Preparing to Launch a Bold New Plan for Wisconsin's Water Future
Indigenous Water Acknowledgement

As a system of universities in Wisconsin we share stewardship of the land and water between the Michigami, the full system of Great Lakes, and Michiziibi, the great Mississippi River, with the current sovereign nations of Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Ojibwe, Oneida and Mohican people along with the ancestors before them. Together we commit to being connected to this space, increasing our knowledge of it and transmitting that knowledge to future generations.

- Our thanks to Dr. Margaret Noodin, director of the Electa Quinney Institute, for crafting this land and water acknowledgement.
The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin is a partnership of Wisconsin's 13 public universities, connecting with industry partners, local communities, policymakers and advocacy groups.

Our mission is to train the next generation of water professionals, and to establish Wisconsin as a global leader in water-related science, technology and economic growth.
“The Freshwater Collaborative is going to establish the nation’s most significant, integrated, multi-institutional higher education program for the freshwater economy... Can you imagine? People all over the world could come to Wisconsin, the only state that’s going to have these programs.”

— Gov. Tommy Thompson, addressing the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents on August 20, 2020.
Water Is The Future

• Water is the **fastest growing sector** of the world’s economy. By 2035, it will be worth approximately $800 billion.
• According to UNESCO, **78% of all jobs globally** are water-dependent.

*Climate change, increasing urbanization, intensive agricultural, and commercial fishing practices* and other trends will require an ever-greater number of skilled water professionals to innovate and to tackle challenging problems.
Wisconsin’s Water Industries

- Agriculture
- Commercial Fisheries
- Energy Production
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Recreation and Tourism
- Shipping
- Water Infrastructure
- Water Technology
Wisconsin's unique natural setting makes it the perfect home for the Freshwater Collaborative:

- Bordered by one of the world's great river systems and two inland seas, in the heart of the Great Lakes Region
- More than 44,000 miles of rivers and streams and 15,000+ lakes
- More than 1,200 miles of shoreline
- Rich and diverse wetlands; significant groundwater assets
The 13 public universities of Wisconsin are already home to strong water programs covering diverse and crucial areas of study, including:

- Climate Change
- Water Quality and Safety
- Emerging Contaminants
- Invasive Species
- Fisheries Management
- Infrastructure Engineering and Innovation
- Watershed and Ecosystem Management
However, these strong and diverse programs have traditionally been isolated, each operating largely within their own silo.
To meet the challenges we face as a state, a nation and a planet, we need to work together. From our individual strengths, we can create a powerful, interdependent, collaborative whole.
• Training **tomorrow's water professionals** with the **real-world skills** employers seek
• **Strengthening individual UW water programs** by building interdependent networks and **fostering innovation**
• Attracting students not only **statewide** but from **across the country and beyond**
• **Creating jobs** and expanding Wisconsin's stake in the freshwater economy
Our story so far...

2017-2019: Representatives of water-focused programs from all 13 UW System partners develop a preliminary plan that combines the unique strengths of each campus to create a water sciences powerhouse.

August 2019: The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation awards $670,000 to FCW, in addition to $1.4 million in funding from the UW System, as seed money for the collaborative’s initial phase.

June 6, 2019: UW System announces the formation of the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin (FCW), the nation’s “most significant, integrated, multi-campus higher education program to meet the pressing needs of freshwater access and security.”

November 2020: A year into its existence, FCW has already supported research projects at more than 12 partner campuses, providing approximately $500,000 of funding.
From 2019 to present, we have received research project proposals in five tracks, and have funded more than 12 projects statewide.
To date, our grants program has benefitted undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on experience in lab and field studying:

- Invasive species
- Emerging contaminants
- Agricultural runoff
- Microplastics
- Surface and wellwater quality
- Harmful algal blooms
- Groundwater conservation
We are now building a **statewide, interdependent educational programming network** that, beginning Fall 2022, will include:

- Customizable **undergraduate degree programs** that allow students to enroll in courses at UW campuses statewide
- **Majors/Minors/Certificate programs** for deep dives into specific topics, with field opportunities at multiple campuses
- **Transformative hands-on student experiences** at different campuses throughout the year
- **Internships and job opportunities** through industry, government and community partners
As part of our new phase, we have begun a **public awareness campaign** online, including:

- **Website** (freshwater.wisconsin.edu)
- Quarterly digital **newsletter** - Contact Us
- Active **social media** presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
With State Funds...
Our Plan for the Next Five Years

- 400 new undergraduate students studying water science
- 150 new graduate research students
- 26 new faculty, researchers and water professionals
- More than 200 new jobs created
Thanks to our 13 UW System campus partners for contributing images and ideas to this presentation.
Thank you!

Visit freshwater.wisconsin.edu to learn more and sign up for our quarterly digital newsletter

@FreshwaterW1 @FreshwaterCollabW1 @freshwatercollabwi

For additional information, contact FCW Executive Director Marissa Jablonski, jablons5@uwm.edu.