

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
Excellence in Higher Education Endowment Report
From the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
1 OCTOBER 2007
[Pursuant to W.S. 21-16-1204]

To the Joint Appropriations and Joint Education Interim Committees

1. Background

Pursuant to Enrolled Act No. 54, Senate, Section 1 (c) (ii), the fifty-eighth Legislature of the State of Wyoming appropriated two million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$2,800,000) in one-time “jump-start” funds to be distributed to the University of Wyoming and expended exclusively for the purposes specified in W.S. 21-16-1202 (b). This one-time appropriation allowed the university to begin filling positions to be funded permanently using earnings from the excellence in higher education endowment. The endowment, authorized under W.S. 21-16-1202 (b), will allow the university to establish endowed faculty positions and to acquire instructional and resource materials, classroom equipment, and other resources necessary to support the work of endowed faculty members.

The statute imposes some constraints on the uses of the endowment earnings. Not less than 2/3 of the amounts must be used to expand university instruction and research in disciplines related to economic and social challenges facing Wyoming. Not less than four (4) endowed faculty positions are to be in the College of Education. The remaining endowed faculty members must have established reputations in other areas of distinction as identified in the university academic plan, including business, arts and humanities, mathematics, cultural studies, economics and law.

2. Summary of searches authorized and completed

Under W.S. 21-16-1204, UW must report annually on faculty positions partially or fully funded through the endowment program, including the name of each faculty member filling an endowed position, their education and experience, their research and instructional activities, and the benefits of their research and instruction.

The \$2.8 million “jump-start” appropriation became effective July 1, 2006. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs developed a planning budget for the allocation of positions to be filled with these funds during the 2007-2008 biennium, while the \$70M endowment account began to fill. The planning budget includes estimated salaries, employer-paid benefits, ongoing costs to support research and instructional activities of the faculty recruited into the positions, as well as one-time start up expenses essential to recruiting the best possible senior faculty. The planning budget recognizes that, at the end of the biennium, “jump-start” funds will no longer be available, and earnings generated by the higher education endowment account must be sufficient to pay on-going costs associated with filled faculty positions and to generate reserves to cover future increases in salary, benefit, and support costs. Uncertainties associated with future endowment earnings and payouts suggested the need for a fiscally cautious approach in allocating positions during the first year of the biennium. Greater financial certainty, together

with the opportunity to augment the state endowment with funding from private gifts, allowed for a greater number of search authorizations in the second year of the biennium.

Based on the planning budget, three searches were authorized with first-year “jump-start” funds: two in the College of Education and one in the College of Arts and Sciences Creative Writing MFA program. At the start of the second year of the biennium, as information became available about anticipated expendable income flowing to the university from the State-managed endowment account, the Vice President for Academic Affairs authorized seven additional positions for searches during the second year of the biennium.

All ten Wyoming Excellence Chairs allocated during the biennium are described below. Two of the three positions authorized for searches in the first year of the biennium have been filled, and eight searches are underway or authorized.

Education positions (three searches authorized; one completed to date)

Three of the ten positions currently allocated will reside in the College of Education with focuses on literacy, science education, and mathematics education. The individuals selected for these positions will develop and lead nationally recognized programs in these fields and are expected to be magnets for attracting the best and brightest junior faculty and students into these critical areas of teaching need in Wyoming. These positions — one of which was just recently authorized for a search — represent three of the four endowed faculty positions that ultimately must, by law, be in the College of Education.

- **Literacy.** Professor James F. Baumann joined the UW College of Education this fall, as the first Wyoming Excellence Chair in Literacy Education. A professor of language and literacy education most recently at the University of Georgia, Baumann earned a B.A. degree in psychology (1971) at the University of Notre Dame, and received his M.S. (1973) and Ph.D. (1980) degrees in curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was associate director of the National Reading Research Center for five years, was elected in 1998 as a fellow of the National Conference on Research in Language and Literacy, and was a member of the board of directors of the International Reading Association from 1995-1998. Literacy education in Wyoming will be bolstered by the addition of Dr. Baumann to the faculty, who is a recognized expert in reading education. He not only will teach UW students, but will conduct in-service workshops for teachers throughout the state.
- **Science education.** A search is underway for an endowed faculty position in science education, an area of expertise in which the College of Education currently has several faculty members.
- The Office of Academic Affairs authorized the College of Education to begin a search to fill a third endowed faculty position. The search is slated to begin this fall.

Eminent Writer-in-Residence (one search authorized and completed)

One of three positions allocated in the first year of the biennium was for an Eminent Writer in Residence, a permanent visiting position to reside in the English Department's Creative Writing MFA program. By allowing the university to bring in a new, well-known creative writer each year, this endowed position will help cement the reputation of the MFA as a nationally competitive program in creative writing and will also significantly enhance UW's curriculum in English composition more generally.

- **Creative writing.** Ms. Terry Tempest Williams, a nationally and internationally known nature and environmental writer, will hold the Eminent Writer-in-Residence position for the 2007-2008 academic year. Williams is the author of the famous memoir, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*, as well as other well-known nonfiction books that focus on nature, the environment, art and politics. Among her many honors are the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Lannan Literary Fellowship, the 2005 Wallace Stegner Award by the Center for the American West, and the Wilderness Society's highest honor for a private citizen.

In accordance with the premise that the Writer-in-Residence will provide faculty and students interaction with prominent writers in active dialogue, Williams will teach a creative writing Master of Fine Arts workshop and direct MFA theses. She will also host brown bag lunch "conversations" for members of the university and Laramie communities during the fall semester. In the spring, she will conduct innovative outreach events, called "weather reports", in four Wyoming locations, designed to inspire conversations and writing about change in Wyoming communities.

During FY2007, faculty endowment "jump start" funds were used to build and support the writer-in-residence program and recruit for the endowed writer-in-residence position. Jump-start funds provided support for the MFA program director Harvey L. Hix, who successfully launched the MFA program in 2005, and who also conceived the writer-in-residence position. Because the MFA program is relatively new, this use of the "jump start" funds was an essential step in making it possible to recruit eminent writers of Ms. Williams's caliber.

Dr. Hix is the author of numerous award-winning poetry collections, including *Chromatics* (Etruscan Press, 2006), *Shadows of Houses* (Etruscan Press, 2005), *Surely As Birds Fly* (Truman State University Press, 2002), *Rational Numbers* (Truman State, 2000), which won the T. S. Eliot Prize, and *Perfect Hell* (Gibbs Smith, 1996), which won the Peregrine Smith Poetry Award. Hix brought widespread acclaim to University of Wyoming in 2006, when he was named a top finalist for the prestigious National Book Award for *Chromatics*. Hix earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin. Before coming to Wyoming, he taught philosophy at Kansas City Art Institute and was Vice President for Academic Affairs at The Cleveland Institute of Art.

Life Sciences (two searches recently authorized; both under way)

Two of the ten Wyoming Excellence positions, allocated recently, are in life science fields.

- **Biomedical physiology.** The College of Arts and Sciences Department of Zoology and Physiology has begun a search for a distinguished biomedical physiologist to train students in physiology and health sciences, and to conduct innovative research to build the university's distinction in the life sciences. The endowment for this fourth position is partially private, and the Wyoming Excellence professor selected to fill it will also hold the title "Hank Gardner and Marilyn Fiske Chair of Physiology".
- **Prion biology.** The College of Agriculture has initiated a search for a Wyoming Excellence Chair in veterinary neurosciences with a focus on teaching, research, and service in prion biology. Prion diseases, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, scrapie in sheep, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in elk, affect both livestock and wildlife, and as such are of particular importance to Wyoming's livestock and tourism sectors, its economy, landscape, and lifestyle. In some cases, prion diseases have been known to affect humans, as well. With the establishment of the excellence chair in prion biology, University of Wyoming has the potential to build national and international recognition as a center of excellence for animal disease and prion research.

Business and Law (two searches recently authorized; both under way)

The Excellence in Higher Education endowment has afforded UW the opportunity to complete several partially funded, privately endowed chairs, creating unique state-private partnerships in building excellence in areas of distinction at UW. One of these partner positions will be located in the College of Business:

- **Accounting.** The Office of Academic Affairs recently authorized the College of Business to search for a distinguished professor to fill the Toppan Chair in Accounting. Clara Raab Toppan, the private donor, was the first woman CPA in the state of Wyoming. The goals for the Toppan professorship are to recruit accounting students into the profession by connecting with high schools and community colleges throughout the state and region, and to enhance the effectiveness and impact of UW's accounting education program.
- **Law.** A second such partner position will be located in the College of Law, which is now authorized to search for a permanent faculty member to fill the Kepler Chair in Law and Leadership. The scholar chosen for this position is expected to bring critical expertise in energy law to University of Wyoming, and to create and build linkages between the College of Law and the new School of Energy Resources.

Earth Sciences, Environment, and Natural Resources (two searches authorized; both under way)

Earth sciences and environment and natural resources are two areas of distinction identified in UW's academic plan. The Office of Academic Affairs recently authorized a search in each of these areas.

- **Ecological climatologist.** The Office of Academic Affairs authorized the Colleges of Engineering and Agriculture to search for an ecological climatologist. To reside in the departments of Atmospheric Sciences and Renewable Resources, the faculty member to hold this Wyoming Excellence chair position will study the relationships between changes in climate and ecosystem dynamics, with an emphasis on the complex, semi-arid terrains of Wyoming. The position will have a critical role as well in developing the newly formed research partnership between University of Wyoming and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).
- **Collaborative resource management.** The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) will be searching to fill the Eldon and Beverly Spicer Chair of Environment and Natural Resources. The faculty member to hold this distinguished professorship, to be funded jointly by the Spicer family and Higher Education Endowment, will have established expertise in environment and natural resources conflict resolution and collaborative processes. The academic home for this position may be in one of several colleges and departments, depending on her or his area of scholarship or discipline.

3. Fiscal Summary

In total, the Office of Academic Affairs has authorized ten fully or partially state-funded endowed chair positions for searches during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 academic years. The final number of endowed chairs will depend on how many positions can be supported by the earnings off the state's endowment. The costs associated with each position include salaries commensurate with those received by top academics, employer paid benefits, ongoing budgets to support the research and instructional activities of the faculty recruited into the positions, as well as one-time start up expenses which are especially critical to recruiting distinguished scholars with large established laboratory research programs.

The following tables summarize the uses and expenditures of the "jump start" funding authorized by the 2006 Legislature, budgets for filled positions, and estimated first-year expenses for positions currently under search.

Use and Expenditure of "Jump Start" Funds July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007

State Appropriation – "Jump Start" Funds	\$2,800,000.00
Advertising and Recruitment	\$43,822.01
Salaries and Benefits	\$163,699.65
Support	\$3,144.41
Balance June 30, 2007	\$2,589,333.93

Account Balances as of August 31, 2007

Account	Balance
“Jump Start” accounts	\$2,456,893.91
UW Excellence Endowment expendable account ¹	\$1,665,196.87

2007-2008 Budgets for Excellence in Higher Education Endowment Chairs

Endowed Chair	Incumbent	Annual Budget
Eminent Writer-in-Residence, Excellence Chair in Creative Writing	Terry Tempest Williams	\$245,200
Excellence Chair in Literacy Education	Jim Baumann	\$252,125

Estimated Total First-Year Expenses for Additional Positions Authorized in 2007-2008, when filled

Salary	Support	Start Up	Total
\$1,245,000	\$240,000	\$1,300,000	\$2,785,000

¹ Based on earnings from the corpus as the corpus is being funded with revenue through the statutory formula over the current biennium.