# THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# Statewide Strategic Planning Listening Sessions

# *Riverton, Wyoming*

# Wednesday, December 5, 2016

A member of the community asked what criteria was being used to decide if a program was worthy of elimination. She stated that she was concerned with services provided for students attending the University, adding that providing good services to students assisted in their retention by the University. The community member explained a good service that was currently provided to the students at UW was the Student Health Service. She asked University President Nichols if she would address examples of how the students’ academic life had benefited based on providing those types of services. The community member specially asked how the University intended to proceed with strategies to maintain these services across campus.

University President Laurie Nichols stated that the Student Health Service was a strong service provided on the UW campus and there were no current plans to proceed in any other manner than to continue the strong services provided. She added that staffing had been evaluated across campus in an effort to become efficient and reduce the amount of inefficiencies. University President Nichols stated that if there was any excess staffing that has been identified sometimes those areas were targeted in an effort to get staffing to a level that was in line with industry standards, which was the case in Student Health Service.

A community member stated that the presentation given by the University President and other UW Staff was mainly vocational and he was concerned about education for the long term and making students better citizens for the state. He added that often times residence of the state did not want to focus on anything taking place outside of the state borders and the University needed to work to broaden the horizons of all students at the University.

A member of the community stated that he was interested in the statistics pertaining to citizens of the state that held bachelor’s degrees compared to those that held a high school diploma. He asked if the state of Wyoming was weak in their high school curriculum leading to student receiving a diploma or was UW weak in the bachelor’s degrees offered. The community member asked how many of the incoming freshman class required remediation upon arrival at UW, suggesting that there needed to be conversations taking place at UW to figure out how to strengthen the number of Wyoming resident that held a bachelor’s degree.

University President Nichols stated that this session was an effort to collect as much information from around the state as possible and she did not want to take time away from the community members by responding to each questions individually. She suggested that if any members of the community wanted specific answers that she would take a few moments following the session to speak with them one on one.

A community member stated that they believed that there was such a drop from those that held a high school diploma to those that held bachelor’s degrees because of the large number of students who needed remediation, often satisfied through the Community Colleges around the state. He stated that on average 2/3 of Wyoming High School Students required remediated courses after graduating from high school. The community member suggested retrieving more data on this topic since it was an incredibly important issue for the state.

University President Nichols stated that many students across the state would begin their post-secondary education at a community college. She added that if this was the entry point for these students it was UW’s job to then work to recruit these students to transfer to UW when they were ready to complete their degrees. University President Nichols stated that the second component of the difference in these numbers was that many graduates of UW were lost to jobs outside of the state of Wyoming. She added that UW was graduating a strong number of graduates but they were leaving to maintain their livelihood, which became a part of the overall state economic picture.

A member of the community stated that in their job the growth of the Outreach Programs was a critical issue. She said that when UW looked at the community of Riverton it needed to take into consideration the community college students and the nontraditional aged students, she added that many of these individuals had families and were unable to move to Laramie to pursue their education. The community member suggested that there be some growth in the programs that were offered by the Outreach School through distance education.

A community member explained that there was a large population of young students who lived on the Wind River Indian Reservation who wanted to attend college and were being encouraged to do so by the elders on the reservation. He explained that once students get involved and decide to complete at bachelor’s degree at Central Wyoming College or at UW there needed to be more cultural sensitivity for those students. The community member stated that there were a variety of issues that needed to be better understood as students attended UW, including developments in the curriculum and the education provided. He noted that the position of Diversity Coordinator had been introduced by the previous administration and was probably still under consideration. The community member added that there had been some students at UW that had graduated but had not had the enthusiasm necessary because they felt as though they were being chastised by those in the UW and Laramie communities. He suggested that these cultural sensitivities be better investigated to better the educational experience of all students. The community member also suggested that the UW Extension Offices begin working with the reservation to conduct more agriculture related work.

A community member suggested there be an implementation of additional degree programs offered through the Outreach School and distance learning programs.

Another community member expressed frustration with the current advising that took place at UW. He added that it seemed that UW should be able to tell students which classes to take and in which order so that they would remain on track to graduate in the four-year time frame.

Interim Dean of the Outreach School Alyson Hagy noted that there were new four-year guide sheets for all degrees, that were available on the University Website.

University President Laurie Nichols added that there were three large goals that she would like to see implemented including enrollment growth, improved retention, and an improved graduation rate in the four year-time frame.

A member of the community suggested that in an effort to increase the number of Native American students present on campus there be a recruiter of Native American decent located in Riverton to work with local students. He suggested that UW work to expand their community college programs to encourage students to get their degrees from UW instead of out of state colleges that would services areas that were not close to Laramie.

A community member stated that UW begin working with the high schools across the state to better prepare students to begin college and reduce the amount of remedial course work that was required. She added in response to previous comments about the cultural sensitivity needed on campus, adding that faculty and staff should receive additional training to ensure this sensitivity was taken seriously and applied to all situations.

A member of the community expressed support for the Masters in Adult Learning and Education that was offered through the College of Education. She stated that many people across the state were working to pursue that degree because they were sight bond and could not move to Laramie. The community member added that this program was incredibly beneficial to the state and should be offered moving forward.

A community member suggested that UW begin looking to implement Solar and Wind Energy Development courses.

A member of the community stated that he had struggled with bringing groups of young students to campus during the summer to partake in different conferences and camps, noting that these efforts were their greatest ability to help recruit students to UW and get them excited about being on campus. He added that his group had felt unwelcome to stay in the University Residence Halls because other camps and conferences had taken priority. The community member noted that in his experience it had been less expensive for his group to stay in local hotels during these visits, which did not get the student excited about UW like these opportunities should.

A community member stated that he would like to see additional conversations had regarding the funding of WWAMI students to attend school in other parts of the country. He added that he would like to see the students who graduated with teaching degrees from UW become Teacher of the Year following graduation, adding that the passion was present to achieve this.

A member of the community stated that the transfer credit process as it had been in the past was a large deterrent for students wanting to attend UW but not wanting to repeat course work that had already been completed at a community college. He added that it would be important for UW to increase the priority of the transfer credit process as they worked though the Strategic Plan.

A community member added that in addition to the new transfer scholarships that were being proposed by UW they should look into alumni based scholarships for these students. She added that currently alumni scholarships only were offered to students attending UW as a freshman.

A member of the community stated that UW had done a great job of bringing in professors with strong research capabilities, but one challenge had been for Wyoming students that had not been widely exposed to diversity working with professors that they were unable to understand.

A community member stated that UW should take into consideration offering free tuition to Native American students.

A community member asked what types of new programs were being explored by UW to assist with economic diversification. University President Nichols stated that UW was looking at programs that were not maintaining enrollment to sustain long term and programs that were not being offered but should be based on needs of the state like tourism. She added that this effort would look to change the work force shortage in specific areas. University President Nichols noted that increasing programs in entrepreneurship and computer sciences were also being discussed in an effort to diversify Wyoming’s economy.

A member of the community offered support for the continuation of the NPR programs offered through Wyoming Public Media.

A community member expressed concern regarding sexual assault on campus and asked what measures were being implemented to decrease the number of incidents.

Dean of Students Sean Blackburn stated that last year a new program was launched to provide training during the UW Summer Orientation.

A member of the community suggested a partnerships between Central Wyoming College and UW to assist with trainings regarding the Native American student population for faculty and staff.

A community member suggested that UW work to provide a space on campus where cultural activities, studying, and gathering of Native American students could take place, adding that such a center would be increasingly beneficial to recruitment.