While the concept of “distinction” seems clear and approachable to many, it is often vague in higher education. The pursuit of true distinction requires strong fundamental building blocks. Among them are a history of achievement that provides a solid base from which to rise; a strategic plan towards our destination that is truly focused, aspirational and purposeful; the discipline and resolve—avoiding the temptation to be “all things to all people”—needed to reach our goals; and the passion, energy, and investment of many who share our vision.

With an unwavering commitment to teaching, mentoring, and engaging students, UW-River Falls is forging a path that will lead to distinction as a public university. We will remain student-focused while aspiring to a level of excellence that will set us apart from peer institutions.
This campaign, Rising to Distinction, is our public commitment to boldly define the university’s uniqueness. The journey begins with an unprecedented UWRF scholarship program and a signature campus facility. These are the two initiatives that will inspire our strategies and guide us on our path to distinction:

- **Falcon Scholars** is a four-year scholarship program for select freshman. The program addresses a university objective of increasing student retention and success, especially for those with financial need. Falcon Scholars is supported through a unique donor and student partnership.

- **The Falcon Center** puts strong bodies on par with strong minds. This new facility will replace the Karges Athletic Center, built in 1959, with modern, academically focused space that also enhances community and regional engagement.

Together, these projects create a transformative moment for UW-River Falls and both are catalysts to an even bolder future. When immediate efforts to launch Falcon Scholars and to fund the Falcon Center are successful, we will be positioned to vigorously pursue the university’s new strategic goals: attaining distinctive academic excellence; promoting global education and engagement; and fostering innovation and partnerships. In our pursuit, we are confident that we will redefine distinction on this campus, thanks to the solid building blocks from which we rise.

**Our track record of achievement is strong.**

- Our long-standing focus on undergraduate research is evident in our McNair and Summer Scholars programs, as well as typically having the largest delegation of students traveling to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

- Intense support for study abroad is another part of our solid foundation. Currently ranked at the top of the UW System (second only to UW-Stevens Point), UW-River Falls has enabled more than 3,500 students, faculty and staff to participate in study abroad opportunities in more than 30 countries, including through the Wisconsin in Scotland program at Dalkeith House near Edinburgh, Scotland. Building on that successful model, UW-River Falls is opening a second residential international program in Hangzhou, China in 2012.

- Evidence of our academic program strength includes: the College of Business and Economics’ AACSB accreditation—one of only three in the Twin Cities metro area; our formidable science programs—UWRF consistently ranks in the top 5-10% for physics majors; and the continued excellence of our historically celebrated programs in agriculture and elementary education.

- Staying true to our mission to help prepare students to be productive, creative, ethical, engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective is a huge achievement and one never taken for granted. Personal attention to students’
learning needs results from dedicated faculty in our small classes.

Even today we continue to provide opportunities to first generation students – approximately 46% of our current students are the first in their family to attend college.

Our 2012 – 2017 strategic plan, Pathway to Distinction, is truly focused, aspirational and purposeful.

• Through Pathway to Distinction the university has collectively committed to pursuing three main priorities: Distinctive Academic Excellence, Global Education and Engagement, and Innovation and Partnerships, while identifying a key set of “foundational elements”, which focus on: facilities, finance, human capital, inclusiveness, sustainability, and technology.

Discipline and resolve keep us grounded.

• Unlike many public and private universities which have experienced mission creep while trying to be “all things to all people”, the UW-River Falls faculty, staff, and administration have developed the wisdom and determination needed to distinguish ourselves from amongst our peer institutions. With a combination of limited resources and a pragmatic attitude, UW-River Falls understands the need to highlight its strengths in order to help define its future.

Many share our passion, energy, and willingness to invest in the vision.

• UW-River Falls has always worked in close concert with, and on behalf of, those who matter most to us—our students, their parents, our faculty and staff, alumni, and our regional neighbors. As we move forward, we will continue to act boldly in this sense.

Our rise from this foundation to new heights, however, will not be swift or even possible... without you. Your voice, your connections to like-spirited alumni and friends, and your private gift investments in our pathway to distinction make possible the exciting journey that lies ahead for this university. Let’s do something together that sets the stage for lives of meaning, lives of value, lives of distinction.

Dean Van Galen
Chancellor

William Boehm, ’70
Campaign Chair
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