### Office of Corporate Relations and Economic Engagement

**Focus on Research, Innovation, and Talent Development**

**Progress Report – October 2021**

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<td><strong>1. Communication (Raising Awareness)</strong></td>
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| 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 2021-2022:  
- 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/](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. | 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. |
| | 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. | 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. |

Access the Economic Development Portal: [https://www.wisconsin.edu/economic-development](https://www.wisconsin.edu/economic-development)
### Strategic Focus

#### Progress Update

#### Status

1. **Connection (Identifying, building, and rewarding relationships)**

   - **1. Identify entrepreneurial faculty and build structures and funding mechanisms to support them.**
     - 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.
   - **3. Create and expand joint UW System/WEDC programs.**
     - In 2020-2021, 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.**
     - Future Wisconsin Talent Development and Competitiveness Committees helped to inform statewide priorities and discussions during the seventh annual (virtual) event in December 2020 and plans are being formulated for a late-2021 follow-up event.
   - **5. Develop a searchable, on-line database of faculty expertise to spur innovation.**
     - 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 new Venture Home community innovation hub in Eau Claire.
   - **6. Conduct on-campus regional business/entrepreneurial info sessions with WEDC support.**
     - The WiSys Big Idea and Quick Pitch Tournament events have expanded to 10 campus locations by popular demand, with the most recent events held virtually during the spring 2021 semester.
   - **7. Recognize and reward economic development initiatives and results.**
     - The “Regent Scholar” program recognizes faculty innovation, entrepreneurship, and the importance of undergraduate research. President Thompson has announced the 2021-22 program with submissions due Nov. 5, 2021.
   - **8. Mobilize alumni in support of economic development partnerships.**
     - Governor Evers inaugural trade mission to Japan included 28 business and academic partners from across Wisconsin, including UW-Platteville Chancellor Dennis Shields.
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| **3. Capital Support**  
(Sustainable Funding) | | |
| 1. Establish WEDC seed fund that fosters undergraduate research and entrepreneurship. | The award-winning **Ideadvance** program was established in 2014. It is jointly funded by UW System and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). Forty-eight percent of its small business (start-up) clients are either woman-owned or minority-owned businesses. | 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. |

2. Structure WiSys for long-term sustainability.  
[WiSys](http://wsys technology.com) provides technology transfer and licensing support for the comprehensive campuses. The WiSys Board of Trustees membership includes university leaders and chancellors, WAF representatives, Wisconsin business owners, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs. | The WiSys **Wisconsin Science & Technology Symposium** event held at UW-Stout in July 2019 drew a total of 200 attendees. In 2020, the event was renamed SPARK, with virtual events organized to support ongoing initiatives during the pandemic. |

3. Expand agency and legislative funding support for additional development resources. | The UW System Talent Development Initiative (TDI) promotes student internships and business connectivity. This effort has been expanded to include additional focus on alumni outreach and retention. | 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). |

4. Support WEDC workforce-related initiatives that offer pathways for sustainable economic resiliency and growth. | UW System collaborations with WEDC are designed to 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. | Campus applications are due this month for projects that can take advantage of the state’s $100 million Workforce Innovation Grant funding opportunity. 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, and the Connected Systems Institute (CSI) project focused on the Internet of Things. |

5. Foster new ways for students to experience entrepreneurial opportunities. | 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. | The UW “Smart Cities-Smart Futures Summit”, held at UW-Parkside, launched Foxconn’s $1 million “Smart Cities: Smart Futures” initiative. In 2019, the program was recognized as a global best practice by the University-Industry Innovation Network. Today, UW-Parkside offers on-line Smart Cities classes and a graduate level programming. |