



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# ACADEMIC

PLAN 2004-2009 III



# Dear colleague

I am pleased to send this executive summary of the university's Academic Plan II for 2004-2009. I am even more pleased to report that it is the product of extensive campus-wide and public discussion and deliberation. It was developed through the efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators, in concert with planning done in individual academic colleges, departments, programs and support units. Academic Plan II reflects an effort to integrate the individual and composite planning efforts of all of these units at the institution level.

APII is UW's vision for the future. It describes the challenges ahead and articulates a set of concrete measures, all of which advance both the university's commitment to the people of Wyoming and its academic stature. The action items listed represent our best thinking about how to achieve these ends. We will look to this document as we make decisions and allocate resources, and we will continue to operate in a climate that encourages open debate and forthright implementation. Consistent with our first strategic plan, we will continue to provide yearly reports on our progress.

This executive summary contains only a skeletal description of the actions to be undertaken and the rationale behind them. The detailed text of APII, the college-level plans, unit plans, and the plans of individual academic departments are all contained on the enclosed CD. We encourage you to examine all of these documents in greater detail.

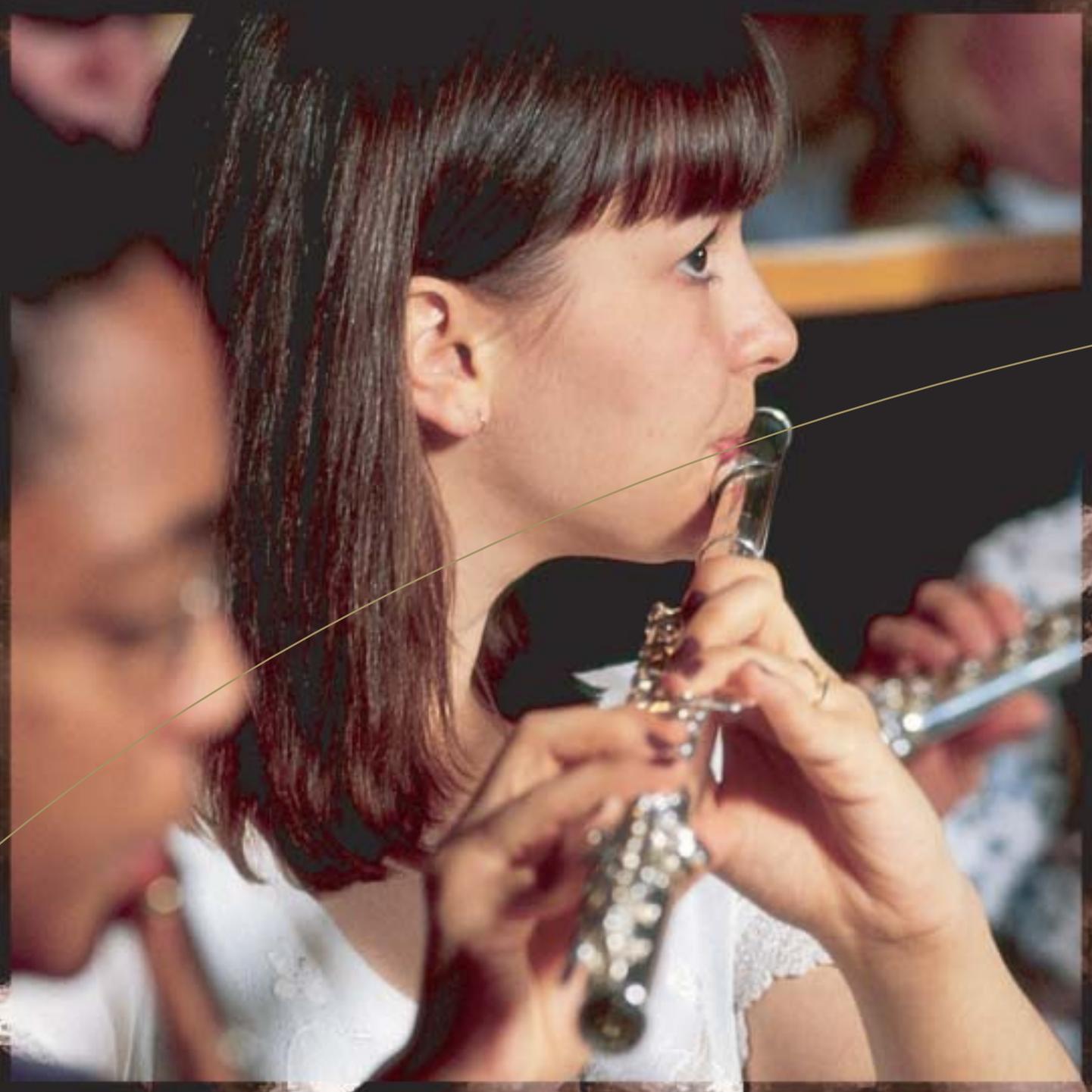
I welcome your suggestions and feedback as we undertake the *real* work: implementing the plan.

Sincerely,



Tom Buchanan  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

*On behalf of the hundreds of faculty members, academic professionals, staff, administrators, and interested citizens who have contributed to this vision.*



# I. Introduction

At the University of Wyoming, strategic planning starts with academics. *The University of Wyoming Academic Plan II 2004-2009* will guide the institution's efforts to advance its teaching, research, and service missions. It will be implemented in tandem with college and department plans. And, like the *UW Academic Plan I 1999-2004*, it will set priorities for the institution's support-service and capital facilities plans.

To frame the planning process, the Office of Academic Affairs produced and circulated three successive drafts of *Moving Forward* to the university community and its constituents. Each new draft reflected feedback from this audience. These documents delineated areas of distinction and sketched issues to be addressed at all levels. In December 2003, a draft of the *UW Academic Plan II* was distributed for review and input. In re-

sponse to hundreds of comments and suggestions, Academic Affairs revised the plan and submitted it to the Board of Trustees for approval in the spring of 2004.

At the heart of the plan are: (1) a set of **areas of distinction**, which define the academic strengths that the institution will continue to emphasize, and (2) a set of **institutional issues**, which are core challenges that the university must address to continue advancing its mission. For each area of distinction or institutional issue, the plan identifies a set of concrete action items, described only briefly in this executive summary. Some of the action items are simple and easily implemented. Others will require in-depth discussion, significant resource shifts, or the development of policy statements. To track progress, Academic Affairs will publish an annual report to identify action items that have been initiated or completed.



There are six areas of distinction—essentially the same as those defined in the *UW Academic Plan I 1999-2004*:

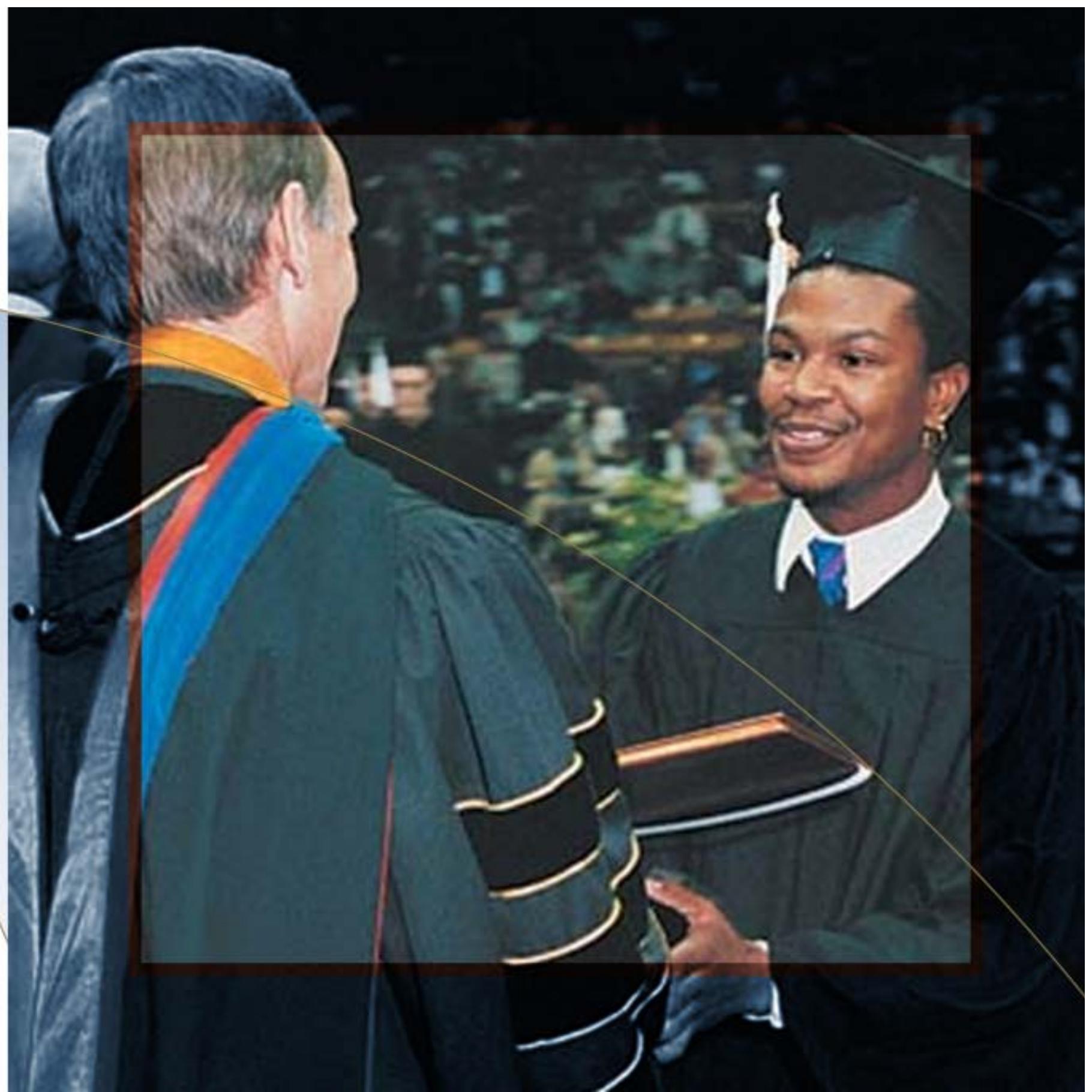
1. Cultural endeavors, the arts, and the humanities
2. Environment and natural resources
3. History and culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region
4. Life sciences
5. Professions and issues critical to the region
6. Science and technology.

These areas are sufficient in number and scope to allow most academic programs to contribute.

The plan also defines eight issues that challenge the institution:

1. The learning environment
2. Scholarship and graduate education
3. Diversity, internationalization, and access
4. Structure of the curriculum
5. Faculty development and program planning
6. Educational infrastructure
7. Outreach, extension, and community service
8. Enrollment management.

The remainder of this document summarizes the specific actions proposed for these areas of distinction and institutional issues.





## II. Areas of Distinction

### Cultural Endeavors, the Arts, and the Humanities

To maintain its position as the state's leader in the arts and humanities, UW must continue to cultivate these disciplines.

Undergraduate programs in the humanities and the arts are excellent, and student enrollments continue to grow. Writing and oral communication must become significant curricular commitments and, as discussed further in Section VI, we support the English Department's growing emphasis on creative writing. In addition, UW must take better advantage of the cultural assets of the Art Museum, the American Heritage Center, and the University Libraries. Cooperation among the units, as well as clarification of responsibilities, will promote more vigorous contributions to the university's academic life and facilitate better outreach to the state and the region.

#### Action items:

1. Form a cultural assets working group.
2. Expand student internship opportunities.
3. Enhance classroom teaching roles for librarians, archivists, and Art Museum professionals.
4. Emphasize writing and oral communication in existing curricula.

### Environment and Natural Resources

UW has made great strides in ENR-related teaching and scholarship. The institution's base of expertise in ENR has historical depth and disciplinary breadth that reach far beyond such formal structures as the School and Ruckleshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources. Many mainstream disciplines are fundamental to teaching and research in this area and require more consistent support, whether or not they are involved with the School or Institute. We intend

to support interdisciplinary scholarship in environmental and natural-resource economics, sustainable agriculture, land resources, rural communities, water, energy resources, parks, and pristine large-scale ecosystems. Linking ENR activities with International Programs and expanding ENR-related connections between UW and K-12 schools will also help bolster UW's presence in this area.

Action items:

5. Continue to emphasize ENR.
6. Enhance ENR interaction and collaboration.

## History and Culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain Region

The university has considerable momentum in this area, with the expansion of Anthropology, the holdings in American Indian history, and a tradition of expertise in the history of the American West. The History Department has taken steps to broaden its reach through intellectual ties with Religious Studies.

Action items:

7. Expand the AHC's curricular support, and enhance its national presence.
8. Develop interdisciplinary coursework in regional human ecology.



American Heritage Center Photo - Casper, Wyoming, 1912

## Life Sciences

The life sciences constitute one of UW's historic strengths. At the undergraduate level, life-science faculty members have developed a restructured core curriculum in biology. In addition, the plan proposes a more coherent structure for the undergraduate program in microbiology.

At the level of graduate education and research, the life sciences have changed dramatically — perhaps more so than any other major branch of science — since most of UW's Ph.D. programs were first established. Discussions among faculty leaders, department heads, college deans, and central administrators suggest four major focus areas for graduate education and research in the life sciences:

- neuroscience
- reproductive biology
- ecology
- molecular and cellular life sciences.

These areas are disparate in scope and maturity; hence, they warrant different types of actions.



Photo by Micki Hamende

Action items:

9. Implement revised biology core curriculum.
10. Support the neuroscience Ph.D.
11. Set targets for faculty staffing in reproductive biology.
12. Advance an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in ecology.
13. Establish staffing targets in ecology.
14. Coordinate institutional assets in ecology and environmental sciences.



15. Assess the viability of a Ph.D. in molecular and cellular life sciences.
16. Refine the life-science doctoral offerings.
17. Develop a microbiology staffing plan.
18. Establish management responsibility for microbiology.

## Professions and Issues Critical to the Region

Professional programs are critical to Wyoming's workforce. Among the most important examples are teacher education, business, the health-care professions, and law. Yet these programs face many com-

mon issues, including the need for better alignment between student demand and areas of state need, the need for better integration of programs that have shared affinities, and the need to balance clinical and service responsibilities with classroom teaching and research. The institution must focus on special issues affecting rural communities in the sparsely populated Mountain West and the accreditation demands of many professional programs.

Action items:

19. Codify the tenure and promotion expectations in education.
20. Establish incentives for areas of critical need in teacher education.
21. Align content standards with teacher-preparation standards, and streamline bachelor's-plus-master's programs.
22. Coordinate programs in childhood and youth development and family life.
23. Integrate e.Business and differential tuition into the M.B.A. program.
24. Explore cross-college 4+1 M.B.A. programs.
25. Increase the supply of nursing Ph.D.s.
26. Develop a differential tuition plan in Pharmacy.
27. Coordinate WWAMI and WICHE medical education programs.

28. Develop a clinical practice plan for graduate medical education.
29. Increase the tuition differential in Law.

## Science and Technology

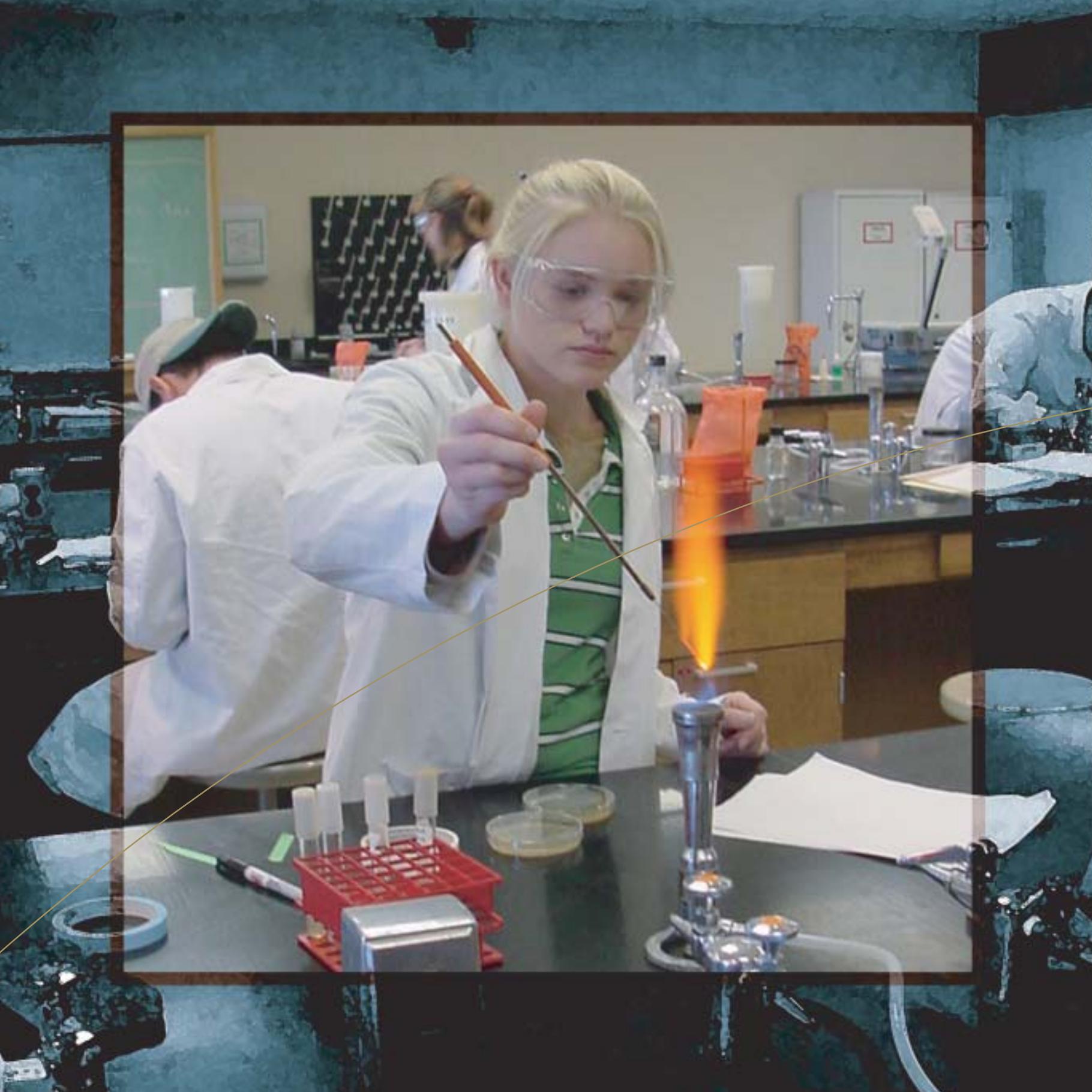
The time is ripe to strengthen three broad areas of science and technology of importance to Wyoming's future:

- earth and energy science
- materials science
- computational science.

Several departments have historically had internationally recognized and well funded research in these areas. Others have maintained nuclei of expertise, although they have fluctuated in strength. Some units have the potential for greater contributions. The plan includes several action items that will help build a stronger presence in these areas.

Action items:

30. Develop an earth-systems science curriculum.
31. Earmark faculty positions for the future development of geographic information science and earth and energy sciences.
32. Complete a feasibility study for a center for earth and energy science.
33. Commission a materials-science prospectus.
34. Earmark faculty positions for the future development of computational science.



# III. Institutional Issues: The Learning Environment

The plan identifies four issues associated with the learning environment: (1) students' preparation for university-level education; (2) the institution's commitment to personalized, connected education; (3) the establishment of an academic success center; and (4) the assessment of student learning.

The university has a responsibility to work with K-12 educators to prepare students for university-level learning. Wyoming has enormous advantages in this arena because of its scale and the richness of its existing educational networks. One of UW's distinctive assets is the capacity to offer personalized, connected education in the setting of a research university. Initiatives to build on this capacity include expanding UW's learning communities, furnishing greater opportunities for inquiry-based learning, and exploring measures to make large classes more effective. The plan proposes an academic

success center, called the Learning Resource Network (LeaRN), to connect all students with learning resources beyond the classroom. It also emphasizes assessment of student learning at the level of academic programs. Effective assessment guides course sequencing, promotes effective articulation across the curriculum, showcases truly excellent teaching, and identifies avenues for improvement.

Action items:

### ***Preparing for a Successful University Education***

35. Schedule a yearly meeting for K-16 administrators.
36. Include high-school teachers in articulation conferences.
37. Involve faculty in the principal-counselor conferences.
38. Promote K-16 data systems to track educational performance.



- 39. Investigate faculty internships for high-school teachers.
- 40. Support summer residential programs for high-school students.

***Providing a Personalized, Connected Education***

- 41. Examine resource commitments to the Honors Program.
- 42. Provide greater support for successful learning-community projects.
- 43. Assess effectiveness of learning communities.
- 44. Enhance teaching in large classes.

***Establishing an Academic Success Center***

- 45. Appoint an advisory council to guide the Learning Resource Network (LeaRN).

- 46. Fund and staff the LeaRN proposal.
- 47. Renovate Coe Library to accommodate LeaRN.
- 48. Provide institution-level funding for a director of the Math Lab.
- 49. Examine reading lab models.
- 50. Reorganize the federal work-study program.
- 51. Make LeaRN accessible to off-campus students.

***Assessing Student Learning***

- 52. Complete the assessment cycle by AY 2007.
- 53. Organize workshops to guide departmental assessment activities.
- 54. Develop an assessment plan for the University Studies Program (USP).







# IV. Institutional Issues: Scholarship and Graduate Education

Expanding knowledge, developing new applications of existing knowledge, and nurturing creative activity are among the central functions of research universities. These activities, subsumed under the term scholarship, are core responsibilities of faculty members. Strong scholarship is also essential to vibrant graduate programs. To enhance UW's stature as a research university requires thoughtful attention to bolstering graduate education, strengthening interdisciplinary support for the areas of distinction, and planning research infrastructure.

Issues associated with graduate education include the structure and function of the Graduate School, the small number of graduate programs that enjoy national prominence, and UW's culture of graduate-level assessment. Strengthening interdisciplinarity, in the form of cross-departmental and cross-college ties, will help achieve and sustain scholarly depth in graduate programs and research. Planning for research infrastructure involves careful budgeting, continued pursuit of institution-level external awards, and accountability for investments in research.

Continued coordination between the Offices of Research and Academic Affairs is essential in all three tasks.

Action items:

### ***Bolstering Graduate Education***

55. Develop graduate-program goals for all graduate degrees.
56. Involve the Graduate School in the tenure and promotion process.
57. Evaluate the Graduate School's function in recruitment.
58. Advance the assessment of graduate programs.

### ***Strengthening Interdisciplinarity***

59. Expand the responsibility of the Graduate School.
60. Set aside graduate assistantships for innovative and interdisciplinary graduate programs.

### ***Planning for Research Infrastructure***

61. Pursue matching funds for programmatic federal grant opportunities.
62. Track the external funding secured by faculty receiving start-up funding.

## V. Institutional Issues: Diversity, Internationalization, and Access

Diversity, internationalization, and access share, as a common thread, the richness and inclusiveness of the university community. These issues have important implications for recruitment and hiring practices, outreach efforts, and resource-allocation decisions. They also must play significant roles in the curriculum.

The institution faces persistent challenges in maintaining a diverse and inclusive community. Among the greatest of these challenges are the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty and the infusion of diverse perspectives into the curriculum. Also, while UW has recognized the importance of international perspectives in higher education, the university still faces curricular tension in counterbalancing the distinctive culture of the Mountain West with the rich array of cultures that characterize both the global community of scholars and the internationally diverse workforce our students will enter. It is essential to enhance the number of international experiences available for UW students. It is equally critical to overcome the practical barriers—such as immigration procedures and language skills—that often discourage international scholars and students. Finally, promoting accessibility for site-bound and non-traditional students, as well as those with special financial or physical needs, is at the core of UW's public, land-grant mission.

Action items:

### ***Enhancing Diversity***

63. Clarify diversity-related hiring policies.
64. Strengthen American Indian Studies, African-American Studies, and Chicano Studies.
65. Highlight diversity-related courses.
66. Build a broad-based curriculum in diversity and internationalization.
67. Involve the Faculty Senate in promoting and retaining a diverse faculty.
68. Review and enhance UW's *Affirmative Action Plan*.

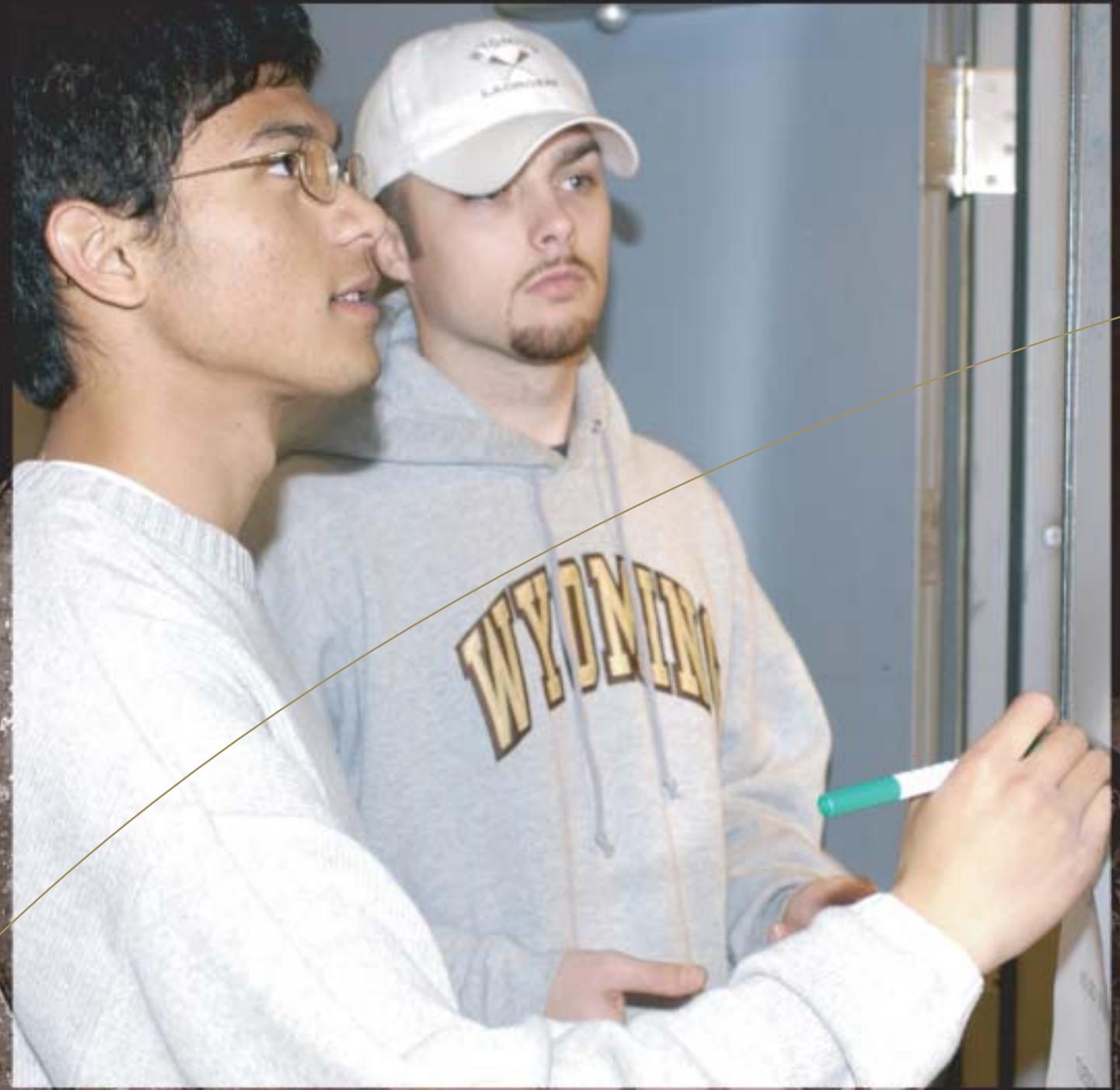
### ***Expanding Internationalization***

69. Develop institution-level strategies for recruiting international students.
70. Consider co-locating programs and services related to international affairs.
71. Enhance instruction in English as a second language.
72. Support summer opportunities for students to study, work, and travel abroad.

### ***Increasing Access***

73. Offer permanent support for faculty outreach positions.
74. Support the graduate-level disability certificate and minor in the Wyoming INstitute for Disabilities (WIND).





# VI. Institutional Issues: Structure of the Curriculum

Every university faces a never-ending mandate to align its curriculum with rapidly evolving disciplinary needs, new instructional paradigms, and institutional aspirations. Curricular structure should ultimately be driven by carefully crafted learning goals, academic rigor, and a commitment to student engagement and measurable academic success. At UW, the curriculum should also capitalize on areas of distinction and interdisciplinarity.

The curriculum must also be reasonable in scope. Focused undergraduates who pursue full-time study should be able to finish the baccalaureate in four years. Because degree requirements are not the sole factor in time-to-degree statistics, an analysis of an array of factors is in order. Five issues are germane to such analysis: (1) the scope of undergraduate requirements, (2) the University Studies Program, (3) the breadth and complexity of the curriculum, (4) the criteria for evaluating new interdisciplinary program proposals, and (5) the process by which we review undergraduate and graduate programs.

Action items:

### ***Reviewing Undergraduate Requirements***

75. Analyze the time taken to complete degrees.

### ***Improving the University Studies Program***

76. Design and implement a writing placement system.

77. Support faculty interested in teaching oral communication courses.

78. Integrate information literacy requirements into the USP.

79. Develop cross-disciplinary physical and earth-science courses.

80. Develop cross-disciplinary cultural context courses.

81. Monitor the adequacy and curricular impacts of the newly revised USP.

82. Pilot courses to enhance civic engagement.

83. Promote bridges between the sciences and the humanities.

### ***Analyzing Curricular Breadth and Complexity***

84. Eliminate specific bachelor's and master's degrees.

85. Discontinue unused courses that lack justification.

86. Identify hidden credit requirements for upper-division courses.

### ***Evaluating Interdisciplinary Program Proposals***

87. Add an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in ecology, an M.F.A. in creative writing, and a B.S. in earth-systems science.

88. Coordinate cross-college undergraduate interdisciplinary studies.

### ***Reviewing Programs***

89. Integrate program review with academic planning.

# VII. Institutional Issues: Faculty Development and Program Planning

The most difficult issues that many academic units face are the finite budgets for faculty positions and the tensions created by efforts to initiate new programs and enhance existing ones. Specific issues associated with the management of faculty resources include the consistency of faculty job descriptions, the utility of UW's post-tenure review regulation, and fine-tuning of the processes for faculty re-appointment, tenure, and promotion.

Budgeting for faculty positions, workforce governance, and program planning at the college level are inextricably linked. Among the tools available to assure the optimal use of the faculty workforce are (1) steadfast adherence to carefully circumscribed areas of distinction, (2) increased commitments to interdisciplinary and cross-college endeavors, and (3) regular curricular review and modification.

Action items:

## ***Budgeting for Faculty Positions***

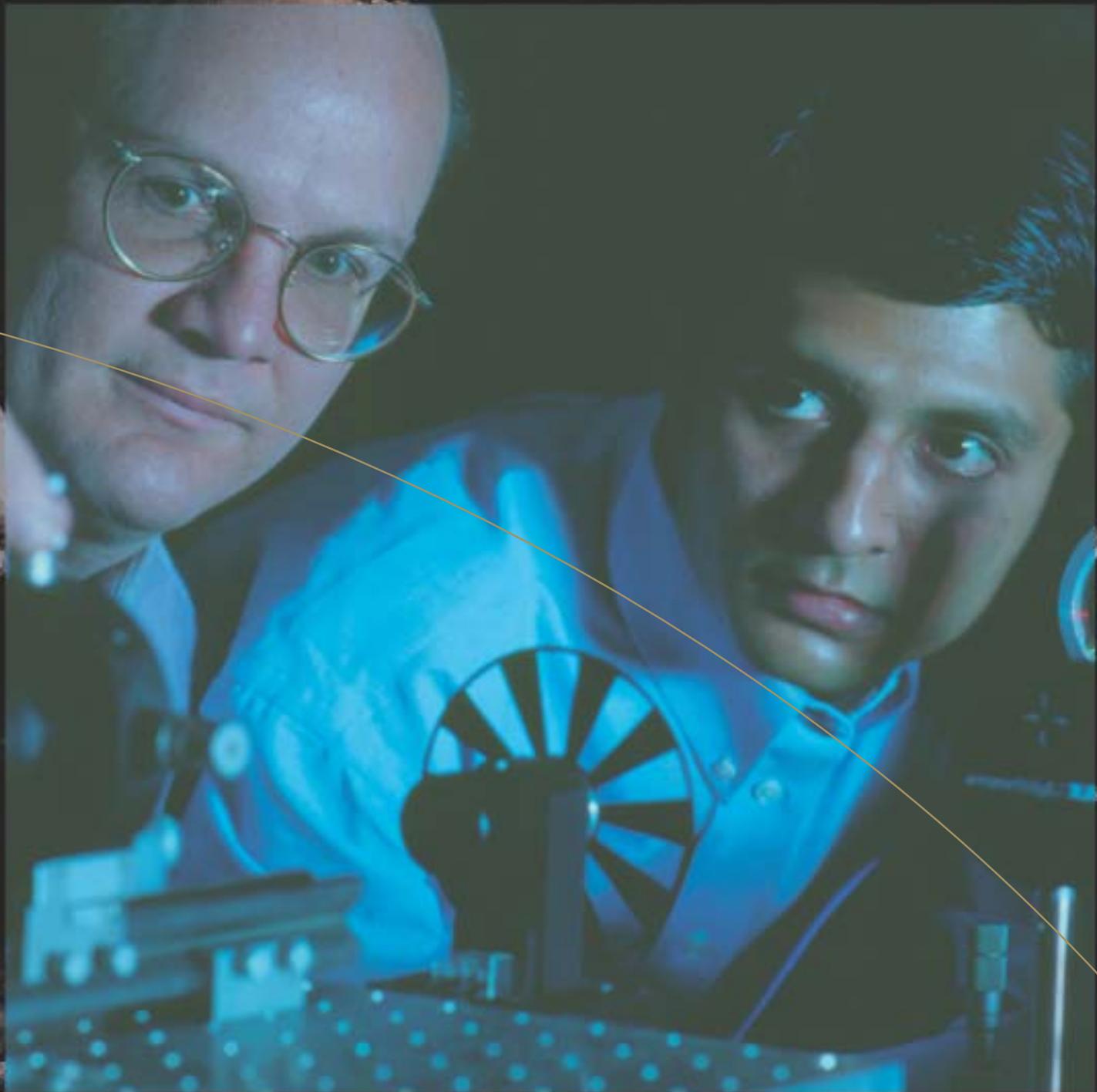
90. Link position requests to institutional areas of distinction and academic planning goals.
91. Study the instructional workforce distribution.
92. Draft a revision of UniReg 408, which governs academic professionals.
93. Develop revised policies to manage endowed or partially endowed faculty positions.

## ***Governing the Academic Workforce***

94. Standardize the metrics for faculty job descriptions.
95. Evaluate UniReg 808 on post-tenure review.
96. Review the minimum number of faculty needed for tenure and promotion recommendations.

## ***Planning at the College Level***

College, department, and program plans are available on the enclosed CD.





# VIII. Institutional Issues: Educational Infrastructure

The educational infrastructure includes the university's buildings and grounds; its offices, laboratories, and studios; and its equipment and software systems. The most basic elements of academic infrastructure are the physical facilities housing academic programs and departments, the libraries, and the institution's information and instructional technology. Concerns about the libraries, information technology, and the allocation of space are prominent in the university's planning.

Infrastructure costs can overwhelm university budgets. For example, the University Libraries face serious, systemic challenges that threaten every university library in the country. Ruinous inflation rates in serials subscriptions are perhaps the most serious of these challenges. Space allocation is a contentious issue on any college campus; it is also a key vehicle for strengthening UW's areas of distinction. Classroom-based instructional technology is changing at a pace that easily outstrips our capacity to pay for it in the absence of careful planning.

Action items:

## ***Supporting Academic Publication and Collections***

97. Develop a series on the Libraries' role in scholarly publishing.
98. Review and revise the Libraries' collections budget and allocation process.
99. Establish library partnerships through the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA).
100. Investigate the digital archiving of scholarly work.

## ***Supporting Instruction***

101. Establish eCollege as UW's online course platform.
102. Convene an institution-wide information technology summit.
103. Centralize audiovisual equipment and instructional technology.
104. Restructure information technology fees.

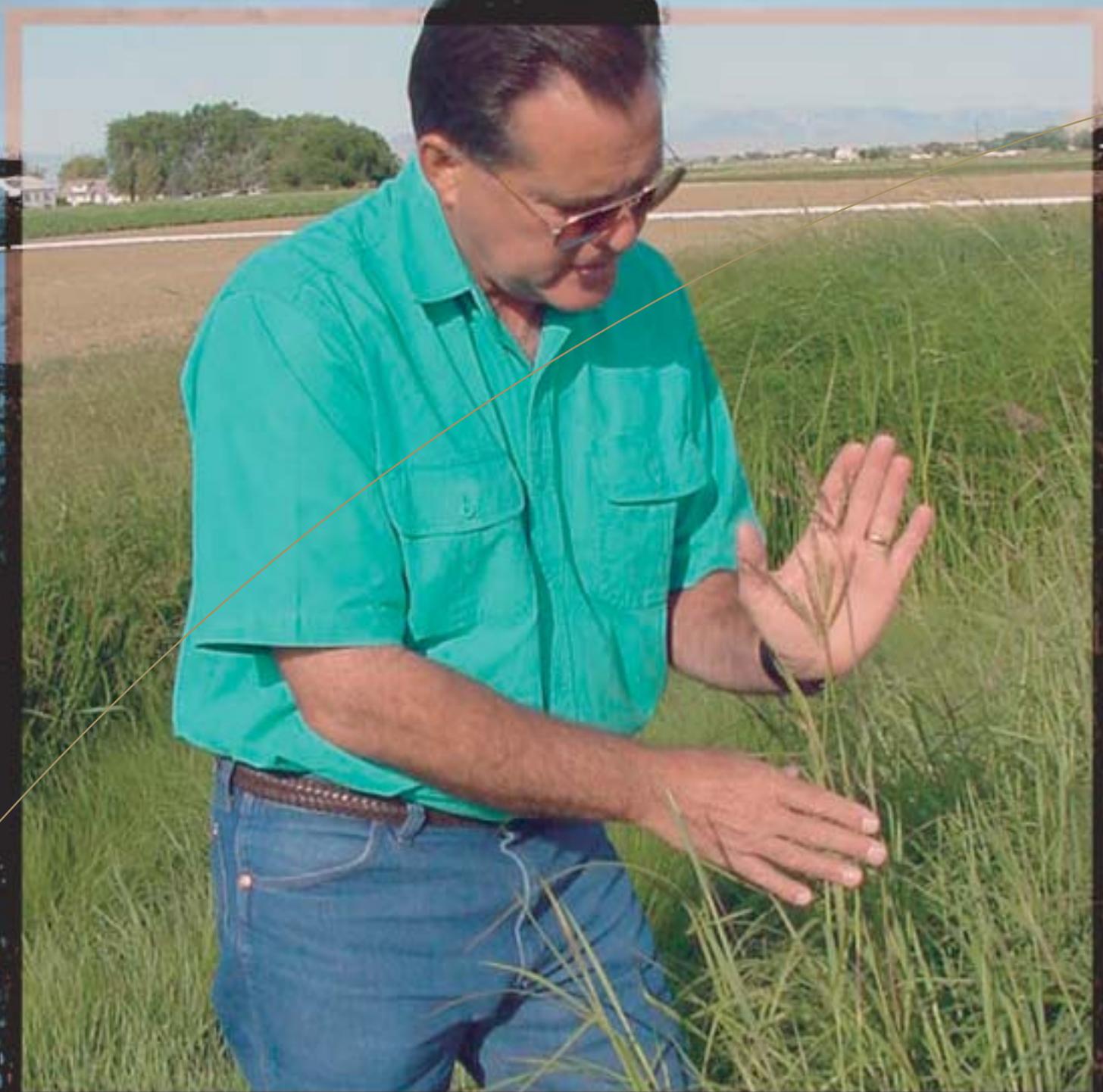


### ***Allocating and Managing Space***

105. Analyze space assignments in each college.
106. Consider clustering ethnic studies and international programs.
107. Relocate the Survey Research Center and the Wyoming Statistical Analysis Center.
108. Study the feasibility of combining the Survey Research Center and Wyoming Statistical Analysis Center.
109. Relocate Anthropology.
110. Decide what will become of the Science Library space.
111. Update the College of Education facilities plan.
112. Repair and improve the Centennial Complex.
113. Discuss security staffing needs of the Centennial Complex.
114. Consider a new building for the Art Department.
115. Design the Science Teaching Laboratory Facility.
116. Document the office and laboratory space needed to accommodate new faculty positions.







# IX. Institutional Issues: Outreach, Extension, and Community Service

UW's service mission is inherent in its role as a land-grant institution. At the institutional level, service includes degree programs offered through the Outreach School as well as non-credit programs offered by the Cooperative Extension Service and the Outreach School. It also includes all other UW initiatives aimed at community, industry, and business assistance.

Recently enhanced instructional commitments to outreach credit programs are a step in the right direction, but they are not enough. The establishment of a scholarly community focusing on outreach is also crucial. Outreach, Extension, and the Research Office are all responsible for non-credit programs and services offered around the state. Because these programs affect academic budgets across the institution, it is imperative to seek better orchestration among them. Challenges include organizing and delivering high-caliber programming, identifying fiscal and reward structures, assessing the effectiveness of current services, and responding to new statewide demands.

Action items:

## ***Organizing and Delivering Outreach, Extension, and Service***

117. Share distance degree programs with other institutions.

118. Explore effective pedagogies and processes for distance learning.

119. Activate an Outreach Advisory Council.

120. Coordinate non-credit outreach, extension, and service programs.

## ***Financing Reward Structures***

121. Review outreach compensation policies.

122. Implement entrepreneurial outreach programs.

123. Review and revise outreach budgeting.

124. Implement the *2002 Cooperative Extension Service Strategic Plan*.

125. Examine the institutional costs and benefits of economic development programs.

## ***Assessing Effectiveness***

126. Assess Outreach School and Cooperative Extension non-credit programs.

127. Evaluate the delivery of registration and advising services to off-campus students.

## ***Responding to New and Evolving Demands***

128. Discuss future UWCC facility plans with Casper College administrators.

129. Explore the establishment of permanent UW facilities in Cheyenne.

130. Assess outreach needs.

131. Coordinate the Outreach School and the Cooperative Extension Service.

## X. Institutional Issues: Enrollment Management

UW has made laudable progress in enrollment management since 1999. The mission and fiscal health of the institution mandate further progress. The simple goal of increasing student enrollment ignores deeper questions about particular institutional goals such as diversity, academic excellence, instructional capacity, the balance between undergraduate and graduate enrollments, and the returns on investment associated with various recruitment strategies. This last question is especially compelling in light of the impressive enrollment increases that have occurred in the Outreach School.

To attract and retain more promising but financially needy students, UW must review and reconfigure many of its financial aid practices. In addition, it is important to clarify the relationships between enrollments and academic budgets, building appropriate links between increased tuition revenues and increased instructional pressures. Finally, success in recruitment is meaningful only if we retain capable students. Academic intervention programs are instrumental, but they must be subject to honest assessment. And the need to accommodate different levels of student readiness must be balanced with the responsibility to pro-

vide high-caliber learning opportunities for those who are prepared. Many of these issues are appropriate subjects for the upcoming support-services plan.

Action items:

### ***Refining Recruitment and Enrollment Targets***

- 132. Establish target enrollments for off-campus degree programs.
- 133. Increase need-based student scholarships.
- 134. Automate scholarship-awarding processes.
- 135. Connect jobs to student aid.
- 136. Explore differential-pricing mechanisms.
- 137. Establish institutional policies to guide enrollment filtering and screening mechanisms.

### ***Allocating Revenues***

- 138. Develop a philosophical rationale to guide tuition rates.
- 139. Discuss the use of tuition and fee revenues with respect to associated instructional costs.

### ***Reviewing Student Retention Strategies***

- 140. Benchmark retention-related services.
- 141. Review admission policies.



The background of the cover is a dark, almost black, gradient. A large, sweeping, light blue arc curves across the upper and middle portions of the page. A thin, golden-yellow line follows the inner edge of this arc, creating a subtle glow. In the bottom right corner, a thin, golden-yellow line curves upwards and to the left, intersecting the blue arc.

# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

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