# THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# Statewide Strategic Planning Listening Sessions

# *Gillette, Wyoming*

# Thursday, December 8, 2016

A community member expressed support for the technical education program that was under consideration for elimination. He explained that even though this department did not produce a large number of students, the ones who did graduate from the program were highly sought because CTE teachers were difficult to find and to hire to work in the school system. The community member stated that this was an incredible program that could be used to strengthen recruitment for UW, starting with the students taking the CTE courses taught in the high schools. He noted that he had brought three students that had prepared a letter for President Nichols about their experience and what it would be like had they not had shop class as an outlet in high school. The community member explained that there were a number of companies, such as Haliburton, that supported the continuation of CTE programs. He explained that many of the best students for programs in the STEM fields realized that that was what they wanted to pursue based not only on their math and science courses but on the hands on work they were able to experience through CTE courses. The community member added that this elimination would also have a large effect on the community colleges.

Another community member stated that she was appreciative of the effort and research taking place at UW in the area of clean coal technology, while also working to better the connections with industries in the state. She added an appreciation for the work that was being done by the School of Energy Resources, and hoped that these efforts would continue to better the future of the industries in Wyoming.

A community member expressed support for a special education degree to be created as a four-year degree at UW. He also stated that he was grateful that the Board of Trustees had created the Trustees Education Initiative to improve the education programs to produce better teachers for the state.

Another community member stated that the current efforts being made by UW were the first truly great efforts made to improve the University for the good of everyone in the state. He added that he was strongly in support of the outreach efforts and he would like to see a continued effort to strengthen these relationships to provide access to degrees online to residents across the state. The community member suggested that in these efforts UW look to not only provide strictly online programs but also hybrid programs that provided students with an in class component. He added that the citizens of Wyoming were underserved in terms of higher education degrees and UW should be working to bridge that gap.

A member of the community echoed previous comments, adding that the current 2 plus 2 programs worked well for some students but it could be beneficial to look into more 3 plus 1 opportunities for students that might be site bound. He added that this would also strengthen the relationships with the community colleges, if qualified faculty members could step in to teach these courses in the communities. The community member added that based on changing standards there were faculty members that would be required to take additional courses to retain their licenses. He noted that UW could take advantage of this opportunity to assist faculty across the state and find a way to provide these courses to faculty at a distance and without a large number of boundaries that might prevent their success.

A community member suggested that UW look to maintain programs instead of eliminating them. He added that he supported the Technical Education Program at UW and hoped that UW would look to refocus their efforts on their educationtional programing during the budget crisis.

Another community member stated that keeping the Technical Education Program was critical to the community of Gillette and its economy. He added that many other colleges across the country had also dropped this program which had made it difficult for schools in the state to hire educators to teach these courses at the high school level. The community member added that he was also concerned with the raising costs to attend UW, while the state had begun to erode the Hathaway Scholarship Program. He suggested that UW rethink the idea of increasing tuition, and look at the funds currently within the University and their allocation.

A member of the community thanked UW for their commitment to the Saturday University Program that Gillette had recently been a benefactor off. She stated that she was concerned with cuts being made to the liberal arts programs at UW. The community member stated that these types of programs were critical to the land grant missions and the foundation of producing successful members of society. She stated that it would be an injustice to not foster a strong liberal arts education.

A community member stated that UW should work to better its advising for all students, but especially outreach students located across the state. She added that a connection to campus for outreach students through stronger advising would only benefit their experience as students. The community member suggested that UW make it a top priority to completely renovate the residence halls. She stated that UW was trying not to do to many things in regards to infrastructure based on cost but as an alumnus she completely supported this action moving forward. The community member added that it was critical for UW to improve the bachelor of nursing program. She added that the town of Gillette was not seeing any of the nurses that were produced by UW. The community member stated that by not having outside experiences through these programs students and the communities were missing out on opportunities. She added that it was difficult for students that were in these programs and were being required to take some courses that were stalling their progress towards graduation. The community member stated that often times these students were attending different universities because the number of prerequisites were fewer, allowing them to proceed with their degrees in a timely manner. She stated that the nursing program should reconsider their Masters in Leadership, that had once been considered.

Another community member asked that UW work to better its outreach programs. He stated that he would like to see these efforts made specifically through laboratory experiences across the state not just in Laramie. He stated that these efforts would engage high school and community college students early which could help to increase the number of students attending and transfering to UW.

A member of the community echoed previous comments, adding that having connections between the university and field programs would greatly increase their success and productivity. He stated that he looked forward to the growth of these programs in Campbell County.

A community member stated that it would be beneficial for UW to have a culture shift towards its partnerships with the communities. He added that many students across the state knew that UW existed but UW should look to increase their awareness through a concerted effort for visibility across the state through numerous outreach programs. He stated that it was critical if UW wanted to grow its enrollment to be more visible in the state, as there had been a larger draw for students to attend universities out of states because those universities had ramped up their recruitment efforts in Wyoming. The community member stated that it would be critical to their mission to establish champions at the community colleges to channel students towards UW.

Another community member expressed support for UW Athletics, and expressed a desire to continue that support. He added that he agreed with previous comments made about the residence halls need for renovation. The community member added that this was a huge factor in student’s decision to attend UW or not. He also expressed a need for UW to better their transfer credit program, which could increase enrollment if students did not have to worry about losing previously earned credits. The community member suggested that UW work to make this process more precise for students to easily follow for their ease of transferring to UW.

A member of the community expressed concern for students wanting to stay in Wyoming following graduation, as there were not enough jobs in the state to support these students. He suggested that UW look at ways to increase the number of industries present in the state so that more students as they graduated from UW had the opportunity to stay in the state. The community member noted that it was a combined effort between producing graduates to fill these jobs and bringing the companies to Wyoming. He hoped that UW would work with the communities around the state to turn this effort into a reality. It was noted that entrepreneurship would be further encouraged at UW in the hopes that as students graduated they would go into the state with their ideas and create industry.

Another community member added that UW needed to work to place great emphasis on supporting tourism in the state, adding that this could take place without adding a completely new degree program. He stated that through programs in the College of Business and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources students could receive degrees that would allow them to stay in the state and develop the tourism in the state. The community member stated that through the existing components these concepts could be developed and promoted to students.