FROM THE CHANCELLOR



Integrity, academic excellence, inclusiveness, community and continuous improvement are the declared values of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. They are our daily markers of genuine progress in our fundamental commitment to help students learn.

UW-River Falls is located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro statistical area. The *2007 Twin Cities Annual Business Journal* listed UW-River Falls among the metro's higher education assets. We are closer to the Minnesota capital in St. Paul

than most of the Minneapolis suburbs. Significantly, we are the nearest public comprehensive university to the metro and its burgeoning population now estimated at 2.8 million with a growth projection of one million in the next 15 years. From 2001 to 2006, the net population gain was 130,000.

Much of this growth is east toward Wisconsin, toward the St. Croix Valley and toward UW-River Falls. The economic and growth prospects for the western Wisconsin counties of Pierce, Polk and St. Croix are bright with St. Croix County the fastest growing in the state and among those in the national forecast with high percentage growth rates.

If the real estate axiom about the primacy of location is true, then we are geographically blessed. As articulated in our vision, we are committed to being the learning nucleus of the St. Croix Valley.

We are in the unique location where urban meets rural, where contrasting lifestyles now search for new relationships and where challenges and opportunities collaboratively tackled here may provide fresh models and alternatives for others.

The community of River Falls was founded in 1848 by Joel Foster, a Mexican war veteran who was visiting in the St. Croix area north of Hudson. He heard about a beautiful area of the Kinnickinnic River with cascading falls. The winter of 1848-49 marked the first official settlement of River Falls.

Only 25 years later, the state decided to establish its fourth Normal School and placed it in this community with its falls and its mills. An 1880 map depicts River Falls with the notation of two significant features: the arrival of the railroad and the façade of South Hall, home of the Normal School. One insightful River Falls resident wrote in 1875 just after the school was founded: "Generations upon generations yet to tread these fertile plains will reap the rich harvest of the works begun here today." He knew that the state and the people of River Falls had planted seeds of learning here for the future. He and his fellow settlers expressed their enduring belief in education, and in the power of learning.

One hundred and thirty three years later, the fruit of their vision is this bountiful region and this university which grew with, and was nurtured by, the people and their dreams for this valley. Today, UW-River Falls encompasses some 780 acres of main campus and two laboratory farms. We enrolled over 6,400 students in fall 2007, excluding continuing education, outreach and study abroad programs. We have grown at a controlled pace of over two percent for the past three years. Scarcity of resources in virtually every category except for commitment dictates that we proceed prudently. With resources and flexibilities, however, enrollment could significantly increase. We embrace the University of Wisconsin System's growth agenda and the goals of the emerging Advantage Wisconsin strategic plan. They are inextricably interwoven and both must be credibly resourced as sustained state priorities to be truly successful.

We are among the largest economic engines in this region and fuel the growth and development of River Falls, the St. Croix Valley and the surrounding areas through our annual institutional expenditures as well as the spending of our faculty, staff, students and visitors. We host dozens of gatherings of people in the region for a wide variety of purposes, including, for the last 17 years, the summer training camp for the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs. Each September, when fall semester re-convenes, the community of River Falls dramatically increases in size and prosperity. Most important, we are a serious player in shaping the quality of life and the pool of conscientious citizen-leaders for this region.

Our four colleges and the Office of Outreach and Graduate Studies programs are the academic foundations of our institution. They include the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; the College of Arts and Sciences; the College of Business and Economics; and the College of Education and Professional Studies. I trust that through this study, additional documentation and the visit of the site team, the Higher Learning Commission will discover some of the unique and substantive learning opportunities offered by our faculty and staff.

In fall 2007 we enrolled 1,300 new freshmen from 400 high schools. Our current students represent 71 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, a dozen U.S. states and 17 countries. We retain students from first to second year at a 75 percent rate with a strategic plan target goal of 80 percent. Given that our average ACT is approximately 22, which is about average for the System, and that 57 percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college, an 80 percent retention rate will be a notable achievement.

We have nationally competitive four and six-year graduation rates for comprehensive institutions and the second lowest credit to degree rate in the UW System. This is good news for students and their families. UW-River Falls was among the top 10 public comprehensive universities in the Midwest in the 2008 *U.S. News and World Report* survey and among the Best in the Midwest for the *Princeton Review*, as were several of our fellow UW institutions.

But far removed from numbers and subjective rankings, this university—this faculty and staff—are passionate about teaching, about learning and about

serving. Not boastful or self-promoting by tradition, this institution truly helps students learn. And they know it. Whether a new graduate, a 10-year alum or a proud member of the class of 1934, UW-River Falls' graduates consistently report high satisfaction rates with their years here.

In this global century of accelerated change and the knowledge economy, UW-River Falls is reaffirming its historic role as a learning hub of the St. Croix Valley and a committed partner to lend our efforts to building the future of western Wisconsin. In true partnership with our fellow UW institutions, Stout and Eau Claire, with the Wisconsin Technical Colleges, the UW Colleges, and with UW-Extension as well as a wide spectrum of public and private partners, we are stepping up to harness the economic and entrepreneurial prowess of the I-94 "Collaboration Corridor."

We believe that we have the opportunity to make strategic choices, including the power to choose to continue the work begun here long ago.

Our choice, our pathway for the coming years, is "Living the Promise," the plan for the next dynamic phase in UW-River Falls history. LTP is the consensus outcome of dozens of meetings with hundreds of people on and off campus. We began by conducting a "Vision and Values" survey that reaped 10,000 discrete comments from hundreds of responders. The result included the articulation of institutional values, an affirmation of the existing select mission and the creation of an abbreviated, focused mission statement, and a vision statement. Together these statements constitute UW-River Falls' mission documents.

LTP is our individual and collective pledge of responsibility to our students, to our communities, to Wisconsin and to each other. For us, the focus of that promise is integrity and intentionality.

The world around us continues to change and so does UWRF. In dozens of ways, some boldly expressed and others almost undetected, UW-River Falls is gaining momentum and renewed confidence as it seeks its position in an increasingly interdependent global society.

Under the umbrella of continuous improvement, the "culture of learning" has emerged as our premier strategic goal. COL invites fresh ideas and opportunities to help students learn framed by the mission documents. COL is to be purposefully cultivated in multiple and interconnected ways, including via faculty development, undergraduate research opportunities, civic engagement, global connections and proliferating expressions of service. We see these initiatives constituting the core of effective pedagogy for the 21st century.

For the next several years we will seek to fulfill our mission to build the future of Wisconsin and this region by educating students to become engaged citizens and leaders who create true sustainable communities, who implicitly understand the importance of inclusiveness to long-term success and who embrace knowing and serving the community, from local to global. At UW-River Falls students are learning to serve by leading and to lead by serving and sustaining our communities. Civic engagement is a declared value.

The central component of “Living the Promise” is our commitment to prepare our students, ourselves and our communities for success, for productive and meaningful lives in this, the global century. Our students will graduate into an era of unprecedented change affecting virtually every part of their lives. What we must offer them is confidence based on their capacities to learn, adapt and learn again as a life-long habit. Their confidence will be rooted in their competence. We strive to create such a university environment by reaffirming a culture of learning for all of us at UW-River Falls.

In the goals and initiatives of “Living the Promise” we are declaring the power of learning. The power of learning is our response to the challenge of accelerating change. Learning as a passion, as a lifestyle, assures us that we need not fear change. The power of learning can prepare us to lead change, to direct it in order to serve the needs of our families and our communities. In our compressed, globalized world, the power of learning will aid us in devising vital, collaborative solutions to immediate and protracted local and global issues. The planet’s fundamental challenges defy narrow solutions and will require imagination and fresh perspective to be tamed.

With confidence in the power of learning, we are pledging ourselves and the university to intentionally grow that next generation of productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective. By infusing our curriculum, our activities and our partnerships with concentrations on sustainable community development, leadership, inclusiveness and global literacy and engagement, we believe that our graduates will be ready to assume a full spectrum of meaningful roles in society. They will leave UW-River Falls, as they have for so many decades, prepared and motivated to lead by serving the needs of their families and our communities.

The Chinese proverb is instructive:

- If you are planning for a year, plant rice;
- If you are planning for 10 years, plant trees;
- If you are planning for 100 years, educate your children.

At UW-River Falls we are planning and planting for our future. In this way we fervently believe that we will be “Living the Promise” of our values, mission and vision. In this way, we are creating our future.

I hope that the deep-seated sense of the commitment, passion and service that expresses itself daily in actions of people at UW-River Falls is effectively reflected in this study. UW-River Falls is an intensely human story about the power of learning to change lives and, thereby, change societies.



Don Betz, Chancellor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface from the Chancellor	2
Glossary of Acronyms	8
Introduction	
Institutional Profile	11
Key Developments Since 1998	23
Challenges Cited in the Last Report	27
Organization of the Self-Study Report.....	32
Chapter One	
<i>Criterion One: Mission and Integrity</i>	
Core Component 1A	36
The mission documents of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls are clear and articulate publicly the institution’s commitments.	
Core Component 1B	38
In its mission documents, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies and the greater society it serves.	
Core Component 1C	51
Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.	
Core Component 1D	54
Governance and administrative structures promote leadership/collaboration to fulfill mission.	
Core Component 1E	60
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls maintains and upholds its integrity.	
Chapter Two	
<i>Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future</i>	
Core Component 2A	74
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.	
Core Component 2B	88
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.	
Core Component 2C	96
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.	
Core Component 2D	107
All levels of planning align with the university’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.	
Chapter Three	
<i>Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching</i>	
Core Component 3A	119
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.	
Core Component 3B	128
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls values and supports effective teaching.	
Core Component 3C	138
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls creates effective learning environments.	
Core Component 3D	147
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls’ learning resources effectively support student learning.	

Chapter Four

Criterion Four:

Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge

Core Component 4A	165
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, faculty and staff, that it values a life of learning.	
Core Component 4B	180
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.	
Core Component 4C	189
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.	
Core Component 4D	195
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls provides support to ensure that faculty, staff, and students acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.	

Chapter Five

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

Core Component 5A	205
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.	
Core Component 5B	212
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.	
Core Component 5C	225
The University of Wisconsin-River Falls demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.	
Core Component 5D	234
Internal and external constituencies value the services that the University of Wisconsin-River Falls provides.	

Conclusion

The Self-Study	243
Cross-Cutting Themes	245
Overview	250
Challenges	251
Strengths	252
Request for Reaccreditation	253
Appendix A: UW-River Falls Institutional Snapshot	255
Appendix B: Organizational Charts	266
Appendix C: Federal Compliance.....	269
Acknowledgements	274

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

TERM	DEFINITION
AASA	Asian American Student Association
ADP	American Democracy Project—a national educational project sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and affiliated with the <i>New York Times</i> , designed to foster informed civic engagement
AP&P	Academic Program and Policy Committee, the chief curricular committee on campus
ASC	Academic Success Center
BOR	University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents
BSU	Black Student Union
CAFES	College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences
CAS	College of Arts and Sciences
CATTS	Community Action Theatre Troup, a multi-cultural company that makes presentations in area schools and other venues
CBE	College of Business and Economics
CERS	China Exploration and Research Society, headed by UWRF alumnus Wong How Man in Yunnan Province, China
CESA	Cooperative Education Service Area—Wisconsin has divided the state into 12 CESA regions to coordinate services to the schools
C.H.I.L.D.	Creative Hours in Learning Development, the university childcare center affiliated with our early childhood education program
Center	
COEPS	College of Education and Professional Studies
COL	Culture of Learning
CRSCA	Collaborative Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities—a grants program from the UWRF Foundation supporting student researchers and faculty mentors
CTL	Center for Teaching and Learning
CVTC	Chippewa Valley Technical College—a branch of the technical college is located in River Falls
D2L	Desire To Learn—a course management software adopted in the UW System
DAC	Diversity Awareness Committee of Student Senate
DAR	Degree Audit Report, an electronic continuous report on the courses completed, which requirements have been met and which requirements remain to be completed
DPI	The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction—governs certification and educational policies in the state
eSIS	The electronic Student Information System—the database program that tracks all academic information about a student. eSIS provides the basis for academic advising
ETC	Educational Technology Center in the Wyman Education Building
FAN	Falcon Action Network—a group of friends, alumni, students and supporters who actively contact legislators to build support for the university. www.uwrf.edu/fan
FASDB	Faculty and Academic Staff Development Board
FYE	First-Year Experience, the program designed to help freshmen and new transfer students make a successful transition to UWRF
GLBTQ	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning
Global	The office of international programs
Connections	
GPR	General Program Revenue—funds allocated by the State of Wisconsin to support our academic programs
HHP	Health and Human Performance
IITC	Information and Instructional Technologies Council
ITS	Information Technology Services
ITSRP	Information Technology Services Redesign Project
J-Term	Three week January winter interim session between the fall and spring semesters
LRPC	Long Range Planning Committee—covered strategic planning from 2000 to 2004

TERM	DEFINITION
LSO	Latino Student Organization
LTP	Living the Promise
NAC	Native American Council
NADOHE	National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education
OGS	Outreach and Graduate Studies
OPID	Office of Professional and Instructional Development— a UW System program to support effective teaching
PR Funds	Program Revenue—funds from fees paid by individuals and organizations to support specific programming
PEAT	Professional Experience Advisory Team—a campus-wide group with representatives from each college and Career Services, charged with coordinating common internship issues
PLAN 2008	A UW System program to enhance diversity across the state system
PT3	Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to use Technology— a grant program from the U.S. Department of Education
RDI	Regional Development Institute
ReBAR	Regional Business Assistance Resource—a searchable database of the faculty and business consulting expertise created through the cooperation of UWRF, UW-Stout, UW-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College
RFTF	Reach For The Future—a university-wide strategic planning effort from 1994 to 2000
RSCA	Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity—encompasses the scholarly activity in all fields, including experimental and applied research and the creative activity in the arts and humanities
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCISCD	St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development
SCUP	Society of College and University Planning
SH & CS	Student Health and Counseling Services
SRC	The Survey Research Center
SSS	Student Support Services, a TRIO program funded by federal grants to provide tutoring and academic support
SUF	Segregated University Fees
SURSCA	The Society for Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities—an undergraduate student organization on campus, dedicated to supporting student research and to foster an environment for this work
TED	The course designator for the Department of Teacher Education
TLC	Technology Leadership Cadre— https://www.uwrf.edu/tlc/
UPG	University Planning Group— the strategic planning coordinating committee
UW-Learning Innovations	A UW System program that supports the development of online and non-traditional teaching strategies
UWS	The University of Wisconsin System
WCWC	West Central Wisconsin Consortium—includes UWRF and the UW universities of Stout, Eau Claire and La Crosse
WCWRDC	West Central Wisconsin Regional Development Commission— a nine county consortium in the St. Croix and Chippewa river valleys designed to explore issues of regional growth and economic development
WEB	Wyman Teacher Education Building
WIS	Wisconsin in Scotland program, a multi-institutional cooperative program housed in a historic mansion just outside Edinburgh, Scotland. We have provided leadership to the program since it was founded in 1986
WOW	Weeks of Welcome—our freshman orientation program
WWHEL	Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership
WWIC	Western Wisconsin Intergovernmental Collaborative