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## The Wisconsin idea brochure. 1950/1952

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# The WISCONSIN IDEA

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*... what it  
means today*

*... how it can  
be perpetuated*



# The WISCONSIN IDEA

## *... what it means today*

It is often said that Wisconsin men and women are tremendously proud of our University.

In a deep and quiet way, we are.

With the University well into its second century, we find ourselves taking stock—counting up the many contributions it has made to alumni, students, and people in every walk of life throughout the state and nation.

It is clear from any appraisal that the University of Wisconsin is today a truly great institution of education, research and service.

From the outset, the University taught that the past is not to be worshiped and perpetuated, but to be studied for improvement of the future. From the outset it sought great teachers, philosophers and scholars. Before long great teachers, philosophers and scholars sought posts at Wisconsin where encouragement was given to search and discovery, to analysis and open minds.

### **What is the Wisconsin Idea?**

And this University originated and developed a unique idea of usefulness. Not content to help only the students who could attend its classes, the University began long ago to take useful information and new ideas to all the people in their homes and at their places of work.

This was called the Wisconsin Idea. There have been a thousand definitions of it, all boiling down to Service to the People.

### **How Is It Carried Out?**

The Wisconsin Idea is expressed in many ways. There are short courses for farmers, tradesmen, business men and professional people; there is the Agricultural Extension Service; the Extension Division, helping thousands study by mail; the State Department of Hygiene, the Orthopedic Hospital, the Psychiatric Institute, the Wisconsin General Hospital, radio station WHA, and many others.

This Idea is visionary in that it sees ahead . . . in that it never loses sight of the great ultimate goals of mankind. And this Idea is practical in that it serves the people now . . . helping men and women do their jobs better . . . helping to build a strong, productive society. Wisconsin's scientists, in the laboratories and pastures and woodlands of the state, are part of this Idea. Wisconsin's geologists and social scientists and teachers are part of it. And Wisconsin's people are the first and chief beneficiaries of this Idea.

The Wisconsin Idea is itself the yeast of vigorous mental curiosity. As you read these

words, day or night, men and women of the University are conducting countless experiments, at Madison and throughout the state. They are looking for new ideas and better ways to help the students and to serve the people of the state.

Yesterday the Wisconsin Idea advanced vitamins and penicillin—miracles then, common tools now. Today, the Wisconsin Idea is coming to grips with knotty problems in such diverse fields as cancer and atomic energy. Tomorrow, we shall all benefit from the work now going forward under the impetus of the Wisconsin Idea.

### **Wisconsin's Friends Can Help**

It is no wonder that Wisconsin men and women are proud of their State University, for the Wisconsin Creed guarantees the integrity of its education and research, while the Wisconsin Idea promises continued expansion of its service.

Obviously such a program of service requires—and deserves—widespread popular support. As a state university, Wisconsin receives a substantial part of its income from appropriations by the state legislature. The danger is that the Wisconsin Idea—which is Service to the People, above and beyond the educational functions of the University—will suffer seriously from malnutrition unless outside aid comes to the rescue.

### **Van Hise Foresaw Need**

In 1905, Charles Richard Van Hise, one of the University's great presidents, foresaw the need for such outside aid—and that the aid would be forthcoming. Van Hise said,

In addition to the certain support by the state of productive scholarship, the state universities in the future have at least an equal right with private institutions to expect assistance from their alumni. Finally, the state university may reasonably expect funds from wealthy men, not alumni, inspired by ethical and educational motives.

To encourage such aid from friends of the University, the University of Wisconsin Foundation was organized. The Foundation has made a survey of what Wisconsin is doing and what it needs to carry on its services. It invites the support of all those who love and admire the University, and who will contribute to its further progress. And the Foundation expects and welcomes additional unsolicited gifts—knowing from valued experience that many generous friends of the University will, unasked, make important contributions to the life and growth and strength of the Wisconsin Idea.



# The WISCONSIN IDEA

## ... how it can be perpetuated

*The Wisconsin Idea of service is a hardy one—a concept that has survived wars and depressions. There have been times when the University's services to the people have produced magnificent fruit. There have been other times when, with financial support diminished, it has seemed that this Idea might die on the vine.*

*Today, more than ever, the opportunities*

*for the effective use of the Wisconsin Idea are tremendous. But these opportunities are greater than the resources which are available. To help create new resources, the University of Wisconsin Foundation has been organized. The questions and answers which follow tell the Foundation's story—and indicate how this organization can help perpetuate the Wisconsin Idea.*

### **What does the University of Wisconsin do?**

It teaches, encourages thinking, stimulates social and cultural interests, carries on research, and offers what it learns to the people of the state and nation.

### **What is the Wisconsin Idea?**

That the University should freely offer its services to the people; that the boundaries of its campus are the boundaries of the state.

### **Who supports the University?**

Approximately one half of its support is appropriated by the state legislature. The balance comes from earnings, gifts, endowments, or fees for services rendered.

### **Is this support adequate?**

No, the University has long needed added support for many of its functions, which have been hampered by lack of funds. This is especially true now that student enrollment has outgrown the physical capacity of the University. Today the University is serving over 17,000 students on the Madison campus alone—with very little more "plant" than it had when enrollment was 10,000.

### **Will present needs continue?**

Yes, in the opinion of Regents and University officials.

### **How will these needs be met?**

The State Legislature is responsible for the University's academic needs. The Legislature can be expected to help in providing more faculty, more teaching equipment and additional academic buildings. But to carry on the Wisconsin Idea, the University greatly needs help from its other friends.

### **What is the University of Wisconsin Foundation?**

The University of Wisconsin Foundation was organized to inform the people about conditions facing the University and to ask for help in supporting its public service and cultural activities.

### **Is the U.W.F. connected with the Alumni Research Foundation?**

No. The University of Wisconsin Foundation has no connection with the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. The Research Foundation manages inventions, collects royalties, and appropriates funds to support and encourage further research.

### **What does the University of Wisconsin Foundation plan to do for the University?**

It plans to raise funds for purposes other than purely academic. In brief, it intends to foster the Wisconsin Idea of service to the people and to help Wisconsin maintain its high rating among other universities.

### **Will it give professorships, scholarships, fellowships?**

Yes. It has already endowed the Frederick Jackson Turner chair of history. Projects like this will help the University attract and hold outstanding men of learning. Scholarships given by the Foundation will help support students of special ability; some such scholarships and fellowships have already been created and assigned.

### **Will the U.W.F. give special equipment?**

Yes. The Foundation has a list of more than a thousand items urgently needed—ranging from small microscopes to complete laboratories and special-purpose buildings.

### **Who controls its funds?**

The directors of the University of Wisconsin Foundation. The procedure will be to transfer all monies to the University Board of Regents with specific instructions as to their use in accordance with the wishes of the donors. Money given without specific instructions will be applied to Foundation projects in the order of importance to the University, but each transfer to the Board of Regents will carry with it a specific application of the funds by the Regents.

### **Can givers specify use of gifts?**

Yes, within the broad limits of what the Regents and the University recognize as appropriate.

### **What do the Regents say?**

Charles D. Gelatt, President of the Regents, says: "Alumni and friends of the University can keep the Wisconsin Idea strong and growing with gifts through the University of Wisconsin Foundation. By their gifts, contributors to the Foundation take an active part in the continuing progress of the University of Wisconsin."

### **What does the faculty say?**

President Edwin Broun Fred says: "The University of Wisconsin Foundation was organized to help satisfy public service and cultural needs to carry on the activities implicit in the Wisconsin Idea. Its purpose is to strengthen the University by increasing the basis of its financial support."

### **Who's giving?**

Some 7,640 gifts and bequests have already been received and acknowledged by the Foundation. These gifts come from individuals, from families, from corporations and from other organizations.

### **What do they get out of giving?**

Individual donors will gain the priceless satisfaction of becoming a part of the Wisconsin Idea. Families can gain lasting memorials. Organizations can gain the assurance of continued research, analysis and study in various fields.

### **Are gifts tax-exempt?**

Yes, gifts made to the Foundation for the benefit of the University are tax-exempt.

### **How does this perpetuate the Wisconsin Idea?**

Gifts to the University of Wisconsin Foundation will support and extend the cultural and public-service activities of the University. They will help this great institution in its service to the people. This money will truly be invested in the perpetuation of the Wisconsin Idea.

### **Where can further detailed information be obtained?**

If you'd like to ask specific questions—or if you wish to sit down with a representative of the Foundation—we suggest you address Mr. Robert B. Rennebohm, executive director. The Foundation's office is at 905 University Avenue, Madison 5, Wisconsin.

## The UNIVERSITY CREED

We feel that we would be unworthy the position we hold if we did not believe in progress in all departments of knowledge. In all lines of academic investigation, it is of the utmost importance that the investigator should be absolutely free to follow the indications of the truth wherever they may

lead. Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.

*From a report of the Board of Regents, 1894*



# The UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN FOUNDATION

● This Foundation's chief aims are the support of the public-service and cultural activities of the University. It is not tax-supported; it is tax-exempt. It will be happy to work with you in the arrangement of gifts or bequests to the University of Wisconsin.

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