

Strategic Plan for Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute (7/2017, updated 1/2023)

CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

The Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI) became an academic unit in the 2009-2010 academic year. AWRI offers a M.S. degree through the Department of Biology, with an emphasis in Water Resources and a M.S. degree in Water Resource Planning. Administratively, AWRI is part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Programmatically, AWRI is a multidisciplinary research organization committed to the study of freshwater resources. The Institute was founded in 1986 on the GVSU campus in Allendale as a 1-person operation. Over the past 30 years, it has grown to a 65-person research and education program, and is now located on the shoreline of Muskegon Lake in downtown Muskegon.

MISSION

The mission of the Institute is to integrate research, education, and outreach to enhance and preserve freshwater resources. AWRI seeks to accomplish its mission through: 1) interdisciplinary research into major questions about water resources; 2) public education for a variety of groups, including K-12, university students, and the community; and 3) outreach to ensure that decision makers are equipped with the best available knowledge on environmental and water resource-related issues to reduce the uncertainty associated with their resource management decisions.

VISION

The vision of the Institute is to enhance the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of freshwater resources among students, university and professional communities, and the general public, and become recognized at both the national and international levels as a leader in the area of water resources. AWRI has adopted this vision recognizing that sustainable freshwater ecosystems are a fundamental necessity, and that the integrity of these systems helps to define our quality of life. AWRI will advance its mission and commitment through three mechanisms: unique educational programs, outreach, and pure and applied research. To accomplish the goal of broader recognition, we envision growing the Institute through additional faculty lines that reflect emerging water resources issues and also lend themselves to interdisciplinary efforts both within and outside the university (e.g., water policy and environmental economics). We also desire to establish endowed chairs, place a greater emphasis on projects that have broad geographic relevance, and place our scientific findings in broader social and economic contexts.

VALUE STATEMENT

We at the AWRI value excellence in research, education, and outreach, as demonstrated by: a. Seeking an objective understanding of natural phenomena via scientific inquiry, collaboration, and scholarship. b. Fostering excellence in our teaching and outreach initiatives through active student-instructor engagement, participation of students in research, academic advising and mentoring, hands-on experience, and the application of the most current information available. c. Performing University and community service that is recognized for its contribution and effectiveness.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 1: ACTIVELY ENGAGE LEARNERS AT ALL LEVELS

- Objective 1: Increase graduate student participation in giving scientific presentations.
- Objective 2: Increase graduate student productivity
- Objective 3: Increase undergraduate student participation in giving scientific presentations
- Objective 4: Retention rates of M.S. graduate students between years 1 and 2 are a minimum of 75%
- Objective 5: Diversity of faculty and staff in AWRI increases relative to current status.
- Objective 6: Establish collaboration with at least one new external scientific partner each year
- Objective 7: Maintain and establish service activities with organizations in AWRI's West Michigan service area

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 2: FURTHER DEVELOP EXCEPTIONAL PERSONNEL

- Objective 1: 100% of AWRI faculty are involved in high-impact student learning experiences
- Objective 2: 100% of AWRI faculty attend and present at scientific conferences
- Objective 3: All appointed bodies at every level AWRI-wide include diverse individuals and reflect diverse perspectives
- Objective 4: All new employees shall participate in intercultural training and development
- Objective 5: Increase activity of AWRI faculty members with respect to professional service
- Objective 6: All AWRI faculty will have access to academic advisor training
- Objective 7: At least 90% of faculty and staff in AWRI participate in professional development to expand, enhance or extend their competencies and capabilities within the context of the responsibilities of their positions

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 3: ENSURE THE ALIGNMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS

- Objective 1: Faculty capacity in AWRI expands to meet expectations of a nationally-recognized graduate program with highly qualified, matriculating students
- Objective 2: Hold in-house training in AWRI on diversity and inclusion once every 5 years
- Objective 3: Hold diversity and inclusion pot-luck lunch once per year
- Objective 4: AWRI increases and diversifies its donation base

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA 4: ENHANCE THE INSTITUTION'S IMAGE AND REPUTATION

- Objective 1: Meet or exceed scientific productivity (manuscript publication) targets
- Objective 2: Meet or exceed scientific productivity (scientific presentation) targets
- Objective 3: Maintain and acquire state-of-the-art equipment, technology, and facilities
- Objective 4: Publish peer-reviewed papers with external partners as co-authors
- Objective 5: AWRI identifies specific initiatives and academic programs that attract graduate students, using its location and resources as attractants