Strategic Plan Spring Update

The 2013-2014 academic year marks the end of the second full year of implementation of the university’s strategic plan, Pathway to Distinction. This year the Strategic Planning Progress Committee has evaluated new initiatives to be worked on through the 2014-2015 academic year, explored alterations and amendments to the metrics associated with the strategic plan, and identified potential initiatives from year 1 that could be eliminated.

As a reminder, the following initiatives were recommended for approval by the Strategic Planning Progress Committee and ratified in a motion approved by the Faculty Senate and signed by the Chancellor:

**First Year Seminar** - Develop a one-credit First-Year Seminar (FYS) course that challenges and supports all first year students - both inside and outside the classroom. The FYS will be designed to develop first-year students as learners and scholars, build their skills for success, and connect them with the campus community.

**STEM GTC with optional Master's degree** - Create a self-funding STEM graduate teacher certification (GTC) program, with an optional master's degree in the CEPS in collaboration with the CAS and Outreach. The program will provide STEM degree holders a focused and efficient route to an initial secondary teaching certification. The initial target candidates will include STEM degree holders who are recent graduates, career changers, and retirees. Approval through the WI DPI will be sought.

**Falcon Scholars Program Director** - Create the position of Falcon Scholars Program Director through a one-quarter time release to a current UWRF faculty member (to be named). UWRF has admitted two classes of Falcon Scholars. Since the retirement of the previous program director, the task of coordinating Falcon Scholar activities has been shared by the Provost, Foundation, Admissions and AVC for Enrollment and Student Success.

**Honors Program Improvement** - Hire a half-time Honors Program Director and begin the implementation of suggestions from the report issued by the Ideas and Innovation Project committee in December 2013. In the past, the Honors Program Director was just one of multiple unrelated roles assigned to an administrator. A half-time Honors Program Director will focus on improving both the administrative processes and the curricular structure of the Honors Program, potentially leading to upgrading the program into an Honors College in 2-5 years.
In terms of the Ideas and Innovation Incubator (an ongoing and rotating project-based initiative approved in year 1), three projects have been identified for the summer and fall:

Integrated Marketing

The FYSEM initiative

Bachelor of Science in Data Science/Predictive Analytics

The Ideas and Innovation Incubator brings teams of faculty and staff to work on focused projects, typically through the summer and fall, to advance very specific innovations to the campus and in support of Pathway to Distinction’s three goals.

At present the Strategic Planning Progress Committee is examining a handful of metrics and offering changes or deletions to better capture that data that can be measured. Several metrics, for example, relied on external sources (such as the Open Doors international education report or the National Survey of Student Engagement) that have changed their method of collecting and reporting data. The Committee will make their recommendations to the Faculty Senate in the hope that such changes can be recorded by the commencement of the Fall 2014 semester.

In addition, the Committee has collected information about a number of existing initiatives from year one that may need to cease based on a lack of progress or an inability to translate into operational success. Again, the recommendations of the Committee will go first to Faculty Senate and then onto the Chancellor.

Finally, a number of first-year initiatives have moved into operation. The Year of Initiative is transitioning from the Year of Germany to the Year of China. Please share any programming ideas with your unit head or contact Professor Don Taylor, Kelsey McLean in Global Connections or the Provost’s Office. The graduate program in Montessori education has been deployed and received accreditation. The Board of Regents approved the M.S. in Computer Science at the April 2014 meeting held at UW-River Falls. The translation of printed materials and web pages has accelerated over the current academic year.

Perhaps most important to many people on campus is the progress of Rising to Distinction, the university's fundraising campaign and an ongoing initiative within the strategic plan. The fundraising is on track and as of April 1, 2014 it has surpassed $15 million in gifts and pledges.