

**Think Tank 2030+ Recommendations**

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

**FINAL REPORT**

**May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

## University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Think Tank 2030+ Recommendations

### *Introduction and Recommendations Summary*

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is a top-tier public research university situated in the largest metropolitan area in the state of Wisconsin. A research university's mission is to provide a world-class education to its students and to generate and disseminate new knowledge. As a public institution, UWM has a core mission to serve the needs of the city of Milwaukee and southeast Wisconsin by providing a strong talent pipeline, relevant research programs, and outreach to the community. UWM is distinguished by its responsibility to promote social mobility for the people in the city of Milwaukee and surrounding area by providing access to an affordable world-class education. This mission and accompanying responsibilities oblige the leadership, faculty, and staff to create a campus culture of valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our relationships with our students, with each other, the community, and in our policies, procedures, and practices at all levels. **The Think Tank 2030+ strongly advocates for a Milwaukee and student-centric vision for the future of UWM.**

UWM's stated vision is to continue to be a "top-tier research university that is the best place to learn and work for students, faculty and staff, and that is a leading driver for sustainable prosperity." When the committee began its work in the Fall of 2019, it was acknowledged that this vision would be challenged over the next ten years by several concurrent state and national pressures including trends in state support, demographics of high school graduates, student loan debt, and the landscape of higher education. The COVID-19 crisis is accelerating and amplifying these challenges. While the committee's original focus was on ways the university should be proactive in the coming years to remain a "top-tier university" in the future, there is now compelling urgency to act in order to retain its ability to meet its dual academic and research missions. The focus of the committee's recommendations is to provide a sustainable model for the future.

Maintaining a robust critical mass of faculty and staff is central to the university's ability to achieve its mission as a research university. The ability to do this requires a budget that maximizes revenue while also maximizing efficiencies and synergies in academic program delivery. Undergraduate enrollment is the primary driver that determines the size of our faculty and staff (Figure 1), which is a primary differentiator between the top-tier research universities ("R1") and those in the second tier (Figure 2). Furthermore, a strong undergraduate student body also supports our graduate education mission through the interconnectedness of undergraduate tuition revenue, research, and excellence in graduate education. Therefore, it is foundational to our research mission that UWM prioritize ways to attract and retain undergraduate students.

### *The Call to Action*

Urgently, UWM must critically examine its internal organizational structure, program array, and technical and physical infrastructure and put the necessary systemic processes in motion to maximize impact across the university as efficiently as possible. We must also immediately take action to modernize our curriculum and more meaningfully engage with our students.

Beyond the acute actions required to ensure our ability to achieve our core missions, UWM has two primary inter-related longer-term goals. One is to remain a top-tier research university and the other is to become a first-choice destination for more prospective students. Success in meeting the first goal is primarily measured by our scholarly productivity and the quality of our graduate programs. Two key metrics utilized by the Carnegie classification system are research expenditures and the number of doctoral students produced, both of which

are directly linked to having a critical mass of faculty (Appendix A). While this classification system uses these select measures as gross indicators of a university's overall scholarly output, it does not imply that other types of scholarly productivity should be less valued. The critical point is the need to maintain a robust faculty in order to maintain overall scholarly activity that is commensurate with a top-tier research university. The second goal is influenced by that scholarly reputation, the reputation of our academic programs (represented in part by our performance in national ranking systems – Appendix B), and student perception of campus life (see Student Success Workgroup Report). In particular, the committee has identified improving UWM's retention and graduation rates as a critical factor in making UWM a first choice for more students.

UWM must be willing to accept radical change in both the short- and long-term if we are to not only survive the current crisis, but also to thrive going forward. This report makes recommendations having a short-term survival orientation as well as recommendations that are intended to seed the change necessary to achieve the longer-term vision of being a top-tier destination research university that meets the needs of our students and the communities we serve.

The committee developed four overarching goals and several strategies to meet those goals:

1. Become a first-choice destination university that attracts and graduates the most diverse<sup>1</sup> student body in Wisconsin.
  - a. Make a full-scale revision of the undergraduate student experience as well as developing forward-facing core competencies that will make a UWM education distinctive. This will also include optimizing the student experience of UWM services and leveraging technology to maximize flexibility for students' preferred learning pathways.
  - b. Make UWM a radically welcoming and engaging institution for all students, including automatic acceptance for all Milwaukee high school graduates. This includes reducing financial barriers for students in need, incentivizing high-achieving students to attend UWM, and changing the culture of UWM to embrace a diversity, equity, and inclusivity mindset among faculty, staff, and administration.
  - c. Make UWM a leader in non-traditional education models, particularly for adult learners, and to provide opportunities for credentialing specific skills for employees needing to upskill.
2. Remain a top-tier research university that excels in producing, disseminating, and commercializing leading-edge knowledge and technology, and graduates innovative and entrepreneurial scholars.
  - a. Expand collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship and graduate programs.
  - b. Infuse entrepreneurship and design thinking into faculty research and undergraduate and graduate education.
  - c. Strengthen sustaining partnerships with community, industry and other academic institutions.
3. Design UWM's operational structure and program array to most flexibly and efficiently meet the teaching, research, and outreach missions.
  - a. Conduct a review of the administrative structure and the program array that includes evaluation of the structure of Colleges and Schools.

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<sup>1</sup> "Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations)." USC Race Equity Center's *Sample Working Definitions for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Discussions, as utilized in the UWM cohort modules in 2020*.

- b. Optimize faculty/staff workforce deployment in support of UWM's academic and research missions.

4. In support of the first three goals, grow the UWM Foundation endowment to \$500M by 2030.

Details related to these recommendations are enclosed in this report.

**Given the acute budgetary constraints UWM is currently facing, the committee recommends prioritizing work on strategies 1a, 1b, and 3a immediately. UWM needs to immediately modernize its general education curriculum to create a more accessible and welcoming campus for students and explore a more optimal program array and alignment.** The committee recommends that task forces be formed to create detailed proposals for each of these by December 2020 to begin moving through shared governance for approval. The detailed recommendations within this report provide a framework as a starting point for these efforts.

Completing these tasks by December 2020 will require concentrated efforts by a small group of UWM faculty, staff, and administrators. The committee strongly advises that the individuals tasked with these assignments be provided workload release in order to focus on this critical work.

Achieving these goals will require an immediate shift in UWM's traditional campus culture, which has historically been known as a faculty, staff, and administration that is risk averse and resistant to major change. For the campus to be prepared and nimble to continually adapt to a rapidly changing environment and to make necessary changes to how we operate, there needs to be a shift in campus culture at all levels. This includes shifts in our approach to how we relate to and educate our students, how we approach our research mission, and how we approach governance and faculty/staff workforce deployment. Ultimately, there needs to be greater flexibility and willingness to re-examine our operations to meet the demands of a rapidly changing landscape of higher education.

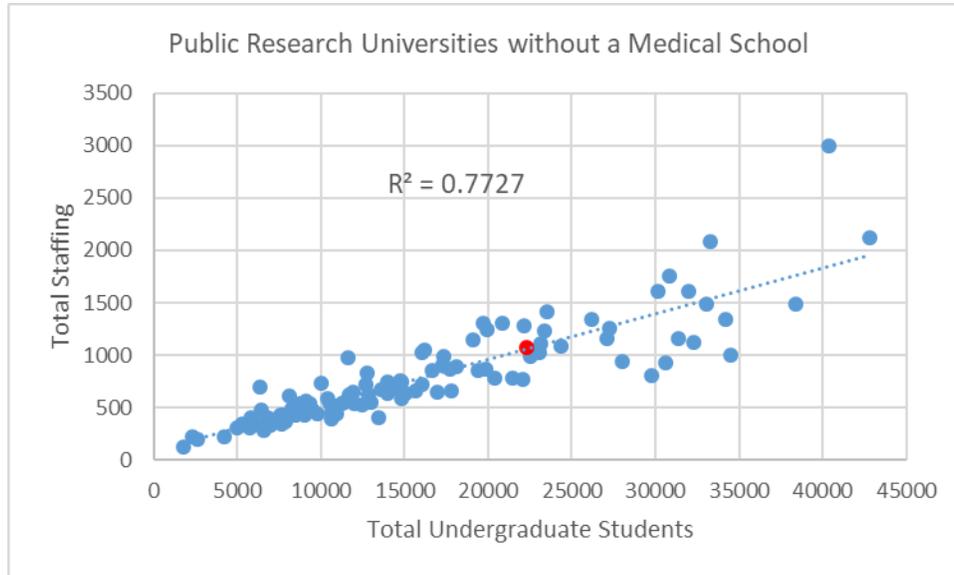


Figure 1. Relationship between total undergraduate enrollment and total faculty and instructional staff size for public research universities (R1 and R2) without a medical school (n = 101). The red dot represents UWM. Data from 2019 IPEDS dataset.

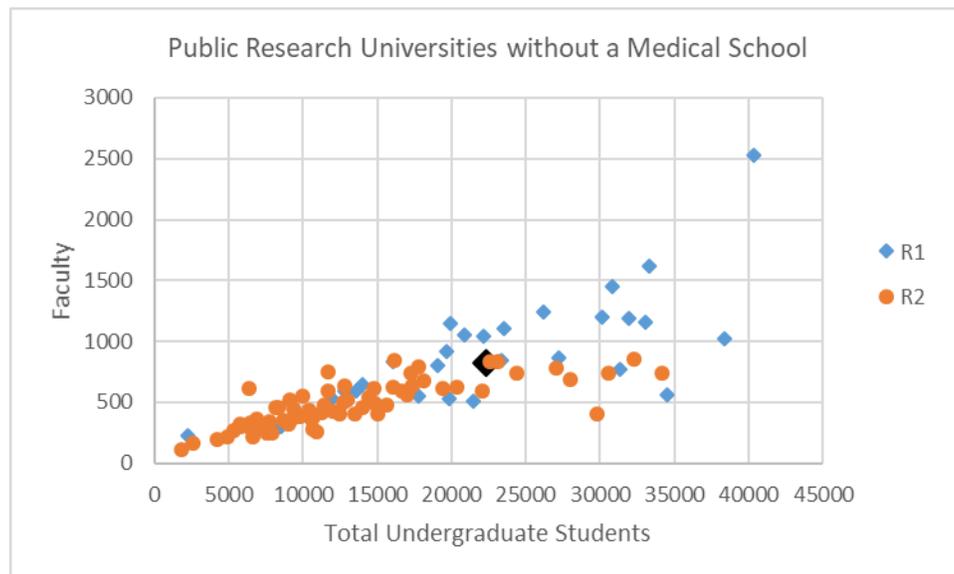


Figure 2. Relationship between total undergraduate enrollment and faculty size (excluding instructional staff) for public research universities without a medical school (n = 101). The large black diamond represents UWM. The average faculty size for the R1 institutions in this dataset is 925 (N=31), and the average for the R2 institutions is 478 (N=70). Data from 2019 IPEDS dataset.

## *Think Tank 2030+ Group Process and Membership*

The Think Tank 2030+ held 16 meetings between November 2019 and May 2020. Committee membership included representation of people from a wide range of roles and perspectives across UWM including faculty, staff, administration, a student, and an outside community member. Individual committee members also represented shared governance groups including the University Committee, Academic Staff Committee, the University Staff Committee, and student government. The committee engaged in an intensive data gathering phase from November to January. Data gathered included the review of national reports, articles, and books on trends in higher education, internal UWM reports that had previously generated recommendations for institutional improvements across all areas of the university, a review of initiatives at other universities, including data from comparable institutions, who had achieved success in key metrics such as undergraduate retention and graduation rates, and data related to UWM and UW-System that helped to meet committee members' knowledge needs in relation to the seven questions asked in the committee charge (Appendix C).

In January, two half-day meetings began the deliberative phase of the committee's work. Data gathering from January forward became more targeted to facilitate discernment of the committee's recommendations. The co-chairs had regular meetings with the Chancellor and Provost to provide bidirectional communication between UWM leadership and committee members. Upon committee request, the Chancellor and Provost attended two committee meetings to engage in dialogue related to proposed ideas, recommendations, and timeline. The intent was to generate draft recommendations mid-spring and to solicit feedback from governance groups, but this was not possible given the effects of the COVID-19 disruption. The committee hopes that the campus will be able to provide feedback to the report at the start of the next academic year. The committee charge and meeting minutes can be accessed through the Chancellor's [website dedicated to the Think Tank 2030+](#).

### *Committee Membership*

Jennifer Doering, Associate Dean, College of Nursing (co-chair)

Kathy Dolan, University Committee Chair and Distinguished Professor, Political Science

Jackie Fredrick, Retired CEO of Versiti and BloodCenter of Wisconsin, MBA '88, Honorary PhD '12

Scott Gronert, Dean, College of Letters and Science

Laretta Henderson, Associate Dean, School of Information Studies

Alejandra Lopez, Assistant Director/Senior Academic Advisor, Lubar School of Business

Connor Mathias, President, Student Association at UWM and Junior, Letters and Science

Kris O'Connor, Associate Vice Provost for Research and Professor, Kinesiology (co-chair)

Wilkistar Otieno, Associate Professor, College of Engineering and Applied Science

Margaret Noodin, Professor, English and American Indian Studies and Director of Electa Quinney Institute

James Peoples, Professor, Economics

Paul Roebber, Distinguished Professor, Atmospheric Sciences

Chia Vang, Associate Vice Chancellor of Global Inclusion and Engagement and Professor, History

Leigh Wallace, Academic Staff Committee Chair and Clinical Assistant Professor, Education

Stan Yasaitis, University Staff Senate Chair and University Services Assistant, Undergraduate Admissions

*Special thanks to the following individuals for their time and assistance:* Cheryl Andres, Pat Borger, Marcus Carriaga, Dave Clark, Lori Craig, Pat Cronin, Bob Da Vita, Chris Fiasca, Nikia Handy, Jonathan Hanes, Mark Harris, Cindy Kluge, Drew Knab, Katie Miota, Carl Mueller, Mary Tagliavia, Brian Thompson, John Torinus, and Robin Van Harpen.

## Think Tank 2030+ Detailed Recommendations

### Overarching Goal #1

UWM is a first-choice destination that attracts and graduates the most diverse student body in Wisconsin. UWM is also the primary source for southeast Wisconsin's workforce in the financial, manufacturing, freshwater, entertainment/cultural, health, education, and social sectors. This can be accomplished by developing a distinctive educational brand for traditional students, making UWM more accessible to a diverse student body, and becoming a regional destination for non-traditional learners.

- a. Make a full-scale revision of the undergraduate student experience as well as developing forward-facing core competencies that will make a UWM education distinctive. This will also include optimizing the student experience of UWM services and leveraging technology to maximize flexibility for students' preferred learning pathways.
- b. Make UWM a radically welcoming and engaging institution for all students, including automatic acceptance for all Milwaukee high school graduates. This includes reducing financial barriers for students in need, incentivizing high-achieving students to attend UWM, and changing the culture of UWM to embrace a diversity, equity, and inclusive mindset among faculty, staff, and administration.
- c. Make UWM a regional leader in non-traditional education models, particularly for adult learners, and to provide opportunities for credentialing specific skills for employees needing to upskill.

### Strategy 1a – Develop a Distinctive and Student-Centered Undergraduate Experience

For UWM to be an attractive and inclusive destination campus, UWM needs to drastically alter the way the undergraduate curriculum is delivered and how students interface with the institution at all levels. This includes re-vamping the general education curriculum, infusing experiential learning in a meaningful way for all undergraduates, creating a single set of university graduation requirements for all bachelor's degrees, improving the student experience from recruitment through graduation and beyond to the workplace, creating a more unified and coherent student support structure focused on the individual student, and strengthening faculty engagement with students and faculty investment in student success. These changes will have the effect of improving student success measures like retention and graduation, reducing unnecessary additional credits for transfers into UWM and within (between majors), graduating students prepared for workforce entry, and promote a sense of belonging that will catalyze students to complete their education at UWM and remain connected as alumni.

Specifically, the committee recommends the following:

1. Development of a unified "UWM Core Curriculum". This core curriculum provides a cohesive framework that includes the following three components:
  - a. A cohesive first-year experience,
  - b. A revamped general education curriculum, and
  - c. An experiential learning requirement. In addition, this core curriculum would define the common degree requirements for all UWM undergraduate degrees such that students could switch majors and colleges without additional college-specific graduation requirements outside of those for the major.
2. Improve the student experience from recruitment through graduation, and
3. Leverage and invest in newest technologies to provide flexible student learning pathways.

Each component will be discussed in turn.

*First-Year Experience.* UWM must develop a strong first-year experience. There are several models nationally that appear to have had success in retaining students but developing a detailed structure for UWM was beyond the scope of the committee. Two recommendations of the committee are that if a first-year seminar is required of all students, those credits should be part of the General Education Requirement (GER) structure, and seminars should be offered across all schools and colleges such that a student can take a seminar in their (at least initial) interest area.

*General Education Requirements.* One of the highest-priority changes the committee identified is to revamp GERs by updating and modernizing the core competencies and creating a more streamlined and cohesive list of eligible GER courses. In addition to the core competencies of a traditional liberal arts education, the committee recommends that *local and global community literacy, technological literacy, team skills, leadership & initiative, and entrepreneurship* be included in some fashion. UWM is well positioned to infuse these competencies into its core curriculum which will distinguish the UWM brand from our regional competitors. Specific GER recommendations include:

- No more than 150 total GER approved courses across campus.
- Explore an alternative revenue model where GER revenue is pooled in order to change the financial incentives.
- Implement a learning outcome-based GER model.

*Experiential Learning within the Undergraduate Experience.* There should be an experiential learning requirement for all UWM graduates. This experience should be embedded within their chosen program of study as much as possible. Specific recommendations include:

- Promote local community based experiential learning opportunities.
- Expand connections with leading businesses as a primary strategy for expanding internships.
- Intentional effort to expand study abroad participation by providing student travel grants. It is acknowledged that fundraising is needed to achieve this.
- Expand undergraduate research opportunities by creating incentives that increase faculty participation. The committee recommends that faculty be allocated workload for this and that engagement of students in research opportunities be incorporated into tenure and promotion processes.

*Improve the student experience from recruitment through graduation.* Significant improvements are needed at UWM to create a student-centric experience within all aspects of UWM. While this list is not comprehensive, below are some suggested strategies the committee recommends be explored and implemented as part of overall changes needed to support the 2030 goals. The committee also emphasizes that there is a difference in the student experience as it relates to logistics and navigating the system(s) of campus as opposed to how students experience the culture and climate of campus. Equal attention should be given to both aspects when making changes.

- Create a more unified and coherent student support structure focused on the individual student. A personalized student experience of advising and support will require:
  - A coordinated and integrated systems approach with a single accountable leader imbued with the authority and knowledge to reorganize and lead a major system change.

- Clear coordination of messaging and systems among UWM’s admissions office, University Relations, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and systems related to enrollment management (student success).
  - Consider a more centralized, yet relational academic advising model, especially in relation to revision of the first-year experience and GERs. For example, there should be coordinated messaging about the UWM brand from the time when a student has a first point of contact with UWM, such as when recruiting students from area high schools through orientation, onboarding of students to campus life and across all advising contacts through graduation.
  - A relational model for advising that includes many points of contact for students to engage with support services as a network of support across their UWM experience; however, equally important is coordination at all levels of student services and inclusion of interfaces between Student Affairs and faculty and staff to support students.
- Tours of UWM for students and parents should be focused on the academic offerings in equal measure to the student experience of UWM to enhance the advertising of the strength of academic programming at UWM including distinguished programs, flexibility of course delivery modes, Honors College opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, study abroad, and other academically oriented pursuits.
- UWM, in partnership with several campus units and community partners, are making significant investments in big data science innovations. When applying data science to the study of student experiences and outcomes, the committee suggests that care be taken not miss the human insights that are necessary to drive recommendations and take collective action. To this end, the committee recommends that narratives from student experiences be included in the development of a complete data picture that seeks to drive change and improvements of student experiences and outcomes.
- Strengthen faculty engagement with students and faculty investment in student success. Greater relational connection between the faculty and staff and our students’ physical, psychological, and social well-being, along with our students’ development and growth in both personal and academic performance is critically important. All systems that interface between a student and UWM should be oriented towards the student’s needs and ease of user experience for all involved.
- Key outcome success metrics include freshman area yield rates, enrollments, first to second year retention rates, and 4- and 6-year graduation rates. A comprehensive data system that targets metrics for each strategy implemented should be developed to create a system of continuous quality improvement and accountability for tracking and achieving key targets. There should be systems within currently discrete (and siloed) structures (e.g., the admissions office, University Relations, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, enrollment management, Honors College, Office of Undergraduate Research and several more areas) to track and feed into a comprehensive system from which predictive analytics are explored as a key student and university success strategy.
- Furthermore, the committee recommends studying the cost structure for student services and developing comparisons with similar institutions to understand how and what UWM spends for

student support to be as cost effective and efficient as possible, and to ensure the continuation of high impact practices.

*Leverage technology.* The committee recommends that all above efforts strategically leverage the newest technologies to maximize flexibility for students' preferred learning pathways. This should include the ability of students to complete a UWM degree either fully in person or fully online, for at least a designated group of selected degrees, or facilitating degrees using hybrid models creatively. This umbrella recommendation is intended to maximize student-centeredness by enabling students across Wisconsin and beyond to be attracted to degrees that are flexible to meet the student's learning, geographic, and economic needs.

- Enhancements should comprehensively exam infrastructure, innovative pedagogies, and platforms, and educational design and technologies as all having potential for leverage and expansion. A few examples on campus of units who currently are engaged in such innovations that could be evaluated for greater campus use include the, the [UWM Flexible Option](#), in the [School of Architecture and Urban Planning](#), and the online Nursing PhD program.

Fundamental to this overall goal is an understanding that the steps listed above are all interconnected with the previously listed, and subsequent recommendations and actions taken, for instance, related to the First-Year Experience and GERs, which seeds the groundwork for programs and majors to set new priorities and for UWM to propose and prepare for the next evolution of academic opportunities that can subsequently arise when the budget model changes in the future. The committee anticipates that UWM can develop economic goals that incentivize and reward the type of achievement that the report identifies.

#### *Strategy 1b – Make UWM a Radically Welcoming and Engaging Institution for Students*

UWM must be the anchor institution for Milwaukee and region, including southeast Wisconsin, and will serve the needs of the citizens of the region, and reflect the populations served, within UWM and by UWM. As such, UWM must more intentionally engage with the city and surrounding areas and be viewed as a welcoming and accessible institution. This will require changes in UWM's institutional culture, structure, and affordability to residents of the city of Milwaukee.

UWM seeks to achieve the aspirational reality of being perceived by students of all backgrounds as a place to engage meaningfully with a world-class faculty and staff who are invested in a student's academic and personal development, growth and academic experience. This includes the encouragement of UWM to embed principles of liberation, equality, and diversity into the learning experiences for students so that students from all backgrounds understand their value as equal members of the learning community. Equally important for achieving this aspiration is that UWM is received by the people and communities it serves as an authentic academic partner that is committed to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and creates opportunities for social mobility and racial equality and justice through research and community engagement.

Specifically, the 2030 Think Tank recommends the following:

1. *Institutional Culture Changes.* Achieving overarching goal #1 will require an intentionality across all employees, programs, and levels of UWM to create an institutional culture of relationship building and equity with a goal of achieving educational equity and justice at UWM. Everyone working at UWM needs intensive and ongoing development to improve strategies supporting student engagement and competency to engage in the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). A faculty or staff member who is knowledgeable about and capable of implementing best practices to support students

of diverse backgrounds is fundamental for attracting, retaining, and graduating all students. If all faculty and staff are focused on building a campus climate to promote educational equity and establishing relational networks that support student success, then UWM will become a first-choice destination for all students. Because having a goal of educational equity must be authentic, the committee recommends centering the principle that being welcoming is everyone's job at UWM.

- a. In support of the above goal, UWM should continually assess our changing demographics and develop and implement a comprehensive plan to assess and measure the degree to which our faculty and staff reflect the demographics of the region served.
- b. Full implementation of the [UWM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Framework](#). While the DEI Framework is comprehensive in nature and it is beyond the scope of this report to fully explain all components of it, the committee emphasizes prioritizing processes to recruit and retain faculty and staff who reflect the populations UWM serves, which itself, supports all four overarching goals recommended by the committee.

## 2. *Structural Changes.*

- a. UWM needs to have stronger pathways from the local high schools and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) that are radically welcoming and are designed to promote access to higher education and social mobility as early as possible within the K-12 educational system. Recommendations include:
  - Automatic UWM admission for all City of Milwaukee high school graduates.
  - Stronger pathways and collaborative agreements from area high schools and between all transfer institutions targeting the goal of optimizing all transfer opportunities to maximize affordability and minimize barriers to higher education access. All possible pathways for optimizing the seamless flow of students between institutions should be explored (e.g., even stronger MATC to UWM pathway). While most pathways expect to support student flow from MATC to UWM, opportunities for creative bidirectional flow should continue to be explored, especially in highly competitive or in-demand programs. Programs such as Nursing, where qualified students who are not selected for a UWM program may be able to matriculate to MATC for a period of time and are automatically accepted to UWM to finish a bachelor's degree (e.g., RN-BSN) at UWM.
- b. "University College": It is recommended that UWM create a University College for offering a low-cost opportunity to facilitate college readiness in students who have graduated high school. Such a program will be critical if UWM adopts the recommendation to automatically accept local high school graduates, since UWM is committed to the success (graduation) of every student.
- c. Degree Affordability: The committee recommends examining ways to remove barriers and support students' ability to afford tuition and consider the factors such as time and space needed when building flexibility into programs.
  - UWM is encouraged to recognize multiple pathways and timelines for completing a degree. For example, the student's time is a resource, including the time the student spends on campus and getting to campus (e.g., transportation structures to optimize use of time). When planning academic programs, flexibility of timing and scheduling classes (e.g., evening, weekends) and leveraging technology to maximize flexibility should be considered.
  - Encourage instructors to adopt the use of open source textbooks and other open educational resources to promote affordability. This strategy also connects to Strategy

1a's recommendations for a stronger First Year Experience; however, this strategy should also be considered across the university.

- Expanded emergency grant program to support student retention.
- d. Create ways for parents in the region, knowing their students have automatic acceptance to UWM, to invest early in a UWM education and develop mechanisms for UWM to remain engaged with prospective families within the K-12 system to support this. For example, UWM, in partnership with K-12 systems, could create a pathway to engage students at young ages. This is recommended, because the committee discussed how connectivity between UWM and K-12 systems that creates synergies can support mutual goals of both institutions. In the long-term, this engagement can enable UWM to support community health and job training that may lead to positive outcomes, such as social mobility.
- Simultaneously, expand relationships between students and area schools to work more intensely with K-12 institutions to promote rich experiential learning within K-12. Optimize how UWM can be a resource to help K-12 improve student success and outcomes. Develop strong educational programs linked to middle and high schools to prepare younger students for college.
  - The committee recommends developing a fundraising campaign to create a "Promise" program to fund tuition for students from families with household incomes below a predetermined amount. Examples of ideas discussed included:
    - i. Programs such as Wayne State's "Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge" or "Purdue Promise" (where students pay an income-contingent loan back for a defined period after graduation), and "Badger Promise" are models to explore.
    - ii. The UWM Endowment will need substantial investment by 2030 with the primary focus on funding a Promise-type program.
- e. UWM should also work to attract high-achieving students, both locally and nationally, by leveraging our status as a top-tier research university and our world-class academic programs. In addition to increasing need-based aid, UWM should increase merit-based scholarships to both in-state and out-of-state students. Many peer institutions offer national scholars programs that discount out-of-state tuition. Such a strategy would seem to have little financial risk relative to the potential rewards. In addition, emphasizing and expanding the Honor's College and the undergraduate research program could be a way to attract such students.
- f. A better understanding of how to work within the UW-System (UWS) and how to leverage the System as a whole is needed to enhance inclusivity and educational equity across the System. For example, asking how could all the English departments, deans, chairs, faculty, staff across UWS work together to dismantle barriers for all Wisconsin citizens; such efforts would also minimize duplication of efforts and increase resource efficiency.

#### Strategy 1c – Make UWM a Leader in Non-Traditional Models of Education

- UWM's access mission should also be applied to adult learners in the region. To this end, efforts should be undertaken to make re-entry and re-careering of adult learners as easy and flexible as possible, leveraging technology, industry partnership to identify the industry's trends and rapidly develop and deploy competitive programs, and opportunities for adult learners. Well before the Covid-19 pandemic, UWM was an innovative leader in online learning (e.g., UW Flexible Option, which enrolls students

monthly, is housed at UWM), and online learning innovations will become increasingly important over the next decade. UWM is well positioned to take advantage of emerging market opportunities.

- The Committee strongly recommends that traditional constraints of higher education including the idea of semesters, an academic year, and regular business hours be discarded to improve student centricity and innovation, and competitiveness of opportunities that are developed. Simultaneously, the employment schedules and structures that support maintaining traditional models of work at UWM need re-examination and adjustment to allow innovative opportunities to be quickly and effectively implemented.
- UWM has an opportunity to develop opportunities to partner with industries in the area and nationally to leverage faculty and staff expertise to meet the upskilling needs of employees of our industry partners. Upskilling could take the form of “badges”, short-courses, and formats outside the traditional academic calendar.
- Similar to the above strategy, the committee recommends UWM develop custom programs for major employers that fulfill the requirements for advancing their workforce measured by significant programs in every sector and every large to mid-sized business. UWM positionality as an economic and knowledge driver of the region means that UWM should be the #1 choice for academic partnerships in Wisconsin.

### **Overarching Goal #2**

Remain a top-tier research university that excels in producing, disseminating, and commercializing leading-edge knowledge and technology, and graduates innovative and entrepreneurial scholars.

- a. Expand collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship and graduate programs.
- b. Infuse entrepreneurship and design thinking into faculty research and undergraduate and graduate education.
- c. Strengthen sustaining partnerships with community, industry and other academic institutions.

#### **Strategy 2a – Expand Collaborative and Interdisciplinary scholarship and graduate programs**

In order to maximize UWM’s research impact and graduate education quality and competitiveness, UWM should prioritize the development of interdisciplinary and collaborative research teams. This can be accomplished by instituting structures and reward systems that promote collaborative work, and there should be a focus on building areas of collaborative strength through future hiring. The committee specifically noted the need to improve internal processes to facilitate multiple investigator work that provides adequate visibility of their contributions. Efforts to build a stronger collaborative culture should include developing interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate degree programs and more effective Centers and Institutes, including considering the degree of interdisciplinarity in the evaluation of Centers and Institutes. Note that the Office of Research’s working group continues its efforts and will likely have more detailed recommendations.

#### **Strategy 2b – Infuse Entrepreneurship and Design Thinking into Faculty Research and Graduate Education.**

Entrepreneurial thinking and design thinking approaches are a powerful complement to UWM’s research strengths, and these skills can enhance the preparation and future success of UWM graduate students, helping UWM to become known as a model for entrepreneurship across all academic disciplines recognized nationally as a source of innovation. Design thinking provides tools to fundamentally understand the experience of the user, define problems in focused manner and identify solutions best suited to address those problems. Entrepreneurial thinking – taught through programs such as I-Corps and in other settings – provides a hypothesis-based approach to testing models and solutions in the marketplace. This approach will help the

outcomes of UWM research to have the broadest possible impact, ensure the relevance of UWM research and strengthen connections with industry and other partners. Both design thinking and entrepreneurship will help our graduates to better adapt to a changing marketplace, identify ways to add value and use the skills of their core disciplines in new ways throughout their career.

*Strategy 2c – Strengthen Sustaining Partnerships with Community, Industry and Other Academic Institutions*

UWM will need to increasingly partner with others to strengthen its research programs and to develop unique educational opportunities. The committee encourages developing future industry partnerships similar to the Data Science Institute as well as exploring opportunities for large-scale contracts with industry or governmental agencies to provide data collection and analysis services. The committee also encourages the pursuit of academic partnerships with other academic institutions in order to take advantage of a collective critical mass of expertise to launch innovative graduate programs. UWM should also expand its community engagement to increase the impact of its scholarship and expertise in meeting community needs.

**Overarching Goal #3**

Design UWM’s operational structure and program array to most flexibly and efficiently meet the teaching, research, and outreach missions.

- a. Conduct a review of the administrative structure and program array that includes evaluation of the structure of Colleges and Schools.
- b. Optimize faculty/staff workforce deployment in support of UWM’s academic and research missions.

*Strategy 3a – Optimize Academic Organization and Program Array*

The committee recommends a broad-based review of UWM’s academic organizational structure and its program array. This was already one of the committee’s recommendations given the long-term demographic trends, but the current pandemic crisis elevated this recommendation to be a critical priority. While any programmatic decisions are unlikely to be immediately implemented for the coming academic year, it is imperative that academic programs and schools/colleges be financially viable, because the budgetary aftereffects of the current crisis are likely to persist into the foreseeable future. UWM needs to focus its increasingly limited resources on areas where it can have the greatest impact on our teaching, research, and outreach missions. This will require re-aligning of schools and colleges to maximize efficiencies and program synergies, as well as streamlining its program array and investing in areas with strong potential for growth. The end goal will be to position UWM for sustainability and strategic growth over the next ten years.

The committee recognizes that re-organization, particularly at the level of degree programs, is the most difficult conversation any campus faces. However, UWM cannot continue to erode in a diffuse manner without eventually sacrificing its core mission as a top-tier research university. The committee is committed to the broad array of programming UWM offers as a top-tier research university. However, how we deliver this programming will need to change in order to maintain financial viability and will likely require some difficult decisions. The committee recommends a set of principles to guide the decision-making process.

*Schools/Colleges.* UWM should reduce its number of Schools and Colleges, which is greater than most peer institutions with a similar academic program array and faculty size. The committee believes that the total could be decreased from 13 to as few as six. Self-identified peers of approximately the same size have 8-9 equivalent

free-standing schools and colleges, such as Virginia Commonwealth, Georgia State, or Wayne State. The committee recognizes that the cost savings related to eliminating the administration costs of a single dean's office are likely relatively small when compared to the total budget. It is acknowledged that there is potential modest budgetary benefit if there was a substantial reduction in the number of stand-alone schools and colleges, but the primary rationale of such re-organization should be based on grouping academic programs in order to maximize collaborations and synergies, which could promote innovations in future academic programming and research collaborations. As part of this exercise, UWM could eliminate free-standing Schools and only have Colleges, with Schools as functional units within Colleges. Note that changing to this model will require changes to the UWM Policies and Procedures. Some examples of possible re-alignments could include (note that the committee did not fully explore all of the merits and challenges of implementing each of these ideas since such substantive discussions must include the parties affected):

- A College of Health with several Schools (e.g, Public Health, Nursing, Rehabilitation Sciences, Health Sciences, Social Welfare). Similar structures are common at peer institutions.
- Combine the College of Engineering and Applied Science with programs that have a data science/informatics focus (e.g., Luddy School at Indiana University). This would consolidate programs with a data science focus and could lead to greater programmatic synergies.
- Study opportunities for connecting the College of General Studies with the College of Letters & Science to improve pathways for student success.
- College of Design similar to those at the University of Oregon or the University of Minnesota that bring together fields previously not housed under a singular umbrella. This college would not only combine areas of Peck School of the Arts and the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, it could also connect to engineering and other units, and could provide an academic home for entrepreneurship programming.
- College of Environment that could include the School of Freshwater Sciences, atmospheric sciences, and faculty from various other units having environmental foci (e.g., Geosciences, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, etc.). Alternatively, SFS could become a School within CEAS or the College of Letters & Science.

*Academic Program Array.* UWM should streamline its degree programs to focus on those that are considered essential as a comprehensive research university, those that attract strong numbers of majors and have high growth potential, and those that positively impact UWM's reputation as a top-tier research university. Specifically, the committee suggests *three primary principles for assessing our academic program array.*

1. Academic programs that are considered core to the mission of a comprehensive research university.
2. Programs that contribute substantially and sustainably to the scholarship and community engagement missions of the university.
3. Programs with sufficient undergraduate majors and/or have revenue-generating graduate enrollments (such as in professional programs) to balance their operational costs.

The Committee recommends the following additional criteria for discernment. For programs that meet:

- #1 or #2 – Candidate to create a more sustainable operational model, including reconfiguring degree programs and/or combining with other academic units to create a clustered critical mass of faculty.
- #3 – Candidate for continued investment.

- #2 and #3 – Candidate for growth and additional campus investment.
- Programs not meeting any of these criteria would be candidates for disinvestment if there is not a path forward for sustainability.

Given the acute uncertainty facing higher education, in addition to the above recommendations, the committee also encourages UWM to be engaged and pro-active in evaluating its role both within UW System and nationally. In light of UW System’s recent focus on distinguishing the comprehensive campus missions, UWM must position itself as a System leader in both education and research and be prepared for a potential seismic shift in the landscape of higher education. Evaluation of our structure and program array must be considered through this lens.

**Additionally, given the extensive discussions required for such decisions, the committee recommends initiating these conversations as soon as possible.**

*Strategy 3b – Optimize faculty/staff workforce deployment in support of UWM’s academic and research missions*

Assuming constrained faculty numbers for the foreseeable future, the university must re-think its staffing model to optimally meet its teaching, research, and outreach missions. Initial discussions have raised several questions:

- 1) Should there be more flexible tenure & promotion (T&P) criteria that link to greater faculty workload flexibility?
  - Given that T&P and workload assignments are generally decided at the local Executive Committee level, how can UWM adopt a university-wide culture change?
- 2) Should the historic faculty/staff roles be re-examined to provide a more flexible overall workforce?
  - Could the definition of “Faculty” be broadened to include those in primarily teaching or research roles (relates to T&P flexibility)?

Changing our approach to our workforce deployment will require a major culture change among the faculty such that those in more teaching-intensive roles are valued equally to faculty in more research-intensive roles. Coupled with a significant culture change of Faculty and Academic Staff roles should also be a re-examination of our governance structure to make the structure as nimble as possible.

The committee was unable to fully explore more detailed recommendations due to time constraints. However, the committee strongly supports a campus re-examination of workload practices and how those interface with faculty tenure & promotion requirements. Note that the Office of Research’s working group has also been discussing this and may have more detailed recommendations when their work concludes.

**Overarching Goal #4**

Sustaining our mission and vision will require resources beyond state appropriations and student tuition. UWM has a strong access mission and a major recommendation is to improve the affordability of a UWM education through scholarships. A robust endowment will be central to that purpose. Therefore, the UWM Foundation must grow its endowment substantially. The UWM Foundation’s current endowment is \$112M, which is unable to adequately support the proposed initiatives. **The committee proposes charting a goal to increase its endowment to \$500M by 2030.** This will require a different fundraising strategy than has been employed in the

past. Previous comprehensive campaigns have resulted in about a third of the funds going towards the endowment. If the next campaign used that same strategy, UWM would need to raise a total of ~\$1B in order to increase the endowment to the goal, which is not realistic. Instead, the committee recommends that the next campaign be primarily focused on growing the UWM Foundation's endowment, and it also strongly supports investment in our development infrastructure to achieve this goal. A \$500M endowment would greatly enhance our capability to support our students and gets us closer to the median endowment for public research universities (currently ~\$800M).

Appendix A –Carnegie Classification of Research Universities

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (CCIHE) provides the most commonly utilized university classification system. In the 2018 classifications, CCIHE designated 261 universities in the United States as “Doctoral Research Universities”. This group is split in half and designated as “High Research Activity” (i.e., R2) and “Highest Research Activity” (i.e, R1). Since 2014, UWM has been designated in the R1 group. In the 2018 listing, that group included 131 institutions, and UWM was 119<sup>th</sup> on that list. The rankings are based on research expenditures, number of doctorates awarded, and the number of non-faculty research staff (e.g., post docs). Different weightings are given to each category and doctorates are split by field. ([https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/pdf/CCIHE2018\\_Research\\_Activity\\_Index\\_Method.pdf](https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/pdf/CCIHE2018_Research_Activity_Index_Method.pdf))

The classification system considers both aggregate performance and production per capita faculty (Figure A1 and Table A1). The per capita analysis primarily focused on expenditures, which was not an area of strength for UWM. The campus generally performed better on the aggregate metrics, although UWM’s overall expenditures are below most R1 institutions. UWM’s greatest strengths were in its doctorates awarded in the social sciences and humanities.

Table A1. PCA loadings based on rank ordered data:

<b>Aggregate Analysis</b>	PCA Loading	UWM Ranking
Doctorates: STEM	0.909	121*
S&E R&D Expenditures	0.899	163
Research Staff	0.894	124*
Doctorates: Social Sciences	0.864	64*
Doctorates: Humanities	0.863	96*
Non-S&E R&D Expenditures	0.817	147
Doctorates: Other Fields	0.621	122.5*
<b>Per-capita Analysis</b>		
Per-capita S&E R&D Expenditures	0.935	189
Per-capita Research Staff	0.930	131*
Per-capita Non-S&E R&D Expenditures	0.619	140

\* Top 131

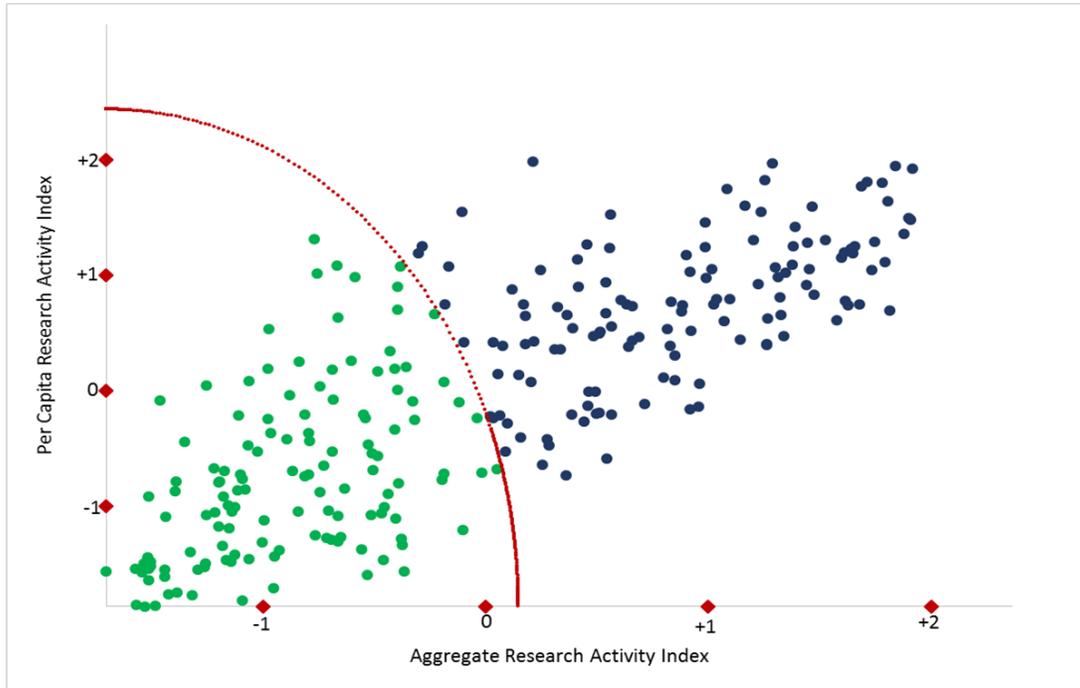


Figure A1. CCIHE representation of R1 (blue) and R2 (green) universities in the relative performance on per capita and aggregate performance metrics. [http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/downloads/CCIHE2018-Research\\_Activity\\_Index.xlsx](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/downloads/CCIHE2018-Research_Activity_Index.xlsx)

While not directly part of the classification system, faculty size clearly affects aggregate productivity. UWM’s faculty size was ranked 125<sup>th</sup> of all 261 research institutions and 109<sup>th</sup> of the 131 R1 institutions. Given that UWM’s R1 classification rested more heavily on its aggregate performance, further faculty reductions will make meeting the aggregate benchmarks to retain R1 exceedingly difficult. UWM should also develop strategies to improve its per capita research expenditures, potentially through more extensive collaborative and interdisciplinary research efforts in order to maximize the faculty’s collective expertise (e.g., included within Strategy 2a).

Appendix B – US News & World Report Ranking System

While an imperfect gauge of the quality of the university’s educational mission, the US News & World Report, and other similar rankings, are highly influential in students’ evaluation of potential destinations. As such, improving our ranking out of the bottom tier would yield substantial material benefits to multiple key success metrics. Roughly a third (35%) of the weighting in their ranking system is linked to student outcomes (retention and graduation rates, both overall and for students who are Pell eligible), which is an area in which UWM has not performed well historically. The campus has been aggressively pursuing retention measures in the last few years to maintain enrollments, and these efforts should also have several positive, long-term benefits, including boosting the 6-year graduation rate, which is a major driver across many national ranking systems. UWM reported a 44% graduation rate for 2019, which is a slight improvement over previous years, but still lags behind peer institutions (Table B1). If UWM could achieve approximately a 60% 6-year graduation rate, UWM would very likely move out of the bottom tier of the US News rankings (Figure B1). The committee identified this as an achievable goal for the next ten years. To achieve this goal, the retention rate would have to increase to ~80% by 2025 (Figure B2). Continuing to strengthen UWM’s retention efforts is the first step to achieving the graduation goal. A significant portion of the committee’s recommendations strategically targets this metric for the clear benefit to UWM teaching, research, engagement missions and thereby, UWM’s financial viability, that this would achieve.

*Table B1.* Self-identified peers in IPEDS separated by those ranked by US News & World Reports and those that are not.

	2019 US News Rank	Retention Rate	6-year Grad Rate	Avg ACT Score
UIC	129	80%	58%	24
Virginia Commonwealth	157	85%	62%	24.5
Georgia State	187	84%	53%	23.5
UMass Boston	191	76%	45%	N/A
IUPUI	194	72%	47%	22.5
Wayne State	205	79%	39%	24
U Missouri – St L	226	76%	53%	24
UWM	>230	73%	44%	22
Cleveland State	>230	72%	41%	22
CUNY	N/A	83%	47%	N/A
Portland State	>230	76%	48%	21.5
U Memphis	>230	76%	42%	22.5
U New Orleans	>230	71%	36%	22.5
U Toledo	>230	76%	43%	23

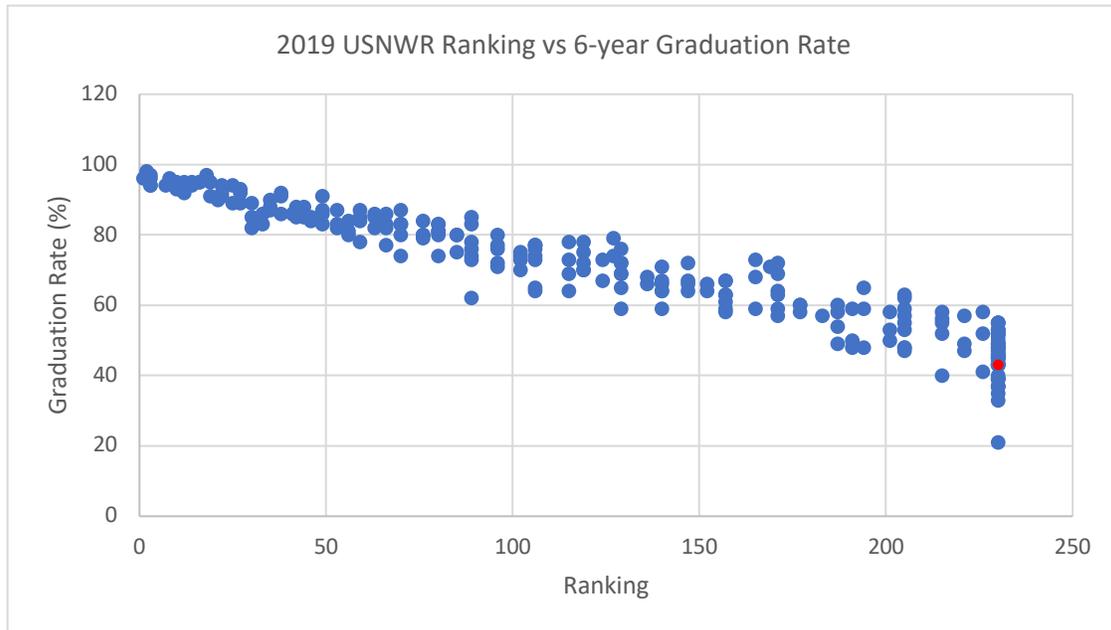


Figure B1. Research university rankings in the 2019 US News & World Report versus 6-year graduation rates.

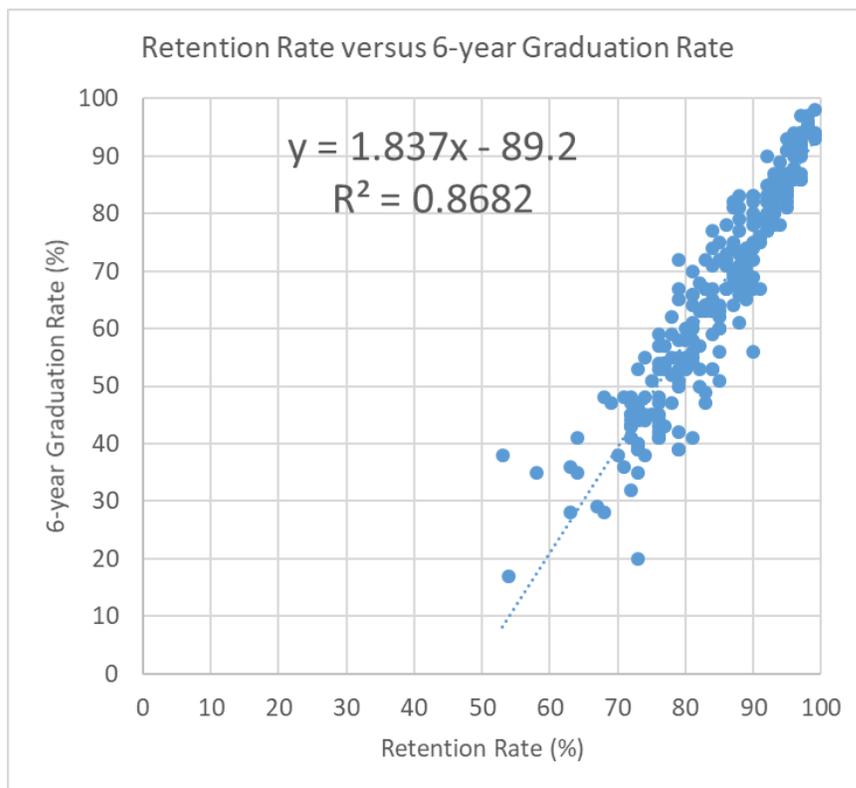


Figure B2. First-to-second year retention rate versus 6-year graduation rate. Note that there is roughly a two-point increase in graduation rate for each point increase in retention rate. Also, universities with ~80% retention rates have ~60% graduation rates. Data from 2019 IPEDS dataset.

There are several factors that affect retention and graduation rates, but one factor that highly correlates is the profile of the incoming freshman class, which can be broadly represented by the average ACT score (UWM’s average ACT score is currently 22). There is a strong correlation between the average ACT scores and graduation rates nationally (Figure B3). The committee strongly supports the access mission of the university and also believes targeted efforts can be made to recruit higher-achieving students, which may be explored as a strategy for improving UWM’s overall graduation rate.

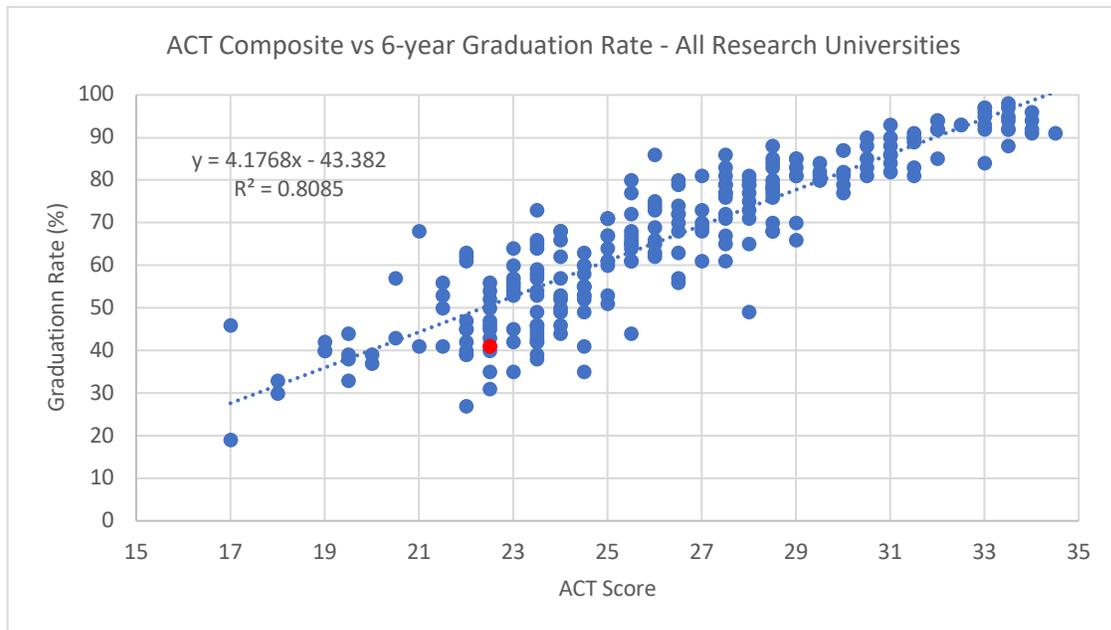


Figure B3. ACT composite versus 6-year graduation rates for all research universities. The red dot represents UWM. Data from 2019 IPEDS dataset.

A third aspect of improving retention and graduation rates is to focus on retaining students who may be considering transfer to another institution. While UWM graduates approximately 44% of new freshmen, ~20% transfer away to other schools, with most of those transfers being to other four-year institutions (Figure B4). Improving this group of students’ connections to UWM through the many strategies suggested within Strategies 1a and 1b have the potential to reduce the number of students who transfer out of UWM, thereby further supporting UWM’s financial model. Strategies to improve student life would likely also positively affect recruitment of new students overall (see Chancellor’s Student Success Workgroup report).

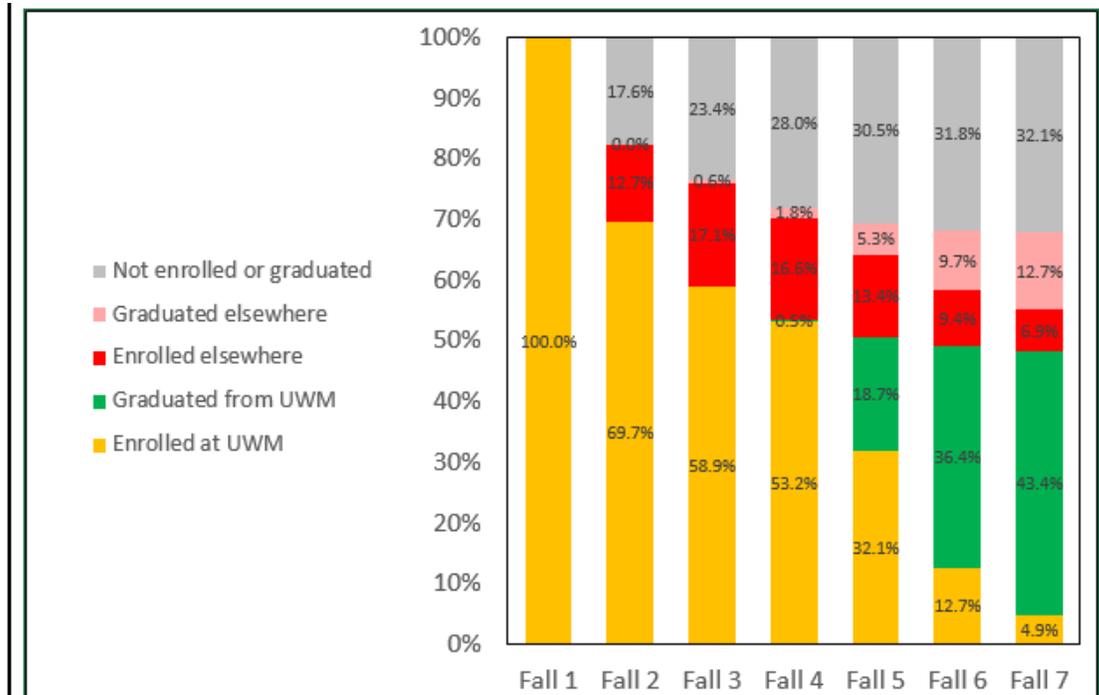


Figure B4. Fall 2013 cohort six-year outcomes. Data from OAIR.

To summarize, the committee has identified four main ways to achieve higher retention and graduation rates:

- Continue to enhance student success efforts.
- Create a more streamlined general education curriculum that facilitates student progression.
- Aggressively recruit high-achieving students from both within and outside the state.
- Improve the student experience and increase the sense of campus pride and the overall UWM brand in order to retain more students who otherwise may consider transferring out of UWM.

### Appendix C – Chancellor’s charge questions

The efforts of the committee were largely shaped by the following questions posed by the Chancellor in the charge to the Think Tank 2030 committee in November 2019. While responses to each question do not appear explicitly in the committee’s recommendations, the committee’s approach to each is highlighted below.

1. *What are options for a sustainable undergraduate tuition model in light of changing student and employer expectations?*

Affordability was a major focus of the committee. The committee was struck by the fact that UWM students generally pay more for their education as compared to students of equal financial need who attend UW-Madison, even though UWM’s tuition is lower (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/02/14/scholarship-student-loan-financial-aid-university-of-wisconsin-madison-milwaukee/4754913002/> ) The Chancellor also expressed concern that lower priced entrants into the marketplace could negatively impact UWM’s future enrollments. The committee explored two potential ways to address these issues. One was to consider a reduced tuition model for first- and second-year students, and the other was to find ways to grow UWM’s endowment to provide more need-based assistance. Drew Knab (Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Business Services) and Jonathan Hayes (Director and Coordinator of Official Enrollment Processes) modeled two potential tuition models where the first two years were offered at lower rate. The modeling demonstrated that the primary challenge to adopting this model would be the magnitude of the lost revenue, which would require an increase of 30-50% in the size of the incoming class. While it is possible that a lower price point could attract more students, there was not enough evidence to suggest that a lower price point would draw enough students to counteract revenue losses. In addition, such a scenario may also require increasing tuition for the final two years beyond current levels for it to be revenue neutral across four years and an increase in upper division tuition could have the effect of students transferring to lower priced institutions. Based on these discussions, the committee was cautious about suggesting altering our tuition model at this time. There was strong support, however, for pursuing a fundraising strategy targeted at building an endowment to support financial assistance and making a UWM education more affordable. This will be a longer-term effort, and it would likely require additional investment in the university’s development operations. However, that investment would likely result in a substantial return.

2. *What are future demand areas for curriculum, types of degrees, models of student engagements and areas of alignment with workforce needs that UWM can advance and grow?*

The committee did not focus on specific degree programs, but rather the general competencies that our graduates will need to be successful in their future careers and as informed citizens. This led to several recommendations for changes to the current general education curriculum. There was also a major focus on student engagement that appears in the committee’s recommendations (see goal 1b).

3. *What is the ideal delivery model for UWM’s liberal arts, general education curriculum in 2030+?*

As noted in #2, the committee discussed the need to re-design the general education curriculum, which led to several recommendations to streamline and modernize UWM’s GER structure (see goal 1a).

Regarding delivery modes, particularly in light of the COVID-19 crisis, there was discussion of how alternate delivery modes that leverage technology might be employed on a more permanent basis after the crisis. The committee believes that UWM should maximize student learning flexibility by leveraging technology. However, the committee cautioned against aligning UWM with a primary online focus. The committee believes that most students will continue to seek the campus experience and in-person interaction after the crisis wanes.

4. *How can the general education curriculum maximize degree and career pathways for students?*

This was a major focus of the committee's discussions and is one of the major recommendations. The committee noted that the current GER, especially when overlaid with college-specific degree requirements, create unnecessary barriers for students to switch paths. The committee strongly recommends a single set of university degree requirements (see goal 1a).

5. *How should UWM expand offerings to audiences beyond the traditional 18 to 25-year-old student college populations including topics, evolving learning audiences, delivery methods, costs, types of degrees and other details?*

The committee's primary focus was on how to improve UWM's approach to undergraduate education, since this is the primary budgetary driver for the university. UWM's undergraduate population has more non-traditional undergraduate students than most other UW System schools. The needs of these students are unique, and the committee's recommendations are meant to optimally serve all of our students. The committee spent less time considering how we can better serve those not pursuing a full degree, such as certificates or micro-credentialing, since the committee understood that such opportunities are already being pursued in areas where opportunities may arise (see goal 1).

6. *What are options for a sustainable resource model to maintain and/or grow research excellence at UWM?*

Co-chair Kris O'Connor, in his role as Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, has served as a bridge between research planning activities led by Vice Provost Mark Harris and the 2030+ Task Force. Recommendations 2a and 3b are directly linked to discussions the research group has been having in parallel with the 2030 group during the academic year.

7. *Other areas identified by the work group.*

One of the greatest challenges faced by the committee was the vast scope of areas to consider. One of the exercises the committee undertook was a brainstorming exercise where we invited Brian Thompson (President of the UWM Research Foundation and Director of the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center) to help facilitate. Based on those deliberations, Brian produced a visual that highlights the scale of the task of re-imagining UWM (Figure C1). This work led to several avenues of inquiry that helped shape the final recommendations.

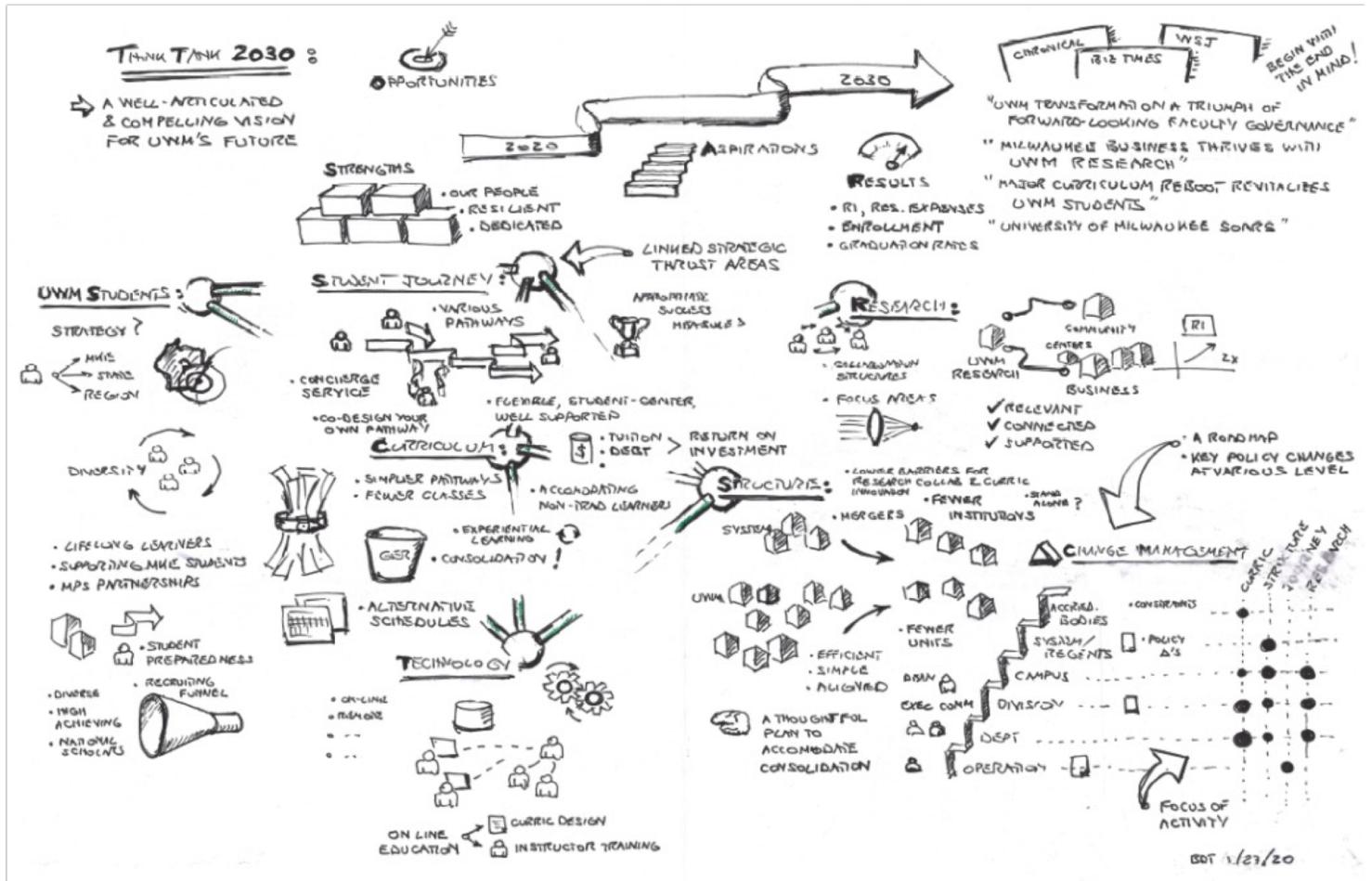


Figure C1. Mind-map produced by Brian Thompson capturing 2030+ task force brainstorming session.