

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-SUPERIOR:  
PRESENTATION OF CAMPUS ACADEMIC PLAN**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**BACKGROUND**

In the effort to improve its effectiveness and spend its meeting time on substantive discussions of the academic issues facing the University of Wisconsin System and its institutions, the Board of Regents Education Committee in conjunction with the Office of Academic and Student Services has implemented a more streamlined process for considering institutional reports on academic planning, re-accreditation, and general education to the Board of Regents, and has shifted its focus to institutional academic plans.

At its February 2008 meeting, the Education Committee agreed on a new process whereby UW institutions will periodically present a campus academic plan. Presentation to the Committee will allow Committee members to direct their attention to a more comprehensive understanding of each institution's academic program planning and array, as well as the alignment of that array to each institution's distinct mission and identity.

In 1998, the UW System Board of Regents designated UW-Superior as "Wisconsin's Public Liberal Arts College"; in 2001 the campus adopted a revised mission to reflect this status:

*The University of Wisconsin-Superior fosters intellectual growth and career preparation within a liberal arts tradition that emphasizes individual attention and embodies respect for diverse culture and multiple voices.*

Since that adoption, UW-Superior has been guided by this mission, as it has examined existing programs, evaluated proposed programs/initiatives and planned for new programs/initiatives. The UW-Superior Academic Plan summarizes the institution's current academic program array including existing, developing and new programs and initiatives.

**REQUESTED ACTION**

For information purposes only; no action is required.

**DISCUSSION**

As Wisconsin's Public Liberal Arts College, UW-Superior provides an undergraduate academic experience that emphasizes the development of the whole person. Curricular innovation centers on the improvement of the overall student experience. To further our Public Liberal Arts Mission, the campus has embarked upon five initiatives that are infused throughout the student experience: Academic Service Learning, First-year Experience, Global Awareness, Senior Experience and Writing Across the Curriculum.

All initiatives have become vital, active, staffed components of campus life. All have established timelines for further development.

We serve 2,700 undergraduate and graduate students from the upper Midwest and over 30 different countries with small classes in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. This small size requires us to guard against program proliferation and to advance new majors and sub-majors carefully and judiciously. In 2004-05 we conducted a review of undergraduate majors and sub-majors that reduced the number offered from 79 to 56. Within this context we have a few new major and minor programs in process or under consideration. Most recently we have adopted a Sustainable Management Major taught in collaboration with three other UW System institutions, a Global Studies Minor, and Forensic Chemistry track within our Chemistry Major. We are reviewing proposals for: Majors in Criminal Justice and in Spanish; a Minor in Social Work; and a track in Interactive Media.

UW-Superior welcomes nearly half of our new undergraduates as transfer students, many of whom arrive through active articulation agreements within Wisconsin and the region. Currently we are undergoing a systematic review of all existing articulation agreements.

Approximately 11% of UW-Superior students are graduate students in one of seven areas of study. Current Graduate Council initiatives include recruitment and engagement of more international students, improved program assessment, consideration of Master's programs in music and business, and exploration of an Educational Doctorate degree.

UW-Superior has long been recognized for its outreach efforts. The Distance Education Program has served place-bound adults for over 30 years and currently provides roughly 14% of UW-Superior's FTE enrollments. The Center offers three Bachelor of Science degree programs with six additional ones under consideration. We will also continue to meet regional needs through new and revised programming in Cooperative Extension and Continuing Education, with emphasis on economic development, water quality and Native American youth.

Research and creative activities are vital components of our liberal arts mission, providing the intellectual underpinnings for academic and outreach activities as well as a model of life-long learning. While UW-Superior is the smallest UW four-year campus, the institution ranks third in the UW-System in the receipt of federally funded grants. In addition to our existing research centers and ongoing faculty scholarship, the campus is pursuing two new major research initiatives. In partnership with UW-Extension, the Wisconsin DNR, Coastal Management, and others UW-Superior will be establishing the research priorities for the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve. The

campus is also actively investigation and seeking support for a Superior Research Institute on the Lake Superior waterfront to house a portion of the University's research programs. The campus has also made a significant investment in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through the establishment of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

While regular program assessment has occurred for many years, the campus is engaged in aligning our assessment with a focus on liberal education and continuous improvement. The campus recently adopted the Self-Study for Continuous Improvement (SSCI) mechanism for assessment of academic programs. In 2009-10, we will find or design a mechanism to assess general education learning outcomes, and will research and adopt liberal learning outcomes for all students.

The UW-Superior Academic Plan will be reviewed and revised annually. Primary responsibility for review and revision will rest with faculty governance, with final review and approval by governance bodies and administration.