



Memorandum

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Chancellor

To: University Community
From: Gary L. Miller *Gary L. Miller*
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Subject: University Mission

As we continue to do the hard work of aligning expenses with revenues for the coming year and beyond, discussions have arisen regarding plans to restructure the Board of Regents (BOR) approved Select Mission of the University. Let me provide some background to those discussions.

From its beginning, UWGB has relied on the deep support of this community. The story of how this community fought to establish a four-year University here is well known to all of us. Community support brought the Weidner Center for the Performing Arts and the Kress Events Center to campus. Community support helped establish our Division I athletic program and continues to support that program today. For nearly twenty years, the UWGB Council of Trustees (COT) has provided important material and political support for the University. In recent years, the COT Advocacy Committee has played a key role in promoting the significance of the University in the economy of Northeastern Wisconsin, one of the most important sectors of the Wisconsin economy. The COT Program and Initiative Advisory Committee has played a key role in helping us develop support for academic programs as they move through the arduous System approval process.

The UWGB Foundation has worked with great skill to optimize our endowments and quasi-endowments in order to support students and programs. The UWGB Alumni Association is growing and increasingly engaged in active support of philanthropy and student recruitment. Countless members of the community provide service and advice to us because of their love of this University. UWGB faculty and staff serve as members on nearly every major board and advisory group in the region and provide countless hours of consulting and other kinds of support to the community.

So, it was not surprising that the year-long Greater Green Bay Chamber strategic economic development planning initiative, which included all of the top business, government, not-for-profit and education leaders of Green Bay and Brown County, focused heavily on the role of higher education as a key driver in expanding the local economy through educational attainment, high wages job creation, capital investments, business startups and growth in the local tax base. On May 10, the Greater Green Bay Chamber will release the results of their extensive study, which was facilitated by Tip Strategies of Austin, Texas. The recommendations of the study are based on national benchmarks and lessons from important urban projects from around the country.

One of the key messages of the report will be the need for the expansion and reshaping of the higher education assets in the region. A greatly expanded partnership between NWTC and UWGB is recommended (something we are already developing). With respect to UWGB, the most important strategic actions recommended are:

- Expand UWGB into downtown Green Bay
- Develop engineering programs at UWGB
- Re-Mission UWGB to be a larger, more R&D focused, broader-reaching university with a long-term trajectory placing it on track to support significantly more research and technology development.

Given our creation as a community initiative, and the support we have and continue to receive from this community, our obligation is to respond directly to these recommendations from community leaders.

This represents a unique opportunity for us. The Chamber recommendations align with the message I presented to the BOR when they met on campus last April. Green Bay is a very different place 50 years after UWGB was founded. The University sits in a vibrant, dynamic, growing and internationally-branded city with large economic sectors in manufacturing, health care, professional sports and the service industries. The confluence of difficult economic times, innovative thinking in the community and the need to address important imperatives (e.g., degree attainment; middle class wage decline; emerging regional diversity, etc.) present UWGB with an uncommonly large suite of unique opportunities, some of which I have mentioned in our recent college meetings. Recognizing these opportunities require a different kind of university partnership, the community is asking us to reexamine ourselves with respect to the new realities of our region.

The University System has a process for campus reconsideration of the select mission, which we will initiate this summer. The System process will include public hearings regarding any new mission recommended. The campus process will begin with college-level vision and missioning exercises led by the Deans. Each college will be asked to shape a vision of their college in consideration of (a) the Chamber recommendations; (b) regional social and economic goals; (c) the changing nature of work, (d) the future of the various disciplines and programs; and (e) the changing nature of knowledge and learning. The goal of this college-level work will be to sharpen college program priorities; emphasize the social, cultural and civic impact of key higher learning dimensions (e.g., Humanities; Arts and Music; Social Sciences; Communications; STEM; Business; Helping Professions, etc.); and make the case for the college vision and mission in the context of the Green Bay environment. These college visions will form the foundation of organized campus and community discussions regarding a contemporary mission for UWGB. The details of this planning process will be discussed with the University Committee and released near the end of the semester.

The Chamber report leaves no doubt of the importance of UWGB to the future of this region and the expectation that we will be nimble in our response to the dramatic changes that have occurred in the past 50 years and those that will continue to occur. I look forward to working with you and the community to seize this important opportunity.

c: President Ray Cross, UW System
Council of Trustees