



## CHAPTER 2

“Even in the face of recent downturns in the world economy, Wyoming’s leaders look to education as a key to the state’s long-term advancement. As the state’s only public baccalaureate-granting and research institution, UW is at the center of these discussions. Along with a talented faculty and dedicated staff, among the university’s most important long-term assets are a refined set of academic foci and a solid commitment to the planning needed to advance them.”

—*The Creation of the Future: University Plan 3, 2009-2014*

# Academic Planning and Major Developments

## ALIGNING PLANNING WITH THE UNIVERSITY’S MISSION

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

One of the University of Wyoming’s strengths is its ability to turn its academic plans into reality. Academic planning provides for continuous analysis and improvement of learning environments. The university’s strategy is to promote discussion among stakeholders, identify key planning issues through iterative documents, and implement concrete action items that advance the guiding principles of the institution. (2a)

Strategic planning is relatively recent to the university’s history. Although in 1978 the university developed a long-range strategic plan, former President Dubois initiated a more systematic, sustained approach in 1997. Nine months later, in May 1998, the Board of Trustees approved the university’s first academic plan, Academic Plan I, designed to guide the decisions needed to focus and strengthen the institution’s teaching, research, and service missions for the five-year period 1999-2004. (2d)

Five years later, the trustees approved Academic Plan II, followed by a support services plan for all non-academic divisions and a capital facilities plan, covering the period 2004-2009. With the recent completion of *The Creation of the Future: University Plan 3, 2009-2014* (UP 3), the university community is now fully engaged in a five-year cycle of an integrated planning process. With this third cycle of planning, the university combined all institutional planning efforts into one process as a way to further strengthen institutional priorities and commitments. The concept of using strategic plans to guide important institutional decisions has received broad acceptance among the university’s leadership, faculty, staff, and students. (1a, 1c, 2d)

The university plan focuses on the most important institutional goals. That focus provides the basis for resource allocation decisions as well as for new resource requests at all levels across the university. Of crucial importance in implementing the academic plans has been a system of central position management (CPM) for faculty position allocation. Under this system, vacant academic lines revert to the Office of Academic Affairs for possible reallocation. College deans submit ranked requests and then meet as a group with the provost and associate provosts to discuss the degree to which each request aligns with the university’s mission and major planning motifs. The strategic plan also guides the university through recent budget reductions, which are dependent upon the Wyoming economy in 2009 and 2010. (2b)

The university has completed more than 90 percent of the action items in Academic Plans I and II. Annual progress is documented for the university community and its external constituents by academic plan implementation report cards, demonstrating that institutional priorities, decisions, and resource allocation stem from the university plans. (2b) Academic Plans I and II, with their accompanying support services and capital facilities plans, have altered the university with a number of specific outcomes outlined in this chapter. In addition, our institutional credibility, verified to internal and external constituents, has been enhanced due to its increased communications and transparency with the planning process over the past decade. (2d)

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*“Areas of distinction allow the institution to focus its resources strategically: to build depth, excellence, and international recognition in the areas of study that are both globally significant and critical to the state’s future.”*

## PLANNING FOR A DIVERSE FUTURE: THE UNIVERSITY’S AREAS OF DISTINCTION

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

Planning over the past decade has allowed the university to define and pursue a set of areas of distinction. For each area of distinction, the University of Wyoming has a sustained commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, inquiry, scholarship, and outreach. (1c)

This concept of areas of distinction has created some tension. The university’s status as Wyoming’s only public university suggests a mandate to respond to all external constituents. However, the university is relatively small for a public land-grant university, too small to be excellent in all things. Areas of distinction allow the institution to focus its resources strategically: to build depth, excellence, and international recognition in areas of study that are both globally significant and critical to the state’s future. (2d)

The philosophy of focusing on distinction first appeared in Academic Plan I, which emphasized areas of inquiry that capitalized on Wyoming’s geographic, historical, and cultural assets and on strategic opportunities to help build a sound future for the state. Academic Plan II affirmed, refined, and strengthened these opportunities. In UP 3, the university continues to focus on the same six areas of distinction. Planning has also delineated a set of core institutional challenges that must be addressed for advancement of the university’s stature. The first two cycles of academic planning, including the correlating support service plans and capital facilities plans, helped align the institution’s

budget decisions, operating practices, infrastructure investments, administrative toolkit, and fundraising activities with its overarching academic goals. They also solidified the university's commitments to enhance student access and academic excellence, with a focus on student learning, greater diversity, stronger graduate education, internationalization, curricular coherency, outreach, and enrollment management. (1c)

In 2009, the university produced and distributed *Taking Stock: Reflections on a Decade of Academic Planning*. This document provides a report card of the university's accomplishments related to areas of distinction over the past decade. (2c) Because these achievements have been a critical part of reflection during this self-study, we include a summary of *Taking Stock* and some updates of the university's achievements in the following sections. In Chapters 4 – 9 of the self-study, we revisit some of these achievements in the context of enriching the learning experience. (2b)

## Critical areas of science and technology

### (Core Components 2a, 2b)

Of major significance was the creation of a new School of Energy Resources (SER), established and funded in 2006 by the Wyoming State Legislature. SER currently receives \$10 million per year in legislative funding to bolster academic and research activities in the university's seven academic colleges and to conduct state and national outreach efforts in energy-related fields. SER's budget supports a dozen new faculty positions, visiting scholars, graduate assistantships, interdisciplinary curricular innovations, and enhanced connections with Wyoming's community colleges and school systems. It also provides seed money for energy-related research centers. (2a, 2b)

Partnerships with external constituents help align the university's planning with real world needs. Complementing the development of the SER is a new partnership between the university and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). Based in Boulder, Colorado, NCAR is a federally funded research and development center with a tradition of world-class leadership in high-performance computing that spans over four decades. Under the partnership, announced in January 2007, NCAR will locate its next supercomputer in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Under the terms of the partnership, the university will have access to 20 percent of the computer time. But the partnership has deeper implications: the university and NCAR are now engaged in scientific collaborations that have enabled the institution to hire new faculty members in areas related to computational science and biosphere-atmosphere interactions.

Another recent collaboration is the university's partnership with General Electric to develop a High Plains Gasification Advanced Technology Center in eastern Wyoming. Approved by the Wyoming State Legislature, the center will be designed to explore the application of clean coal technologies to the grades of coal mined in the Powder River Basin at the altitudes prevailing in Wyoming's coal basins. (2a)

Part of this academic area of distinction in science and technology is the development of a computational science degree program, which is expected to draw additional students to the institution. Another advance in this area is a new computer tomography X-ray scanning laboratory in the Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, which will help create knowledge critical for optimizing the production of oil and gas from fields in Wyoming and around the world. (2a)

## Cultural assets, arts, and humanities

### (Core Components 2a, 2b, 5c)

One of the university's most prominent accomplishments has been the establishment of a new Master of Fine Arts degree program in creative writing. This program builds on the Department of English's long tradition of attracting prominent poets, fiction writers, and nonfiction writers to its faculty, and while in its infancy, it has begun to attract nationally recognized faculty and students of writing from all over the country. (2a)

In 2006, the Wyoming State Legislature established the \$105 million Wyoming Excellence in Higher Education Endowment, \$70 million of which was designated for creating several endowed faculty chairs. The university designated two of these to support permanent visiting positions in the arts and humanities: the Eminent Writer-in-Residence chair, held first by Terry Tempest Williams and then by Joy Williams, and the Eminent Artist-in-Residence chair, recently filled through a year-long visit by prominent theatrical actor and director Bill Bowers. The Artist-in-Residence complements the nearly annual appearance of university faculty and students in the selective national competitions at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. (2b)

The university's commitment to excellence in the arts includes funding from the state legislature to plan a new Fine Arts Center. When completed, the new and remodeled facilities will furnish the fine arts departments with improved learning spaces for students. (2b)

The Art Museum has strengthened its relationship with the art department and other departments and colleges, especially the College of Education, and has extended its mission to enrich education communities throughout the state. The premier example of this new form of outreach is the addition of a master teacher to the museum. Funded at first by the Art Museum National Advisory Board and subsequently by a challenge grant from the Wyoming Excellence in Higher Education Endowment, this program introduces K-16 students, teachers, and faculty to new concepts in interdisciplinary and arts education supporting shared educational goals. (5c)

## Environment and natural resources

### (Core Components 2a, 2b)

The university has a long history of expertise in environment and natural resources. This area of distinction encompasses interdisciplinary coursework, research, and policy discourse on issues such as land use, water, wildlife, climate, and energy-environment linkages. When Academic Plan I was adopted in 1999, the Haub School and Ruckelshaus

Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) were programs with much unrealized potential. (2a) As a result of the planning process, faculty members established environment and natural resources as interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate majors, both of which are affiliated with disciplinary majors, providing an organizational commitment to environmental and natural resource issues. (2b)

The university's sustained focus on ENR has prompted the allocation of new faculty positions in a range of departments in several colleges. The ENR Spicer Chair position emphasizes collaborative processes in natural resources decision-making. The College of Engineering and Applied Science is now home to the Cline Chair, a distinguished faculty position dedicated to interdisciplinary work with the Haub School and the Wyoming Excellence Chair in Ecological Climatology, a position that promises to strengthen the university's partnership with NCAR. (2b)

The excellence of ENR teaching and research programs at the university has attracted substantial support in the form of private gifts in recent years, including a \$3 million gift and endowment from Ervin and Helga Haub for the School of Environment and Natural Resources. Another gift by Donald and Bim Kendall is financing the renovation of a building that will be one of the first green buildings on campus and the new home for ENR. (2b)

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has steadily strengthened its depth in ENR-related teaching and research through faculty commitments from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. The College of Business has continued to support an internationally recognized graduate program in resource economics, and it has begun to weave concepts related to sustainability into its curricular and faculty hiring goals in the Department of Management and Marketing. (2a)

## History and culture of the Rocky Mountain region

### (Core Components 2a, 5b)

Several social science departments, the American Heritage Center, the University Libraries, and the Art Museum house substantial collections and staff who demonstrate scholarly expertise in this area of distinction. As an outgrowth of Academic Plan I, the university now offers a PhD degree in anthropology, and in 2007 the new Archaeological and Anthropological Research Facility (AARF) opened on the Laramie campus to house collections, research labs, and classrooms. The university's Archaeological Repository (UWAR) is located in the AARF and functions jointly under the Department of Anthropology and the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist. UWAR is estimated to contain more than three million items from at least 25,000 sites found throughout the state. In addition to housing collections from state and private lands, the university is a federally designated repository for archaeological collections recovered from Wyoming's public lands. These collections have been, and continue to be, the basis for scholarly interpretations about human activity on the High Plains and Rocky Mountains that spans 11,500 years of occupation. Partnerships between the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office and

the Departments of Anthropology and American Studies provide multiple research and internship opportunities for students in the history and culture of the Rocky Mountain region. (2a)

The American Indian Studies program has implemented undergraduate and graduate minors and programs that further scholarly and cultural goals under the guidance and expertise of an expanded faculty. It has attracted a number of highly accomplished new faculty members in recent years from several disciplines. The university has also added a Chicano Studies minor with a public history emphasis in the Department of History that includes partnerships with the American Heritage Center. (5b)

## Life sciences

(Core Components 2a, 2b, 3c, 3d)

Through two completed cycles of planning since 1999, the university's broad-reaching presence in the life sciences has become deeper and more focused. At the undergraduate level, the university now has a revitalized, cross-college life science core curriculum for majors, and a suite of innovative courses that provides all lower-division courses for life science majors in three colleges. At the graduate level, the university has distinctive interdisciplinary doctoral programs in ecology (PiE), molecular and cellular life science (MCLS), and neuroscience. These cross-college programs have helped define unifying nucleation sites for a once diffuse array of life science faculty spanning four colleges. (2a)

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*“The COBRE, EPSCoR, and INBRE programs have all provided important opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research.”*

In 2006-2007 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded \$10.4 million for the second phase of a grant for the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE). The Program in Ecology has benefitted from a \$7 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). The university is entering its second phase of an IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) grant with \$16.9 million awarded in 2009 through the NIH. (2b) The goal of the INBRE program is to boost the state's competitiveness in NIH-funded research oriented toward human biology. The COBRE, EPSCoR, and INBRE programs have all provided important opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research. (3c) In addition, the INBRE program provides a link to Wyoming community college faculty and students.

Using resources marshaled through the central position management system, the Office of Academic Affairs has funded core scientific facilities that are essential to high-caliber research in the life sciences. Among these facilities are the Wyoming Geographic Information Sciences Center, the Stable Isotopes Laboratory, the Nucleic Acid Exploration Facility, the Microscopy Laboratory, and the Macromolecular Core Facility. Through a recent gift, the university is now designing the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center, a facility that will help support and integrate several of these innovations to enhance learning, teaching, and research. (3d)

The Endowment for Excellence in Higher Education has enabled the university to solidify its expertise in keystone areas of the life sciences. Through a prospectus developed by the deans of the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Arts and Sciences,

Engineering and Applied Science, and Health Sciences, the university has allocated senior, endowment-funded faculty positions in the ecology of atmosphere-biosphere interactions, grassland ecology, biomedical science, and the biology of prion diseases, all of which have special relevance to Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. (2a)

## Professions critical to the state and region

### (Core Components 1d, 2a)

Institutional planning has helped the university to align a significant portion of its teaching, research, and service missions with the economic needs of the state and region. (1d) Arguably even more important for Wyoming than for other states, initiatives in education, health care, engineering, business, and law have strengthened the university's contributions to workforce development in these critical professions, which comprise the sixth area of distinction. (2a)

## Education

### (Core Component 5c)

Two statewide initiatives have helped to develop educational partnerships. One initiative is the Wyoming P-16 Education Council, created in 2007, which promotes more seamless transitions as students progress through the state's educational systems. This 15-member council focuses on shared commitments to educational excellence and student success at all levels from preschool through postsecondary. A second statewide initiative is the nationally recognized Wyoming School-University Partnership, whose facilitation of content area and course level articulations between secondary and postsecondary teachers has strengthened and deepened the P-16 Education Council's efforts. (5c)

The College of Education has launched several initiatives to address the impending critical shortage of teachers. The college has filled four endowed chair positions funded by the Endowment for Excellence in Education: two in literacy education, one in science education, and one in mathematics education. In addition, 19 concurrent majors for secondary education—designed to ensure that future high school teachers are highly qualified in their subject areas—are now in place as a result of agreements between the College of Education and Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Agriculture and Natural Resources. In 2003, the University of Wyoming Casper College Center added a degree program in technical education, which is the only bachelor's degree program in the state that helps prepare industrial arts teachers at the middle and high school levels. More recently, the College of Education partnered with Wyoming's seven community colleges and the university's Outreach School to mount a statewide, distance-delivered elementary education degree option, which is currently under consideration for approval by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Finally, faculty hiring in the College of Education has bolstered the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines. From 2007 to 2008, students earning certifications in mathematics, science, and special education increased from 37 to 68 students.

***Health care*****(Core Component 5c)**

In the health professions, several initiatives completed by the College of Health Sciences have boosted the caliber of health care professional training at the university. These initiatives include a professional pharmaceutical degree program (PharmD), which began in 1997; the introduction of an accelerated BS in nursing for nontraditional students with baccalaureate degrees in other fields; an online RN-BSN completion program, which has drawn site-bound RN-qualified students into the nursing degree pipeline; and increased funding and resident recruiting at the Family Medicine Residency Centers in Casper and Cheyenne. A new minor degree program in disabilities studies is available through the Wyoming Institute for Disability Studies (WIND). In addition to these specific initiatives, the completion of the \$18 million Health Sciences Complex has changed the nature of clinical training, allowing for greater interaction among students in nursing, pharmacy, social work, communication disorders, and the Washington-Wyoming-Alaska-Montana-Idaho (WWAMI) medical program. (5c)

***Engineering*****(Core Components 2b, 5c)**

The College of Engineering and Applied Science has broadened its scope. The college now includes the Department of Computer Science as well as a new major in computer engineering through the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. In 2006, the university reinstated the BS in petroleum engineering to meet growing demand and to complement its MS and PhD degree programs in that field. Since then, the college has filled six new faculty positions in the program. (2b) Other new faculty positions include one in coal technologies and one in wind energy. Energy-related technology now plays an important role in the undergraduate degree in architectural engineering offered in the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering. Through summer school revenues, the Office of Academic Affairs established funding for the Engineering Summer Program for high school students, which draws 30 high school students per year. (5c)

***Business*****(Core Components 2b, 5d)**

The College of Business has a central role to play in the economic and workforce development of the state and region through its undergraduate emphasis on entrepreneurship and its graduate programs in accounting, business administration, economics, and finance. (5d) Initiatives in business that have enhanced the university's impact include the offering of a high-demand Executive MBA program in cooperation with the Outreach School, developing expertise in business ethics with the hiring of a distinguished professor of business ethics, and approval of a PhD in Management and Marketing focusing on sustainable business practices. The 2006 Wyoming State Legislature established three new university positions in sustainable business, and in 2007 the college successfully recruited and filled all three positions. Private donations have included an endowment for the college's career center.

In 2007, the Wyoming State Legislature authorized funding for the construction of a \$54 million building to unify the College of Business into a single complex. This building will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, illustrating the college's support of sustainable business practices. (2b)

### **Law**

#### **(Core Components 1c, 2b)**

In 2009, the College of Law appointed a faculty director of the Rural Law Center to provide service and education to legal professionals practicing in Wyoming's rural communities. With tuition revenues, the College of Law has strengthened its curriculum and faculty in legal writing and in the legal clinics by hiring a full-time faculty director of legal writing and a full-time faculty director of the domestic violence clinic (the latter formerly funded by grants). (2b) Tuition revenues have also supported the hiring of a full-time Academic Support Program faculty director to assist students in successfully completing the academic program and preparing for the practice of law. Through an endowed chair, the College of Law has established a significant presence in constitutional law to support its mission. (1c) In addition, recent new faculty positions have allowed the college to strengthen its contributions to the legal aspects of natural and energy resources. A visiting professor position is shared with the School of Energy Resources, with that professor teaching energy law courses at the College of Law, as well as supervising law student graduate assistants in developing an undergraduate course in energy law and policy. The JD/MA program in Law and Environment and Natural Resources started in 2009. Several other new hires will bring expertise in the areas of international law as well as in applied legal skills.

In September 2009, the university held a dedication ceremony for the William N. Brimmer Legal Education Center, a \$4.5 million renovation and addition to the College of Law. This newly expanded instructional area, consisting of three classrooms within the College of Law building, is used for law classes, courtroom hearings, and other events. (2b)

## **THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY**

### **(Core Component 2d)**

In addition to defining the university's areas of distinction, Academic Plans I and II, together with their associated support services plans, have helped focus administrative attention on an array of persistent issues facing the institution. (2d)

### **Expanding the resource base: The University of Wyoming Foundation**

#### **(Core Components 2b, 2d)**

The University of Wyoming Foundation is an independent nonprofit corporation established to secure, manage, and steward private gifts in support of the university's mission. (2d) The foundation's average private giving over the past six years exceeded \$30 million per year, with \$35.9 million contributed in FY 2009. The number of endowments

increased from 450 in 1999 to 1,113 in 2009. The value of endowments increased from \$136 million to \$225 million over this period. Throughout the self-study, we also provide evidence of the positive impacts of the state legislature’s commitment to match private gifts. From 2001 to 2009, this commitment has supported university students, faculty, programs, and facilities with \$140.2 million in matching funds. (2b)

### Creating a culture for student learning

(Core Components 3a, 3d)

Beginning with action items identified in Academic Plan I, the university revised and strengthened its general education program, the University Studies Program (USP 2003), and made substantial additions to its infrastructure to better promote academic success among students. USP 2003 was both streamlined and strengthened by the addition of requirements in oral communication, information literacy, and diversity in the U.S. Faculty members on the USP Committee review courses every three years to ensure the courses are aligned with the learning outcomes for a particular requirement. The USP Committee has also established a regular schedule for assessment, which will serve as the basis for curricular revision and cross disciplinary discussion of pedagogy. (3a)

The university has also made significant headway in creating an institutional culture focused on student learning through its assessment efforts. With the leadership of the university assessment specialist and the University Assessment Coordinators Committee, along with the work of several deans, department heads, faculty, and staff, a majority of the university’s academic units now have functioning assessment processes and have begun to connect student learning outcomes and the results of assessment with pedagogical and curricular revisions. These efforts require different ways of thinking about teaching and learning, and the university’s active participants and key leaders are making notable strides in demonstrating the benefits of well-grounded, continuous assessment cycles. (3d)

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### Supporting diversity

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

Diversity enriches the learning environment, helps ensure the broadest possible development of human talent, and helps cultivate leaders for a civil society. However, increasing the diversity of its faculty, staff, and student body continues to be a challenge for the institution. In recognition of this challenge, in spring 2008 the university appointed an associate vice president for diversity to expand the institutional commitment to diversity initiatives. (1d)

During the implementation of Academic Plan I and its associated support services plan, former President Dubois established the President’s Advisory Council on Minority and Women’s Affairs (PACMWA) with a broad mandate to explore diversity issues at the university and provided \$75,000 annually with which to sponsor diversity initiatives. (2b) The council has helped fund courses, special programs to retain students of color, initiatives to retain faculty members from underrepresented groups, and a salary equity study in collaboration

with the Office of Academic Affairs. Under the guidance of the associate vice president for diversity, the university reconfigured PACMWA in 2009 as the Strategic Diversity Initiatives Committee. (1b)

A major gift by an anonymous donor permanently funded several diversity initiatives, including the annual Matthew Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Dialogue, and the recently established Social Justice Center to support faculty scholarship in areas related to social justice. (2a) These efforts have been significant in raising awareness of diversity issues and fostering a dialogue on social justice beyond the university.

Recently, the university joined with NCAR in signing a memorandum of understanding with four historically black colleges and universities—Hampton University, Howard University, North Carolina A&T University, and Jackson State University—to explore student and faculty exchanges in areas related to climate analysis, geosciences, and computational science. (2a) The goal is to increase opportunities for interactions between diverse populations and share educational objectives.

The Office of Academic Affairs has undertaken several additional measures to promote diversity. An annual \$200,000 funding pool has provided incentives for departments and colleges to diversify their faculty hiring. Initiatives include start-up and early-career enhancements for faculty members of color and female faculty in disciplines where they are underrepresented. This fund also provides bridge funding to facilitate the hiring of spouses and domestic partners in cases where there is strong department support. In 2006, augmenting its other investments in diversity, the Office of Academic Affairs permanently funded a visiting faculty position in the Department of African American and Diaspora Studies to help promote recruitment of faculty members in various disciplines who can contribute to that program's academic mission. (2a)

As called for in Academic Plan II, the Faculty Senate has taken a role in promoting diversity. In 2007, the senate's standing university Tenure and Promotion Committee conducted a study of the rates at which women and faculty members of color earn tenure and promotion, investigating whether there are subtle factors that adversely affect their success. The results did not suggest that female faculty or faculty of color achieve tenure less often than white male faculty, although in some cases promotion to full professor took somewhat longer. (1b)

Other divisions of the university have complemented these efforts. The Division of Student Affairs, for example, established the Multicultural Student Leadership Initiative to cultivate student leaders from a wide range of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the Rainbow Resource Center was established to promote a sense of community among the university's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students. Several divisions have helped make the physical environment more accessible to students and employees with disabilities. A disabilities services taskforce recently developed additional recommendations that can help guide the continuation of these efforts in UP 3. The university has

been granted generous state funding, in the form of a major maintenance formula-funded budget established by the Wyoming State Legislature in 2003, to help make older buildings and grounds more accessible. (1b)

While the university undoubtedly has more to accomplish, enrollment trends have been positive in respect to diversity. Growth among ethnic minority undergraduate populations increased by 26 percent since 1999, outpacing the overall undergraduate growth (14 percent) for the same period. (5c)

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*“The past decade has seen a transformation in the university’s level of engagement in international education.”*

## Strengthening internationalization

### (Core Components 1b, 2a)

The past decade has seen a transformation in the university’s level of engagement in international education. Once characterized by institutionally embedded reluctance to recruit teachers, scholars, and students from other countries, the university now routinely hires the best faculty members it can through searches of international scope. At the same time, the university has strengthened its efforts to recruit international students. In the past decade, representatives of the university have engaged in recruitment trips to such countries as India, China, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Oman. In fall 1999, the international student population was 303, whereas in fall 2008, the university was home to 544 international students. Upon the recommendation of the International Education Steering Committee, UP 3 includes an action item to increase enrollment to 700 international students. (1b)

The University of Wyoming has also increased its support to the international community on campus. While the university has historically offered a comprehensive orientation program to new international students, new components have been added to provide cultural adjustment support, information about the academic environment, lessons about banking and budgeting, and more connections to current students, both domestic and international. Other services designed to help integrate international students include group and individual tutoring, weekly international coffee hours, weekly e-newsletters, the Friendship Families program, the American Conversation Club, and cultural programs supported by student organizations. (1b)

Initiatives in the Office of Academic Affairs include grants for international study and support for summer and winter break courses abroad. The Department of Modern and Classical Languages now offers regular instruction in Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic, in addition to its traditional offerings in Spanish, French, German, Russian, Latin, and Greek. (1b) A significant measure of the increasing interest in international education is the number of majors in the International Studies Program, which currently stands at 190 students.

Through a gift in 2005 from former Vice President Dick Cheney and his family, the university established an international travel scholarship fund to help support student travel and study abroad. The gift also helped fund a major building renovation for the Dick and Lynne Cheney International Center, a facility in the academic core of campus that has allowed the co-location of international programs, international studies, international

students and scholars, and English second language programs—all entities that are critical to the advancement of internationalization. Located within the center is an immigration specialist to assist faculty and students with fulfilling additional federal immigration requirements, for which the Office of Academic Affairs provided funding in 2006. (2a)

## **Supporting external constituencies: Statewide extension and economic development**

### **(Core Components 1b, 5b)**

In 2002, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources developed and began implementing the Cooperative Extension Service’s (CES) strategic plan, which enabled it to deliver all of its programs across the state through a system of multi-county extension areas. Focused on five statewide initiatives—nutrition and food safety, profitable and sustainable agricultural systems, sustainable management of rangeland resources, 4-H youth development, and community development education—Cooperative Extension has reinvented itself to respond to state challenges. In 2006, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources established the James C. Hageman Sustainable Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Lingle, Wyoming, where university faculty and extension educators apply state-of-the-art integrated crop livestock systems research to problems faced by Wyoming producers. (1b)

A number of entities administered by the university contribute to the economic development of the state. The Research Products Center assists with technology transfer through patenting and licensing of university-owned intellectual property. The Wyoming Technology Business Center, a not-for-profit business incubator, provides entrepreneurs with the expertise, networks, and tools they need to make their ventures successful. To date, two businesses have been successfully incubated. The Wyoming Small Business Development Center network provides consulting, training, and resources to businesses throughout Wyoming to help them become more successful and sustainable. It assists qualified Wyoming small businesses and individuals to access federal funding opportunities provided by the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. The university also participates in the Wyoming Workforce Alliance, the Wyoming Business Council, and the Wyoming Economic Development Association. (5b)

## **Strengthening quality: Educational infrastructure**

### **(Core Components 2b, 5c)**

A visit to the Laramie campus will provide ready proof of the recent and ongoing improvements to the university’s educational infrastructure as the result of legislative appropriations and generous private gifts. New facilities since 1999 include the \$18 million Health Sciences Complex, the \$2.4 million Early Care and Education Center, the \$50 million expansion of Coe Library, the \$15.1 million Archaeological and Anthropological Research Facility (AARF), the \$10.9 million Indoor Practice Facility, the \$8 million University of Wyoming Conference Center, the \$11.4 million Wyoming Technology Business Center, the \$14.7 million Classroom Building renovation, the \$31 million Information

Technology Center, the \$2.5 million Honors House, the \$54 million College of Business expansion, the \$4.5 million College of Law expansion, and the \$3.8 million Cheney International Center. (2b)

The Outreach School has worked with several community colleges, including Central Wyoming College, Eastern Wyoming College, and Northern Wyoming Community College District, to remodel and acquire additional space for video conference classrooms and Outreach School offices. Outreach has also worked with city governments and the Wind River Development Fund to deepen the access to distance-delivered degrees in their communities. (2b, 5c)

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*“The libraries currently provide a robust research collection complemented by advanced delivery systems and services.”*

### **Supporting student learning: Libraries** (Core Components 2a, 2b, 3c)

The 2006 Wyoming State Legislature allocated \$4.3 million in one-time funding and an additional \$1.5 million per biennium to the University Libraries to bolster the collections and to enhance services and collaborations with Wyoming libraries. In 2008, the legislature renewed the one-time funding to a permanent annual increase of \$4.3 million. (2b) Recently, the University Libraries established a digital repository to house university-related materials, including undergraduate research projects and graduate theses and dissertations. To address the rapid inflation in subscription costs for scholarly journals, the libraries negotiated highly effective contracts with major serial publishers. The libraries also increased access to research materials, most notably by purchasing access to the *Web of Knowledge* and by expanding electronic delivery services available through interlibrary collaborations. The libraries currently provide a robust research collection complemented by advanced delivery systems and services. Unfortunately, to help meet the mandated 10 percent reduction in the university’s state budget for FY 2010, the university used part of the \$4.3 million allocation to offset approximately one-quarter of the overall \$18.3 million funding reduction. Restoration of this funding for library acquisitions is a high priority for the institution. In fact, the university recently approved a plan for tuition increases, part of which will be dedicated to the library. (2a, 3c)

### **Supporting student learning: Information technology** (Core Components 2b, 2d, 5c)

Academic and support service planning have led to substantial improvements in the university’s information and instructional technology infrastructure. In 2003, Princeton University and Forbes magazine ranked the University of Wyoming 13th on their list of “top 25 most connected campuses” for its computer resources and services. The University of Wyoming was the only school in the Rocky Mountain region ranked in the top 25 at that time. As part of the implementation of Academic Plan II, the Division of Information Technology (IT) established the University Technology Planning Council to help guide technology decisions about administrative software (such as the student information

system) and instructional technology (such as the infrastructure needed to deliver online courses). In 2006, the Office of Academic Affairs permanently transferred \$140,000 to IT to support a dedicated office to oversee a rapidly growing instructional technology infrastructure. The Classroom Technology Advisory Committee (CTAC) now provides broad guidance to the director. In addition, the 2006 Wyoming State Legislature provided \$3.2 million in one-time funding and \$3.2 million in recurring funds, in part to support instructional computing and data networking. (2b) In partnership with Colorado’s universities, the university has developed the Bi-State Optical Network (BiSON), a high speed, redundant fiber optic system connecting the university to the Front Range GigaPop consortium. These initiatives, together with the university’s participation in the nationwide Internet 2 consortium, have laid the groundwork for the university’s supercomputing partnership with NCAR. (2d)

The Outreach School also helped to create a statewide Outreach Video Network (OVN) that delivers distance courses to approximately three dozen sites in 17 different communities across the state. Only two-years old, the OVN system is already recognized as the state’s most robust video conference network. (5c)

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## CONCLUSION AND KEY FINDINGS

The University of Wyoming has experienced a decade of growth and support unparalleled in its history. At the same time, the university embarked on a new, ambitious journey of institutional planning, which has continued to evolve and mature over time. These processes have helped to guide periods of budget growth as well as address recent budget reductions. The university recognizes the following accomplishments:

- **Planning has become part of the university’s culture.** Every major activity and allocation of resources derives from academic, support services, and capital facilities plans. Planning provides a framework for decision-making that is supportive of innovation and change, in both prosperous and unsteady economic times.
  - **The institution has been guided by academic and university planning processes over the last decade.** The commitment to follow institutional plans without significantly deviating from priorities has provided the university immense credibility with its constituents and policymakers.
  - **The university has the capacity to link budgets with plans.** Through internal decision-making mechanisms, such as central position management (CPM) and strong relations with the state’s legislative and executive-branch leaders, the university has been able to direct existing resources to high-priority academic and support areas and to make successful, focused requests for new resources. (UP 3 Action Item 1)
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