The Value of Investing in UW-River Falls

The Impacts of the 2015-17 Reduction in State Budget on UWRF

- **$2.87 million base budget cut** (share of $125 million UW System cut)
- **11.2% reduction in base state support**
- **55% reduction in state/tuition supported positions equaling 38 FTE full-time equivalent (as of Oct. 2015)**
- **18 permanent layoffs/non-retentions**

Students attend UWRF from all corners of Wisconsin

- **18,275** UWRF alumni reside in Wisconsin
- **38%** of UWRF Wisconsin freshmen had a high school graduating class size of 125 or fewer. UWRF's ability to provide small class sizes and personalized attention are paramount to the success of students coming from small communities.
- **43%** of UWRF incoming freshmen are first-generation college students.

FAQs

**Q:** Can’t you just raise tuition to make up for state budget cuts?
**A:** No. Wisconsin government has mandated a resident undergraduate tuition freeze throughout the UW System. We are entering the fourth consecutive year of this freeze. We have no option for implementing modest tuition adjustments to help cover state budget cuts. A tuition freeze may look like a savings to UW students and families, however in this context, it translates into fewer class offerings and larger class sizes, which means less personalized attention and possibly increased time to obtain a degree.

**Q:** Aren’t you building a new $63 million facility?
**A:** Yes. State funding for capital projects such as the UWRF Falcon Center project cannot be used to address shortfalls in operational funding due to the 2015-17 budget cuts. The Falcon Center is supported by capital funds from the state, student fees, charitable gifts, and parking “user fees.”

**Q:** Didn’t I just hear about a successful $20 million fundraising effort?
**A:** Yes, and we are proud of our success! However, charitable gifts can only be used for the purposes intended by the donor. Therefore, most of these funds are destined to support our students directly and are not used to pay for items such as faculty and staff salaries, educational supplies or equipment. Scholarship funding, instructional space improvements and program support are the most commonly chosen charitable destinations.

**Q:** Doesn’t the university have lots of money in reserves?
**A:** No. The university’s current tuition reserves could support faculty salaries and other educational costs for less than two months. Other fund balances in areas such as housing, parking, construction projects, and dining services are committed for specific projects or uses, and cannot be used to fund faculty or support basic teaching and learning activities.

Salaries of faculty and staff at UW comprehensive universities such as UWRF are significantly lagging. For example, faculty earn more than 18% below national peers. Employee pay plan increases have been minimal, while their cost of benefits has increased.
How UWRF is responding...

Recruitment and Retention of Students

Concerns
- “With recent budget cuts affecting the university, I’m concerned I will not be able to complete my major within four years here at UWRF. I know for many students, adding an additional year (or more) of schooling is a big deal financially as well as personally.” Janelle Olson, sophomore
- “We are concerned about what the proposed budget cuts may mean for her education at UW-River Falls. Others have told us that they have advised their children to transfer out of the University of Wisconsin System. I am certain that the University of Wisconsin does not want to lose top students due to these budget cuts.” Lu Ann Sifford, mother of prospective student
- “The losses have impacted a number of student support functions, including the library, IT department, financial aid, registrar’s office, human resources and our student affairs units.” Provost Fernando Delgado

Responses
- Develop a **Strategic Choices Task Force** to analyze and recommend the most sustainable, student-centered academic program and general education array.
- Focus on the university’s Strategic Plan goals:
  - **Distinctive Academic Excellence**
  - **Global Education and Engagement**
  - **Innovation and Partnerships**
- Absorb a higher percentage of reductions in administrative (vs. academic) areas.
- Successfully implement strategic new academic programs (agricultural engineering, data science, criminology, neuroscience, master of science in computer science), which are responsive to the needs of our state and our students.

Recruitment and Retention of Quality Faculty

Concerns
- “This past year, we had at least three faculty members who retired earlier than they would have probably retired in an effort to keep enough money in their departments to keep them functioning. That’s new. That’s a lot of self-sacrifice.” Brad Caskey, dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- “We have had a number of institutions and other organizations successfully recruit and hire UWRF faculty and academic staff in the past 12-18 months. In most cases, the salary received was higher than what they were receiving in Wisconsin.” Provost Fernando Delgado

Responses
- Provide some, albeit modest, merit or market adjustments to employees.
- Continue to tell the story of the outstanding teachers and scholars who make up the UW-River Falls faculty, with their genuine concern for students and willingness to provide hands-on educational opportunities.

Innovation and Growth Opportunities

Concerns
- “UWRF is an extraordinarily student-centered university, has prepared its graduates well, and is deeply connected to River Falls, Hudson and the entire St. Croix Valley. Continued cuts will risk inhibiting our ability to remain an essential component of talent development and economic growth in this region.” Chancellor Dean Van Galen
- “UW-River Falls is helping develop critical thinkers for the agricultural industry that I work in. The budget cuts will have a negative impact on the next generation of farmers I rely on to continue my business.” John Rosenow, class of ’72; Partner, Rosenholm-Wolfe Dairy & Owner Cowsmo
- “Having worked in health care all of my career, I know how important a highly skilled workforce is to meeting the patients’ needs. Education is crucial to keeping our communities healthy and vibrant.” Marian Furlong, president and chief executive office at Hudson Hospital & Clinic in Hudson

Responses
- Prioritize initiatives such as the **UWRF Hudson Center**, the **St. Croix Valley Business Incubator**, and strategic new academic programs.
- Advocate publicly for **renewed state investment** and creation of a **reasonable and rational tuition policy**.

Post-secondary education is an essential component of talent development and economic growth. UW-River Falls is critical to the economic and cultural vitality of the St. Croix Valley, especially when innovation, entrepreneurship and talent development are most needed in this rapidly developing part of Wisconsin.