The university planning process now underway will define our university for the next six years and create a foundation for its progress over the next few decades. I wish to encourage faculty, staff, and students to participate actively in this process. The resulting programmatic and resource plan will be an evolving document, updated as needed, and a baseline for program, capital, and fiscal decision making. It will establish metrics by which we will assess our collective progress toward achieving the institutional goals and unit objectives defined during the process.

Background and Goals

As we plan, I would ask that each of us constantly keep in mind the broad purpose of any university. Numerous and learned definitions of a university’s purpose exist, but practically all of them settle around a single theme that can be simply stated as follows:

Transmitting inherited knowledge, while simultaneously building on what is known and correcting the errors of the past.1

In one way or another, each one of us at UW is engaged in this endeavor. It is a noble one—perhaps the most noble in which human beings can engage.

UW engages in this endeavor with the dual responsibilities of being a land grant institution and a flagship research university. The land grant responsibility demands that UW provide for the liberal and practical education of the people of Wyoming, with the purpose of enabling them to achieve steadily improving levels of income and well-being, both individually and collectively. The flagship research responsibility demands that UW undertake research that creates new knowledge beneficial to the citizens and economy of Wyoming and beyond. Wyoming’s Governor and Legislature have elaborated on this latter mission by calling upon UW to become a superior “academic and research institution in areas of excellence appropriate for Wyoming”2 and to achieve “full integration of UW operations where seamless programmatic and asset integration is accomplished by lasting productive partnerships with the state and national agencies as well as industry.”3

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2 Mead, Matthew H., letter to the President of the University of Wyoming, May 25, 2012.
3 Mead, Matthew H., letter to the President of the University of Wyoming, August 23, 2013.
In my mind, the foregoing responsibilities translate into the following three goals. I ask that each of us keep all of them in mind as we proceed with our planning process.

- **Students** leaving UW will be prepared to compete and succeed in a global economy, and believe that there are no limits to what they can learn and do.
- UW will achieve measurable and improving **excellence in academics** (teaching, research, graduate degrees, creation of new knowledge) in its defined areas of academic distinction.
- UW will steadily improve its **statewide engagement**, to further the well-being of citizens across the state in defined and measurable ways.

Everything we do must be directed toward achieving one or more of these goals.

**Academic and Administrative Unit Plans**

In planning to achieve the three goals articulated above, each **academic unit** within UW must ask itself—and answer—the following questions (five pages or less, including exhibits):

1. What is the current status of your college or unit? Information to include:
   - Constituencies served and constituent needs addressed;
   - Degree programs offered and degrees actually granted in academic year 2012-2013;
   - Faculty and staff numbers and deployment by department and discipline;
   - Student majors, current academic year;
   - Faculty papers accepted for publication and research grant funding, academic year 2012-2013;
   - Significant services rendered to Wyoming citizens, academic year 2013-2014;
   - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges by department.
2. What are the major programmatic goals of your college or unit over the 2015-2020 plan period? Why? What will be the benefits of successfully achieving these goals to the people of Wyoming, the students, and the faculty? Be as specific and quantitative as possible.
3. Given the major goals of your college or unit over the plan period, what specific actions need to be taken, year-by-year over the plan period, to achieve these goals?
4. What resources (faculty, staff, facilities, funding) must be acquired or redeployed over the plan period for your college or unit to undertake the actions identified in 3 above? What assistance will you need to acquire or redeploy resources?
5. What is your succession plan for the principal administrative positions (dean, associate deans, department heads) in your college or unit over the plan period?
Similarly, each **administrative unit** must ask itself—and answer—the following questions (five pages or less, including exhibits):

1. What is our mission, what needs do we serve, and what assets do we employ?
2. What should be our major programmatic objectives for the next six years? How and what do these objectives contribute to achieving the three goals defined above?
3. What actions must be taken to achieve these objectives? In what order? When?
4. What resources are needed to achieve these objectives? When? How shall progress toward their achievement be measured?
5. What are the benefits to UW and the citizens of Wyoming in the three major theme areas?

**Timeline**

Over the next six months, all academic deans and directors, members of the Executive Council, and the leadership of the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate and ASUW will work together in this effort. We will follow a timeline that will allow for extensive conversations during this period. In April, academic unit draft plans will be assembled in the Office of Academic Affairs, and administrative unit plans will be assembled in the Office of the President. In May and June, feedback will be gathered from university and external constituencies to ensure relevance and to permit integration. In July, the draft university plan will be shared with the Board of Trustees, with the intention of finalizing our plan in September with Board of Trustee approval.

**January – February:** Monthly planning meetings with Executive Council; Deans and Directors; and Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and ASUW leadership.

First planning meeting will focus on a discussion of:

1. The three major goals for planning:
   - Prepared students
   - Academic excellence
   - Statewide engagement
2. Institutional and environmental overview (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges; economic, societal, and technological trends)
3. Timeline and process

Subsequent planning meetings:

1. Continue analysis of environment and trends
2. Discuss unit objectives
3. Discuss how to integrate action plans, resource requirements, timelines
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February – March: Each academic or administrative unit develops plans, including action, resources needed, timeline, and assessment. Continue to have institutional discussions about areas of collaboration and where to support priorities of mutual interest.

April: Compile draft plans and post on UW website for internal and external comment. Hold town hall meetings in key locations around the state.

May – June: Revise plans as needed. Engage the Board of Trustees to seek feedback on draft plans.

July: Discussion of institutional and unit draft plans with Board of Trustees.

September: Board of Trustees considers final plan.

I look forward to hearing the ideas that will emanate from across the university during this process. I thank you in advance for your contributions to this important effort.