

## Team 1: Rethinking the Public Research University

### Executive Summary

*Submitted by Co-Chairs Michael Bernard-Donals and Bob Mathieu*

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is both a great research university, and a great public university. Through the power of the Wisconsin Idea, these two roles merge to create a great *public research* university. In this context, the definition of being public is *a mutual commitment between the UW-Madison and the people of Wisconsin to support and enhance one another and the global community.*

A great public research university must address great public challenges and goals. In the next decade, we seek to more intentionally couple the intellectual capacity of the university with the identified needs of the state, the nation and the world. For UW-Madison to enhance its role as the exemplar of a great public research university on into the twenty-first century, the UW-Madison faculty, staff, and students must see and embrace their roles as contributing to the public good, and must engage with the issues and opportunities that face the people of both Wisconsin and the global community.

Our overarching recommendation for the next decade calls for the **UW-Madison to more strongly embrace the Wisconsin Idea for the public good, and to demonstrate that our connections and responsibilities with the people of Wisconsin and the global community are opportunities for the very best work that a great public research university can do.**

We will do so by fostering aligned and sustained public work by faculty, students and staff; building partnerships with the public; enhancing public access to the opportunities and resources of the university; and changing our organizational and reward structures to encourage public work. Importantly, our educational mission is one of our strongest embodiments of the Wisconsin Idea.

The university's current work is already rich in engaged citizenship and demonstrates the power of good ideas applied to solving social, economic, health, educational, environmental and other challenges faced by people in Wisconsin and across the globe. We also recognize the public good of the university's commitment to insuring that hard-working, talented Wisconsin students, regardless of background and means, can obtain one of the finest educations and degrees in the world. The UW-Madison begins the twenty-first century from a position of impressive tradition and strength.

We nonetheless assert that UW-Madison has substantial untapped ability to address the opportunities and issues identified by the state and global publics. We also assert that engaging that capacity will require intentional commitment and action by the university community to advance the public good. Finally, we assert that such a commitment of the university will lead to enhanced prestige and recognition of UW-Madison in research, in education, and in leadership for all public research universities. In ten years, the UW-

Madison will attract – and produce – the finest *public intellectuals*, scholars, researchers, teachers and students who explicitly connect their intellectual power to serving the public good.

We have in our midst at UW-Madison remarkable talent and knowledge by which to join with the public in this work. Still needed is a new model for the university that aligns that talent and fosters interdisciplinary engagement of the UW-Madison community with major public issues. Our recommendations for achieving these goals are organized within five key ideas.

**1) Aligned and sustained public work.** We seek systemic and enduring impact for the public good. This goal will require, and motivate, interdisciplinary connection across the campus, a long-standing strategic goal of the university.

1.1: Develop and implement interdisciplinary systems that enable aligned and sustained

engagement of the university with public opportunities and challenges.

1.2: Develop funding and resource models that promote aligned, sustained engagement on timelines appropriate to the goals.

1.3: Develop a broad, inclusive understanding of the role of the humanities and the arts within coherent, sustained engagement for the public good.

1.4: Focus university-wide attention on a select few of the foremost public opportunities and challenges.

**2) Partnerships with the public.** We envision establishing a highly collaborative relationship between the university and the public. Being a public research university means having public conversations and establishing public relationships.

2.1: Establish ongoing and mutual communication with the public.

2.2: Develop modes of operation to work collaboratively with the public.

2.3: Develop institutional partnerships for impact throughout Wisconsin.

2.4: Enhance knowledge transfer to bring economic benefit to the public.

**3) Expanded access of the public to the opportunities and resources of UW-Madison.** The UW-Madison is a resource of and for the people of Wisconsin. All Wisconsin residents – whether or not they are enrolled students at UW-Madison – should have access to the teaching, research, and other benefits of the university. In return, access of the public brings diverse perspectives to the campus.

3.1 Continue enhancing financial aid programs as one of the highest priorities of the UW-Madison

3.2: Invest in programs and technology to broaden public access to the university.

3.3: Become the trusted and accessible source of expertise for the public.

3.4: Expand the sharing of academic programs and courses with other universities in Wisconsin, regionally, and beyond.

**4) Engaged students serving the public.** 40,000 students represent tremendous capacity for connecting the knowledge and research capability of the university, and of the students themselves, to the public. We seek to increase the role of students in connecting the *intellectual* capacity of the UW-Madison in public work.

4.1: Embed the Wisconsin Idea in student recruitment and admissions.

4.2: Integrate the Wisconsin Idea throughout the academic and non-academic student experiences.

4.3: Work with the state of Wisconsin to develop programs that encourage UW-Madison students to stay in or return to Wisconsin after their education.

**5) Recognition of the impact of UW-Madison for the public good.** There is already exceptional public work occurring at the UW-Madison. Making widely known the public work of the university is critical to developing support, trust, and further opportunities with the public.

5.1: Develop and support more powerful strategies of communicating our public work to members of our public.

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To accomplish these goals, significant changes in the university's governance and organizational structures, its rewards systems, the way it implements budgets and allocates funds, and the infrastructure that supports that work must also occur. *Public* work requires easy movement between the academic center of the university and the public domain outside of it, and it requires that the faculty and staff be able to forge relationships with the public and with one another across disciplines. We make the following recommendations for systems that will enable coherent and sustainable engagement with the public:

**6) Organizational Structures:**

6.1 Develop criteria that can be used when merging, reorganizing, and regrouping

departments, centers, colleges, and units to better promote interdisciplinary public work.

6.2 Make clear that the UW-Madison wishes to hire more faculty who value the Wisconsin Idea and public work.

6.3 Create an administrative structure that increases awareness of and connects the excellent public work across the entire university.

## **7) Rewards:**

7.1 Create a Task Force, reporting to the Provost and the Faculty Senate, to develop guidelines and criteria that will adequately protect and reward faculty at all ranks who engage in high-quality research and teaching that involve explicitly public work.

7.2 Align the criteria and policies of Divisional Committees and other university structures (including those in the departments) that oversee the granting of tenure, promotion and mentoring in a way that gives meaningful weight to intellectual work done in the public sphere.

7.3 Define the extent to which units must include considerations of public research and scholarship into their criteria for merit and other professional rewards.

7.4 Establish rewards for excellent work in the public sphere – like the Hamel Family Fellowships – that have the prestige and the dollar equivalents to current WARF awards that principally value pure research (Romnes, Kellett, WARF named professorships).

## **8) Budget and Funds:**

8.1 Design greater flexibility in budgeting lines.

8.2 Develop criteria for budgeting decisions that promote public work.

8.3 Establish grant support for addressing issues of importance to the public.

8.4 Develop cost-sharing strategies that don't disadvantage units whose public work does not generate significant revenue.

## **9) Processes and Infrastructure:**

9.1 Fully invest in CIC broadband.

9.2 Make better use of technology to avoid redundancy, to share resources, and to increase access.

9.3 Streamline industry-sponsored research agreements.

The responsibility of the UW-Madison in the twenty-first century to benefit both the people of Wisconsin and the global community represents a powerful opportunity to leverage alignments of local and global work. We envision an implementation of the Wisconsin Idea in which the **state of Wisconsin becomes our laboratory for the world, and in which the world is our laboratory for Wisconsin**. The research and education achievements of the UW-Madison on behalf of and in concert with the people of Wisconsin will be internationally recognized and respected.