



CHAPTER 9

“It is our responsibility, and it is our time to instill our passion for education in others. Our reach has to extend across Wyoming and beyond, to our public schools, to our community colleges, to our businesses, to our towns and cities, and most of all, to our children.”

—Tom Buchanan, *President of the University of Wyoming*

The University’s Commitment to Lifelong Learning

THE UNIVERSITY’S COMMITMENT TO ITS CONSTITUENCIES

(Core Components 1a, 4a, 5b)

As the state leader in higher education, the university provides Wyoming residents with a diverse array of opportunities in education, professional development, and connections to the arts and cultural history of Wyoming. (1a) To achieve its goals in human and community development in these areas, the university works closely with the governor, state legislators, and state agencies that have similar goals on behalf of their constituencies. (5b) This area of the self-study has proven to be the most challenging to conduct for several reasons. First, it has been difficult to develop an inventory or catalog of the large number of diverse informal and formal learning opportunities offered by university units. Second, because of the diversity of partnerships and collaborations represented by these opportunities, a rigorous evaluation of their success has been difficult.

This chapter begins with a discussion of continuing education opportunities for university employees. The bulk of the chapter discusses the university’s significant outreach programs in three categories that reflect the core of the university’s mission: library services, cooperative extension services, and programs related to the university’s areas of distinction. For both internal and external constituents engaged in enrichment, development, and continuing education, the university works toward quality, consistency, and competency in its offerings. (4a)

UNIVERSITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING

(Core Components 1c, 2b, 4a)

University staff and faculty members have a variety of opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and to acquire new expertise. (4a) The university encourages

employees to take classes of interest while in their current positions. Employees also have opportunities to pursue a degree. In 2008, the university expanded its tuition waiver program for all benefitted personnel. The number of credit hours that a staff member may take increased from three to six credit hours per semester. Staff members can take classes during work hours with pay. In fall 2009, 219 employees took advantage of this opportunity, representing a 4 percent increase over faculty and staff enrollments for fall 2008. (2b)

Personal and professional development classes are offered through such offices as the Department of Human Resources, the Outreach School, and Cooperative Extension Service. (4a) The Department of Human Resources offers classes in leadership development, and the Division of Information Technology offers an extensive program of classes on software applications providing an important resource for the university community seeking to advance in specialized areas of professional skills development.

Like Faculty Senate and ASUW, Staff Senate represents an opportunity for staff members to engage in university governance and leadership development. (1c) Senate members work with the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students in the development and advancement of university policies and procedures. The senate encourages communication among all university units, advocates for staff development, and addresses staff concerns in a formal democratic setting. Past senators have commented that Staff Senate allowed them to expand their leadership skills and to broaden their perspectives on the university. Staff Senate has had a direct impact on important university decisions, including the 2009 budget reductions described in Chapter 10. It also tackles such issues as salary policy, university regulations, budget planning, and capital improvements, providing needed input to the university's governance system. (4a)

OUTREACH IN SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S CORE MISSION

(Core Components 1a, 1b, 5b)

The University of Wyoming takes a leadership role within the state in providing learning opportunities for the citizens of Wyoming. First and foremost, the university adheres to its responsibilities as a land-grant institution. As such, it has a comprehensive set of Cooperative Extension Services available throughout Wyoming, funded in partnership with counties and the federal government. (1b) In addition, the university provides a wide array of opportunities aimed at developing personal and professional interests. (1a) Some of these outreach activities are general in nature such as access to the university library system while others are specific to more targeted audiences. (5b) This section describes many of the activities provided throughout the state. However, it is important to note that these descriptions do not exhaust the scope of the university's outreach efforts.

Statewide access to the university's library

(Core Components 5b, 5c)

In facilitating the university's commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, every person in the state has access to the university's library resources, including books, e-journals, article databases, audiovisual materials, and reference or research assistance. Faculty, staff, and students have free access to all library resources, regardless of format. University affiliated patrons can access licensed databases from off-campus via a proxy server. This is particularly beneficial to graduate students and researchers who work electronically. Wyoming residents also have borrowing privileges once they obtain a library card free of charge. (5b) The general public can use licensed electronic resources at the libraries' public access computer workstations. Across the state, residents have access to a large selection of databases in their local public libraries through the Wyoming Libraries Database (WYLD) system, including some research databases paid for by the university for statewide access. (5c)

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The university's land-grant mission and the Cooperative Extension Service

(Core Components 1c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d)

The university partially fulfills its mission as a land-grant university by way of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). Through Cooperative Extension Service agreements with 26 county offices, 12 outreach locations throughout the state including the Wind River Indian Reservation, and the seven community colleges, every county in the state has a local university representative who works with local communities. (1c) This distribution allows the university to have a prominent presence across the state. CES educational programs are focused on five major initiatives: 1) profitable and sustainable agriculture systems, 2) sustainable management of rangeland resources, 3) 4-H and youth development, 4) nutrition and food safety, and 5) community development and education. (5b, 5d) Some of the CES programs related to these initiatives are described below.

- Efforts to address issues among small-acreage owners have resulted in sustaining the land's productive qualities, particularly in subdivisions, while minimizing impacts to surrounding lands and wildlife. A publication entitled *Barnyards and Backyards* addresses small-acreage issues associated with community growth in Wyoming. In 2008, 99,200 copies of this publication were distributed as inserts in 24 Wyoming newspapers. (5a)
- In 2008, the 4-H program included nearly 7,000 youth, ranging in age from 9 to 19 years old, and included more than 3,000 4-H leaders.
- The Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) administered under the CES umbrella has helped thousands of Wyoming families with limited resources through education and lifelong learning. During the 2007 grant year, 19,481 adults participated in one-time lessons with 70 percent reporting a change in behavior. On average,

CNP clients saved \$44 per month on food. In 2008, approximately 1,200 individuals enrolled in a minimum five-week educational series, resulting in 97 percent reporting some form of positive behavior change.

- The Snowy Range Nonprofit Institute provides low-cost training in nonprofit organization management, an important resource for the more than 4,000 nonprofits operating in the state, many with staff and budgetary constraints.

The Cooperative Extension Service also includes the Agricultural Experiment Station, which maintains four research and education centers in Powell, Sheridan, Goshen County, and Laramie. Scientists at the centers conduct agricultural research in laboratories as well as field research on private farms and ranches. University educators provide research-based programs and information, and they serve on advisory boards offering expert advice and recommendations on future research and development needs. (5a)

The Engagement Database, developed by the CES, is designed to be an internal tool for university employees to utilize when addressing client requests. Faculty and staff are invited to join the searchable database and list areas of expertise so that inquiries to the university can be forwarded to the appropriate expert. It is hoped that this comprehensive database will help everyone at the university to connect citizens' needs with appropriate university resources. (5a, 5c)

The Cooperative Extension Service actively engages stakeholders in assessing needs and identifying issues of importance to the state. Every five to seven years, the university conducts a statewide CES needs assessment to gain input from Wyoming's residents. Initiative teams prioritize the information as well as identify emerging issues so programs remain relevant, current, and timely. The CES also receives feedback through annual county or area advisory council meetings, constituent surveys (both written and electronic), program evaluations, and county-based planning and steering committees. With these methods, CES strives to develop a high level of responsiveness to the constituencies that depend on its services. (5c)

Areas of distinction

Many of the university's outreach activities support one or more of the areas of distinction defined in its planning documents. The following sections contain highlights from the university's wide array of outreach activities.

Critical areas of science and technology

(Core Components 1b, 5b, 5d)

The areas of science and technology encompass a broad umbrella that includes some of the university's longest-standing areas of expertise. In addition to the expertise of several departments in this area, many units provide education, training and information, and technology transfer activities to support the adoption and use of science and technology information. (1b) This knowledge is utilized by a wide range of users in academia, government, business, and the general public. In addition, experts in these units disseminate information on

new and developing technology, respond to direct requests, provide reference materials and online resources, and conduct workshops throughout Wyoming. (5d)

Education and information on enhanced oil recovery is provided by the Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute. The Wyoming Geographic Information Science Center provides education, training, and information and technology transfer to support local community needs, as well as support for the analysis of statewide land use and other resource issues. The goal of the Wyoming Water Resources Data System is to educate and inform the citizens of Wyoming on matters related to water, climate, and drought. The Wyoming Technology Transfer/Local Technical Assistance Program assists local Wyoming agencies and individuals with technical issues related to Wyoming's transportation infrastructure. (5b)

A recent program that reaches hundreds of middle school and high school students and communities is the university's Science Posse, which in 2005 received \$4.3 million in federal grant money over five years for implementation. Graduate students coordinate with teachers across the state to participate in classroom discussions and lead workshops on their science and research endeavors. This opportunity brings state-of-the-art science to young students, and the graduate students gain additional hands-on teaching experience and leadership skills in reaching many of the state's rural school districts. Twenty-one schools participate in this program, with more than 180 events that reach nearly 4,000 students statewide. (5d)

It is worth mentioning again the High Plains Gasification Advanced Technology Center, to be constructed east of Cheyenne. This facility will enable researchers from the university and General Electric to develop advanced technologies for the gasification of Wyoming coal—a process that is critical to the future viability of coal-based energy in a carbon-constrained society.

Cultural assets, arts, and humanities

(Core Components 1b, 2b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d)

The university is Wyoming's most prominent hub for the fine and performing arts and creative endeavors in the humanities. With award-winning academic programs in the visual and performing arts, a new MFA degree program in creative writing, an art museum of increasing national prominence, and outstanding archives, the university has an impressive array of assets upon which to build. (1b)

The university has a reputation for offering high-quality performances that are comparable to other larger institutions in the nation. To bring these performances to a statewide audience, the university has created a variety of outreach programs that reached 6,375 people in 2008 in communities distant from the Laramie campus. The university's cultural programs and fine arts outreach offices make it possible for guest artists, faculty, and students to tour in Wyoming, providing an important connection to the university through the presentation of dance, theatre, and musical performances. These guest artists often provide master classes for university students and on occasion across the state. (5b) In addition, every spring the university's symphony orchestra completes a week-long tour in Wyoming, performing in schools and community centers in all corners of the state.

The university also creates opportunities for Wyoming and regional students and teachers to participate in intensive cultural study on campus. Through Fine Arts Outreach, students and teachers connect with world-renowned artists and university faculty. They participate in workshops, mentorship programs, master classes, and performances through such programs as the Vocal Jazz Workshop, the Festival of Strings, the Festival of Winds, and the Festival of Voices. Every summer, the Department of Music hosts the popular Music Camp for middle school and high school musicians. (5a) The Annual Snowy Range Dance Festival, hosted by the Department of Theatre and Dance each summer, offers intensive study with professional dance faculty and performers for 80 to 100 dance students and teachers from around the mountain west. In addition to ballet, modern, jazz, and tap technique classes at various levels, festival activities include classes with guest faculty, student showcase performances, guest faculty lectures, discussion groups, and special performances and concerts for the public.

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The Art Museum, recently re-accredited by the American Association of Museums, is located in the Centennial Complex on the Laramie campus. It is known throughout the region for exhibiting high-caliber visual art by national, regional, and international artists. The museum’s education program has become a model for responding to the needs of teachers, students, and communities through a variety of in-house and outreach activities that include the Ann Simpson Artmobile and traveling exhibits. In 2007-2008, 10,054 people participated in Art Museum educational activities. (5c, 5d) The success of these programs in a time when the national trend has been a decrease in K-12 school participation in museum offerings is attributable to the addition of a master teacher, who bridges the gap between museum and schools, the shift to an enquiry model of teaching and learning, and ongoing assessment that has been responsive to the needs of the university’s constituencies. On the other end of this education spectrum, the Art Museum implemented an internship program for graduate students and advanced undergraduates to encourage museum studies options for business and other related fields.

The willingness of the Art Museum to take a leadership role for the region often results in innovative programming not usually associated with rural states and communities. In 2008, the Art Museum expanded its exhibition programming beyond the gallery walls with *Sculpture: A Wyoming Invitational*. This exhibition of large scale sculpture included 18 major works by artists of international, national, and regional reputation installed on campus and at locations around Laramie. The first major exhibition of contemporary public art in Wyoming, *A Wyoming Invitational* served as the backdrop for a Public Art Symposium in spring 2009, where artists, scholars, city and county administrators, facilities managers, legislators, faculty, staff, students, and members of the public gathered to consider the role of public art in communities. (5b)

The Wyoming Humanities Council serves the state from its location on the main campus in Laramie. The Wyoming Humanities Council engages the university and statewide communities through public forums, reading and film groups, teacher institutes, exhibits,

grants projects, and other programming. By providing housing for the council, the university enables partnerships that support the understanding, appreciation, and cultivation of the humanities in Wyoming. Saturday University, initiated in 2009 in Jackson, Wyoming, is jointly sponsored by the Wyoming Humanities Council, the University of Wyoming, the University of Wyoming Foundation, the Teton County Library, and numerous Teton County businesses. In the inaugural session, three university faculty delivered classes to over 65 attendees. Participants who attended all three terms were eligible to receive college credit from Central Wyoming College.

The university also reaches out to the state and its rural communities through Wyoming Public Media (WPM). Administered by the Outreach School, WPM is the university's administrative umbrella for its several public radio and Internet networks and services. Wyoming Public Radio is the state's only National Public Radio member. It currently has a weekly listenership of nearly 60,000. WPM coverage of the state increased during the past decade, now reaching approximately 80 to 85 percent of the state's population through 15 stations and seven translators. Major federal grants and Wyoming legislative support enabled WPM to convert 14 of its stations to digital broadcasting. (2b) Wyoming Public Media's annual budget of \$2.1 million is nearly 80 percent self-funded, primarily through private donations by approximately 5,600 listeners and 200 Wyoming businesses. WPM operates a second statewide public radio network, "Classical Wyoming," a 24/7 quality classical music service with hourly newscasts from the BBC and statewide Wyoming news. WPM has acquired another new broadcast license for KUWL-FM in Laramie. Its service is "Jazz Wyoming," which offers full-time 24/7 jazz programming.

Environment and natural resources

(Core Components 1b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d)

The university's expertise and reputation in environment and natural resources is continuing to gain prominence. An emerging strong connection between the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources and the School of Energy Resources is essential in the future management of natural resources in Wyoming and the region. (1b) This partnership can help advance effective decision-making on environmental and natural resource issues through research, policy analysis, education, process support, and outreach. (5b)

Several units provide technical information and database resources. For example, the well known Wyoming Open Space Initiative, through the university's Ruckelshaus Institute for Environment and Natural Resources, strives to improve the effectiveness of Wyoming citizens in maintaining the state's open spaces through research, information, education, and decision-making assistance. Open space issues that may be considered by this interdisciplinary group include agricultural sustainability, community planning and development, recreation and tourism, wildlife, and other related cultural, economic and environmental issues of importance to Wyoming. Units also provide access to university resources on issues such as reclamation and restoration, ecology of rare plants, and geography and earth sciences. (5c)

The University of Wyoming-National Park Service Research Center is a cooperative effort with the National Park Service. Headquartered on the main campus in Laramie, the research center was established to foster research in national parks in the Rocky Mountain region. In addition, the center operates a field research station at the AMK Ranch in Grand Teton National Park. Each year, this facility attracts scientists and students from around the world to study aspects of the Greater Yellowstone Area. (5d)

The university also provides access to the study of utilizing natural resources through several diagnostic clinics and laboratories, such as the Soil Testing Laboratory, the Arthropod Diagnostic Service, the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and the State Seed Analysis Lab in Powell. (5a) The Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory is researching disease agents in livestock, integrated methods of parasite control for improved livestock production, animal disease investigations and diagnostic techniques, and food and water safety through discovery and control of natural and induced toxins and agents.

“As a signatory of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, the university is showing its commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.”

The university is taking national leadership in addressing climate change and pursuing sustainable practices. As a signatory of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, the university is showing its commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. In addition, the university has formed the Campus Sustainability Committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students who serve in an advisory capacity to all departments, colleges, and other entities in an effort to advance environmental and economic sustainability at the university. The committee is working on such initiatives as implementation of green building practices, reduction in energy consumption, waste reduction and increased recycling, water conservation, expanded xeriscape landscaping, and education of the university community regarding sustainability objectives. These initiatives augment the many supply-side research initiatives associated with sustainability, such as the Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute, research into cleaner coal technologies, wind energy research, and a carbon sequestration field project. (5c)

The university houses a number of environmental and natural resource museums, collections, and research centers for scholarly and public use. (5b, 5c, 5d) The Rocky Mountain Herbarium contains the largest collection of Rocky Mountain plants and fungi in existence, as well as a good representation of the floras of other parts of the northern hemisphere. The Louis O. and Terua P. Williams Conservatory facilitates teaching and research needs and assists numerous visitors seeking information and advice on plants for their homes and gardens. The conservatory also offers tours for school children, university students, clubs, and classes. The Insect Museum is the only research collection of insects in the state of Wyoming. The museum allows for visitor use of the collections, loans of specimens, and contributions to faculty and student research projects. Additionally, it contributes to the community by providing educational opportunities for youth. The University of Wyoming Planetarium offers astronomy displays for community groups and for K-12 and college classes. The Geology Museum continues to maintain public hours for research and viewing of the collections while it undertakes an in-depth assessment and planning process to envision a new future after the recent budget cuts (see Chapter 10).

The university sponsors numerous summer institutes held in Laramie for high school students and teachers that combine intellectual inquiry with recreation and the opportunity to meet people from across Wyoming. These institutes keep students and teachers engaged in current issues affecting Wyoming communities. In addition, the university has developed course transfer agreements with the Teton Science School and a credit transfer agreement with the Wyoming-based National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), one of the world's leading innovators in outdoor education. (5c)

History and culture of the Rocky Mountain region

(Core Components 1b, 5b, 5d)

Western history and cultural resources abound in Wyoming, with the university serving as the conduit in education related to the Rocky Mountain West. The American Heritage Center (AHC), located in the Centennial Complex, is the university's repository for archives, rare books, and manuscripts. AHC collections support a wide range of research and teaching activities in the humanities, sciences, arts, business, and education. More than 120,000 boxes of various collections stored in the AHC are accessible to residents. Areas of specialty include Wyoming and the American West, the mining and petroleum industries, U.S. politics and world affairs, environment and natural resources, journalism, transportation, the history of books, and 20th century entertainment such as popular music, radio, television, and film. The AHC recently completed a systematic review and strategic deaccessioning project to focus its collections and to permit more effective cataloging and curatorial practices. (1b)

The AHC's mission is to make all the archival material a visible, vital, and accessible resource for students, scholars, and the public. In 2008, scholars and other researchers from 48 states and 21 nations used the AHC's collections. The AHC also creates a variety of education and outreach programs, including a speaker's bureau, History Day, traveling exhibits, participation in the Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education, and summer teacher institutes. The AHC has received national coverage through documentaries featured on PBS's American Experience and the History Channel, and the director is chairing the national archivists' organization. (5d)

The University of Wyoming Archaeological Repository is one of two federally recognized repositories in the state. In addition the Anthropology Museum exhibits highlighting Wyoming's archaeology have been completely upgraded as part of the new anthropology building. (5b)

Professions critical to the state and region

(Core Components 4a, 5b, 5c)

The university offers a variety of programs for professionals in the state and region, many of whom require continuing education for their careers. Attorneys, certified public accountants, medical professionals, and teachers fall into this category of learners who require

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access to quality lifelong educational resources. (4a) Opportunities at the university range from programs that qualify participants for professional development licensure credit to forums and conferences geared toward specific industries operating in the state. There are certificate programs in the areas of geographic information systems, nursing, professional teaching standards, continuing education, and real estate.

The state's teachers and attorneys especially rely on university programs for continuing education and professional development. The College of Education and other colleges and departments provide multiple teacher training opportunities ranging from summer institutes to weekend workshops. Educators are able to advance their teaching skills and pay scales by taking for-credit classes. These include programs in mathematics, music, and engineering; workshops and institutes presented by the Art Museum, Fine Arts Outreach, and the art department; and institutes sponsored jointly by the American Heritage Center and the Wyoming Humanities Council. The College of Law offers legal education classes throughout the year that are central for the state's attorneys to continue their licenses. These law classes, the majority of which are free, average 200 participants a year. In addition, the college offers legal assistance in criminal and civil cases through the Wyoming Prosecution Assistance Program, providing services to Wyoming county offices, prosecuting attorneys, the Wyoming Attorney General, and the United States Attorney for the District of Wyoming.

Leadership Wyoming, jointly sponsored by the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Heritage Foundation, provides opportunities each year for a diverse group of 40 Wyoming professionals to participate in a nine-month educational experience. Training sessions provide practical, nonpartisan, hands-on understanding of a broad spectrum of public policy issues and help people develop an appreciation for trusteeship, with lasting commitments to civic involvement at the state and local level. After nearly a decade, Leadership Wyoming has created a cohesive community of influential citizens from virtually all professions and all major communities.

The university has a special role and responsibility in providing social science data and policy analysis. Data collection through the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center allows students and researchers to evaluate local, state, national, and international policies as well as their impact on Wyoming's quality of life. Through the generous support of the Simpson family, the university has sponsored numerous nationally and internationally known speakers such as James Baker, Sandra Day O'Connor, Donald Kendall, Gerald Ford, and George H.W. Bush.

The Office of Research & Economic Development works with faculty, staff, and students in all seven colleges and the university's outreach programs to link research, technology transfer, and economic development efforts. In addition, several units and partners provide education, technical assistance, and networking for Wyoming businesses, entrepreneurs, inventors, business women, and the general public. (5c)

- Manufacturing Works is a catalyst for growth and development for manufacturing and technology enterprises in the immediate Rocky Mountain West.
- Wyoming Research Products Center (RPC) is a collaborative effort between the University of Wyoming research office and the Wyoming Business Council. The RPC assists Wyoming entrepreneurs or inventors across the state to help them identify, protect, and commercialize their intellectual property.
- The Wyoming Small Business Development Center entails partnerships among the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Wyoming Business Council, and the university. It works to strengthen Wyoming businesses and create economic growth by providing management assistance, educational programs, and helpful resources for Wyoming small businesses and entrepreneurs. The center has served between 2,259 and 3,669 total clients yearly since 2003. During a five-year period (FY 2004-FY 2008), it averaged 1,284 clients counseled, 1,499 clients trained, 147 workshops, 433 jobs created or retained, with a capital impact of nearly \$14 million.
- The Wyoming Technology Business Center (WTBC) is a not-for-profit business incubator that assists in the process of start-up and growing technology-oriented companies. The university supports a state-of-the-art data center at WTBC that provides robust internet connections and high-capacity, fully redundant broadband services to WTBC clients. The incubator's new 30,000 square foot facility, including 19,000 for client lease, was completed in 2006. Two of the nine on-site clients have since graduated as successful businesses, no longer in need of the support provided by the center. In addition, the WTBC co-sponsors a \$10,000 competition to stimulate student entrepreneurial projects with potential for development to market. Of the three student team award winners to date, at least one has expanded to a regionally successful enterprise. (5c)

In addition to supporting businesses and manufacturing activities in the state, the university is the leader in developing quality health care for residents. Health education, assistance, and service are provided in the areas of physical health, disability, nutrition education, drug information, speech and hearing, and telemedicine. (5b) The major units providing health care and education include the Family Medical Residency Programs in Casper and Cheyenne, the Wyoming INstitute for Disabilities (WIND), the Drug Information Center, the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic, the Center for Health and Education Studies, the Center for Rural Health Research and Education, and the new Wyoming Geriatric Education Center. These health initiatives range from providing direct service to individuals and families to providing training for professionals through conferences, workshops, and other classes. (5c)

“The university is also partnering with the governor, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations for Building the Wyoming We Want, a statewide initiative to address responsible growth in Wyoming in consideration of the state’s vast natural resources and cultural and historic landscapes.”

ASSESSING AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF CONSTITUENCIES (Core Components 5a, 5b, 5c)

The university prides itself on providing residents with a diverse array of opportunities in lifelong learning and professional development. Toward this end, the university works closely with state and local decision-makers to assess the needs of statewide constituencies. (5a)

In 2005, the Outreach School enlisted the university’s Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center to conduct a survey of Wyoming households on how well the university connects with the citizens through various university academic and non-academic programs, offerings, and services. Not surprisingly, sports and athletics were the university programs most widely recognized for connecting with state residents. The next most secure connection between the university and state residents was Wyoming Public Radio administered through the Outreach School. Survey respondents gave high ratings to several other services and programs as well. More than 95 percent responded that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with noncredit classes; 92 percent with academic events and programs for school children; 91 percent with cultural services for the general public; 89 percent with university health-related programs; 88 percent with off-campus classes; 84 percent with agricultural services; and 79 percent with the university’s use of media to communicate with state residents. (5a)

In 2009, the Outreach School initiated the Building Partnerships project to bring together Wyoming’s community colleges, members of state agencies, and university personnel engaged in lifelong learning education to discuss statewide needs and potential collaborations in noncredit and workforce education. Additional assessment of the state’s continuing education needs is being undertaken by the Wyoming governor’s office, which has made continuing education a priority. In 2009, a taskforce was assembled to collect information on academic and lifelong noncredit education. The university is also partnering with the governor, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations for Building the Wyoming We Want, a statewide initiative to address responsible growth in Wyoming in consideration of the state’s vast natural resources and cultural and historic landscapes. (5b)

Because distance learning technologies are so important in a geographically large state with a small population, the lack of consistent distance learning platforms has become an increasingly important issue for the university and for the state. Governor Freudenthal has appointed a small taskforce to examine and make recommendations regarding the various efforts taking place in Wyoming concerning distance education, video conferencing, and general Internet Protocol-based communications. The taskforce, with the help of two consulting firms, collected data on stakeholder perceptions of distance education and video conferencing in Wyoming. With the elimination of the Outreach School Division of Conferences and Continuing Education, which was one of the budget reduction measures, the university may have the opportunity to utilize distance learning technologies for reframing the Outreach School’s role in continuing education. (5c)

CONCLUSION AND KEY FINDINGS

The university as a whole, as well as individual colleges and entities, dedicate substantial resources in support of lifelong learning. The university is generally responsive to state-wide, community, and institutional concerns, especially in its areas of distinction. In addition to attracting state and regional populations to campus for its collections, museums, and programs, the university takes its offerings out to the state. One challenge for the university is being able to respond to the demands of Wyoming's citizens without straying from the university's core mission. Additionally, the following issues have been identified:

- **Although the university sponsors an impressive number of outreach activities through a wide variety of partnerships, many of these programs have not been rigorously assessed for their contributions to learning.** The university believes it is meeting many of the needs of the people of Wyoming and has information to verify this perception through various formal needs assessments. The university knows collectively less about the outcomes of many of these programs. While assessment of these diverse programs can be challenging, the university needs to expand the assessment dialogue to include outreach programs. (UP 3 Action Item 21)
 - **The technology and infrastructure for effective delivery of course offerings throughout the state and beyond is available to deliver these offerings; however, consistency in presentation, support, and delivery needs to be developed with involvement from all colleges and units.** Two gubernatorial taskforces are currently evaluating distance education and video teleconferencing infrastructure statewide. The outcomes from these studies will help the university assess the effectiveness and efficiency of technological advances that support lifelong learning environments to better plan for the future. (UP 3 Action Item 14)
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