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)
It is to support, expand and develop dynamic, high-quality nature-connected education for all ages and multiple disciplines throughout the university and community by creating a nature exploration area along the South Forks tributary from South Forks Suites to the old Sixth Street bridge.

(Accepted as part of a connecting to nature initiative in Spring, 2011. The preschool nature area part of the project received funding, but no budget was available for this second part of the initiative. A more specific vision has now been developed and some planning funding consideration is requested.)

2. Person, administrative department, or college proposing the initiative:
College of Education and Professional Studies in collaboration with Molly Gerrish and Dr. Gay Ward, Teacher Education.

3. Which strategic goal does this initiative support?
Distinctive Academic Excellence and Innovations and Partnerships

4. Describe how the initiative supports the goal(s). (limited to 1000 characters or less)
Distinctive Academic Excellence. Developing nature exploration areas on campus will support the University’s goal to “...enhance and build distinctive academic programs that support a community of diverse, talented, and highly-engaged learners and scholars.” Devoted to nature exploration and activities, these areas would be outdoor laboratories that would expand and enhance learning of many disciplines by promoting critical and creative thinking to “…foster an inclusive, challenging, learner-centered environment that supports academic excellence.”
Innovations and Partnerships. This project will enhance collaboration in teaching and research between departments and colleges including, but not limited to, teacher education, the arts – drama, fine arts and music, history, health and human performance and outdoor education, geology, biology, horticulture and environmental studies. We would hope that the location of this natural exploration area on campus would help to make this a focus of collaborative projects. This outdoor exploration area can also be used for demonstration to district educators from preschool through high school, as well as being a community resource for all ages.
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)

These would be nature exploration areas for all ages and invite the application of science as outdoor laboratories for horticulture, biology and ecology. In addition this projected designated nature area will provide an opportunity for the connection of nature to fine arts, music, story telling, movement and drama, and demonstrate to future teachers how nature is connected to all disciplines. Finally, this also provides an opportunity for local history students to be involved in researching and presenting details of historic landmarks such as former brickworks, farm, mill in the area.

Current multidisciplinary committee: Gay Ward and Molly Gerrish, Teacher Education; David Zlesak, Horticulture; Kurt Leichtle, History; John Wheeler, biology; Paul Shirilla and Deb Allyn, HHP; Karla Zhe and Eoin Breadon, Arts; Sue Goode, community member and liaison to Kinnickinnic land trust committee, Kelly Cain; Consultant (Sustainability); Dale Braun, Consultant; and Sandra Scott-Duex, Residence Life. Efforts are being made to add representatives of other relevant disciplines (e.g. geology and geography as well as community representatives).

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


b. Upper South Forks tributary walk with Dale Braun and multidisciplinary faculty occurred on Sept 28, 2012; those in attendance included Molly Gerrish and Gay Ward, Teacher Ed; Eoin Braedon, Arts; Deb Allyn, HHP; and David Zlesak, Horticulture.

c. Planning workshop on Nov 12, 2012 included landscape architect consultants with experience on similar projects, including representatives of multiple disciplines on campus including horticulture, biology, HHP, Art, Dance, and History (see committee composition above).

d. During Spring 2013 & 2013-2014, designated course projects that contribute to the design and development of the South Forks tributary nature exploration area will be completed. Projects will be in science, arts, and education classes (among others).

e. Seek approval by DNR (Timeline depends on timing of this approval).

f. Apply for grant funding, investigate DNR project possibilities and seek meeting with Wisconsin Environmental Education Board.

g. During Summer 2014, initial site preparation and development will be completed so areas are ready for use as an outdoor classroom and for community education.

h. During 2014-2015, collection of data on use of designated spaces will be completed.

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: No
Facilities: No
7. **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 initiative will involve faculty, students and community members in the planning, implementation and maintenance of these areas through varying university and outreach course projects and clubs (bio-club, horticulture club, eco-club, EYE, etc.). Opportunities for research and exploration will contribute to sustaining dynamic classrooms. It is understood that a system will have to be in place so that faculty are trained to guide their student organizations in maintaining aspects of the project and ensure the continuance despite changes in student membership.

8. **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)

Developing this area will promote inclusivity by providing opportunity for dialog between professionals in multiple disciplines. Also, future teachers will learn that the natural environment is an inclusive environment. Use of these sites will be appropriate for all ages, being used to promote knowledge and understanding of native culture and horticulture. The nature areas will bring to light the ecological perspective, emphasizing collaboration and cooperation. They will be an inclusive classroom for people of all abilities, learning styles and backgrounds.

9. **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)

By involving students in the planning and design, as well as implementation and maintenance of the areas through varying university course projects and clubs (bio-club, horticulture club, eco-club, EYE, etc.), it is anticipated that labor costs for this project will be greatly reduced and no additional personnel will be required in the long term. Many aspects will be dynamic, providing for continual change and input from future faculty, students and community members.

10. **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)

No additional technology will be required; technology will be used for research data bases. Actual interactive activities along nature trail will not be technology driven.

11. **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)

Facilities will be affected in that maintenance will be required for what will be a university designated space. We have already involved Facilities in preliminary discussions. Every effort will be made to involve university groups in assisting in a regular committed way to the maintenance of the area and working in partnership with facilities to train relevant faculty who are coordinating groups. Facilities input will be sought as materials for pathways, lighting and other safety measures are discussed.
12. 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 project cost for the South Fork Tributary nature walk area could be in excess of $1,000,000, but total amount would be offset by labor contributions of student/community groups, grants and participation in DNR waterway projects (pending university approval). Currently, we are seeking funding of $50,000 to support initial planning. The accompanying document includes the estimated cost ($38,000) for planning the development of the nature exploration area and obtaining DNR permits for project implementation. There would be additional expenses associated for travel and supplies. The landscape architects would oversee development of the trail system, shoreline enhancements, outdoor classrooms/performance areas and vegetation enhancement zones. Some examples of specific nature activities noted in discussion have been water entry areas, art platform, dance platform, structure for natural weaving, construction, flora and fauna identification signage, art sculptures, and history marker signs. Considerations: amount offset by use of student group labor.