# THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# Statewide Strategic Planning Listening Sessions

# *Rock Springs, Wyoming*

# Friday, December 2, 2016

A community member stated that he was concerned about the number of students from the western part of the state who were attending universities in Utah instead of attending UW. He suggested that UW look to foster better relationships between the high school counselors, the community colleges, and UW so that students were encouraged to attend UW instead of schools outside of the state. The community member noted that upon arriving at the session he did not see any UW sponsored bulletin boards to encourage students to consider transferring to UW and it frustrated him as a citizen. He hoped that UW would look into this situation and rectify it so that students would decide to stay in the state instead of leaving.

Another community member added that many citizens on the western side of the state felt that the presence of UW was scarce. She added that UW was losing students to out of state universities because those universities had a large presence in Wyoming. The community member thanked President Nichols for the tremendous work she had done since arriving at UW.

A member of the community stated that the business incubator program had been working well in Laramie. He added that these same benefits had not been seen by many other communities in the state, noting that it could be incredibly beneficial to create a business incubator in the southwest corner of the state that could be utilized by community members in Rock Springs and Evanston. The community member added that increasing employment in the state would work to make Wyoming a more vibrant place to live and work.

A community member stated that she felt the 4-H programs across the state could be the solution to the number one problem facing UW; increased enrollment. She added that when students had participated in programs like 4-H that got them connected with students around the state and connected to the campus, there was no question that they would attend UW. The community member stated that the hardest aspect of that engagement was actually getting the students to campus. She explained that the distance from Laramie played a small role in that issue, but once groups got to Laramie it had become very cost prohibiting to conduct events on campus. The community member stated that overcoming that cost barrier prevented a large number of students from this part of the state from visiting UW. She added that she would like UW to continue to improve its distance education via outreach to improve the number of citizens in the state that held bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the state, as many citizens were site bound and required these distance education programs to receive these degrees.

Another community member suggested the UW no longer put off the implementation of a master’s in nursing program. She added that if this were put off for too much longer UW would miss out on a pool of students that were demanding that education.

A member of the community offered support for the continuation of the INBRE programs offered through UW. He explained that this was a great pipeline for students at the community colleges to UW, adding that he had four transition fellows through this grant that were completing research at UW based on the start the had received in his lab. The community member also suggested that UW consider the implementation of a 3 plus 1 transfer credit program for students who may have a more difficulty leaving their respective city to go to Laramie. He stated that previously this had been difficult based on logistics of outreach technology and expense issues. The community member stated that there were faculty members on the community college campus that were qualified to teach at the university level but were not allowed to teach 3000 level courses. He explained that by creating 3 plus 1 agreements this could be an avenue for UW to take down some barriers that had been put up between UW and the community colleges.

Another community member stated that one of her sons who attended UW was disabled and she was struggling with the fact that her family had struggled tremendously to get tutors for her son to receive additional help for his courses. She stated that she continued to be passed from office to office with no resolution to their problems, adding that over the past two years they had only received one tutor. The community member added that her son had also had difficulties with certain professors on campus that were unwilling to accommodate her son based on his 504 plan. She added that when she had tried to assist her son she was told the situation was none of her business and she should not be involved. President Nichols and Alyson Hagy stated that they would speak with the community member one on one following the session to get additional information on the situation so they could provide additional assistance.

A member of the community stated that she was looking at diversity, improvement of communities around the state, and attracting more people to come and stay in Wyoming. She added that the most tragic export in the state was the young citizens that left the state following graduation. The community member suggested that UW look to find a balance between STEM education and the liberal arts education, which would also assist with statewide economic diversification. She stated that UW should be allowed to set the agenda for that economic diversification as the flagship university in the state.

Another community member stated that many of the teachers across the state had received their degrees from UW and he wanted to stress the importance of these graduates to the state as a whole. He added that he supported the continuation of the Technical Education Program offered at UW. The community member stated that these types of educators were difficult to recruit to teach courses in wood shop, auto mechanics, welding, and applied engineering and science program. He added that the high schools were highly committed to keeping these programs available to its students and UW should look to continue to supply those educators to keep these programs alive. The community member added that if UW did not continue to produce these educators Wyoming schools would have to begin hiring educators from other states, which was not something they wanted to do.

A member of the community stated that UW needed to look at better preparing and producing more elementary education majors. He stated that many students were discouraged from receiving their elementary education degree at UW based on prerequisite courses and the additional fees associated with the program. The community member added that additionally if any teachers who taught in the Wyoming schools were looking to purse a master’s degree they struggled because of the course offers through the distance education programs. He added that UW needed to work with the citizens of the state to create a more flexible schedule for those participating in programs through outreach to progress these careers. The community member stated that the current 2 plus 2 programs were benefiting the students across the state and those needed to continue so that students were receiving the best education at the community colleges to prepare them for their course work at UW. He added that this program needed to continue as long as these 2 plus 2 programs were coordinated with the four year programs so that students were not required to retake courses. The community member stated that he appreciated the universities effort to implement the Hoyt scholarship but there should be a comprehensive scholarship program for all transfer students.

Another community member stated that UW should consider the continuation of tuition increases, as many students were currently finding better deals in the surround states.

A community member suggested that the community colleges and UW look to sign age waivers so that students currently in the high schools could get to the community colleges to start earning credit at a much younger age. He stated that this could increase the number of students that would consider attending college at UW through these experiences that they had with the campus. The community member also suggested that UW provide an online course that could transfer back to the high schools as an elective that would provide these students with a connection to UW from the beginning of their high school experience. He added that this could provide the admissions recruiters with data on these students earlier so that they could be better targeted through their continued efforts.

A member of the community asked what capital construction priorities were set for the University in the future. President Nichols provided a brief update on the current projects taking place on campus and noted that two priorities for UW would be to build a Science Initiative building and to completely renovate the University Residence Halls in the next five to ten years, although there were no current plans.

Another community member asked if UW had considered having a conversation with the superintendents across the state to make what was happening at the K-12 level resemble what was being done at the university level. He explained that the transition from high school to college was very difficult for students because the levels of education were so drastically different, which sometimes hindered the success of students attending UW. The community member stated that if the high schools could mirror what was being done at the University level it would benefit all involved.

A community member suggested that UW take a serious look into parking available across campus. She stated that this was a concept that was often offered but thought that this could be implemented through the strategic planning process. President Nichols stated that UW would consider implementing a parking study to better understand the needs at UW.

A member of the community stated that UW needed to better work to recruit students with disabilities. He explained that when students with disabilities were looking for schools to attend they based their decisions on which institution could best support their needs. The community member stated that often times these students receive grant funding to complete their education.