




Office of Corporate Relations and Economic Engagement

Focus on Research, Innovation, and Talent Development

Progress Report – June 2022

Strategic Focus	Progress Update	Status/Next Steps
1. Communication (Raising Awareness)		
1. Employ REDI platform to build visibility and broaden support.	REDI Committee meetings are structured to include participation from all key partners: university leaders, researchers, students, business leaders and entrepreneurs, legislators, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) .	Strategic Program Focus for 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/student/business collaboration/internships • Research-to-commercialization pathway • Statewide partnerships – education and private sector alignment for talent development
2. Highlight one-stop reference of campus economic development contacts.	Uploaded to https://www.wisconsin.edu/economic-development/economic-development-contacts/	Contacts across the UW System continue to provide convenient access to university talent.
3. Build out UW System economic development web portal.	Social media (Twitter) account and web portal are regularly updated with information on campus initiatives.	Twitter: @UWEconD (1,163 followers vs. 1,112 in June 2021) Web portal link .
	The Career Connect internship portal provides support for both students and Wisconsin employers with links to Career Services representatives at all UW System university campuses.	UW System Career Services offices provide an easy-to-use Career Treks portal which provides virtual tours of Wisconsin employers for students considering career options.
	UW System and WEDC have launched the nation's first online Talent Generator tool with 100+ screens of internship program instruction for employers and students to support Wisconsin workforce needs.	Talent Generator news and acknowledgements from Career Services and Business/Community partners.
4. Review existing economic development programs and resources with a focus on continuous improvement and outcomes which reflect the Wisconsin Idea .	This effort is ongoing, with the focus on identifying potential for the university's capacity to foster and accelerate business creation and growth, collaboration, and partnerships.	The NorthStar economic impact study shows UW System has a \$24 billion annual impact on Wisconsin's economy:
5. Assess research, technology, and innovation assets and roadblocks.	REDI regularly highlights success stories that promote faculty engagement with undergraduates in areas related to research, economic development, and innovation.	Industry and association partnerships are highlighted at REDI and on the Corporate Relations and Economic Engagement website.
6. Establish reporting protocols related to dashboard performance metrics initiative.	Partnership with the UW System Accountability Dashboard guides monitoring, assessment, and reporting of UW System performance.	Three years after graduation, 89% of Wisconsin residents who are now alumni are still living in the Badger state.
7. Identify and leverage UW System/WEDC opportunity areas for collaboration.	Attend WEDC Monday morning executive staff meetings and provide regular reports regarding UW System economic development programs and initiatives.	One notable joint success is Ideadvance , which continues to fund innovation and start-ups in Wisconsin. The award-winning program accepts new Lean Startup applications on a rolling basis throughout the year.
		



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2. Connection (Identifying, building, and rewarding relationships)		
1. Identify entrepreneurial faculty and build structures and funding mechanisms to support them.	During the pandemic, virtual meetings, discussions, and follow-ups with faculty, staff, students, and business partners are ongoing at all comprehensive campuses.	Support for innovative programming is reflected in the UW System Strategic Initiatives and supported by the Board of Regents and its Research, Economic Development, and Innovation (REDI) Committee.
2. Establish an economic development advisory council.	UW System business and community outreach encompasses a range of initiatives designed to address workforce and economic development interests and concerns of business leaders representing a broad range of industry sectors and geographic regions across the Badger state.	UW System conducts regular outreach to a broad cross-section of CEOs and community leaders through an ongoing series of letters, meetings, and webinars.
3. Create and expand joint UW System/WEDC programs.	 Conduct periodic review of collaborations between the WEDC and the UW System Institute of Business and Entrepreneurship (IBE) , the widely acclaimed Manufacturing Outreach Center (MOC) at UW-Stout, and the nation's leading statewide FabLab initiative, among other economic engagement programs and projects.	In 2020-21, the Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship (IBE) was nationally recognized by the SBA as a top performer and received additional funding to support COVID recovery efforts for business in Wisconsin. IBE has been named as one of WEDC's key business partners.
4. Collaborate with business partners and associations to leverage university economic development efforts.	Regularly engage in discussions with Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) regarding joint program opportunities, including the UW System Prison Education Initiative and continue to seek additional partnership opportunities with a variety of regional and state economic development, civic, and business organizations.	Future Wisconsin Talent Development and Competitiveness Committees helped to inform statewide priorities and discussions during the eighth annual (virtual) event in December 2021.
5. Develop a searchable, on-line database of faculty expertise to spur innovation.	At WEDC request, initiated support from WiSys to review existing and potential database opportunities for collaboration between faculty experts and industry start-ups and project developers. WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes provides oversight via her role on the WiSys Advisory Board.	WEDC today is working with WiSys to find new ways to foster stronger connections between campuses and the business community. One significant outcome of this is the Venture Home community innovation hub platform with sites in Eau Claire, Green Bay, and Superior.
6. Conduct on-campus regional business/entrepreneurial info sessions with WEDC support.	Such sessions, prepared and delivered by WEDC through existing campus or state business development (SBDC) channels, assist and encourage faculty and students interested in pursuing research and entrepreneurship options.	The WiSys Big Idea and Quick Pitch Tournament events have expanded to 10 campus locations by popular demand, and in-person events resumed again in May 2022.
7. Recognize and reward economic development initiatives and results.	UW Regents have the ability to recognize excellence in research, innovation, and economic development initiatives and outstanding collaborations that lead to successful commercialization.	The " Regent Scholar " program recognizes faculty innovation, entrepreneurship, and the importance of undergraduate research. The three new Regent Scholars were honored at the April 2022 REDI meeting.
8. Mobilize alumni in support of economic development partnerships.	Increased and targeted connectivity with UW graduates will help to create a powerful and growing business development resource both locally and globally.	Governor Evers inaugural trade mission to Japan included 28 business and academic partners from across Wisconsin, including UW-Platteville Chancellor Dennis Shields.

Strategic Focus

Progress Update

Status

3. Capital Support (Sustainable Funding)

<p>1. Establish WEDC seed fund that fosters undergraduate research and entrepreneurship.</p> 	<p>The award-winning Ideadvance program was established in 2014. It is jointly funded by UW System and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).</p> <p>Forty-eight percent of its small business (start-up) clients are either woman-owned or minority-owned businesses.</p>	<p>Since inception, Ideadvance has supported 64 faculty, staff, and student teams to help promote commercialization efforts on UW System campuses across Wisconsin. The program is recognized as a Global Best Practice by the University Industry Innovation Network (UIIN). Additionally, the University Economic Development Association (UEDA) highlighted Ideadvance as an Award of Excellence finalist at its national summit in Milwaukee.</p>
<p>2. Structure WiSys for long-term sustainability.</p> 	<p>WiSys provides technology transfer and licensing support for the comprehensive campuses. The WiSys Board of Trustees membership includes university leaders and chancellors, WARF representatives, Wisconsin business owners, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>The WiSys Wisconsin Science & Technology Symposium events typically draw 200 attendees. In 2020, the event was renamed SPARK, with virtual events organized to support ongoing initiatives during the pandemic. The 2022 event will be held at UW- La Crosse.</p>
<p>3. Expand agency and legislative funding support for additional development resources.</p>	<p>The UW System Talent Development Initiative (TDI) promotes student internships and business connectivity.</p> <p>This effort has been expanded to include additional focus on alumni outreach and retention.</p>	<p>WEDC and UW System collaborate to support talent development and retention of students and alumni through a variety of state and regional business, industry, and educational partnerships, including the Milwaukee Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA).</p>
<p>4. Support WEDC workforce-related initiatives that offer pathways for sustainable economic resiliency and growth.</p>	<p>UW System collaborations with WEDC are designed leverage the expertise of UW faculty and support career pathways and community growth through more effective utilization of existing business and entrepreneurial competencies, among other strategies.</p>	<p>Campus applications were submitted in late 2021 for projects that can take advantage of the state's \$100 million Workforce Innovation Grant funding opportunity. The UW System received a \$5.7 million grant for its Prison Education Initiative. UW-Eau Claire and the Mayo Clinic received \$9.4 million for an innovative healthcare collaboration. "Round Two" grant awards are expected to be announced in June.</p>
<p>5. Foster new ways for students to experience entrepreneurial opportunities.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial start-ups often require assistance in the development of operational and financial plans. By encouraging student participation, and by fostering related research and internship opportunities, UW System campuses deliver high-impact outcomes and better prepare students for 21st Century job opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing initiatives include support for the "Engineering Curriculum of the Future" project, the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity, the Connected Systems Institute (CSI) project focused on the Internet of Things.</p>