# THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# Statewide Strategic Planning Listening Sessions

# *Casper, Wyoming*

# Monday, December 5, 2016

A community member started by stated that one of the plans was to maintain offering undergraduate research to students, which was hard to accomplish when UW had outreach students transfer to Laramie to get the research experience. She stated that in Casper there was only one position and it was a lecture position, where they could not do research. She was wondering if there was a plan to figure out how to make that available to outreach students.

Another community member added that they had a student here at UW Casper, and she had the privilege to join the INBRE program, and the financial help was a huge relief. One thing that concerns her about college recruitment was not knowing how to enroll. She suggested possibly having a special session that taught students to apply for college and what they needed to do for their degree. The community member stated that many students from her hometown had no incentives to attend college because of the coal mines, but now that the mines were getting weaker there was higher incentives to get better jobs and she thought this was a good opportunity for UW to step in for these students who may not know what to do with their future.

Another community member wanted to share some preliminary research on the graduates of the 2 plus 2 program, in social work, where students did two years at Casper College and finished at UW Casper. In the last year as they started to reach out and find where the graduates were located, they had found therapists and case managers at the Casper Housing Authority, six graduates in the Natrona County Family Services, graduates who serve as directors with Interfaith and the Youth Crisis Center in Casper, nine therapists at the Central Wyoming Counseling Center, and graduates in both Glenrock Hospital and Wyoming Medical Center. Also the BSW program was the 4-year degree that was the professional degree to become licensed. She explained that those interns were having a profound impact on the Human Service Agencies in Natrona County, adding that anything to strengthen that program in Casper would be a good investment for the community as well as UW and the Community Colleges.

A community member commented that everyone in the rooms looked well-fed and they live in the only country that had a food supply that costs less than 10% of income, which was all done by primary producers. He added that the College of Agriculture at the University of Wyoming had a very long history. One thing he noticed was that they had a good figure of alumni from UW and where they were in Wyoming. He stated that that figure could be expanded to the US and the world. He explained that the graduates from the College of Agriculture were feeding people, providing energy for people, recreating, and living in Wyoming which was important. With the way things would change, energy would become more important and the coal miners would go back to work, because Wyoming provide energy for the world not just Wyoming. The community member added that UW and Wyoming did not just provide those substances, they provided the people that provided the substances. There were mentors in those careers that inspired people and made people hungry to learn more. He would just ask that the University remember the faculty, especially those who were inspirational and had shown they could not only bring in research grants, but could take these kids and build in them the idea of continuing their education would lead to their dreams.

Another community member added that Geology and extracting minerals was a very important industry in the state. He turned down many oil and gas companies to come to Wyoming because of the access he had to industry. He was one of three industry representatives, and they were not coming to hire geology students. They were sending people out to other schools to become experts on Wyoming geology. At one point they had one of the top departments and that was a natural competitive advantage they had, and they were risking losing it to recruiters from other schools to become experts on our state.

A community member complimented the staff for the strategic session. He was a banker, and also sat on the Board of Directors for the Casper Economic Development. He was especially encouraged by the fourth bullet point on the slide with UW being a research University. He felt like there was probably a lot of intellectual property developed there, and from an economic development standpoint he hoped to be able to collaborate in enhancing the movement of that property into entrepreneurial hands. UW could sell patents to generate revenue and royalty, which would essentially generate a revenue stream that could bring stable revenue back in. They were excited about the university being on board and the things going on.

Another community member added that he was fortunate to have done work on the campus. He was disappointed to have not talked about the Science Initiative. He had been involved with it, and they did research with the campus faculty to learn what their needs were for the facilities, and how they wanted to reach out and expand education and present it to students. One of the things he found exciting from the science staff was the K-12 outreach program in the state. He thought that was a great way to get those 91.8% high school graduates to get to Laramie or start at a community college and get to UW that way.

A community member added onto previous statements He stated that the minerals industry was the largest in Wyoming, adding that UW needed them and needed to do all it could to help them survive. He added that tourism was the second biggest industry in the state and Agriculture was the third. Agriculture in Wyoming was predominantly livestock but there was a significant portion that was the production of other things. In spite of agriculture being the third economic factor in the state, the College of Agriculture was a small college. He asked that as the strategic plan and budgets were considered, for the University to remember the land grant university mission, and since UW was a land grant institution it should operate as such. He added that citizens of the state and UW had been fortunate to have a good extension program, which needed to be maintained. He would encourage the University to do everything they could to maintain and enhance the extension programs. There were agriculture experiment stations in the state that were vital to the Agriculture industry, which depended on UW to survive. He also added that as a veterinary, the Vet Lab under the College of Agriculture was also vital to the state. Wyoming did not have a veterinary college, so livestock producers depended on the vet lab. The community member believed that it was important not only to Wyoming but to the country that it was maintained. He brought up how it had been suggested that if positions were vacated they may not be refilled. The community member added that within the lab there were people at retirement age, who were vital to the lab, if those positons were not refilled the lab would likely loose accreditation. He would encourage the University to consider that as the budget moved forward.

Another community member added that he would like with the cutting of programs, the University to consider the demands and needs in Wyoming and the nation for Technical Education Instructors. The program through UW was one of the few programs in the US, which produced a majority of students that taught these subjects across the country. Over half of the Career and Technical Education teachers in Casper had graduated from that program. He restated how there was only a handful of these programs, and the demand was high for these teachers. He stated that when considering cutting programs, the numbers for this one may not be large, but the demand for those students was very high.

A community member also added his opinions of what cutting that program would look like. He mentioned that when wanting to reach K-12 students, some of these programs were going to keep those students in school. There were statistics that when looking beyond the people working in Natrona County and across the nation as CTE teachers, they were going to start retiring. That would create a domino effect which would force the programs to be shut down, and it was hard to get the programs started again. Similarly, with baby boomers retiring from the automotive industry, someone would need to replace those technicians. The interest for that started in high school, and UW needed to look at that in the light and look at connecting better with the K-12 system.

A member of the community asked that as UW continued this process that they had better and deeper conversations with the advisory boards for the community colleges, the school districts, and members of the communities that were living their struggles every day. Through these conversations he hoped that UW would have a better understanding of what was going on behind the scenes and in the trenches that could help them better support these groups in the future. He added that he believed it was better to boom and bust than to not boom as all. The community member added that if UW continued to cut from its budget that damage might be done to areas that truly benefited the state and the university.

A community member that was a graduate of the College of Agriculture agreed with the previous statements adding that the University needed to continue to broaden the education provided to its students. He explained that he had received a well-rounded education which had allowed him to enter a field outside of his degree. The community member added that it was critical for UW to continue to offer leadership opportunities through units that were already on campus such as the SLCE office. He added that in the job market, skills outside of student’s degree programs were a critical component to whether they were hired or not.

A member of the community stated that they believed that CAEDA had set up a great model that could be used statewide to look at economic diversification. She explained that there were certain workforce needs the state that could work toward filling to keep more UW graduates in the state upon graduation.

A community member expressed support for the UW extension programs. He explained that those services were the entrance into the University for many citizens across the state. The community member added that often times these programs provided advice to producers in the Agriculture Industry to better the services they were providing to the state. He added that this would also include continued support of the 4-H program available around the state, adding that those experiences were providing kids with valuable life skills that would also get them connected to UW from a young age.

A member of the community stated that she was in charge of one of the low enrollment programs that was under consideration for elimination. She wanted to make sure that those in charge at UW understood that just because there were low enrollment numbers it did not mean that these programs had low impact. The community member explained that there were students in her program and the program itself that were nationally recognized and they were champions in events surrounding the teaching of CTE programs. She explained that theses student were the ones that would go on to teach the students of Wyoming in the high schools. The community member expressed a large concern that this program would be eliminated even though it was beneficial to the entire state. She added that many of the students in the CTE teaching program at UW were born and raised in Wyoming and wanted to stay in the state following graduation to assist with the growth and diversification of the state. The community member also commented on the transfer credit process. She explained that UW should look into a consortium agreement with the community colleges to make sending transcripts from institution to institution easier, which would convince more students to transfer to UW.

A faculty member present at the session wanted to stress the importance of the Technical Education Program, especially within the communities around the state. He explained that this group was incredibly active in bettering the University and the communities, noting that this group may have been small but they were incredibly strong. The community member added that his degree had been small because it had been underrepresented at the University, noting that many students did not even know that the program existed.

A member of the community suggested that UW consider asking the students around the state what they wanted to see from the University as it drafted its Strategic Plan. He also added that UW had not been doing a good job of sharing their stories with the citizens of the state, noting that there were too many people that did not know what was going on at the University. The community member added that he had felt as though there had been a demotivating factor for faculty to engage in outreach, mainly they did not want to travel around the state. He suggested that UW look to incentivize the faculty to better engage in these efforts.

A community member stated that medical education that was provided to students at UW was critically important, adding that he felt as though people around the state were unaware of programs such as WWAMI that gave these students the opportunity to attend medical schools across the country upon finishing their degrees at UW. He added that the students in the Residency Programs in Casper and Cheyenne provided a good quality of medical care. The community member suggested that UW look at a better budget allocation for medical education that would be fully functioning in FY19-20. He added that it was important to remember that Wyoming was lacking in doctors and programs like these could assist with the workforce need, noting that their funding should be continued.

A member of the community suggested that UW look to partner with the middle schools in the state to begin the college recruiting process. She explained that these teachers played a huge role in student’s decisions to attend college and where to attend. The community member also expressed support for the Science and Math Teaching Center, as it greatly benefited teachers graduating from UW.

A community member stated that he was disturbed by the amount of money that UW spent on its athletics programs. He suggested that UW look to make deeper and more dramatic cuts to the athletic programs at UW, adding that students were attending UW to receive an education.

Another community member stated that UW should consider offering full 4-year degree programs through UW Casper so that students could transfer to UW while still having the ability to stay in Casper.

A member of the community stated that he understood the difficult budget times that were facing UW, however he asked that UW look to not make any deeper or more drastic cuts to the UW Athletics. He explained that he was a former UW football player and the skills and opportunities that he gained from participating in athletics had been invaluable to his overall success. The community member added that the atmosphere at War Memorial Stadium had been electric during the season and it was an aspect that would assist with recruitment and retention of all UW students. He added that these programs assisted the University with revenue. The community member stated that he understood his fellow community members concerns but UW Athletics was a critical part to the University’s future.