PES Horticulture Agronomy Outdoor Teaching Lab

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:
  - College Deans: Brad Caskey, Dale Gallenberg, Glenn Potts, and Larry Solberg
  - Chancellor, Dean Van Galen
  - Provost, Fernando Delgado
  - Associate Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs, Gregg Heinselman
  - Assistant Chancellor-Business and Finance, Elizabeth Frueh
  - Executive Director-Administrative Services, Michael Stifter
  - Executive Director of University Advancement, Chris Mueller
  - 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)

Expand and renovate the Horticulture and Agronomy Outdoor Teaching Laboratory to enhance academic utilization, improve visual integration into the surroundings, and expand use by the UWRF/River Falls communities. Goals include north side expansion to enlarge the area; replace current fence with a decorative fence and entry gate; install a covered paver patio with tables and benches to accommodate 24-30 students; add appropriate signage inside the plots; and add plants for educational use and enhancement of the visual integration of the space into the natural surroundings.

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

College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science

3. Which strategic goal does this initiative support?

Distinctive Academic Excellence (through increased opportunities for Horticulture and Crops/Soils students) and Innovation and Partnerships (through increased connection with the River Falls community and industry partners helping facilitate and fund the proposed changes).

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

The Horticulture and Crops/Soils (Agronomy) majors within CAFES bring unique academic programming to UWRF largely unique within the UW System. These programs are nationally recognized and have strong ties to economically significant and vibrant Horticulture and Agronomy industries in the region. The Horticulture and Agronomy Outdoor Teaching Laboratory is a critical teaching and research facility supporting these academic programs. Some space is allocated for the support of faculty research including the national cooperative Earth Kind Rose Trials and plant breeding germplasm repository.
Next spring the UWRF student organization SALSA will install a student vegetable garden within the plots. The live plant specimens and examples of cultural strategies for producing a wide range of edible and non-edible plants provide hands-on learning opportunities for numerous plant science classes. Adding tables with seating would enhance the ability to hold additional teaching activities directly in the area and provide students a place to study between classes while having access to the plant materials. The area would also be more open to the general public.

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)

This builds off an earlier UWRF initiative promoting Nature Connected Education. Providing seating outside of the fence and available for public use and visually enhancing the area with decorative fencing would encourage students to study, meet and/or rest in a nature enhanced environment. Decorative gates would be open during posted hours to allow the public to walk through the teaching plots and learn more about the plants that provide their food, benefit their mental health, and enhance their environment. Informative and interpretive signage would support self-directed learning. Master Gardener groups and others in the public sector would have a potential place for outdoor meetings and educational programming. The seating would be a resting point as students and guests walk from the main campus to the Hunt Arena. Beyond the Horticulture and Agronomic programs, the campus and community would also benefit from the inviting, functional and educational outdoor learning space. Limited expansion of the current area would provide additional opportunities for education and research otherwise limited by decreasing Campus Lab Farm space near Ramer Field.

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

The use of the space by classes and the general campus community could be monitored to track increased use of the outdoor facility. Longer term measures would include increased program enrollments and engagement of alumni and other donors with the university.

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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>YES/NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Facilities  YES
Finance  YES
Other  NA

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)

This project would improve the visual landscape for the enhanced utilization of the space by a broader community while strengthening a commitment to the academic use and environmental integrity of the natural surroundings.

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)

Outdoor seating areas bring people closer to nature. Nature has a natural calming and balancing effect on humans. Individuals may want to sit in this area not only for the calming effect but also for the familiarity with the plants around them. The manner in which the space is designed and connected to nature will create a sense of place and a sense of belonging.

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 project primarily affects facilities. Faculty and staff time will be needed to develop a detailed plan and implement the project.

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)

This project is an enhancement to infrastructure other than technology.

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 primary goal of this project is to upgrade and enhance facilities infrastructure of the Horticulture and Agronomy Outdoor Teaching Laboratory for the enhanced academic and public use of the site. A fence is still required to prevent wildlife, especially deer, from destroying the plant material grown for classes and within the research plots. Fencing also limits potential vandalism, especially at night. The decorative gate would be open during
posted daylight hours to allow for the campus and community to enter and engage in self-directed learning through reading the signs.

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)

The cost of the project is estimated at $100,000. There is a possibility of donations and in-kind contributions of plants and materials to supplement the project which could be implemented over a two year period or perhaps longer depending on funding availability.

Construction details and how much of the work is done “in-house” as opposed to external contractors will significantly impact the actual cost of the project. This includes: type of structure and what material used as the cover for the patio; specific tables and seating selected; rock and paver selection; number of trees, shrubs, vines and perennials used in the final design; type of decorative fencing used; type of decorative gate used; land-preparation costs; and type of signage used.