Dairy Plant Marketing

Proposed Initiative for 2013-14

Initiative Proposal Process and Timeline:

• 11/01/12 – Individuals/groups submit proposals via email (using this form) to their Unit Head for consideration. “Unit Heads” include:
  o College Deans: Brad Caskey, Dale Gallenberg, Glenn Potts, and Larry Solberg
  o Chancellor, Dean Van Galen
  o Provost, Fernando Delgado
  o Associate Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs, Gregg Heinselman
  o Assistant Chancellor-Business and Finance, Elizabeth Frueh
  o Executive Director-Administrative Services, Michael Stifter
  o Executive Director of University Advancement, Chris Mueller
  o Faculty Senate Chair, Wes Chapin
• 11/16/12 – Unit heads submit approved unit proposals via website to Strategic Plan Progress Committee (SPPC)
• 11/30/12 – SPPC requests any clarifying information needed from Unit Head/Proposer
• 01/07/13 – Unit Head/Proposer provides clarifying information to SPPC
• 01/17/13 – SPPC completes ranking and review of initiatives
• 01/22/13 - Rankings and feedback forwarded to Faculty Senate, Cabinet, and Proposers
• Spring semester 2013 – Initiatives finalized, built into 2013-14 budget and communicated to campus.

1. Proposed initiative: (limited to 500 characters or less)

UWRF Dairy Plant Marketing Initiative

One purpose of this initiative is to enhance marketing opportunities for products manufactured by the Dairy Pilot Plant at UWRF. To help remain viable as an operating entity the Dairy Plant needs to increase its revenue from product sales, particularly its signature cheeses and ice creams.

Another purpose is to enhance learning in the proposed Marketing course in the Agricultural Business program through using Dairy Plant products as the focus of student team projects.

2. Person, administrative department, or college proposing the initiative:

This initiative is a joint effort between the Animal and Food Science and Agricultural Economics Departments within CAFES. Lead individuals include Gary Onan, Chair of Animal and Food Science, David Trechter, Chair of Agricultural Economics, Jim White, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics, and Michelle Farner, Dairy Plant Manager.

3. Which strategic goal does this initiative support?

This initiative supports Distinctive Academic Excellence (by facilitating additional collaborations between Dairy Science, Agricultural Business, and other distinctive academic programs) and Innovation and Partnerships (through creatively marketing Dairy Plant products to additional entities and areas).

4. Describe how the initiative supports the goal(s). (limited to 1000 characters or less)

Distinctive Academic Excellence: The UWRF Dairy Plant provides a unique opportunity for students to acquire manufacturing, regulatory, and other knowledge necessary to become valued employees and managers for one of Wisconsin’s premier industries. The classroom instruction and hands-on work experiences are truly distinctive assets and well respected in the industry.

Similarly, the Agriculture Business program is distinctive and well respected regionally and nationally. However, the curriculum would be further enhanced through development of a marketing course which would ideally include student projects aimed at developing, exploring, and implementing new opportunities for marketing of products.

This initiative would tie together needs in Animal and Food Science with those in Agricultural Economics.
Innovation and Partnerships: This initiative will lead to partnerships with a variety of business and academic entities, including other UWRF programs and units, businesses within the St. Croix Valley and beyond, and other UW System campuses as well as expand those already in place.

5. Based on the definition of university-wide Initiative [initiative that spans across colleges, units, and departments], indicate how the proposed initiative has a university-wide impact: (limited to 1000 characters or less)

As stated above, this initiative supports collaboration initially between Agricultural Economics and Animal and Food Science Departments. There is clearly opportunity for involvement with programs such as Marketing Communications and Business Administration with potential for several others at UWRF. In addition, other units across campus becoming involved will likely include the University Center, Student Services, and Sodexo Food Service.

6. Please provide a set of benchmarks and / or indicators of success to support your initiative. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

Indicators of success will include:
- Realized student outcomes for the Marketing course and the Agricultural Business program
- Increased sales revenue for the Dairy Plant
- Increase in number of students enrolled in dairy manufacturing courses and employed as plant workers

7. Indicate, to the best of your consideration, which of the foundational elements mentioned below will the initiative engage. You will have opportunity to elaborate on each element on the next page. (Please indicate YES or NO each of the foundational elements.)

Sustainability Yes
Inclusiveness Yes
Human Capital Yes
Technology Yes
Facilities Yes
Finance Yes
Other

8. SUSTAINABILITY: Indicate how SUSTAINABILITY would be affected by the initiative. If SUSTAINABILITY is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

Long-term ability to sustain the Dairy Plant at UWRF is clearly at stake. With increasing budgetary constraints it is imperative that entities such as the Dairy Plant explore and develop strategies for independent operation. This initiative, if implemented successfully, will clearly enhance that ability. The Dairy Plant is a relatively unique feature of the UWRF campus and one that is highly visible and recognized state-wide. It is a part of “who we are”. It provides a distinctive element to this campus and has had, and will continue to have, a positive impact on student recruitment and UWRF’s ability to garner industry support for its programs.

Incorporation of a real-world marketing project into new course offerings in the Agricultural Business Program will support longer-term sustainability of that program as well. It will create a distinctive learning opportunity that will better train graduates to be important contributors to successes within the U.S. agricultural sector as well as
broader economic arenas. Those graduates, in turn, will serve as examples and touch points for prospective students, enhancing the long-term stature and viability of the Agricultural Business Program.

This initiative will also promote food sustainability by potentially offering locally sourced up-scale dairy products to the greater St. Croix Valley region. This is congruent with expressed goals of the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development and will further demonstrate UWRF’s commitment to sustainability.

9. INCLUSIVENESS: Indicate how INCLUSIVENESS would be affected by the initiative. If INCLUSIVENESS is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

This initiative will foster a greater sense of connection between UWRF and the local community in which it is located. The ability of residents of the St. Croix Valley to have greater access to UWRF dairy products at their local retail outlets (one possible avenue for enhanced marketing currently under exploration with Dick’s Market in River Falls) will create a greater sense of identity with this institution. It will allow consumers to purchase locally sourced, high quality products that will raise the profile of UWRF.

10. HUMAN CAPITAL: Indicate how HUMAN CAPITAL would be affected by the initiative. If HUMAN CAPITAL is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

This initiative will foster an environment allowing current human capital, particularly Jim White and Michelle Farner, to utilize their unique talents in a very productive and mutually beneficial collaboration. Jim has a substantial marketing background and Michelle possesses an interesting blend of creativity focused on product development and esthetic presentation. Certainly the opportunity for expression of unique talents could easily extend to other faculty and staff at UWRF as the initiative is effectively implemented. It will also develop value-added graduates from Agricultural Business, Dairy Science and other programs which will enhance their employment prospects and the reputation of UWRF.

11. TECHNOLOGY: Indicate how TECHNOLOGY would be affected by the initiative. If TECHNOLOGY is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

Impacts on technology will be limited, likely focused primarily on additional web-based marketing tools such as informational sites and “store-front” sites to facilitate ordering. Some inventory management tools may also be required.

12. FACILITIES: Indicate how FACILITIES would be affected by the initiative. If FACILITIES is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 500 characters or less)

The impact on facilities will likely be significant. If the marketing initiatives are successful, the Dairy Plant will require equipment upgrades and an expanded footprint. The Fruit and Vegetable Laboratory space adjacent to the Dairy Plant offers a straightforward approach for expanding the Plant’s footprint allowing for additional ice cream and cheese manufacturing capacity and inventory storage. There is a high likelihood that industry partners can be recruited to offer financial and in-kind support for these upgrades. In fact, CAFES fund development plans include Pilot Plant upgrades and maintenance as one of the priority items.

Another potential facility impact would be at the University Center. One possible route for expanded marketing on campus would be a significant retail presence of the Dairy Plant (Falcon Foods) in the University Center. From the standpoint of maximum exposure to the primary clientele (students) that seems a very sensible goal. This of course, may require moderate to very significant re-prioritization of space at UC.
13. FINANCE: Indicate how FINANCE would be affected by the initiative. If FINANCE is not affected by the initiative, please describe why not. (limited to 1000 characters or less)

This initiative will require modest short-term financial resources. At very minimum, a 3-credit release time ($4500) for purposes of course development is requested. In addition, ongoing commitment for support personnel (0.5 LTE at $10,500) for the Dairy Plant to handle advertising, orders, sales tracking and inventory duties is requested. Any added manufacturing activity will be handled through increased utilization of student labor. Work study students are employed to the greatest degree possible, but in order to fully engage all interested students, additional student assistance monies will likely be needed longer term. To some extent, that need may be met through added sales revenue.

Dairy Plant upgrades will require funding as well. A substantial portion of that may come from industry supporters, but UWRF may be required to match those funds. Long-term sales increases and concomitant net revenue increases should allow for eventual recapture of those expenditures and ultimately net revenue generation.