

Colleagues,

As you know, the most important goal in UW-Parkside's 2025 Strategic Framework is to increase the number of annual graduates by 50 percent.

<https://www.uwp.edu/explore/offices/chancellor/strategicframework.cfm> To achieve this, we need an optimally-functioning transfer pipeline and ours is smaller and leakier than it could be.

Our largest feeder institution is Gateway Technical College. About 100 students transfer each year and 30 eventually graduate. In comparison, almost half the students that transfer from other two-year colleges go on to complete. The reason for the difference is that the courses Gateway students take are mostly not intended for nor are they eventually accepted as transfer credits toward our bachelor's degree programs. This leads to wasted time and money for students and causes higher attrition. To improve the transfer pipeline, we are working with Gateway as they seek approval to add traditional Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees that are intended for students who wish to earn bachelor's degrees.

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), a feeder to UW-Milwaukee (UWM), is another relevant example. MATC offers both technical college as well as traditional associate degrees. In a recent five-year period, over six times the number of students transferred from MATC to UWM after earning a traditional associate degree as compared to a technical college degree (284 vs. 47). Further, the transfers with traditional associate degrees graduated at almost double the rate (73 percent vs. 38 percent). While it is difficult to predict what might occur in our region, the data from MATC and other two-year colleges suggest we should expect the number of transfers to UW-Parkside and the rates at which they graduate to increase if Gateway is authorized to add traditional associate degrees.

Gateway received approval from its local Board yesterday and will advance their request to the State Board of the Wisconsin Technical College System. After this, current policy requires approval by the UW Board of Regents. This is by no means certain. Separate from our bilateral discussions with Gateway, the Wisconsin Technical College System is seeking authority to offer traditional associate degrees through *all* its campuses. This would create unnecessary duplication with a number of UW two-year campuses that already serve the same areas with traditional associate degrees (and where enrollments are falling). While the pipeline in our region would be strengthened by giving place-bound students greater access traditional associate degrees through Gateway, it is possible our initiative may be derailed by statewide forces.

Also, there is risk that some students would chose to begin their studies at Gateway rather than UW-Parkside. How this compares to the number we anticipate will transfer and complete at higher rates is hard to estimate. We are looking at various scenarios. Also, a memorandum of understanding is yet to be developed.

Perhaps like most change we consider, there is promise, challenge, and some risk. In this case, as always at UW-Parkside, I am optimistic about our chances.

- Rob

Rob Ducoffe
Provost & Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
900 Wood Road | Kenosha, WI 53144
262-595-2261 | ducoffe@uwp.edu