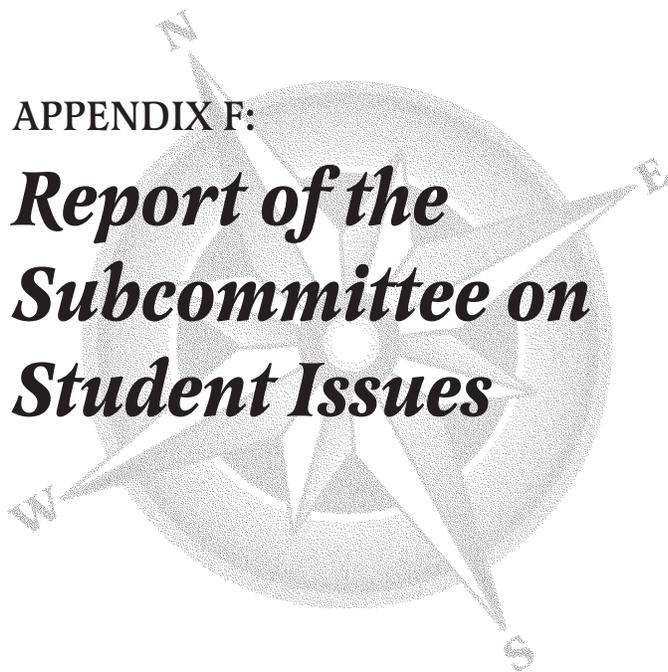


APPENDIX F:

***Report of the
Subcommittee on
Student Issues***



Re-Defining the Student Experience at the University of Wisconsin–Madison

Subcommittee

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Executive Summary

The Student Issues subcommittee was intentionally created to draw on members' expertise as students, administrative staff, and faculty. Our charge was to identify how out-of-class learning is enhanced through the framework of *A Vision for the Future*. However, defining “out-of-class” was very difficult, as students' lives are increasingly interwoven. Indeed, students do not make this distinction—students want to experience learning as a whole, despite artificial boundaries that have been created. Chancellor Ward identified this type of learning in his description of “The Learning Experience” when he discussed how out-of-class experiences would play an integral role in transforming learning on campus in the future.¹

The idea of transforming learning continues to resonate with students, faculty, and staff throughout the university. Every student has his or her own educational story that is filled with individual struggles and concerns. Every issue raised could not be addressed in this report. Rather, the subcommittee focused on the themes that have the potential to achieve the greatest leverage for the greatest number of students possible. In other words, resolving these concerns in the next millennium will hopefully address any other specific issues that may be absent from this report.

The following themes evolved during the work of the subcommittee and serve to identify how “out-of-class” learning can and should be facilitated at UW–Madison, now and into the next decade.

1. Enable Out-of-Class Learning through Connections

Make the services and programs that are essential to students' out-of-class learning readily available to all students. This would involve using strategic locations on campus, intentionally connecting services, or employing technological innovations.

2. Create a First-Year Gateway for New Students

Emphasize orientation of new students as an institutional priority by reframing it as a process of gaining information and developing skills. This would involve defin-

¹ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 5.

From the time that they arrive on campus, we desire students to have connected and meaningful experiences and be engaged with others in academic and social opportunities that are inclusive, integrated and coherent.

ing a culture of learning early, identifying and creating opportunities for students to achieve the set of skills and knowledge necessary to succeed, and making orientation the responsibility of the campus community.

3. Encourage and Sustain Diversity to Foster Learning for All Students

A number of campus groups have identified ways in which the campus needs to encourage and sustain diversity. This involves recruiting and retaining diverse students, encouraging cultural understanding, and identifying ways to make services and programs inviting.

4. Reconceptualize Teaching and Learning for Undergraduate Students

Transform undergraduate student learning by connecting out-of-class and in-class experiences. This would involve tapping the environments in which students live, work, and volunteer.

5. Enhance the Graduate Student Experience through Professional Development

Emphasize ongoing professional development opportunities for Teaching Assistants (TAs), as well as all graduate students. This would involve providing consistent training and other opportunities to enable students to grow as current and future professionals.

6. Promote Responsibility and Accountability for Student Learning

Ensure responsibility and accountability for student learning by focusing on learning outcomes and assessment. This would involve the participation of the campus community to ensure that students' experiences are coherent and meaningful.

The authors of this report suggest that from the time that they arrive on campus, we desire students to have connected and meaningful experiences and be engaged with others in academic and social opportunities that are inclusive, integrated and coherent. All of the campus is involved and learning is reciprocal—the teacher becomes the learner and the learner becomes the teacher.

The subcommittee attempted to identify student concerns that were predominant in the discussions and reports of various groups on campus. For staff and faculty, the ways in which their contributions have been of tremendous value to students and how they can be enhanced have been highlighted. As authors, we acknowledge that the themes are broad—our charge was to review the previous “visions” and suggest potential new ones. To advance specific recommendations would be to limit the ideas yet realized by those who read and interpret the report according to their own understandings. Our charge to the reader is to do just that.

Focus of the Report

The Student Issues Subcommittee was charged with identifying how out-of-class² learning is enhanced through the conceptual framework of four of the priorities described in *A Vision for the Future*.³ As our process to respond to this charge unfolded, we discovered the expanse of current and future issues as experienced by undergraduate, graduate, and professional students on this campus. We sought to capture these issues, relate

² Out-of-class experiences are broadly defined to include all activities in which students engage during study that are either directly or indirectly related to their learning and performance and occur beyond the formal classroom, studio, or laboratory setting. Such activities include, but are not limited to, interacting with peers and faculty, participating in organized campus-based events (e.g., orientation, cultural and theatrical performances) and activities (e.g., organizations), working on or off campus, and using other resources colleges provide for learning and personal development, whether human (instructors, advisors, administrators) or physical (laboratories, studios, unions, residences). From Kuh, G. D., Douglas, K. B., Lund, J. P., & Ramin-Gyurnek, J. (1994). *Student Learning Outside the Classroom: Transcending Artificial Boundaries*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 8. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, p. 9.

them to the four vision priorities where appropriate, and define themes for enhancing the student experience that might guide the campus into the 21st century.

Institutional Context

For the purposes of this particular NCA reaccreditation process, we will not be providing a list of all of the services available to students. Rather, we will mention particular programs or services that were repeatedly identified as exemplary and reflect the ideas within this report. We did, however, feel it necessary to describe recent changes in the basic structure and organization of that which is traditionally defined as “student services.” This following description will provide the context for out-of-class learning at UW–Madison.

I. Student Services at UW–Madison

a. Overview

During the past ten years, there have been significant changes in student services at UW–Madison. In 1988, the Board of Regents directed then Chancellor, Donna Shalala, to strengthen and improve undergraduate education. An appropriate beginning was the summer orientation program for new freshmen and transfers. It was transformed from a one day to a two-day session during summer in which new students meet with their academic advisors and register for fall courses. The Student Orientation Programs (SOP), begun in 1988 by the Dean of Students, has become a well-known service and serves as a catalyst to stimulate many other welcome programs in schools, colleges and departments.

Campus climate has also received increasing attention as it relates to retention and graduation rates for all students, as well as the day-to-day quality of life for special populations such as students of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. The Multicultural Student Center (formerly known as the Interim Multicultural Center) opened in 1988, and is one of many concrete examples of the University’s attempt to provide a safe and supportive environment for students from historically underrepresented minority groups and to foster interaction among students, faculty, staff and community members from all backgrounds. Students themselves have been very active in developing and opening programs and services that they have funded from student activity fees.

Of note is the integration of health education, counseling and clinical medical services in July 1993 and the transfer of the former University Health Service (UHS) to the Dean of Students in order to complete this integration. The primary purposes for the merger were to, a) improve the experience of the thousands of students who use these services annually by reducing confusion about where to go for health and personal issues, and b) reflect the evolution of UHS’s mission away from a traditional clinical enterprise to a comprehensive source of programs. In addition, there have been several excellent residential learning programs established in collaboration with key faculty leaders—the Bradley Learning Community, Chadbourne Residential College, and the Global Village in Merit Hall are a few examples.

Currently, the major student service units are University Housing, the Wisconsin Union (Memorial Union and Union South), Academic Services (Undergraduate Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, and Career Advising and Planning) and the Dean of Students. The offices of the Dean of Students include the Campus Assistance Center, Multicultural Student Center, International Student and Scholar Services, McBurney Disability Resource Center, Student Organization Office, Student Orientation Programs, Race Relations Education Program, and University Health Services. With the exception of Undergraduate Admissions, these services are available to

³ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs.

or provide support for all students on campus, including undergraduate, graduate and professional students. Reporting lines are to the Vice Chancellor for Administration, the Provost and the Chancellor.

Because the longstanding campus culture supports horizontal linkages and opposes centralization, student services offices operate along similar lines. This, as can be seen in the following report, requires much collaboration between service providers and is often felt as both a benefit and a concern.

b. Graduate Student Services, in particular

The Graduate School is the campus administrative unit with overall responsibility for graduate programs and students. As a facilitator, catalyst, and resource for innovative graduate education, the Graduate School works to assess and ensure academic quality. There has been very little done to provide student service linkages between graduate programs. The type and quality of service is almost as diverse as the range of research interests in the graduate degree programs, themselves. Some graduate programs offer help with professional development, grant writing, public speaking, orientation, and a variety of career development services. However, there are also many graduate programs that offer very little for their graduate students. To facilitate the development and ongoing enhancement of department-level student services, the Graduate School adopted a set of questions for consideration during program review. The questions that have particular relevance for student services are:

- How do resources enhance student learning and faculty development?
- What is the quality and diversity of the student experience?
- How satisfied are students?
- How well do faculty and student interactions contribute to student learning?

Staff and faculty in the Graduate School have been working to “support the horizontal linkages,” by collecting the answers to program review questions in the form of “best practices.” These practices will be highlighted and shared across campus to promote community among graduate degree programs, and to also provide a consistency of services to graduate students.

To serve graduate students, the Graduate School houses the Office of Academic Services, Minority Programs, Admissions and a Center for Training and Outreach Services. The Graduate School produces a *Graduate Student Handbook*, a variety of web-based resources, a convocation and resource fair for new graduate students, and workshops for department staff and faculty on everything from “How to Develop a Marketing Plan” to “Enhancing Student Services.” Most recently, the Graduate School launched a new Graduate Student Council to develop a mechanism for graduate students to be involved in policy development and analysis, as well as to improve the overall environment for graduate students at UW–Madison.

The Process

The Student Issues subcommittee was intentionally created to draw on members’ expertise as students, administrative staff, and faculty. We met regularly over the course of seven months to identify and discuss the issues⁴ facing UW–Madison students, now and in the future. We also used the time to plan data-gathering activities with students, faculty, and staff. We developed three major activities with these groups from which much of the data and many of the quotes are taken. We also relied on other sources of information—The Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey⁵, Gradu-

⁴ “Issues” are broadly defined problems or areas of concern, which impact the experience of students on campus.

ate Student Focus groups⁶, UW–Madison and UW–System committee reports⁷, and information from national groups and scholars who report on the current and future state of higher education.

Although the Student Issues Subcommittee was charged with identifying how “out-of-class” learning is enhanced through the framework of *A Vision for the Future*, the distinction between out-of-class and in-class was problematic to individuals as we gathered information. We discovered that defining out-of-class was very difficult, as students’ lives are increasingly interwoven. Indeed, students do not make this distinction—students want to experience learning as a whole, despite artificial boundaries that have been created. Working as a reporter on a student daily newspaper or as a Teaching Assistant are two examples of the seamlessness of learning which is experienced by students at UW–Madison. Chancellor Ward identified this type of learning in his description of “The Learning Experience”:

How well students learn in the classroom significantly depends on what happens before and after the classroom hour. Learning outside of the classroom will play a stronger role in the university in the future. Students and faculty will spend more time working together on research projects, in residence halls-based learning communities and in off-campus learning experiences such as internships and study abroad. Information technology and distance learning will facilitate communication and interactive learning between faculty and students in out-of-class hours. Pilot projects in residential learning communities are paving the way for large-scale transformations in the way students, staff, and faculty interact to promote learning.⁸

The idea of transforming learning continues to resonate with students, faculty, and staff throughout the university. Therefore, many of the ideas within this report may sound familiar. If we have succeeded in the task of writing a self-study report about student concerns at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we should have accurately reflected constituents’ voices within this university. We are also cognizant of the fact that every student has his or her own educational story that is filled with individual struggles and concerns. Every issue raised could not be addressed in this report. Rather, we chose to focus on the issues that have the potential to achieve the greatest leverage for the greatest number of students possible. In other words, resolving these concerns in the next millennium will hopefully address any other specific issues that may be absent from this report.

⁵ The University of Wisconsin Survey Center has conducted the Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey annually since 1993. In 1992 Associate Vice Chancellor Richard Barrows convened an ad hoc Student Survey Committee to consider implementing a regular survey of undergraduate students. This committee was created as part of the administration’s effort to assess and improve academic and student service programs on the Madison campus. The student survey is one way that the University obtains systematic student feedback into this process. The student survey is conducted by telephone with a random sample of University of Wisconsin–Madison undergraduates early in the Spring semester. Approximately 1200 20-minute interviews are completed each year, with response rates ranging from 83 to 91 percent. Students are asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of the University. Core sets of questions are replicated each year, focusing on satisfaction with facilities and services, and basic demographic information. Special topical modules are developed each year with the input of campus faculty and staff. Modules include those on advising, computer and technology use, career plans, student debt, and more detail about classes and instructors.

⁶ These focus groups were completed by Jerome P. Alexander, Mary Healy, and Ushio Miura, and with the support of the Graduate School. The focus groups occurred from January–April of 1998.

⁷ These reports will be referenced in this document through the use of footnotes.

⁸ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 5.

The Themes

1. Enable Out-of-Class Learning through Connections

Make the services and programs that are essential to students' out-of-class learning readily available to all students. This would involve using strategic locations on campus, intentionally connecting services, or employing technological innovations.

2. Create a First-Year Gateway for New Students

Emphasize orientation of new students as an institutional priority by reframing it as a process of gaining information and developing skills. This would involve defining a culture of learning early, identifying and creating opportunities for students to achieve the set of skills and knowledge necessary to succeed, and making orientation the responsibility of the campus community.

3. Encourage and Sustain Diversity to Foster Learning for All Students

A number of campus groups have identified ways in which the campus needs to encourage and sustain diversity. This involves recruiting and retaining diverse students, encouraging cultural understanding, and identifying ways to make services and programs inviting.

4. Reconceptualize Teaching and Learning for Undergraduate Students

Transform undergraduate student learning by connecting out-of-class and in-class experiences. This would involve tapping the environments in which students live, work, and volunteer.

5. Enhance the Graduate Student Experience through Professional Development

Emphasize ongoing professional development opportunities for Teaching Assistants (TAs), as well as all graduate students. This would involve providing consistent training and other opportunities to enable students to grow as current and future professionals.

6. Promote Responsibility and Accountability for Student Learning

Ensure responsibility and accountability for student learning by focusing on learning outcomes and assessment. This would involve the participation of the campus community to ensure that students' experiences are coherent and meaningful.

THEME 1: Enable Out-of-Class Learning through Connections

The size and complexity of UW-Madison continues to be described by students, faculty, and staff as both a strength and a weakness. In the words of one subcommittee member, the campus continues to be perceived as “resource rich and connection poor.” This phenomenon had been previously described by Chancellor Ward in *A Vision for the Future*:

We currently have an intellectual landscape of mine shafts, where most of us are organized in mines, working to deepen the mines, but with not much reflection about corridors that should link us to other miners. We are so poorly connected that we have greatly weakened our share of learning.⁹

Feelings of disconnection will continue to be a concern for as long as UW-Madison is a large, complex university. However, if we continue to use learning as the unifying goal to guide the way in which we “fabricate... unifying interrelationships among our highly specialized activities,”¹⁰ we can create connections through physical location, the intentional joining of services, and technological innovations. Recent initiatives that address this issue serve as models and should be expanded and replicated throughout the years ahead. By doing so, our large and complex university will become more personal by allowing students to access information and connect to the almost infinite

⁹ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 5.

¹⁰ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 4.

variety of programs, services, organizations, departments and resources on campus.

a. Connect Services and Programs through Location

With its central location, the Armory and Gymnasium (commonly known as the Old Red Gym)¹¹ will become the gateway for literally thousands of prospective and continuing students, their families, visitors, and alumni every year. This building, with its welcoming atmosphere and distinctive architecture, its linking of past and present, and the access to essential services it provides, promises to add immeasurably to the university's ongoing quest for community. The programs to be housed in the Red Gym have a strong history of success in supporting the institution's academic goals. Bringing them together in this unique facility offers new opportunities to create a synergy for progress well into the next century. The following UW-Madison offices will relocate in the Old Red Gym in Fall, 1998:

Undergraduate Admissions. This office serves as the front door to UW-Madison for thousands of prospective and admitted freshmen, transfer students, and their families. About 7,000 to 10,000 prospective students and their families visit the office each year. Offices, currently in two separate campus locations, will be together on the third floor.

Campus Assistance Center. For almost 25 years, the Campus Assistance Center (CAC) has served as UW-Madison's primary information and referral service—the single most important source of information on campus. During those years, more than three million people have used CAC services.

Visitors' Center. More than 750,000 visitors come to the campus each year. The center will greet and guide visitors with literature about the campus, and feature displays of research and events, audiovisual presentations, and tours.

The Morgridge Center for Public Service. The expanded clearinghouse for the many campus volunteers will inform students about community service opportunities, encourage the development of service-learning opportunities for students in university academic courses, and assist student, faculty, and staff in designing and implementing innovative community service programs.

International Student and Scholar Services. This office serves international students. UW-Madison has the fourth largest international student population in the nation, totaling to 4,000 students from 118 countries or 10 percent of the student body in 1993-94. The plans also include space for the Madison Friends of International Students, a volunteer group organized more than 40 years ago.

Multicultural Student Center. Among this unit's more important aims is to create an atmosphere of warmth and identity, intersection, and connection among minority and majority communities. Its primary purpose is to facilitate the creation of programs that enhance the academic achievement of students of color and develop activities that promote cultural diversity. It serves a key role in the recruitment and retention of students of color and coordinates its activities with campus Admissions offices (including the Graduate School), academic departments, and student organizations.

Student Organization Office. This office registers nearly 650 student groups each year, and advises student groups on how to use university facilities and abide by rules and regulations to ensure the success of their programs and activities. This office is also instrumental in developing student leadership skills.

Student Orientation Programs. This office welcomes new students to campus through its major programs— Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR), Wisconsin Welcome week activities, and Students Orienting Students (SOS).

The housing of these programs in one central location will change the face of student services at UW-Madison in ways one can only imagine. Prospective and newly

¹¹ The Old Red Gym: Gateway to the Future (1998). *Decline, 1930-1988*.
<http://pro.la.wisc.edu/redgym/decline.html>

If connecting students with resources is the problem, then academic and career advising systems must be a significant part of the solution.

enrolled students will learn how to use the university and its tremendous resources to their advantage and, at the same time, discover the history and traditions passed from generation to generation. On the second floor, in which a village will be established, continuing students from all backgrounds will be interacting through the many programs located there.¹² Once students leave the building, they will have access to all of the other high traffic, frontline services frequently used by students¹³ except for a few programs—the University Health Services and offices for registered student organizations. These programs are just two examples of services, physically disconnected from central campus, and therefore, other students.

Clinical medical services and health education and prevention at 1552 University Avenue remain separate from the “student-services corridor.” Student satisfaction surveys of this location have indicated how inconvenient this site is for decades; campus planners have identified many problems with the facility itself and have designated it to be razed in the Campus Master Plan. A new building to house integrated health services—health education, counseling and clinical medical services—is already on the campus plan for the 2003–2005 biennium.¹⁴ The presumption is that University Health Services (UHS) would be either in the student services corridor or very close to it.

Another concern of students is the fact that registered student organizations have had no permanent space on campus. A few student organizations will be housed in the Multicultural Student Center Organization office when it moves to the Red Gym. A number of other student organization offices will be moving to Union South once the Morgridge Center for Public Service is relocated to the Red Gym. Unfortunately, these spaces will only hold a fraction of the over 600 student organizations on campus. Preliminary discussions about sharing UHS space with the Associated Students of Madison (ASM)¹⁵ have occurred during the past two years. ASM wants to have high quality, permanent space for numerous student organizations. Although there are hundreds of registered student organizations, probably only 50–75 would want physical space (e.g., ASM, the Campus Women’s Center and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center). This issue continues to be voiced as a concern by the student organizations that have had either poor or semi-permanent space, or no space at all.

b. Intentionally Connect Services and Programs to Achieve Learning

The perception that UW–Madison is “resource rich and connection poor” stems from the decentralized nature of the university. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to bring systemic processes to services that had been working independently, or in “mine shafts.” Academic advising was one such process that needed to be addressed, according to the 1988 Future Directions Committee. If connecting students with resources is the problem, then academic and career advising systems must be a significant part of the solution.

¹² The village on the 2nd floor of the Red Gym will bring together four high traffic student services, the Multicultural Student Center, the International Student and Scholar Services, the Student Orientation Programs, and the Student Organization Office. An open computer lab with approximately 26 workstations will also be located there. By virtue of the open office landscaping, students from all backgrounds and geographical places will be able to meet and work together.

¹³ The four key locations are: 905 University Avenue (Counseling and Consultation Center, McBurney Center for Students with Disabilities), the University Club (Student Financial Services), the AW Peterson Building (Registrar and Bursar), the Old Red Gym (Campus Assistance and Visitors’ Center, the Morgridge Center for Public Service, the Multicultural Student Center, International Student and Scholar Services, the Student Organization Office, the Student Orientation Programs and Undergraduate Admissions).

¹⁴ No site or cost has yet been identified.

¹⁵ ASM is the student government association at UW–Madison.

Since the last reaccreditation process, committees were created and much progress was made in the area of academic advising. For example, the University Committee on Academic Advising was formed and identified the following:

There is a series of problems in the advising system that requires correction in order to ensure a high level of quality in advising for all students. In particular, there are significant gaps in service for first-year students, for students who have not declared a major, for students who become uncertain about academic and career goals, and for students who are denied admission to limited enrollment programs.¹⁶

Advising means many things to many people—e.g., course selection advice, academic major direction, identifying out-of-class opportunities, as well as career advising. Academic advising needs to be considered in undergraduate program planning because of the resources required and because of students' desire for connection between their undergraduate study and future goals.

The Cross-College Advising Service (CCAS), created in 1994, is just one example of an effort to systemically connect a service to the students who needed it most. This service uses a developmental approach to advising, which helps students “develop educational and career goals.”¹⁷ The students who have used CCAS over the last 4 years have responded very positively to surveys about this service. Although CCAS offers services for students from all classes, it still only sees a fraction of the undergraduate students on campus.

Questions and problems related to academic programs, as well as academic advising, are generally administered through the individual schools and college deans' offices. During the last five years, the Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey results suggest that students' assessment of academic advising has slightly improved. In 1994, 28.6% of the respondents rated academic advising either *Excellent* or *Very Good* while 41% rated it either *Fair* or *Poor*.¹⁸ In 1997, 29.6% rated it either *Excellent* or *Very Good* while 37.2% rated it either *Fair* or *Poor*.¹⁹

Although students satisfaction has somewhat improved, in the beginning stages of collecting information for the current reaccreditation process both “advising” and “career development and future employment” were identified as issues for students. It became increasingly clear that these two areas were not problems by themselves. Rather, it was the disconnection of the two that caused concern. Undergraduate advising and career planning were two services that were frequently cited as needing some form of connection. For example, we heard the following from staff and students:

[We need] consistent, accessible advising at all levels... and we need to integrate career and academic advising. (A Director of a Student Service Program)

[We should have] an advising session to talk about what the student is involved and interested in—not just what classes they are taking. (Undergraduate student)

[We need to] Weave academic advising and career planning/exploration together beginning at summer orientation. (Undergraduate student)

¹⁶ Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (1994, February 16). *Report of the University Committee on Academic Advising*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 2.

¹⁷ Cross-College Advising Service (1994–95). *CCAS: Annual Report*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 3.

¹⁸ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1996). *1993–1996 Trends and Differentials in Student Assessments: A Graphic Summary*. (Supplement to the Report on the 1996 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. S–18.

¹⁹ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1998, January 16). *1997 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Summary of Results*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. 20.

Current UW–Madison committees have expressed their support for intentionally connecting career development and academic advising. In the *Mission Statement for Academic Advising at the UW–Madison*²⁰ which was recently created and approved by the Council on Academic Advising,²¹ some of the “Guiding Principles” include:

- Effective academic advising can play an integral role in student development.
- Academic advising and career planning are separate but intersecting processes that are most effective when functionally integrated.

The Career Advising and Planning Services Review Committee also recommends that Career Advising and Planning Services (CAPS) should “work with faculty and academic advisors in the delivery of career advising and planning services.”²² Integrating these two areas is just one example of functionally combining services to help students develop in ways that give meaning to their life at UW–Madison and beyond. To make new suggestions about connecting advising and career development would be to disavow the comprehensive study completed by both committees. For this reason, we echo the following recommendations:

*From The Council on Academic Advising:*²³

- Foster a campus-wide understanding of, and commitment to, developmental advising.
- Create structures and strategies that enable advisors from across our decentralized advising services to collaborate in their efforts while regularly exchanging expertise and information.

*From the Career Advising and Planning Services Review Committee:*²⁴

- Improve and expand career-planning services consistent with the vision and tasks identified by the Council on Academic Advising.
- Integrate programs to link students with prospective employers and provide faculty/advisors with data on employment trends that have implications for the skills and experiences students must develop for entering the world of work.

These committees and councils have been instrumental in changing the form and function of advising and career planning on campus. In turn, other organizations and services have become increasingly involved and impacted by their efforts. Examples include:

- Collaborating with the Associated Students of Madison to develop an evaluation tool to assess advisors.
- Planning an advising presentation for students during the Student Orientation, Advising and Registration program.
- Developing a four-year career planner that is distributed to all entering students.

²⁰ Council on Academic Advising (1998, April). *Mission Statement for Academic Advisors at the UW–Madison*. UW–Madison: Author.

²¹ This Council is appointed by the Provost, and is made up of representatives from all Schools and Colleges, as well as units related to advising services. Members include faculty, staff, and students.

²² Career Advising and Planning Services Review Committee (1998, March 30). *Career Advising and Planning Review Committee: Executive Summary*. Madison, WI: Author.

²³ Council on Academic Advising (1998, April). *Mission Statement for Academic Advisors at the UW–Madison*. UW–Madison: Author.

²⁴ Career Advising and Planning Services Review Committee (1998, March 30). *Career Advising and Planning Review Committee: Executive Summary*. Madison, WI: Author.

At the same time, career and academic advising services face many challenges in the coming decade. Among the challenges readily apparent are:

1. Identifying the most effective roles for faculty, staff, and peer advisors;
2. Determining how technology can be used effectively to allow more time for personal advising contact;
3. Monitoring campus climate issues and attending to the needs of those students who have been traditionally under-represented;
4. Providing services that more closely meet student-identified need for sustained, personal interaction with an advisor in such a large institution;
5. Empowering students to define their own ways of learning that takes advantage of the many resources on campus.

These challenges are but a few of the many which face the individuals and groups on campus who are interested in students' current and future professional growth. This example illuminates the problem of services that are theoretically connected, but functionally disconnected. As a University, we need to be aware of when we hear student concerns and what those mean. Rather than jumping to change the service, we might need to systemically connect it with another—possibly achieving a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

c. Use Technology as a Means to Connect Students

Technology has been a very useful tool to connect students with services and information to enable “out-of-class” learning, both academic and developmental. At the same time, students voiced their concerns about the arbitrary use of technology:

[The University] shouldn't get bogged down with the idea that new technology equals good education. (Graduate student)

[The University] should use the available technology to better communicate with and advise students. (Undergraduate Student)

How does the university help students address the costs of using technology while promoting its importance? (Graduate student)

The importance and use of technology has become increasingly apparent, as reported in a recent summary of the 1997 Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey.²⁵ In this survey, “virtually all students (98 percent) reported using computers in connection with their academic work. One third of the students use computers less than 5 hours per week; nearly one student in five reports 15 or more hours per week of computer use. The mean amount of time reported was 8.3 hours per week.” Students also report using email and the world wide web more frequently than in past years (In 1997, 98% of students have an email account and nearly 60% of students report using off-campus web sites at least once a week²⁶).

Besides supporting academics, there are many instances of ways in which access to technology supports out-of-class learning. For example, students currently receive an invitation to register for classes through their email accounts. They are also able to “browse the web” to learn about UW–Madison, local resources, and national and international

²⁵ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1998, January 16). *1997 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Summary of Results*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. 36.

²⁶ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1998, January 16). *1997 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Summary of Results*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. 37–38.

sites. They are able to communicate with faculty or other students in their classes to get questions answered very quickly. When students use this technology, they are developing knowledge and skills that enable them to succeed in the 21st century.²⁷ For example, students learn how to learn in a flexible, adaptable environment, they experience a redefinition of teaching and learning, they receive services which are linked and integrated, and they achieve literacy in communications, technology, and computation. All of this is made possible through a few key programs on campus. The following resources provide access to these resources and services at all hours of the day, seven days a week. The new development of service and programs, as well as continuing and supporting the following programs, are inextricably linked to the educational experiences for all students.

1. Academic Resources and Services for Students

*Academic Resources and Computers in Housing (ARCH).*²⁸ The mission statement of the ARCH states that “ARCH supports student learning by providing accessible, high-quality academic and computer services, programs, and resources for students living in university residence halls.” The ARCH centers²⁹ achieve this mission by offering a variety of different tools designed to create a learning environment and assist students’ with their academic endeavors—e.g., computers, training sessions, publications, one-to-one assistance, and peer education.

Even with the addition of residential network services³⁰ and an increase in personal computers on campus, the ARCH usage numbers continue to increase each semester. Because students utilize technology in different ways for different reasons, the ARCH continues to meet many students’ academic needs in a variety of ways. For example, the ARCH offers many services such as scanning, printing, copying, that students do not have access to in their rooms. Also, the ARCH provides assistance and referral when students have questions or need access to resources and offers drop-in services for both the Writing Center and GUTS in the two larger center locations. Finally, not all students bring their own computers to campus and these students use ARCH services frequently. The variety of these services helps make the ARCH a multi-functional learning community for a large number of students.

The ARCH stays on the cutting edge by offering students the services and programs that best enhance their academic endeavors. In 1998, for example, the centers will offer more training sessions in partnership with academic departments such as chemistry, as well as some of the libraries and other resources across campus. Also, the ARCH continues to offer peer study skills programming designed to help first year students acclimate to college during first semester. Finally, the ARCH continues to stay current by providing different courseware and software required by faculty, as well as access to the Internet and of course, email.

*Student Information Technology Initiative.*³¹ Over the past decade, information technology services have been offered to students to improve computer literacy, to facilitate

²⁷ Olbinger, D. G. (1998, March 30). *Global Education in the 21st Century*. Presented at the Annual Conference of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Chicago, IL.

²⁸ This information was provided by Lesa Fischer, Residence Life Coordinator, Academic Resources and Computers in Housing.

²⁹ ARCH centers have over 200 Macintosh and PC computers available for residents’ use throughout four different locations in University Housing. The centers are fully staffed with two-professional full-time staff and 60 part-time student staff members who are trained to answer questions and serve as a resource and referral to other campus services. The ARCH serves approximately 7,000 students annually with the average number of visits being around 125,000 per year.

³⁰ Residence hall students are able to connect their personal computers to the campus network for e-mail and internet access through a high-speed ethernet jack.

³¹ Dwelle, K. (1997, September). *Student Information Technology Initiative: Report of 1996-1997 Expenditures*. Madison, WI: Division of Information Technology.

communications with faculty, instructors, and classmates, to make research and learning more efficient, and to prepare them for future careers. Examples of initiatives from 1996–1997 include:

- Renovating and expanding the InfoLab at College Library.
- Providing Ethernet awareness fairs and installation services for residence hall students.
- Providing a pilot network connection to registered student organizations for free web space for students.
- Expanded central dial-in pools to allow convenient access to the Internet using the student's own microcomputer and modem from an off-campus location.
- Expanded hours at selected InfoLabs.³²

In the most recent annual report about Student Information Technology Initiative services, the following was noted:

A survey conducted spring semester 1997 indicated that 88% of UW–Madison students were satisfied or very satisfied with Student Information Technology Initiative services. Students gave very high ratings to the email services, the web browser, access to student records, the electronic library, and InfoLabs. 38% of the students said they were more satisfied with services than the previous year and cited improved dial-in services as a major reason. Students also cited updates and improvements in overall technology and more/better computers in labs as reasons for increased satisfaction.³³

2. Access to Student Information

*Integrated Student Information System (ISIS).*³⁴ In mid–1998, the new Integrated Student Information System will take the place of the antiquated Integrated Student Data System. ISIS was designed to support student and academic services by addressing the campus' increasing demand for access to student data. This system will bring modern processing methods, flexibility, ease of use, and greater efficiency to the critical area of student records. It will also address the “year 2000” problem on campus. Once this system is fully implemented, information processing in the following areas will be impacted:

- Prospective student records
- Admissions
- Curricular information and Timetable
- Financial aid
- Registration and student records
- Student fees.

Enhanced and easier access to information will give faculty and staff the ability to assess student learning in classes and in other on-campus experiences. Both quantitative and qualitative data can be entered, which will provide for greater depth and more information about students. Users of ISIS will also be able to communicate with students through notification and email systems. Although students will not “interface” with the new ISIS system in the beginning, the potential for future use is great. For example, this

³² Division of Information Technology (1997–98). The UW–Madison has 16 general access computer labs called InfoLabs. Use of the labs is free for anyone with a valid UW–Madison ID. InfoLab services include many popular word processing, spreadsheet, desktop publishing, graphics software and other packages as well as course-specific offerings. The labs provide Macintosh and PC platforms, color printers, laser printers, dot-matrix printers, OCR scanners and CD-ROM drives. <http://www.wisc.edu/infolabs>

³³ Dwelle, K. (1997, September). *Student Information Technology Initiative: Report of 1996–1997 Expenditures*. Madison, WI: Division of Information Technology, p. 1.

³⁴ ISIS Project Management Team (1998, March). *ISIS Update*, Issue 8. Madison, WI: Author.

Our future challenge is to consider the ways in which educational services and programs are connected to and within the student experience.

system could be designed for web based registration. This system will provide opportunities to use data and information in ways that have not been possible before.

In conclusion, our future challenge is to consider the ways in which educational services and programs are connected to and within the student experience. Maury Cotter describes this type of thinking:

Lately, we have been challenging ourselves to work outside our individual boxes, to notice the gaps in a piecemeal approach, and to explore the potential that can be gained by viewing our mission more systemically.³⁵

Learning continues to serve as a valuable unifying goal for intentionally linking students to the variety of programs, services, organizations, departments and resources necessary for students to succeed. The previously mentioned examples are just some of the many ways in which physical location, intentionally joining services, and technological innovations are powerful means to establish and maintain connections for students on this large and complex campus. Future considerations would be to consider location of services, create pathways across services or departments when needed, and to replicate and/or extend programs for students who are not currently served.

THEME 2: Create a First-Year Gateway for New Students

In our process of gathering information for this report, we also identified the theme of “transitioning into the university” as an ongoing concern related to students’ experience at this large campus. Chancellor Ward, in his reflections on “The Learning Community,” suggests an ideal we should strive to achieve:

We need fluidity in the boundaries of the university itself, viewing all education from elementary and secondary schools to post-graduate as a learning continuum.³⁶

The need to better orient students to their roles and responsibilities within the university continues to exist. If orientation were to be based on a continuum, learning would be uninterrupted, perpetual, and constant. Currently, orientation is designed as a separate product, rather than a continuous process. It occurs at a specific period of time within the life of an undergraduate or graduate student with the assumption that there is a discrete body of knowledge that every student should know. At the same time, students express that once they are here, they do not know what to do and feel as if they are lacking the skills to succeed. As a university, we need to facilitate the learning of information and skill-development necessary for transitioning into and during students’ initial university experience.

Many groups and individuals acknowledged the value of orientation programs that have been implemented since 1988. For example, the Student Orientation Programs (SOP)³⁷ office has provided an invaluable service by coordinating campus-wide orientation programs for new freshmen, transfer and graduate students. This office includes the following major programs:

- Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR).³⁸
- Wisconsin Welcome.
- Student Orienting Students (SOS).³⁹

³⁵ Cotter, M. (1998). *Using Systems Thinking to Improve Education*. *About Campus*, 2(6), p. 10.

³⁶ Ward, D., (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 6.

³⁷ SOP is under the Dean of Students office and is currently being merged with the Campus Assistance Center.

³⁸ SOAR is over 25 years old and currently consists of approximately 34, day and a half sessions for new freshmen and guests. Transfer students and their guests participate in one of seven day-long sessions. SOAR is a joint production of the Office of Admissions, Student Orientation Programs, and advisors from schools/colleges and the Cross-College Advising Service.

³⁹ SOS is a program to plan and coordinate 50 undergraduate volunteers who help new students throughout their freshmen year.

After arriving at UW–Madison, students are able to participate in many activities designed to introduce them to other students and the campus. During SOAR, for example, students meet UW staff, faculty and students, and they also meet with their advisor to plan and register for classes. Wisconsin Welcome is designed to introduce students to the academic, social and cultural aspects of the UW campus during the first month of school. Activities begin the day that students move into the residence halls, and are most frequent and intense during the few days before classes begin, but continue well into October. These events include a number of late night “parties”, opportunities to learn about UW traditions (e.g., the 5th Quarter), and the Chancellor’s Convocation. Over the past 10 years these campus wide events have grown in size and popularity among students. In addition, Wisconsin Welcome is comprised of over 100 smaller events sponsored by various student service units, student organizations, fraternity and sororities, religious groups, the athletic department, residence halls, student unions, and academic schools and colleges. All of these events, including the campus wide highlights, are published in the *Wisconsin Welcome* brochure that provides new students with a menu of events to choose from during the first weeks on campus. According to Student Orientation Program’s annual survey, roughly 60% of students self report having attended one or more of the Wisconsin Welcome events.

The Graduate School also began hosting their own new-student orientation program in 1988. The Graduate School continues to hold a convocation to welcome new students to campus, and also plans a resource fair with representatives from more than 30 campus and city services. In addition, the Graduate School produces the *Wisconsin Welcome* brochure to provide new students with a complete listing of all of the departmental orientation programs, teaching assistant workshops, and other opportunities to meet new people.

Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR), the largest orientation program on campus, occurs for two days during the summer months before new students arrive on campus. Every year, the staff at SOP surveys a sample of these students to understand their experiences at SOAR. The results have been positive, suggesting that students receive very helpful information about the campus during this time. When new students were asked the question: “Besides Academic Advising, what information that you received at SOAR was useful to you?” the *Campus Tour* was listed first in both 1996 and 1997. *Meeting People, Nuts and Bolts*, and *General Information* were also listed in the top five responses.⁴⁰ In 1997, when students were asked if their experiences at UW–Madison had met the expectations that they had formed at SOAR, 95% of the respondents answered “yes.” These results suggest that the information received at SOAR is both accurate and helpful for students.

At the same time, there are some things that SOAR alone cannot address. In 1996, respondents were asked, “What has surprised you the most during your first few weeks at UW–Madison?” The top five responses were *Workload*, *Size of University*, *Nothing*, *Hard Classes*, and *Friendly People*. Approximately 20% of the respondents noted *Workload*, 17% noted *Size of the University*, and 12% mentioned *Hard Classes*. The size of the university and its academic rigor are two issues that would be hard-pressed to deal with solely in one orientation program.

In our data-collecting activities, some of the comments we heard about transitioning to the university included:

We need to develop some form of ‘post-SOAR’ program to help students acclimate to campus throughout their first semester and first year. [This would provide for] better acclimatization, improved self-knowledge, better access to and understanding of support services, and would help students in a timely way. (A Director of a Student Service Program)

⁴⁰ Student Orientation Programs (1996, 1997). *Student Connection: A Survey of New Student Transition to Life at the University of Wisconsin–Madison*. Madison, WI: Author.

[We need to] prepare students from many backgrounds (for example, first child in college, last child, only child) and their families for the transition to this university. (Undergraduate Student)

[We need to] send the right message to students about the culture before they arrive on campus. (Graduate Student)

[We need to] start learning immediately...have less transition time. (Undergraduate student)

The most common theme found in graduate student focus groups is a desire among students to have better access to the “invisible rules.” Students expressed a great deal of frustration with the obscure nature of basic facts—e.g., who can answer questions about forms, when is a particular class offered or when should it be taken, how far along should they be in their program. In addition, students expressed a desire for more access to second-year or more experienced students during orientation.⁴¹

What is the transition we are preparing students for? Have they received the skills necessary to succeed in the transition to college? How can we teach them the habits of scholarship, interpersonal skills, and problem solving abilities necessary at this university, yet different than those that enabled them to succeed in other arenas (e.g., during high school, at another college or university)? To answer these questions, we need to identify what students need to know and be able to do to successfully transition into UW-Madison.

a. Foster a Culture of Learning Early

During our process of gathering data, many people spoke of the need to better define the “learning culture” at UW-Madison during the initial experiences of new students. Consideration of the campus culture should play a role in creating a transitional process for students. First impressions of campus life guide future experiences and often help form norms of behavior. An undergraduate and graduate student describe their concerns:

Welcome Week was a lot of fun and I did a lot of things and met new friends. But after that week when classes started, I was confused. I thought to myself ‘now what am I supposed to do?’ (Undergraduate student)

I wonder if we are at risk of being known as a party school. Are we concerned about having a culture that fosters learning or not? ... [I feel] that there might be a need to preserve Madison as a place of learning. (Graduate student)

It is very important for students to feel comfortable, meet new people, and create their own communities. At the same time, networks of people can be created which meet both the social and the academic needs of students. To what extent do we enable students to create academic networks in the first year? How can we set the stage for a culture of learning in the first key experiences on campus? Fostering learning, as an over-arching mission, can provide the guidance in planning key programs in the beginning and throughout the first year. The following examples of programs at UW-Madison—the Summer Collegiate Experience, the Bradley Learning Community, and programs in the Graduate School—can serve as models to maintain and create orientation-like experiences based on learning.

*The Summer Collegiate Experience.*⁴² The Summer Collegiate Experience (SCE) is just one example of a program for incoming freshmen which has been designed to intentionally provide an integrated, living-learning experience. Interested students are

⁴¹ Alexander, J. P., Healy, M., & Miura, U. (1998, January–April). *Graduate Student Focus Groups*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 9–10.

invited to go through an application process after they are admitted to UW–Madison. During the twelve years of existence, this program has been able to accept approximately 30 students per summer. Funding provides for their room, board, books and tuition. These students receive mentoring, both from their peers and faculty and staff, and also enroll in an existing summer course. Through their experience with others, a sense of bonding and camaraderie is evident. The SCE succeeds in retaining students of color of about 4–5% higher than the campus targeted minority rates. When SCE students are compared with the overall targeted minority students for the period 85/86–93/94, their second year retention rate is 86% for SCE students and 79.8% for all students of color.

The Bradley Learning Community. The mission of the Bradley Learning Community (BLC) is to “provide a living-learning environment for first year students that promotes a successful transition from high school to college life, encourages collaborative learning between students, faculty, and staff, and prepares students to become integrative scholars and active participants in the university community.”⁴³ BLC offers students the opportunity to interact with faculty outside of class, participate in study and discussion groups with students taking the same courses, and participate in a leadership skills development program. Of note are the ten Faculty Fellows (sponsored by the College of Letters and Science) who participate in programs and hold office hours and other group meetings⁴⁴ within the residence hall. In the words of an undergraduate student:

Bradley created this sense of understanding for me in three ways: It created a sense of community, it allowed me to interact with professors, and taught me how, as people, we are constantly learning.⁴⁵

The Bradley Learning Community was recognized as an important initiative on campus as it was nominated to represent UW Madison two years in a row for the UW System Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Council’s award for improvement in undergraduate teaching and learning through collaboration. Research on the Bradley program by Faculty Fellow Aaron Brower has demonstrated that participation in Bradley resulted in better grades and higher student retention through the freshman year, more active engagement in academic and social programs, and a greater sense of feeling integrated in the campus community on the part of students. Additionally, among other positive outcomes, Bradley students became more involved with faculty and staff, became more self-directed in their own educational experience, and were buffered from the drop in self-esteem that is typical of the freshman class at large.⁴⁶

The Graduate School. More recently, the Graduate School recognized the need for something beyond the one-time-only orientation programs and moved away from attempting to orient new students to the diverse nature of graduate education on this campus, to promoting in-depth orientation programs at the department/program level. In the past five years, the Graduate School has made several attempts to understand

⁴² This information was provided by Consuelo Springfield Lopez, Assistant Dean in the College of Letters and Sciences.

⁴³ Office of the Provost (1998, June). *Teaching and Learning Initiatives at the University of Wisconsin–Madison*. Madison, WI: Author.

⁴⁴ For example, Faculty Fellows co-facilitate one credit Journal Groups which focus on transition issues and integrative learning. More than $\frac{2}{3}$ of all Bradley students participate in a Journal Group.

⁴⁵ The Division of University Housing and The College of Letters and Science (1997). *Bradley Learning Community: A Unique Living-Learning Community Exclusively for First-Year Students*. [Brochure]. Madison, WI: Author.

⁴⁶ Brower, A. (1996–97) *End-of-Year Bradley Evaluation Report*. Madison, WI: Author.

If we were to be more intentional in identifying what we want students to know and be able to do after their first year, we would be free to consider and acknowledge other forums in which learning occurs.

departmental criteria for “satisfactory progress”⁴⁷ and continues to encourage departments to work to increase student awareness of department expectations, among other things.

b. Establish and Assess Outcomes of Orientation

There are many areas in which students develop throughout their time in a university. In a recent article by UW–Madison professor Aaron Bower, seven “life task domains” were identified as being important to students’ college experiences:

- Academic achievement (e.g., getting good grades)
- Social interaction (e.g., making friends)
- Future goal development (e.g., picking a major)
- Autonomy (e.g., establishing independence—renegotiating relationships with families)
- Identity formation (e.g., “finding oneself”)
- Time management (e.g., learning how to prioritize tasks)
- Physical maintenance/well-being (e.g., eating right, sleeping, laundry).⁴⁸

As an institution, it is important to identify the particular proficiencies in each area that lead to the greatest chance of success in the first-year. Once these skills are defined, they can form the basis for planning programs and services across the campus. Also, the assessment of these outcomes provides continuous feedback about what students need and if these needs are being met. Examples of competencies that benefit students could include:

- Developing a relationship with a faculty, staff, or student with whom they can discuss time management skills.
- Identifying a faculty member with whom they could approach with a question about a class or their dissertation topic.
- Describing a cultural tradition from an ethnic group other than the student’s own.
- Joining a listserv on a topic area of interest to them.
- Creating a budget.
- Defining their current career and professional interests.
- Identifying campus support services if they would need help with alcohol or drug related problems, sexual assault or harassment, or health and personal concerns.

Being able to competently do anyone one of these skills requires a mixture of information and ability. Through various orientation programs on campus, students are able to learn about UW–Madison and their department, and to develop many skills to succeed on this campus. However, learning is an ongoing process. In fact, students often come to campus with a variety of skills and information that had been developed or acquired previous to their arrival. Tying orientation to one time period negates the fact that many students are quite proficient and that the orientation process is based on a continuum. If we were to be more intentional in identifying what we want students to know and be able to do after their first year, we would be free to consider and acknowledge other forums in which learning occurs. Assessing the achievement of the identified skills would then be connected to the participation in any of these activities. Orientation occurs in the process of achieving the competencies in each of the identified skill areas.

⁴⁷ “Satisfactory progress” is a concept used at UW–Madison to encompass all of the critical features of the progression toward a degree.

⁴⁸ Bower, A. (1992). *The “Second Half” of Student Integration. Journal of Higher Education*, 63(2), p. 446.

A number of experiences could be infused with skill development activities to help in the transition to this University—for example, teaching and personal instruction, advisement and counseling, community service learning, internships and other experiential learning experiences, and organized programs and services. Other specific recommended activities, stemming from our discussions and campus reports include:

- Creating a New Student Seminar or course.
- Clustering courses to establish a “cohort” of students.
- Developing student-to-student guidebooks.
- Planning a “campus mixer” with an emphasis on cultural awareness.
- Using student mentors/ “ambassadors.”
- Planning student panels to answer questions (at the department level).
- Using web pages to provide information.

c. Make Orientation the Responsibility of All

In our discussions with various constituent groups on campus, we also came to understand that no one group or office should be responsible for helping in this transition. Rather, the whole of the campus community is accountable. Once the process of orientation is identified in terms of specific outcomes, the responsibility for teaching and learning this information would rest with all who are involved—faculty, staff, *and* students.

As mentioned previously, faculty members already provide many experiences for students to help them transition to the university. If particular skills were identified, faculty can be more intentional in helping students achieve these through discussion groups, classes, research, or other opportunities. Staff members can help infuse information and skill building whenever they are in contact with new students or are planning new programs. Making students responsible for achieving competence is yet another way in which the culture of learning is stressed on campus. If I, as a student, know that particular information and skills will help me achieve, I am going to strive to gain these skills and learn the necessary information. Yet, there are many individuals on campus who are not directly involved. Continuing to find ways to tap the experiences and expertise of others on campus should be a priority when defining the process of orientation. Making these outcomes explicit helps everyone understand what they are, and the many ways in which they can be achieved.

A current course, *Ways of Knowing*, is an excellent example of how faculty and other students help orient new students to campus. This is a one-credit, graded course designed to help first-semester students integrate their in-class and out-of-class learning. Similar to other “introduction to college” courses offered around the country, students meet in small groups with a faculty member and upper-level undergraduate students (peer mentors), to learn about resources and opportunities on campus, to learn skills for dealing with the transition to college, and to gain support from other new students at the university. Unlike these other traditional courses, however, *Ways of Knowing* focuses more fully on students’ academic experiences—exposing them and teaching them how to blur the boundary between what they learn in their classes, and their experiences, feelings, and passions outside of the classroom.

The First Six Weeks in University Housing. Within the past five years, University Housing has created and implemented a “first six weeks” philosophy to attend to the transition needs of the majority of first year students on campus within Housing. This philosophy includes more actively and intentionally attending to the needs of new students during this extended adjustment period. Increased contact with upper-class mentors, House Fellows, and an increase in academic support and social activities helps students get off to a good start academically, and to make friends to feel connected and supported at the University. University Housing has also incorporated an intentional

community development model to create respectful and supportive communities on residence hall floors. Statistically, student conduct incidents have dramatically decreased since more proactive community development efforts were implemented.

In conclusion, this campus is fortunate to admit thousands of qualified students every year who look forward to beginning their study at UW–Madison. Through the variety of programs on campus, they go through activities called “orientation.” However, these seem to be incomplete—many unanswered questions remain and they struggle to play the role of student. In the future, this campus might consider more intentionally creating an initial culture of learning, establishing and assessing outcomes for the first year, and making orientation the responsibility of faculty, staff, and students.

THEME 3: Encourage and Sustain Diversity to Foster Learning for All Students

Diversity on this campus, or the lack thereof, played a significant role in the dialogue with students, faculty, and staff. This topic is also one of the main areas emphasized by the Human Resources and Diversity Subcommittee and is discussed within their report. We are not the only campus groups reporting on the topic of diversity. Currently, campus committees, task force groups, student organizations, and departments are just some of the many groups researching this very important issue at UW–Madison. We will highlight some of the findings and recommendations of these groups and add to the discussion by identifying the ways in which diversity should be fostered in out-of-class learning for students—through recruiting and retaining diverse students, encouraging cultural understanding, and identifying ways to make services and programs invitational.

For the purpose of this report, we have defined diversity to include race, gender, cultural heritage, religious and sexual orientation, non-traditional students, and other human differences. As a subcommittee, we did not separate out any one group, for our charge was to address student issues broadly. In that regard, our discussions centered on how diversity impacts all students. At the same time, students have “multiple identities” with needs that are specific to them as individuals, not necessarily because they can be categorized in a group. For these reasons, we considered a variety of definitions of diversity. The following comments reflect this:

[There is a] need for increased diversity among faculty and students... [We] need to foster improvements here to have an effect on the comfort level of students. (Director of a Student Service program)

[We] need to make it comfortable for all. (Director of a Student Service program)

[We] need to better integrate minority students into the community—both at the UW and in Madison. (Director of a Student Service program)

[We] need to improve recruitment and retention of minority faculty, staff, and students to improve tolerance and enrich the educational experience for all students outside the classroom. (Director of a Student Service program)

Many families are diverse according to UW standards. Gay and lesbian couples are families, too. (Graduate Student)

Recruiting a diverse university community requires attention to who can afford a UW education. (Undergraduate Student)

In the Graduate School focus group report, one student said that he felt the breadth and depth of his academic experience has been compromised by not sharing the classroom with people from other backgrounds or experiences. The LEAD Center’s⁴⁹ report also includes many quotes from students who are concerned about their experiences on campus. One student notes:

⁴⁹ LEAD (Learning through Evaluation, Adaptation & Dissemination) Center.

It's a totally different thing with a minority like me. The odds are against me. But a lot of people would take it in a negative way when I would fight hard to get something to go in a more positive way for minorities—when I was working two jobs, involved in minority programs, and making sure minorities had a fair shake and everything like that. A lot of people didn't understand that. They felt that I was wasting my time—why do all of that? And I'm like, 'I didn't just come to this campus to get a degree, I came to make a difference.'⁵⁰

These comments suggest the need for having a diverse campus and how this goal can impact the campus community. As can be seen in the following research and reports from various groups, many people are saying similar things. The following are highlights of what others have discovered and recommended for increasing diversity on campus.

The Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey (1993-96). The results of this survey suggest that minority students experience UW-Madison differently than their white peers. For example, when asked about students' "Overall Experience to Date," 20% of the black student respondents said they were *Extremely Satisfied* and over 20% said they were *Dissatisfied*, while over 40% of the white students said they were *Extremely Satisfied* and only 10% said they were *Dissatisfied*.⁵¹ Differentials are also reflected in the responses given by Asian, American Indian, and Hispanic students to this question, as well as in other measures of satisfaction with the University.

A New Century of Opportunity.⁵² The Civil Rights Defense Coalition, a student-led coalition that includes members from the UW-Madison campus as well as the Madison community, developed a series of goals related to increasing diversity at UW-Madison and other UW System institutions. *A New Century of Opportunities* has garnered broad support from several student organizations, as well as from many members of the UW-Madison faculty. This Report proposes meeting seven goals to create a more diverse institution; twenty-six proposals suggest the means to accomplish the goals:

- **Goal 1** is to achieve higher levels of representation, not only by recruiting a diverse student body, faculty and staff, but also by working to create a welcoming climate to help retain them.
- **Goal 2**, to fully implement the plan, stresses assessment and accountability, ensuring that a commitment is made to maintaining the initial effort by evaluating progress throughout the process.
- **Goal 3** focuses on increasing retention of students of color, suggesting, for example, that mentoring programs be strengthened, multicultural programming and diversity in the curriculum be increased, and financial incentives and support be offered.
- **Goal 4** addresses recruitment of students of color; proposals include the establishment of long-term relationships with schools, communities and other institutions to link with populations rich in students of color, and that more active, targeted and personalized recruiting would help increase the number of students of color on campus.
- **Goal 5** focuses on recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color, with the notable recommendation that the successful practices of other institutions be identified (a strategy known as "benchmarking").

⁵⁰ Alexander, B., Foertsch, J., Bowcock, D., & Kosciuk, S. (1998, June). *Minority Undergraduate Retention at UW-Madison: A Report on the Factors Influencing the Persistence of Today's Minority Undergraduates*, Madison, WI: LEAD Center, p. 30.

⁵¹ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1996). *1993-1996 Trends and Differentials in Student Assessments: A Graphic Summary*. (Supplement to the Report on the 1996 UW-Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. S-71.

⁵² Civil Rights Defense Coalition. *A New Century of Opportunity*. Madison: WI: Author.

- **Goal 6** turns toward the need to expand the pool of well-prepared students of color, looking toward strengthening connections with the K-12 educational system, and
- **Goal 7** recommends that “other sources of diversity” be strengthened (again, focusing on issues of climate and curriculum).

This extensive and thoughtful plan is strengthened by having taken the step of suggesting ways to follow through on achieving its goals, as the goals alone would merely reiterate the lofty (and often unachieved) expectations of so many other plans to impact diversity.

Students of Color Campus Climate Focus Groups. This was part of a larger “diversity audit” conducted by the Dean of Students Office. This report suggested recommendations to address the following comments and concerns voiced by students of color at UW–Madison:

- Isolation of students of color in the classroom and campus,
- Positive experiences with services, as well as areas needing improvement,
- Experiences within the residence halls,
- The issue of campus climate/campus-wide concerns.

Examples of recommendations include:

- Creating a diversity leadership team.
- Continuing existing programs that support minority students (e.g., Multicultural Student Center).
- Adopting a team-based, integrated approach to delivering services.
- Encouraging campus leadership to be very vocal about the importance of diversity.

The UW–Madison Committee on Minority Retention is responsible for the following:

Diversity Update. This comprehensive document provides data and information about minority student demographics, enrollment, retention, and services. It also describes the Minority Undergraduate Recruitment Strategic Plan, which has four initiatives:

1. Develop and coordinate an integrated campus recruitment strategy led by undergraduate admissions;
2. Provide detailed information about financial resources and timely award notification; develop a fundraising strategy and increase the amount of scholarships and financial aid; and to develop creative funding options for qualified students;
3. Strengthen tracking and connections between pre-college programs and undergraduate admissions; establish scholarships and other incentives for pre-college programs participants to matriculate at UW–Madison;
4. Expand the University’s outreach especially to feeder schools across the state.

Study of Minority Undergraduate Retention at UW–Madison. This study was conducted by the LEAD Center to understand the factors that have lead to significantly lower graduation and retention rates for the UW–Madison’s ethnic minority undergraduates.

Through the use of surveys, student record data, and interviews, they determined that the following factors are predictive of student retention:

1. Academic preparation prior to enrolling at UW–Madison;
2. Financial status and the degree of financial difficulty caused by attending the University;
3. Adaptation to the feelings of isolation, exclusion, and insecurity that many minority students experience at UW–Madison.

To supplement the data collected by the LEAD Center, the Committee also held two focus groups, one each of academic staff and faculty who are involved in special programs on campus. The Committee on Minority Retention will draft a campus-wide minority retention report in the summer of 1998 that will incorporate the research and reports described previously.

Minority Graduate Student Strategic Plan. The Graduate School's strategic plan calls for increasing diversity in all graduate programs. To achieve this goal, the Graduate School plans to enhance an already successful summer research opportunity program for under-represented populations, recruit more actively from state minority populations (e.g., Milwaukee and Native American populations), and continue to direct and enhance the McNair Scholars program.⁵³ The Graduate School also sponsors the Advanced Opportunity Fellowship program and works with individual departments to insure that competitive financial support is available. The Graduate School provides funds for services to minority graduate students from campus units such as the Department of English Writing Center and the School of Business Learning Center. New initiatives that build partnerships with other campus units are also underway to help minority graduate students integrate their learning experiences and their social environment. Additionally, the Graduate School supports the efforts of minority student organizations such as the Black Graduate and Professional Student Organization, Union Puertorriquena, and Wunk Sheek (Native American) to increase participation and community.

Strategic initiatives developed by the Graduate School's Office Minority Programs include:

1. Collaborate with other Graduate School offices to develop a well-defined recruitment and marketing plan:
 - a. To find an effective use of our fellowship resources to enable multi-year funding packages.
 - b. To develop an efficient on-site recruitment process and tracking system.
 - c. To recruit more minority students to graduate school.
 - d. To enhance the undergraduate programs (in particular, the Summer Research Opportunity Program and the McNair Scholar's Program).
2. Collaborate with other Graduate School offices to develop effective retention programs for minority graduate students:
 - a. To determine the Graduate School's role in providing programs and services for minority students.
 - b. To continue to enhance participation at the fall reception for minority faculty, staff, and students.
 - c. To develop training workshops to strengthen the graduate experience for minority students.
 - d. To develop outreach activities to link with other campus groups serving minority students.

*Plan 2008: Educational Quality through Racial and Ethnic Diversity.*⁵⁴ The UW System's Plan 2008 is the successor to its previous plan, *Design for Diversity*. In the current version, seven goals were designed to transition the UW System into the 21st Century:

⁵³ This program is funded by the Graduate School and the U.S. Department of Education to prepare under-represented undergraduate students who have career interest in research to pursue graduate studies.

⁵⁴ University of Wisconsin System. (1998, May). *Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity*. Madison, WI: Author.

1. Increase the number of Wisconsin high school graduates of color who apply, are accepted, and enroll at UW System institutions.
2. Encourage partnerships that build the educational pipeline by reaching children and their parents at an earlier age.
3. Close the gap in educational achievement, by bringing retention and graduation rates for students of color in line with those of the student body as a whole.
4. Increase the amount of financial aid available to needy students and reduce their reliance on loans.
5. Increase the number of faculty, academic staff, classified staff and administrators of color, so that they are represented in the UW System workforce in proportion to their current availability in relevant job pools. In addition, work to increase their future availability as potential employees.
6. Foster institutional environments and course development that enhance learning and a respect for racial and ethnic diversity.
7. Improve accountability of the UW System and its institutions.

There are many common themes found in the research and reports described. At the risk of being redundant, we will highlight three areas in which fostering diversity on this campus can and should be continued—recruiting and retaining diverse students, encouraging cultural understanding, and identifying ways to make out-of-class learning experiences invitational to all students. The programs and services described are but a few of the many that could be listed here. They were, however, the ones mentioned most frequently as fostering an inclusive and diverse experience for students, and should be used as guides for future program and service development.

a. Recruit and Retain Students with Diverse Backgrounds

Many of the recent discussions on campus have identified recruiting and retention as key areas in which diversity can be increased. As mentioned previously, increasing diversity means to admit students who have had a whole host of experiences and backgrounds, all of which adds to the richness of this University. Two programs—the Chancellor’s Scholarship Program and the Summer Undergraduate Research Program—were developed as a way to retain undergraduate students and recruit future graduate students. These are just a couple of the many efforts and initiatives on campus which reflect the goal of enrolling and supporting a diverse student body.

*Chancellor’s Scholarship Program.*⁵⁵ In its 14th year, this privately funded, merit-based scholarship program provides academic advising and support, nurturance, and encouragement for the continued achievement of personal and academic excellence during four years of matriculation. During 1997–98, a total of 107 scholars were enrolled in the program. Of this number 63 were women and 44 were men. The larger numbers were residents of Wisconsin and their ethnic group representations were African Americans, American Indians, Asian and Hispanic Americans.

In addition to the financial award, Chancellor’s Scholars participate in a variety of academic and co-curricular activities, individually and as a group, which enrich the undergraduate experience. For example, each Scholar is paired with a faculty or staff Mentor/Friend who is knowledgeable about institutional resources and student interests. As a group, they engage in activities designed to provide information about resources and support services, and develop networks for support and academic achievement. This program has been very positively received by students and the University community, alike.

⁵⁵ Lee, M. (1998). *The Chancellor’s and Powers-Knapp Scholarship Programs*. Madison, WI: Associate Vice Chancellor’s Office.

*Summer Undergraduate Research Programs.*⁵⁶ This program is funded by the Graduate School and brings minority students and students from institutions with limited research facilities to the UW–Madison for eight weeks to pursue a structured research project under the tutelage of a faculty mentor. The majority of these students work closely with one of the faculty mentor’s graduate students and consults with their mentor several times per week about their project. At the end of the summer, each participant writes a paper and gives a presentation on the results of their research. During the course of the summer, participants also attend a variety of seminars and workshops related to preparing for graduate school or doing research in their discipline. For many participants, the summer program is their first experience doing research in their discipline, their first opportunity to network with minority researchers at large institutions, and their first exposure to the UW–Madison and what it has to offer.

What are the ways in which we create a campus that leads to cultural understanding?

b. Encourage Cultural Understanding

Above all else, a number of individuals commented on the need for cultural understanding—both between and within various groups. This desire stems from many who feel that increased diversity contributes positively to the experiences of all students on campus. Research tends to support this. For example, in a study of 25,000 students who attended 217 institutions during 1985–1989, diversity and multiculturalism had many positive effects. For example:

Emphasizing diversity either as a matter of institutional policy or in faculty research and teaching, as well as providing students with curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to confront racial and multicultural issues, are all associated with widespread beneficial effects on a student’s cognitive and affective development. In particular, such policies and experiences are associated with greater self-reported gains in cognitive and affective development (especially increased cultural awareness), with increased satisfaction in most areas of the college experience, and with increased commitment to promoting racial understanding. Emphasizing diversity and multiculturalism is also associated with increased commitment to environmental issues and with several other positive outcomes: leadership, participation in cultural activities, citizenship, commitment to developing a meaningful philosophy of life, and reduced materialistic values.⁵⁷

What are the ways in which we create a campus that leads to cultural understanding? How can this be fostered in out-of-class learning? The following are a few exemplary programs that are making this their primary goal.

The Multicultural Student Center. The Multicultural Student Center was developed as a response to a challenge brought forth by students of color on the UW–Madison campus and to bring change to the campus environment—that is to make the campus a more hospitable place and responsive to the needs and concerns of students of color. Since 1988, the Center has provided a variety of educational, cultural and social programs and activities focusing on the needs of African American, Asian American, Chicano/a, American Indian and Puerto Rican students. The Center creates an atmosphere and provides resources to enhance academic achievement and a sense of belonging among designated students of color. The Center provides a forum for the discussion of ideas, different perspectives, and exchanges of dialogue among individuals and groups. Programs and activities are developed to foster better relations within ethnic communities, between ethnic communities, and between minority and majority communities.

⁵⁶ Foertsch, J. A., Alexander, B. B., & Penberthy, D. L. (1997, June). *Evaluation of the UW–Madison’s Summer Undergraduate Research Programs*. Madison, WI: LEAD Center.

⁵⁷ Astin, A. W. (1993, March/April). *Diversity and Multiculturalism: How are Students Affected? Change*, March/April, 25(2), p. 48.

The Center's main approach is to bring diverse groups of people together to participate in a variety of activities that develop an appreciation of cultural traditions, customs and social activities. The Center hosts lectures, seminars, video presentations and discussions, receptions, cultural celebrations and meetings throughout the year. This variety of programs, activities and informal interaction has provided the opportunity for thousands of people to come together over the years to share experiences and to learn from one another.

Multicultural Council. Students find it valuable to connect with each other to create alliances and organizations around specific projects and programs. One outstanding example of an alliance of over 20 years is the Multicultural Council and Program. Each year, 10 students, 2 from each of the historically underrepresented groups, are elected to the Council. It is their responsibility to allocate \$150,000 annually for a variety of multicultural programs. Black History Month, the Pow Wow, and presentations by Amy Tan and Toni Morrison are just a few examples of programs supported by the Council. Student organizations apply for Council funds and are encouraged to work with other groups to submit joint applications. Students on the Council learn leadership skills and have to make difficult decisions about the allocation of these funds. It is an extraordinary opportunity to illustrate the importance of alliances, joint planning, and the power of sharing common interests.

University Housing Initiatives. In the past ten years, University Housing has made tremendous strides to support student of color and international students to succeed at the University and to provide all students with awareness heightening experiences. The Center for Cultural Enrichment (CCE) was created on one side of campus, with a satellite site located on the other side of campus, to house resources and to be a comfortable hub of student activity. Many staff positions were also created to achieve these goals. First, a full time professional staff member position was created—Residence Life Coordinator-Diversity Advocacy. This person oversees the CCEs and supervises student staff members and the Multicultural Resident Consultants (MRCs) who live in each of the residence hall units on campus. MRCs' primary goal is to provide support and serve as a resource for students of color and international students within the residence hall unit. The CCE/MRC program is recognized campus-wide as an important initiative to advance the goals of diversity.

Recently, two Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Liaison positions were created to serve a similar function as the MRC program for the LGBT community within the halls. One LGBT liaison is assigned for each side of campus. An important philosophy within University Housing is to have all staff members work collaboratively to meet the goals of diversity. This philosophy is implemented in staff selection and training and in activities within the halls.

c. Make Campus Programs and Services Inviting

The programs described under this theme, as well as all of the others, provide valuable services. These services are useful only to the extent that students use them. Thus, it is important that students feel welcome or are "invited" to use these services. One example of being inviting is the posting of a pink triangle on faculty and staff members' doors. This symbol says that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students can feel safe approaching that office. For non-traditional aged students, empty offices are a literal example of the closed doors they feel on this campus when they arrive after work. For a student with children, studying at the library requires extensive planning—hiring a babysitter, finding parking, etc. What are the other ways in which a supportive and inclusive community is expressed at UW-Madison?

The following questions can be used to as a guide to determine how "inviting" we are as a campus:

1. Is inclusiveness modeled by faculty and staff and promoted in programs and services?
2. Are different student groups invited to participate when planning programmatic or institution-wide planning?
3. Are service offices open and accessible to students when needed?
4. Are faculty, staff and students invited to program and training opportunities to assist them in understanding inclusiveness?
5. Are learning opportunities provided to promote open discussion of diversity issues?
6. Are faculty and staff active in welcoming new students to the campus community?
7. Are students consulted on campus issues that affect them?⁵⁸

It is the campus community's responsibility to respond to this challenge—recruit and retain diverse students, create opportunities to learn about various cultures, and ensure that services and programs are inviting to all students.

In conclusion, it is impossible to capture all of the specific issues related to achieving and maintaining diversity on this campus. Unfortunately, all of the individual components are part of a connected system. If students arrive on campus and immediately feel unsafe or not welcome, they will leave. This leads to fewer numbers of students and a lesser learning environment for all. Prospective students may tour this campus and question whether they will feel accepted—if not, they will apply to a different institution. For those students who do remain, they may feel as if they have no one to turn to in times of need. These students are also less likely to remain. A number of reports define the problem and issues—there are no easy answers. In the most simplistic terms, we need to recognize the ways in which we are different, yet focus on the ways in which we are the same. It is the campus community's responsibility to respond to this challenge—recruit and retain diverse students, create opportunities to learn about various cultures, and ensure that services and programs are inviting to all students.

THEME 4: Reconceptualize Teaching and Learning for Undergraduate Students

During our discussions with campus groups, the “Quality of Teaching and Learning” continued to rise to the top of prioritized student issues. There are many ways in which teaching and learning can be described. However, it became increasingly clear that students, faculty, and staff were often unable to distinguish between the learning which happens in class, and that which happens outside:

When faculty and student affairs professionals pool their perspectives on students' in-class and out-of-class experiences, they discover firsthand what the college impact research shows: that cognitive and affective development are inextricably intertwined and that the curricular and out-of-class activities are not discrete, independent events; they affect one another (sometimes profoundly) in ways that often are not immediately obvious.⁵⁹

In Chancellor Ward's description of “Reconceptualizing Undergraduate Education,” he stated:

To be a leader in the 21st century, we need to do more than reform our curriculum. We must take full advantage of an environment in which students will learn from one another, and do so in residential settings and other venues outside the traditional classroom.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Adapted from the ACPA/NASPA publication *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (1998, February).

⁵⁹ Banta, T. W., & Kuh, G. D. (1998, March/April). *A Missing Link in Assessment: Collaboration Between Academic and Student Affairs Professionals*. *Change*, 30(2), p. 42.

⁶⁰ Ward, D. (1995). *A Vision for the Future*. Madison, WI: Office of News and Public Affairs, p. 9.

Students had even more specific ways to reform teaching and learning on campus. For example, we received the following email from an impassioned student:

I think it is critical that we begin to revamp our standard method of teaching—i.e., the straight lecture with little student participation. Research shows that for most students this is not an effective method and that students do not retain content after the exams. The University should take a leadership position on revamping teaching to make it more effective not only for our University, [but] to serve as a model for other institutions of learning, whether at the college or primary level of teaching.

Other students also commented about their perception of quality teaching and learning:

Teaching diverse students means using diverse styles. (Undergraduate Student)

I wonder about the quality of learning and if there are better systems set up to foster learning in students. Sensitivity to different styles of learning would enhance [it], as might interdisciplinary or collaborative teaching... An important part of teaching students is teaching them effectively—some faculty need to be educated about more effective methods than those they currently use. (Graduate student)

In this section, we will describe how “Reconceptualizing Undergraduate Education” continues to be a compelling vision and should be extended to include out-of-class learning experiences. Student service offices and departments function predominantly outside of the traditional classroom. Yet, in arenas such as residence halls and through planned programs, student learning is pervasive. It is our contention that we can reconceptualize undergraduate education by tapping the out-of-class environments in which students feel comfortable—in residence halls and through community service work. The following examples should be used as models and replicated and extended in other venues to further this important vision.

*Residential Learning Communities.*⁶¹ Residential learning communities combine the use of residence halls with academic and social programming specifically designed to enhance the experience of undergraduates. Residential learning communities provide seamlessness to students’ undergraduate experience—they counter the too-common problem of a fragmented and isolated undergraduate college experience. In addition to higher retention rates and GPAs, learning community residents do report integrating the domains of their lives and realizing the wholeness in their undergraduate experience. Involved faculty have also become more “holistically” connected to students, joining together in ways heretofore reserved for graduate education.

Currently, there are seven undergraduate residential communities on the Madison campus.⁶² All create programs that bring academic and community learning experiences into the residence halls due to the collaboration of staff, faculty, and of course, students. The programs are comprised of students from extraordinary variety: from honors and non-honors backgrounds, from all ethnic groups and social-economic backgrounds, both men and women, and from inside and outside the state. Additionally, faculty from all units on campus have become involved with these programs, engaging undergraduates in new ways and in unprecedented numbers.

*Service-Learning.*⁶³ In 1994 an endowment was established to create the Morgridge Center for Public Service. The UW–Madison campus is very fortunate to have a center that supports student learning through service. Through its activities and programs, the Center:

⁶¹ Brower, A. (1998, January). *Residential Learning Communities. Teaching and Learning Initiatives at the UW–Madison*. Madison, WI: Office of the Associate Vice Chancellors, p. 26.

⁶² Chadbourne Residential College, the Bradley Learning Community, the Association for Women in Agriculture, Babcock House, Women in Science and Engineering, Global Village, and French House.

⁶³ Morgridge Center for Public Service (1997, Fall). *Morgridge Matters: News from the Morgridge Center for Public Service*. Madison, WI: Author.

1. Supports and enhances the learning environment by assisting faculty and students in creating partnerships that link academic study with public service.
2. Serves as a clearinghouse of information about service and service-learning opportunities.
3. Supports student leadership and initiative by facilitating participation in service activities.

Increasingly, university faculties around the country and at UW–Madison are integrating service into their courses, making it an essential part of the learning experience. This teaching and learning methodology is known as service-learning. The Morgridge Center for Public Service at UW–Madison defined service-learning as:

A method of joining academic theory with service to enhance student learning while addressing collaboratively identified community needs.⁶⁴

Participating in community service is common for the newly enrolled students at UW–Madison. In the 1997 Student Orientation Programs survey, 82% of the respondents said they had been involved in community service in high school; 79% said that they definitely planned to or would possibly be involved in community service at UW–Madison.⁶⁵ Faculty across the campus have come to understand the connection between students' desire to be involved in the community and how this enhances academic learning. This quote, from Arthur Chickering, reflects what many faculty have discovered:

Most of the qualities in students that drive activism—increased sensitivity to social problems, motivation to address these problems, sophistication about effective strategies, and clarity about one's own values—are all essential to exercising responsible citizenship in a pluralistic democracy.⁶⁶

In the Fall 1997 issue of *Morgridge Matters: News from the Morgridge Center for Public Service*, approximately 70 classes were identified on campus as having a service component.⁶⁷ If the “Wisconsin Idea” was updated and reframed to include students, service-learning would be an excellent example of how members of the university can connect both between (faculty with students) and throughout the community (students with members of the community).

In conclusion, both of the previously mentioned programs reflect transformative learning experiences for undergraduate students at UW–Madison and could be extended in various ways where appropriate. In a recent conference, the attendees at the Student Personnel Association's 1997 Spring Conference developed recommendations for creating these types of experiences. They suggested that:

[The University needs to] Create ways in which undergraduates are encouraged to reflect on how what they are learning in one discipline/class connects to other disciplines/classes and how all of this connects to their living experiences and to being a good citizen in their community, state, nation and the world.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Morgridge Center for Public Service (1997, Fall). *Morgridge Matters: News from the Morgridge Center for Public Service*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Student Orientation Programs (1997). *Student Connection 1997: A Survey of New Student Transition to Life at the University of Wisconsin–Madison*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 6.

⁶⁶ Chickering, A. W. (1998, January/February). *Why We Should Encourage Student Activism*. *About Campus*, 2(6), p. 2.

⁶⁷ Morgridge Center for Public Service (1997, Fall). *Morgridge Matters: News from the Morgridge Center for Public Service*. Madison, WI: Author.

⁶⁸ The Student Personnel Association (1997, July). *Conference Recommendations: Transformative Student Learning*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 2.

Other examples of ways in which students' out-of-class lives could be connected to in-class learning include:⁶⁹

- Integrating paid employment experiences into learning—use the work environment as a learning environment.
- Encouraging an environment where service and academic performance are expected—require it in the form of internships, co-op experiences, or student organization participation.
- Infusing career competencies into classwork—help students learn a core set of skills that they can then bring to a variety of situations.
- Creating leadership seminars—offer courses similar to the Leadership Seminar.⁷⁰

THEME 5: Enhance the Graduate Student Experience through Professional Development

Reconceptualizing graduate education arose as a theme throughout the process of gathering information for this report. Most concerns fell into two areas— the need for Teaching Assistant (TA) training and the lack of professional development opportunities for all graduate students. In either case, these concerns are reflective of the interest in enhancing the career development for graduate students, as well as a way to impact undergraduate education. Graduate students, in general, require ongoing opportunities for them to grow as students and future professionals. For example, national groups such as *The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University*, identified the need to “Educate Graduate Students as Apprentice Teachers” in order to reinvent undergraduate education.⁷¹ In their words:

Although graduate education is not at the center of our concern, clearly the metamorphosis of undergraduate education at research universities can not occur without suitable adjustments in the way that graduate students are prepared for their professional roles. Over the last several decades, universities have prolonged doctoral study, but they have not necessarily improved it by doing so. A graduate degree is a professional degree, intended both to furnish credentials and to prepare students for their life's work. But important aspects of their life's work have been neglected or ignored in their doctoral programs, to their detriment and that of the undergraduates they are expected to teach.⁷²

Undergraduate and graduate students at UW–Madison also expressed similar sentiments:

[I wonder if] the art of teaching can be enhanced...if TAs can be better trained and whether the University is creating conditions for them to teach well. (Graduate student)

It is often hard for first-year students to have interactions with professors—class size and inexperience (or reticence, on the part of students)—doesn't encourage this, so the quality of TAs is even more important. (Undergraduate student)

The use of TAs is probably a necessary evil given the size of classes and the faculty/student ratio. In light of this necessity, it is important to see that the UW does its best to train and mentor its TAs. (Graduate student)

⁶⁹ These ideas were generated at a Deans' Council meeting, April 8, 1998.

⁷⁰ This course is listed under Educational Administration 502 and Sociology 496, section 2.

⁷¹ The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (1998). *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Universities*. New York: State University of New York- Stony Brook. <http://notes.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf>

⁷² The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (1998). *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Universities*. New York: State University of New York- Stony Brook, Recommendation VIII. <http://notes.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf>

As suggested by the previous comments, there is a perceived connection between the quality of undergraduate education and the quality of TAs who provide instruction. Current research does suggest satisfaction with TAs at the UW–Madison. For example, in the Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey for years 1993–1996⁷³, 11.9% of the sample rated the overall quality of instruction provided by TAs as *Excellent*, 35.1% rated it *Very Good*, 34.5% rated it *Good*, 15.4% rated it *Fair*, and 3.1% rated it *Poor*.⁷⁴ Similar results were found in the 1997 USSS.⁷⁵

With 80% of the respondents rating TAs as *Excellent*, *Very Good*, or *Good*, the concern is not how well TAs are performing. Rather, the concerns are about how prepared graduate students feel to teach. Since 1988, approximately 8800 to 10,400 graduate students enrolled at UW–Madison each year. For purposes of context, approximately 18% (1612) of the 8811 graduate students worked as TAs during 1997.⁷⁶ Some of these graduate students do plan to become faculty members after graduating with their degree. For these students, quality training is a form of professional development. For others, teaching is a means to an end—that is, supporting themselves to finish their degree and move on to other work. Regardless, resolving the concern helps both graduate students and the undergraduate students they teach.

a. Provide Teaching Assistant Training

The issue of TA training has come up repeatedly in discussions of the Teaching Assistant Association (TAA).⁷⁷ The fact that TAs are covered by a collective bargaining agreement is relevant to discussion of training. Training is a management right and the contract specifically provides that orientation, training, and evaluation of employees is a responsibility of UW–Madison. Input from TAs is sought and is often central to the development and delivery of programs, but it is not bargained in the contract. The one type of training that specifically appears in the contract is not disciplinary or pedagogical in content; it is the diversity training that forms a basis for a “step” pay increase. Mandated training would presumably have to be incorporated in or added to the appointment percentage, and would have an impact on cost or on available time for teaching activities. There are, however, a number of promising models of TA training, as can be seen in the following descriptions of TA training in a couple of colleges on campus. The potential for these programs is expressed in the ways they acknowledge TAs as teachers, students, and professionals.

*TA Training in the College of Letters and Science.*⁷⁸ Teaching Assistant training in the College of Letters and Science is a combination of college- and department-level activity. The intent is to encourage accessibility to a single college-wide program, offering both general and some degree of specific training that supplements and complements department-level programs focusing on specific disciplinary issues and problems.

The day-long Teaching Assistant Workshops form the cornerstone of college activi-

⁷³ Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1996). *1993–1996 Trends and Differentials in Student Assessments: A Graphic Summary*. (Supplement to the Report on the 1996 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. S–16.

⁷⁴ These are means of the percentages across four years, 1993–1996.

⁷⁵ In 1997, 9.8% rated the quality of instruction by TAs as *Excellent*, 33.1% rated it *Very Good*, 37.8% rated it *Good*, 16.7% rated it *Fair*, and 2.6% rated it *Poor*. Sweet, J. A., & Nelson, A. (1998, January 16). *1997 UW–Madison Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Summary of Results*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, p. 8.

⁷⁶ October 1997 headcount, Office of Budget, Planning, and Analysis.

⁷⁷ TAA is the union of graduate student employees at the UW–Madison. The objectives of the TAA are to promote welfare of the membership, to provide a voice in the terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining, to improve the quality of education, and to cooperate with other segments of the society in the achievement of common goals.

⁷⁸ This description was provided by Judy Craig, Associate Dean of the College of Letters and Science.

ty. These are led by 18 graduate student Teaching Fellows (TFs), nominated by their departments and selected by the Teaching Assistant Instructional Development Program Committee (TAIDP) that coordinates the annual workshops. The framework of these workshops is a series of panel discussions (each led by three TFs) providing a general overview of the TA experience. Teaching assistants are randomly assigned to panel locations to facilitate an interdisciplinary look at teaching and learning issues. Panelists discuss topics of interest to all TAs regardless of department or discipline. These topics have included the many roles of the TA; planning for the semester as a whole; dealing with expectations (of students, the professor, self); the student/TA/professor relationship; how to be a TA and a graduate student at the same time; effective teaching styles; and how to handle a variety of classroom scenarios. Participants can then select three from among 18 small group workshop sessions, each led by one TF, that address specific disciplinary topics selected to create a program that would be helpful to their fellow TAs. Special panels or small-group topics are also offered for international teaching assistants (ITAs).

The College does not mandate attendance at the workshops, although many departments require their TAs to attend. Over 400 TAs attend each year, the majority of them first time TAs, but increasingly many of them return in following years. It is estimated that well over 80% of the new TAs attend, willingly and enthusiastically. Participants receive packets of resource material, the L&S Manual for Teaching Assistants, and a major text.⁷⁹ Each year panel and small-group sessions are videotaped; this library is available for borrowing or viewing through L&S Learning Support Services.

Through the L&S Summer Sessions, several special summer programs are held for incoming international graduate students. The first, an 8-week training program that incorporates the ESL courses, was piloted by the Mathematics Department about ten years ago. All incoming international Teaching Assistants (ITAs) are required to participate in this program. It now includes incoming graduate students from Physics and sometimes Economics. The Statistics Department piloted its own four-week summer program about five years ago. These programs are attached to regular summer sessions course offerings so that ITAs can get exposure to students and the course environment here, before the beginning of the academic year.

Most L&S departments offer some type of training program at the start of one or both semesters, and many departments also offer courses in teaching in the discipline as part of their graduate curricula. Four foreign language departments (French & Italian, Spanish & Portuguese, German, and Slavic Languages) take turns coordinating an intensive training program for all new foreign language TAs. Faculty and instructional staff lead this program; one or more experienced TAs serve as demonstration leaders as well. The departments also offer or require graduate coursework in teaching techniques. This program serves as a national model for TA training. Mathematics, Chemistry, English, Computer Sciences, and Botany and Zoology are added examples of excellent department-level training programs. Most departments do offer their own programs now, either combining with related departments or on their own.

The TAIDP has also begun a new College-wide prize, an “early excellence” award intended to reinforce and encourage further development of teaching excellence. The French-Felten Award for Inspirational Teaching as a Teaching Assistant in L&S will provide, annually, five to eight awards of \$400 each. Awards will be based on teaching performance as a first-year TA, to recognize and reward teachers at earlier stages of their careers, often at a time when pressures of graduate work cause students to question the time and effort they should or can devote to teaching.

*Wisconsin Teaching Scholars in the Life Sciences Program.*⁸⁰ Wisconsin Teaching

⁷⁹ McKeachie, W. J. (1994). *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*. Lexington, MS: Heath and Co.

Scholars in the Life Sciences Program is an education reform initiative from a small team of faculty in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) at the UW–Madison. The goal of this program is to enhance the quality of undergraduate biology education by helping graduate students in the life sciences, who are interested in academic careers, develop their confidence in teaching. The program consists of a summer eight-week course on Teaching Biology, and a semester-long teaching practicum during which students teach an inquiry-based lab for a non-major biology course where they practice what they have learned under the supervision of an experienced faculty member. The objectives of the summer course are to:

1. Introduce students to learning theories and pedagogical strategies involved in teaching and mentoring;
2. Help students develop and improve teaching skills through practice and peer feedback;
3. Provide opportunities for students to critically examine their reasons, strength, and potential for teaching, helping them to discover the teacher within themselves; and
4. Establish a community of teaching scholars through which students support and encourage one another's endeavor to become better teachers.

b. Provide Professional Development Opportunities for All Students

The need for additional attention and more resources for professional development opportunities for all graduate students has been underscored by a number of groups and research completed on campus (e.g., TA/PA work environment survey, TAA negotiations, Graduate student focus groups, the formation of a graduate student council, a group of women faculty mentors). Most recently, the Graduate School developed a strategic plan to give attention to finding professional development programs that are currently being offered, designating the “best practices,” and encouraging professional development seminars or colloquia on topics such as:

- developing a vita
- interviewing in and outside of a discipline
- understanding research ethics
- exploring alternatives to an academic career
- developing curriculum
- developing a course syllabus
- publishing in the field.

Furthermore, the Graduate School will work to encourage departments to incorporate the following skills into individual graduate programs:

- computer skills
- how to write a grant proposal
- grants management
- oral presentation skills
- introduction to the university environment
- interviewing
- career choices
- writing (in general)
- communicating to the general public
- conference presentation preparation
- personnel management.

The Graduate School hopes to have the new Graduate Student Council (GSC)⁸¹ do an

⁸⁰ This information was provided by Jo Handelsman, Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology.

All graduate students need the chance to experience professional development opportunities which help them succeed in their degree programs, and beyond.

“environmental scan” of what is working and in turn, disseminate information about workshops and department courses and seminars.

In conclusion, approximately 22% of the 8811 graduate students at UW–Madison worked as either a Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, or Project Assistant in 1997.⁸² The issues for these students—as both workers and learners—are many. Primarily, they need to be recognized as a valuable resource and treated as such. TAs perform important functions to the life of the University, including impacting the learning of undergraduate students. Developing training programs for all TAs is just one of the many ways to foster their growth as professionals. At the same time, all graduate students need the chance to experience professional development opportunities which help them succeed in their degree programs, and beyond.

THEME 6: Promote Responsibility and Accountability for Student Learning

Responsibility and accountability are integrally linked to all five of the previously mentioned themes. In regards to responsibility, we need to ensure that all individuals within the community are charged with fostering learning on campus. An example of this is reflected in the description of the orientation process. Once orientation is defined as the process of gaining skills and information, anybody on campus can (and should) help students’ transition to campus. Accountability is defined in terms of “being held responsible for”—that is, we need to create measures of success and ensure that these measures are achieved. An example of this is seen in using assessment methods to determine if students are achieving desired outcomes of learning. It is our contention that these two ideas are not mutually exclusive—both are important for ensuring student learning on campus.

a. Take Responsibility for Student Learning

To define education as two distinct areas—in-class and out-of-class experiences—is to artificially separate learning. As described in the first theme of this report, “Enabling Learning through Connections,” functional and organizational areas are often split into “heaps” which disconnects the learning system.⁸³ While gathering information for this report, we also identified another systemic problem—the designation of particular roles for faculty, staff and students. If we are to be defined as a learning community, all of the community must accept responsibility for learning. The following are just a few examples of questions, identified by various individuals and groups, which call for the recognition of this responsibility:

Faculty/Instructional Staff:

- How does what we do enable both learning and a healthy environment for students? For example, how do class structures, assignments, and other academic norms lead to stress and anxiety?
- What do we know about different learning styles? How do we use this information in our classroom/curriculum?
- How do we recognize, validate, and connect with the work of our colleagues (e.g., those who work in the areas of student services or other departments) to enable learning?

⁸¹ The Graduate Student Council was created as a mechanism for graduate students to be involved in policy development and analysis, as well as to improve the overall environment for graduate students at UW–Madison.

⁸² Office of Budget, Planning, and Analysis. (1997, Fall). *Ratio of Graduate Students to Graduate Assistants: Big 12 and Big 10 Public Universities*. Madison, WI: Author.

⁸³ Cotter, M. (1998). *Using Systems Thinking to Improve Education. About Campus*, 2(6), p. 10.

Students:

- What role do we have in fostering our own learning?
- How do we create a learning environment for our peers?
- How can we effectively communicate our learning needs?

Administrative Staff:

- How do bureaucratic structures support an effective learning environment?
- How do administrative policies and processes (e.g., tuition increases) impact the learning environment?
- How do we recognize, validate, and connect with the work of our colleagues (e.g., those who work as faculty/instructional staff or in other departments) to enable learning?

For all:

- How do we foster a sense of community?
- How do we act as both teachers and learners?
- How do we create and sustain a learning environment?

Above all, creating a learning environment calls for collaboration. We are fortunate to be able to participate in an institution based on shared governance. This model requires a level of responsibility from all—to be involved, informed, and active in the creation of whatever educational environment we desire. At the same time, our roles often define the agendas of our committees, organizations, departments, or offices. To address this, the Student Personnel Association recommended creating a:

University collaborative subcommittee that consists of faculty, staff, and student organizations (like the Faculty Senate, the Student Personnel Association, and the Associated Students of Madison) with the collaborative mission of improving the educational experience of students.⁸⁴

This committee would be charged with coordinating a collaborative assessment initiative and recognizing individuals who excel at facilitating learning, as well as those involved in collaborative projects that include shared faculty, staff, and student goals.

Some of the most promising programs on campus today infuse aspects of collaboration in their development and implementation—they involve many individuals on campus who have been willing to step out of their traditional roles. Exemplary programs mentioned earlier include SOAR, Bradley Learning Community, and the Morgridge Center for Public Service. Another living-learning community is Chadbourne Residential College (CRC), in which students from all class levels live and “enjoy the benefits of a small liberal arts college while attending one of the world’s great research universities.”⁸⁵ Of note is the commitment of faculty and staff to work with and empower students to shape this community. These devoted individuals are involved with CRC because they believe it, “helps foster the best kinds of undergraduate education, helping students learn, grow, change—and succeed.”⁸⁶

There are other ways in which the campus can play a vital role in working with students to shape a learning environment. For example, health promotion and alcohol use are campus issues that require the investment of the entire community. The following description of the changes in health promotion and curbing alcohol use are two examples of how students, staff, and faculty can and should be involved.

⁸⁴ The Student Personnel Association (1997, July). *Conference Recommendations: Transformative Student Learning*. Madison, WI: Author, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Office of the Provost. (1998, January). *Chadbourne Residential College. Teaching and Learning Initiatives at the UW-Madison*. Madison, WI: Author.

⁸⁶ Chadbourne Residential College (1998). [Brochure]. Madison, WI: Author.

Above all, creating a learning environment calls for collaboration.

Promoting Health on Campus. Health promotion is an example of how collaboration can change the learning environment for students. Recent efforts through University Health Services (UHS) have been designed to transform the ways in which this campus addresses health issues for students—health promotion has become a community-centered, community-directed, and community-focused process. This focus on the campus community represents a critical shift in thinking and action. In the first place, rather than defining health educators as the people with the answers—and health education, therefore, as a teacher-student interchange designed to change something about the recipient—health educators are thought of as facilitators, listeners, translators, and supporters of a gradual process of community change.

A second major change has been an emphasis on community and culture, rather than individual knowledge and behavior. All health behaviors occur, of course, in context; every “decision” about drinking, drug or tobacco use, relationships, intimacy, sex, eating, or exercise happens in a framework created by social norms, community standards and values, local traditions, and the customs of groups. This context is immediate and palpable. Accordingly, a large proportion of our efforts in health promotion are now contextual, environmental, and cultural; they depend on a variety of strategies gradually to alter the prevailing norms toward patterns that support healthy relationships on a safer campus. An example of how environment and culture impact students’ drinking is suggested in a recent study of the Women in Science and Education (WISE) residential program. The WISE program was created as an entirely all-female educational experience for women interested in the sciences to establish a community that improves the academic performance and retention of the participants. These students live, attend courses, and participate in other social and professional events together. According to a recent study, a large percentage of students in this program (46.7%) “reported that they had not consumed alcoholic beverages on more than one occasion since coming to UW-Madison, compared to only 12.3% of students in the control group.”⁸⁷

Increasing consciousness of another important factor has prompted a third major change in health promotion programs: the internal, or psychological, context and its influence on relationships. We learn from students about the struggles of coming to college; they tell us that making friends, building new relationships, fitting in, and feeling accepted are hard challenges (exceeding even the big academic and career questions in their ability to cause stress and unhappiness). Therefore, more and more resources (energy, time, money, and people) are invested in assisting students in transition.

A fourth and final change: Given that our particular community is an academic one, and that life and work (which, on campus, is learning) happen together, health promotion has been integrated as thoroughly and completely as possible with the academic process itself. As a result, health educators are involved in planning and implementing new living-learning communities. Health educators meet with faculty to plan collaborative projects that bring health concepts into classrooms. Faculty provide technical assistance to student groups who tackle health-related projects through our mini-grant program.

Robert Wood Johnson Grant. Through the work of many people on campus—faculty, staff, and students—UW-Madison received a \$800,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to address binge drinking on campus. This grant has enabled the campus community to look at the culture of alcohol use and try to change the norms that foster it.

Students “decide” about certain patterns of drinking surrounded, for example, by alcohol advertising, campus oral and folk traditions, and the “drink specials” of local taverns and bars. While more than 65% of our undergraduate students binge drink,

⁸⁷ Allen, C. (1998). *Supporting Female Undergraduate Science and Engineering Students with a Residential Program*. Article in press.

less than 0.5% feel that they have a drinking problem—and, in fact, the pattern of their drinking is quite normative. To focus only on an individual student’s knowledge about alcohol is to ignore the environment within which that student lives, learns, and develops relationships. To instruct that student about “saying no,” or “knowing when to say when,” or “knowing his/her limits” is to place all of the responsibility and accountability for both actions and outcomes on that one person. Students who do not “drink responsibly” are somehow seen as failures—as if we expect them to control the influence of all the factors in their visual, relational, and media context. When we listen to students, we hear a lot about the power of these environmental factors, and especially about how perceptions of the norm govern students’ assessment of their own behavior. Traditional alcohol awareness and education efforts fail to account for or address these crucial dynamics.

The Robert Wood Johnson Project provides campus leadership toward cultural change. Key characteristics include:

1. student-centered—students are key partners, with major governance, programming, and administrative roles in the project;
2. campus-community connections—uniting the university, community, and students together in confronting problem drinking;
3. cultural change (as described above); and
4. progressive strategies—building gradually on successes.

b. Ensure Accountability for Student Learning

Besides ensuring responsibility for learning, accountability was defined in terms of “being held responsible for”—that is, creating measures of success and ensuring that these measures are achieved. Currently, campus programs, departments, schools and colleges are in different stages of the process of identifying academically based learning outcomes for students in their respective programs. Naturally, both out-of-class and in-class learning will be assessed using those measures. In a recent article about collaboration between academic and student affairs professionals, Trudy Banta and George Kuh suggest this as an opportunity for partnering:

One of the most promising but underused opportunities for collaboration comes in the form of outcomes assessment. Assessment constitutes common ground. It is one of the few institutional activities in which faculty and student affairs professionals can share an interest in student learning, even as they emphasize different aspects.⁸⁸

Forming a committee with representatives from all areas of campus is one example of how the University could ensure accountability of student learning and development through assessment that is not directly tied to academic curriculum. There are many committees on campus that are interested and invested in this topic. For example, combining members from the Associate Administrative Council, the Student Personnel Association, and the University Assessment Council to form a committee would be an ideal way to create a committee charged with identifying and assessing learning outcomes. Each group adds a body of knowledge and expertise to the process:

Faculty members are generally more attuned to knowledge acquisition and intellectual development; student affairs professionals have greater experience in helping students cultivate certain abilities (like time management or decision-making) and cognitive processes (like moral reasoning).⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Banta, T. W., & Kuh, G. D. (1998, March/April). *A Missing Link in Assessment: Collaboration Between Academic and Student Affairs Professionals*. *Change*, 30(2), p. 42.

⁸⁹ Banta, T. W., & Kuh, G. D. (1998, March/April). *A Missing Link in Assessment: Collaboration Between Academic and Student Affairs Professionals*. *Change*, 30(2), p. 42.

UW–Madison has some of the greatest human resources when it comes to research and designing models for both academic and other forms of student learning. To initiate and sustain collaboration, faculty and staff might consider the following:

1. Model strong administrative commitment by rewarding participation in assessment activities.
2. Plan curriculum and assessment jointly.
3. Promote campus-wide understanding of the goals for student development by developing a common view of what matters in fostering student learning at this institution.
4. Coordinate in- and out-of-class experiences, which reinforces the goals of each.
5. Design and administer appropriate measures of desired outcomes.
6. Use assessment findings to improve the entire student experience.⁹⁰

In conclusion, living-learning communities and health promotion there are just two of the many examples of how the campus community can be invested in student learning. Further efforts to establish and assess learning outcomes are yet another way. The previously mentioned goals and recommendations are lofty and may seem unattainable. They certainly are impossible without participation of those involved—faculty, staff and students. If put into practice, they could be powerful methods for creating an experience for students that is integrated, coherent, and meaningful. Ensuring that members of the campus community take responsibility to assess learning outcomes are goals that would be well worth considering in the future.

Final Thoughts

Ultimately, this report is intended to be considered as a whole, and not as six separate parts. For ease of reading, we created artificial distinctions and separations between the themes we uncovered. The challenge, then, is to consider how to connect them into a framework that enables learning for all students. The quick summary of the report is this—from the time that they arrive on campus, we desire students to have connected and meaningful experiences and be engaged with others in academic and social opportunities that are inclusive, integrated and coherent. All of the campus is involved and learning is reciprocal—the teacher becomes the learner and the learner becomes the teacher.

We hope that the suggested themes are helpful to the campus community. We attempted to identify student concerns that were predominant in the discussions and reports of various groups on campus. For staff and faculty, we tried to highlight the ways in which their contributions have been of tremendous value to students and how they can be enhanced. We understand that the themes are broad—our charge was to review the previous “visions” and suggest potential new ones. To advance specific recommendations would be to limit the ideas yet to be realized by those who read and interpret this report according to their own understandings. Our charge to the reader is to do just that.

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⁹⁰ Banta, T. W., & Kuh, G. D. (1998, March/April). *A Missing Link in Assessment: Collaboration Between Academic and Student Affairs Professionals*. *Change*, 30(2), p. 45–46.

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