



A Bold Future

2025 STRATEGIC PLAN





The Council Oak

Our 2025 Strategic Plan features the leaves of the burr oak, a native tree that plays an important role in our university's history and exemplifies the spirit of our future.

The symbolism originated with the first Council Oak, a majestic tree that stood where the Ojibwe and Dakota nations as well as other nations, including the Ho-Chunk, Menominee and Potawatomi, met to share knowledge and discuss peaceful resolutions to their differences. The current Council Oak was planted and dedicated in 1990 by elders from the Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk

nations after the original Council Oak, which had been damaged by lightning in 1966, fell in a windstorm in 1987. The Council Oak stands as a symbol of UW-Eau Claire's commitment to serving as an inclusive place of meeting and exchange.

The Council Oak remains a sacred place and is recognized by UW-Eau Claire as a symbol of the ancestral and sacred lands of Indigenous Peoples, past and present. We acknowledge that the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire occupies the sacred and ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples. We honor the land of the Ojibwe and Dakota Nations.

Our Mission

Foster in one another creativity, critical insight, empathy and intellectual courage, the hallmarks of a transformative liberal education and the foundation for active citizenship and lifelong inquiry.

Our Values

- Diversity and inclusiveness
- Leadership
- Innovation and continuous improvement
- Stewardship and sustainability

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Our Bold Vision **NATIONAL DISTINCTION**

- Distinction in health and human wellbeing
- Leadership in equity, diversity and inclusion
- Integrated undergraduate research and creative activity in all disciplines

Our Collective Action **MEET OUR GOALS**

- Achieve our Guidepost Goals
- Grow enrollment to 10,200
- Invest in faculty and staff



Our Enduring Commitment

SUPPORT OUR STRENGTHS

- An exemplary education
- Nationally distinctive partnerships
- Sustainable campuses





Our Bold Vision: **NATIONAL DISTINCTION**

We will achieve a national reputation for academic distinction through three action goals

Distinction in Health and Wellbeing

- Increase collaborations across disciplines and colleges in support of health and wellbeing.
- Expand national partnerships to enhance opportunities for students, faculty and staff in health and wellbeing.
- Develop new, nationally competitive academic and cocurricular programs.
- Identify ways to enhance the wellbeing of faculty, staff and students.

Leadership in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Implement practices that will eliminate the opportunity gap and lead to equitable outcomes for prospective and current students, faculty and staff.
- Identify national leadership opportunities through the Center for Racial and Restorative Justice and the Center for EDI Training and Development.
- Integrate EDI into classroom pedagogy, content and curriculum on all campuses.
- Build and maintain collaborative coalitions throughout our region.

Integrated Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity in all Disciplines

- Integrate undergraduate research and creative activities across disciplines on all campuses.
- Support departments in determining the best way to integrate research and creative activities into curriculum and workloads.
- Expand research with national partners.



Our Enduring Commitment: **SUPPORT OUR STRENGTHS**

Our vision is supported by existing institutional strengths

An Exemplary Education

- Support existing and develop new programs that attract students and serve the needs of Wisconsin.
- Strengthen University Honors and departmental honors programs.
- Collaborate with alumni and partners to enhance scholarships, high-impact practices and internships that range from local to international opportunities.

Nationally Distinctive Partnerships

- Foster new academic and cocurricular partnerships that support our bold vision and new learning opportunities.
- Identify, with UW-Eau Claire Foundation, new philanthropic support and collaborations.
- Encourage partnerships that intersect health and wellness, EDI and sustainability.
- Work with Barron County to advance regional economic development.

Sustainable Campuses

- Work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Integrate sustainability into curricula and HIPs across disciplines and campuses.
- Implement carbon-free and reduced carbon systems.
- Seek third-party certification for new buildings.



Our Collective Action: **MEET OUR GOALS**

Our actions make our vision possible

Achieve our Guidepost Goals

- 100% will participate in HIPs.
- 90% students will be retained to year two.
- 50% students will graduate in four years.
- 20% students of color and eliminate the opportunity gap.

Grow Enrollment to 10,200

- Through expanded recruitment and increased retention we will return to our 2010 enrollment level of 10,200 FTE.

Invest in Faculty and Staff

- With increased enrollment and efficient use of resources we can invest in faculty and staff compensation and new programmatic initiatives.

Ready for Boldness

For more than 100 years, UW-Eau Claire has provided an exemplary education and extraordinary learning experiences, preparing graduates for Wisconsin and the world. Our passion to continue to be that transformative, leading university is the impetus for this plan. Despite the challenges facing higher education, we are ready for bold action.

Our Purpose: Public Good

Our strategic plan is anchored in and continues to support our centurylong dedication to a mission of serving the public good.

We serve our state and the world through the Wisconsin Idea, preparing graduates for careers and lives that will advance our state and contribute to a strong future. Founded as a normal school, we continue to provide the teachers, healthcare workers, business leaders, scientists, artists and leaders who will shape the coming century, in Wisconsin, the region and the nation.

Not Your Typical Regional

While our history may follow that of many regional, public comprehensives, we do not follow the same path. We refuse to be defined by the roadmap followed by other public institutions. We have always asked, "What more do our students need to truly thrive?" We pioneered undergraduate research more than 50 years ago, establishing a national reputation for excellence in experiential learning. We opened the world to our students at a time when study abroad was more typical of private institutions, sending them across the globe to learn. We forged a campus culture that is radical in our commitment to our students and their success. As we continue to carve a path that sets us apart, we are united by a firm foundation defined by:

1. A commitment to a strong, student-centered education at all our campuses that provides degrees in a broad diversity of disciplines, infuses our professional programs and is the anchor for experiential learning.
2. Experiences and unique collaborations with local, national and international partners that provide students, faculty and staff with opportunities available nowhere else. These experiences and partnerships elevate our reputation for national excellence and build on existing cross-disciplinary collaborations across the university.
3. Our value of sustainability and commitment to preserving and enhancing not only the natural beauty of our campuses, but also our built environment and the relationships that define the health and equity of our communities and region.



The Future We Face

The 2020 pandemic has challenged higher education. It has demanded new ways of teaching and extraordinary efforts to care for each other amid uncertainty. Challenges stemming from the pandemic add another level to an already difficult financial picture. According to the Wisconsin Policy Forum's 2020 report on the state of Wisconsin's public universities and colleges, state funding for higher education fell by more than 33% between 2000 and 2019. Because of this decrease, state institutions are now more financially sensitive to decreases in enrollment, especially in light of the decline in the number of high school graduates predicted to begin in 2025.

The 2025 Opportunity

By keeping the needs of our students and of our state at the forefront, we can meet our mission responsibility to continue to provide a quality, transformative, public education for our future students despite state disinvestment and demographic shifts. But we cannot do so by continuing to operate as we have in the past. We cannot do so by remaining one of Wisconsin's best-kept secrets.

It is imperative that we begin now to grow our market share of recruits from Wisconsin and Minnesota, and also grow our market size by expanding beyond our region. With controlled enrollment growth, we can remain financially healthy, continue to provide exemplary learning experiences and invest in new opportunities as they arise.

To attract more students from across the nation, we must identify targeted, select ways to become more nationally distinctive, while also preserving our foundational commitment to an exemplary education.

We already have individual programs, learning experiences and exceptional faculty that have laid the foundation for national distinction. We will continue to encourage programs that enhance our reputation for excellence. At the same time, we have an opportunity to develop programs and learning experiences that will meet emerging needs in our state and nation, and prepare students for future careers. As we build recognition for select UW-Eau Claire programs, students will also discover the full range of academic and cocurricular programs we offer. We will build on our strengths, leverage our unique, national partnerships, and tap into our innovative spirit to identify, strengthen and create the signature experiences that will enhance our reputation and get us noticed.



How to Read This Strategic Plan

Based on our current strengths, we have identified areas of focus for national distinction: health and wellbeing, EDI, and integrated undergraduate research and creative activities. These goals are supported by our continued commitment to exemplary education, partnerships, and sustainability and climate action.

What distinguishes this bold vision is the integrated nature of our goals. All are interdependent, supporting each other in creating learning and research opportunities that a single focus cannot achieve.

We know, for example, that human wellbeing requires a holistic approach, best undertaken as part of a liberal education that integrates perspectives from all disciplines — from ethics to economics. Our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion requires understanding of environmental and health impacts, in addition to research across disciplines. Our long commitment to sustainability cannot be unraveled from attention to public health or social justice.

Critical and creative thinking — the heart of our university mission — are essential to an integrated approach to our goals. National distinction will require a universitywide, integrated and mutually supportive approach that connects our priorities, and in so doing, enriches learning and research for our students, faculty and staff.

This strategic plan IS:

- Guided by our mission commitment and past strategic plans that fostered transformational, student-focused learning.
- Focused on priority opportunities over the next five years to enhance our national reputation.
- Designed to support our guidepost goals and enrollment growth.
- Aspirational but achievable. This plan will stretch us.
- A guide for making decisions about where to invest precious faculty and staff time, effort, innovation and creativity.

This strategic plan IS NOT:

- A description of every important campus activity. We will continue to provide exemplary education in every discipline, connect our students to international learning opportunities, offer high-impact practices and deliver campuswide service excellence. While these activities may not be highlighted in this plan, they remain essential.
 - A requirement for all departments and units to contribute to all goals. Each department and unit will determine which of the three vision goals they can contribute to most effectively.
 - An operational plan. This plan outlines a broad framework. Implementation, including program development and specific success metrics, will be defined by our colleges, divisions and departments, in consultation with shared governance, as appropriate.
- In addition to refining and creating college and division strategic plans, we have strong operational plans to be completed in 2021 that align with this document:
- Academic strategic plan.
 - Equity, diversity and inclusion plan.
 - Sustainability and climate action recommendations.
 - Facilities master plan.



Our Bold Vision: NATIONAL DISTINCTION

Goal 1

We will achieve national distinction for programmatic leadership in health and wellbeing.

UW-Eau Claire is already a Wisconsin leader in preparing highly qualified graduates in nursing and the health professions, the health sciences, and for careers in social services and public health. Strengthened by our broad program array and high-impact experiences, Blugolds receive an exemplary education for what is a rapidly changing and increasingly important sector. Now, thanks to extraordinary partnerships with the nationally renowned Mayo Clinic and Marshfield Clinic, we have the potential to enhance the distinctiveness of existing programs and to identify new ones.

We know that health and wellbeing encompass the whole person. They involve issues of ethics, mental wellbeing, social justice and cultural competency. **Only through integrative, cross-disciplinary collaborations can we meet emerging needs in 21st-century healthcare in Wisconsin and the nation.**

This is a bold vision because it opens the door wider for truly transformational partnerships that will enable us to provide students with opportunities we cannot provide ourselves. With our partners, we can explore new program opportunities, share financial and instructional

resources, develop new, state-of-the-art facilities and create pathways to new careers and service. We can expand research opportunities for faculty and students with new clinical researchers and together contribute to advances in meeting national health needs. This priority goal lays out a pathway for departments to help build our national reputation in a signature field that has interest for students as well as for potential faculty and staff. We can compete on a larger stage with the help of our national partners and with the innovation and energy of the Blugold spirit. The reputation we build by uniting health and wellbeing will, in turn, help shine a light on all our academic programs.

At the same time, we must seek to improve the health and wellbeing of our campus community as part of our ongoing commitment to invest in our faculty and staff. We will explore ways in which we can create more flexible workplaces that support employees across their careers, and that address the needs of those who are also caregivers for their families. We will identify ways in which we can support healthy lifestyles and promote healthy practices. And we will provide professional development for supervisors to enable them to create affirming workplaces for all employees.



Priority Actions | Distinction in Health and Wellbeing

- Strengthen and increase innovative collaborations across disciplines, linking the sciences, arts, humanities and social sciences in support of health and wellbeing.
- Expand national partnerships to help set us apart and enhance opportunities for students, faculty and staff in health and wellbeing.
- Develop new, nationally competitive academic and cocurricular programs. This includes courses, certificates and programs that advance health and wellbeing.
- Create new student scholarships with national partners.
- Identify ways to enhance the wellbeing of faculty, staff and students.



Goal 2

We will achieve national distinction by leadership in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

This goal is central to our mission and our vision for the future. As a public institution, we exist to provide opportunity for the people of Wisconsin and to assure that all who seek a future can achieve their goals. To fulfill our mission we must be an equitable, diverse and inclusive university. We have invested in the division of EDI and Student Affairs and have led the nation by integrating EDI into all employee evaluation processes. We will build on our successes and learn from our challenges in becoming a better EDI leader.

We will utilize a lens of intersectionality when addressing EDI, which means EDI goes beyond race and ethnicity and encompasses a wide spectrum of traditionally underrepresented and underserved social identities. This intersectional lens also means EDI is relevant to all of our programs, departments and services, and to our faculty, staff and students. We will integrate EDI into our daily work and practice, and ensure that EDI is applied across our campuses.

As we seek to meet our Guidepost Goal to eliminate the opportunity gap, we do so within the framework of historic inequities of investment in education, the economy, social and civic justice and opportunity for all, requiring a comprehensive approach to what has been called the “education debt” and a renewed will to make systemic changes.

We cannot be a successful educational institution going forward without a more equitable, diverse and inclusive community. Our key initiatives can truly launch us forward only if we simultaneously work to dismantle the oppressive structures that hold us back. We must correct practices that have caused unfair outcomes for people from traditionally underserved social identities. Our attention to this goal will strengthen and enhance our other vision goals and our ability to deliver on our enduring commitments and collective action.

Priority Actions | Distinction in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Implement the EDI Strategic Plan.
- Implement practices that will eliminate the opportunity gap and lead to equitable outcomes for prospective and current students, faculty and staff.
- Identify national leadership opportunities through the Center for Racial and Restorative Justice and the Center for EDI Training and Development and Education.
- Recruit and retain a more diverse student body and workforce.
- Integrate EDI into classroom pedagogy, content and curriculum on all campuses.
- Employ the “education debt” framework to strengthen our efforts to eliminate the opportunity gap, with one outcome being equity across social identities in student retention and graduation rates.
- Build and maintain collaborative coalitions throughout our region.

Goal 3

We will achieve national distinction by integrating undergraduate research and creative activity across all disciplines.

Rigorous, transformative learning is a hallmark of all UW-Eau Claire campuses. Our university is known for its high-impact practices and for our leadership in study abroad, service-learning, experiential learning and internships, and for undergraduate research. That will not change.

Our priority focus on EDI and health and wellbeing, and our continuing commitment to sustainability provide additional opportunities to enlarge our undergraduate research effort. We are already national leaders in this regard, but we can take even bolder steps by assuring that this high-impact experience can be a part of every student's education.

By integrating undergraduate research and creative activity into every academic program on all our campuses, we can significantly increase access and engage students while also managing faculty workload.

This goal does not replace the existing research and creative activities underway or opportunities for new research with our national partners. It will involve department-level discussions about how this high-impact experience can be integrated into the curriculum in ways that support each discipline and benefit students. A key component of these departmental discussions is the impact that integration can have on faculty and instructor workloads. One size will not fit all, but with innovation we can create new workload solutions while also providing students with additional opportunities to explore, question and critically engage in every discipline — further setting us apart from our peers.



Priority Actions

Distinction in Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

- Engage faculty and students from all disciplines as we successfully host NCUR 2023.
- Integrate undergraduate research and creative activity across all disciplines on all campuses.
- Explore partnerships with UWEC-Barron County and two-year institutions.
- Support departments in determining the best way to integrate research and creative activity into curriculum and workloads.
- Expand research opportunities with national partners.



Our Enduring Commitment: **SUPPORT OUR STRENGTHS**

Our bold vision will guide innovation to help UW-Eau Claire stand apart, both regionally and nationally. At the same time, we have existing institutional strengths that will continue to be supported and expanded to benefit our students. They exemplify our enduring commitment to excellence and will be the strong foundation for bold initiatives. To that end, this plan also proposes the following:

1. **Continue our commitment to an exemplary education.** We will:

- Support existing and develop new programs that enable departments to meet regional needs and attract more students.
- Leverage national partnerships to support departments through teaching collaborations, internships and scholarships.
- Strengthen University Honors and departmental honors programs to enhance our national distinction.
- Encourage existing and additional program accreditation demonstrating our commitment to rigorous quality and academic standards.
- Collaborate with alumni and partners to enhance scholarships, high-impact practices and internships that range from local to international opportunities.

2. **Expand nationally distinctive partnership opportunities.** We will expand our partnerships to provide our students with opportunities we cannot achieve alone. We will:

- Foster new academic and cocurricular partnerships that support our bold vision and new learning opportunities.
- Identify, with the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, new philanthropic support and collaborations.
- Encourage partnerships that intersect health and wellness, EDI and sustainability.
- Work collaboratively with Barron County business and civic organizations to identify opportunities to support economic and social development in the region.
- Expand alumni involvement to support departments and benefit students through internships, career connections and philanthropy.



3. Support sustainable campuses and climate action.

We will advance our commitment to the value of stewardship and sustainability. We will:

- Adopt the 2021 Sustainability and Climate Action recommendations.
- Create a Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Sustainability and Climate Action and establish a coordinator for campus sustainability and climate action.
- Work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Preserve, enhance and steward Wisconsin’s most beautiful campuses.
- Prepare students for civic leadership by integrating sustainability into experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate research and internships, and into academic curriculum on all campuses.
- Increase partnerships, especially throughout the Chippewa Valley, that support education, student internships, research and action at the intersection of sustainability, EDI and health and wellbeing.
- As feasible, implement carbon-free and carbon-reduced systems in existing and new buildings.
- Seek third-party certification for new buildings.



Our Collective Action: **MEET OUR GOALS**

Our vision goals and enduring commitments require continued attention to growing and maintaining student enrollment and to supporting our faculty and staff. As state funding has declined and tuition has been frozen, we must continue to seek manageable and sustainable enrollment growth. Through enrollment growth beyond the region and with increased retention, we not only serve our students more effectively, we also create the financial base on which our bold vision and enduring commitments can succeed.

We will continue our collective action to:

1. Achieve our Guidepost Goals

Our Guidepost Goals are based on our mission commitment to assure our students thrive and succeed at UW-Eau Claire. We have made significant progress on our goals, and our vision to integrate undergraduate research, support sustainability and expand EDI will further advance our efforts. This plan calls on all campuses to renew our commitment to the Guidepost Goals, to student success and

especially to improving student retention over the next five years.

2. Grow Enrollment

In order to have a stable enrollment by 2025 when the reduction in high school graduates begins, we need to return to our 2010 enrollment levels. This will require us to modestly grow our current enrollment to 10,200 FTE from the current 9,255. To do so, we will need to explore new ways to collaborate across divisions to tell our story, reach out to students

beyond our traditional recruitment footprint, and create the programs and experiences that will resonate with prospective students. We will continue our collective action to:

- Identify new and existing undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs that will attract students to the discipline, contribute to university distinction and help increase department enrollment and retention.
- Expand collaboration with Enrollment Management to recruit, retain and support student success.
- Continue to refine the UWECBC Launch Program and explore other ways to create a strong pipeline from the two-year to our four-year programs.

3. Invest in Faculty and Staff

Our vision goals will not be achievable without continued investment in our UW-Eau Claire employees. To have additional resources for investment, we must continue to find ways to manage current resources more effectively. We will:

- Implement an employee wellbeing program to assure a more flexible and healthy workplace.
- Implement improved planning, training and strategic budgeting systems.

- Monitor and assess outcomes in order to inform improvements.
- Develop new resources in strategic areas such as auxiliary operations, nonresident tuition, external grants and contracts, continuing education and self-support programs.
- Partner with the UW-Eau Claire Foundation to expand opportunities for philanthropy.

These efforts, in addition to enrollment and retention growth, will support our efforts to invest in faculty and staff. These vital investments will include:

- A faculty and staff compensation fund. This fund will help support both equity and merit awards. If we are able to attain and maintain our enrollment goals and operational improvements, the investments can become base awards.
- Work toward more competitive compensation for all employees and especially for our lowest-paid employees.
- Professional and leadership development for faculty and staff to provide opportunities for employees to enhance their knowledge and skills, prepare for leadership opportunities and explore new innovations in support of our bold vision.

100%

All our students will have a high-impact learning experience.

50%

We will graduate half of our students within four years.

90%

We will retain 90% of our students to their second year.

20%

We will increase enrollment of students of color and close the opportunity gap.

Appendix | Our Planning Process

In fall 2019, faculty, staff and students began planning for our 2020-2025 University Strategic Plan in the spirit of collaboration that distinguishes our university. Led by the University Planning Committee, we gathered in groups small and large, exchanging ideas, reflecting on our past achievements, acknowledging areas for improvement and looking ahead to the next five years of our more than 100-year history. We also received almost 1,300 responses from faculty, staff and students to an online survey asking what we want to accomplish by 2025.

While our planning was interrupted in early 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, we returned in the fall to review and refine a draft plan. At the same time, we coordinated with three concurrent planning efforts — those focused on operational plans for equity, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and climate action, and the academic enterprise. By aligning

all efforts, we have comprehensive strategic and operational guides for the next five years.

In fall 2020, a draft plan was shared with campus for further discussion. Opportunities for feedback were available through an online action forum (attended by more than 160 faculty, staff and students); individual discussions with academic chairs and with the University Senate, Student Senate and University Staff Council; conversations with the chancellor, executive team and deans and the UW-Eau Claire Foundation Board; a presentation to Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce members; as well as an online response form for campuswide comments. After further revisions, the final draft was shared in spring 2021 with the campus and with shared governance groups before presenting it to the chancellor for campuswide adoption. The University Senate endorsed the plan on March 23, 2021.



Members of the University Planning Committee

Ann Aschenbrenner, Nursing
MJ Brukart, Chancellor's Office

Grace Crickette,
Administration and Finance

Billy Felz, Enrollment Management

Paula Kleintjes Neff, Biology

Troy Kozma,
Philosophy and Religious Studies,
UWEC-Barron County

Leah Olson-McBride, Social Work

Brent Opall, Management
(through January 2021)

Louisa Rice, History

Jenni Sterling, University Centers

Evan Weiher, University Senate

Dang Yang, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Jidong Zhang, Accounting and Finance
(beginning January 2021)

Anna Ziebell, Student Body President

