



News Release

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New accountability report focuses on strategic goals

More students are completing degrees, and taking fewer credits to do so

MADISON, Wis. — The University of Wisconsin System today released a new report, “**Investing in Wisconsin’s Future**” – the latest in an annual series of accountability reports dating back to 1993. This year’s report has been revamped to directly reflect the UW System’s strategic plan and efforts to advance its *Growth Agenda for Wisconsin*.

“As the report’s title implies, we look at this as a communication to all the people who invest in the success of this public university system,” UW System President Kevin P. Reilly said. “Our faculty and staff are engaged in work that is critical to the future of our state and all of its citizens, and we want to communicate clearly about our progress in key areas. The new design and layout is easier to navigate, focuses more tightly on our progress towards key goals, and includes a wealth of related information.”

Overall, the UW System does well on its goals related to producing more graduates, with UW institutions overall recording record enrollments (175,056 students) and a record number of degrees conferred (32,475 degrees) in 2007-08. Retention and graduation rates remain above national averages.

One important measure of efficiency is the average course credits taken by students in completing their four-year degrees. In 2008, the average UW System graduate left with 133 credits – down from 145 in 1994. When students achieve their degrees with fewer credits, they reduce their personal expenses and open up classroom seats for others.

While UW System has made strides in producing more graduates overall, the rates of access, retention, and graduation for students of color continue to lag those of white students. At the same time, more students of color are enrolling (in both absolute numbers and percentages).

The performance measures in the report include not only the traditional, widely-used indicators of access, enrollments, retention, graduation, and resource management, but also include indicators of the UW System’s impact on Wisconsin communities through civic participation, community outreach and engagement, and contribution to the Wisconsin economy.

The annual contribution to Wisconsin earnings for the 2007-08 graduating class, for example, is estimated to be \$507 million, an increase from the \$498 million for the previous graduating class.

“This report provides valuable information for university leaders, students, families, lawmakers, and taxpayers alike about where we are and where we need to go,” Reilly said. “We’ve made it easier for people to see where we are succeeding, and where the university has more work to do.”

The UW System’s 2007-08 budget of \$4.5 billion generates a \$10 billion annual contribution to the Wisconsin economy, a return of ten times the \$1 billion annual state investment in the UW System. The report also shows that UW System’s administrative spending remains well below the national average for public four-year colleges and universities.

“The information about economic impact makes the point that in a severe recession, the UW is one of few ‘sure bets’ to revitalize the economy and set it on a positive course for the long-term,” Reilly said. “At a time when demonstrated value per dollar invested is so important, the cost efficiency data are equally compelling.”

“Investing in Wisconsin’s Future” reports the UW System’s progress in seven key areas:

- Preparing students for success
- Producing more graduates for the workforce
- Increasing the creation of well-paying jobs
- Strengthening local communities
- Balancing, diversifying, and growing resources
- Boosting efficiency and overall operational excellence
- Leveraging resources more effectively through collaborations.

To view the 2008-09 report, “Investing in Wisconsin’s Future,” along with individual campus/institution data, visit www.uwsa.edu/opar/accountability. For more information about the UW System, see www.wisconsin.edu.

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