

Academic Matters

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FROM THE INTERIM PROVOST:

Season's greetings to one and all!

I know that as you receive this newsletter you will be working hard. Some of you will be grading final exams, papers, projects, and/or student portfolios. Others will be advising, enrolling, and admitting students. Still others will be making plans for next semester. Many of you will be reflecting on the year gone by and writing end of the year reports. We know that eventually the stacks of work will decline, and you will be able to enjoy some well-earned relaxation. In the meantime, I wish you the very best as you go about your work!

This has been a very busy semester for all of us. We have worked hard to engage our students in curricular and co-curricular learning activities, to successfully hire a new chancellor, and to forge new and exciting collaborations with UW System and Wisconsin Technical College System institutions. Through it all, teaching and learning, quality and access, student success and transfer have remained our highest priorities.

When you do find time to relax, please take a moment to read this edition of *Academic Matters*. Below is a preview of what you will find inside:

- ∞ An introduction to our UW System Teaching Scholar and Teaching Fellow, the UWC Chancellor's Teaching Scholars, and more.
- ∞ A report on student achievement at the AMSLC Conference.
- ∞ A discussion of findings from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement.

- ∞ A report on the future of First-Year Seminar
- ∞ An update on 2005-2006 campus assessment activities.
- ∞ A review of Grants Office activities.
- ∞ A report on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.
- ∞ A preview of the 2006 UW Colleges Colloquium.

On behalf of the Office of Academic Affairs, I wish you success as you work to finish your semester-end activities, a most enjoyable winter break, and a very happy and prosperous new year!



***Professional Development: Teaching Fellows and Teaching Scholar Named
By Wava Haney***

November and December have been very good months for professional development in the UW Colleges. In November, two UW Colleges faculty were named a UW System Wisconsin Teaching Fellow and Teaching Scholar, respectively, and two UW Colleges faculty were named UW Colleges Chancellor's Teaching Fellows. In December, four UW Colleges faculty were granted UW System Office of Instructional and Professional Development (OPID) Conference Development Grants; UW Colleges faculty submitted four proposals and all four were funded.

UWS Wisconsin Teaching Fellow: Tracy K. White, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at UW-Barron County was named a 2006-2007 UW System Wisconsin Teaching Fellow. The UW System Wisconsin Teaching Fellows Program, directed by UW Colleges Professor of Psychology, Jane Ewens, is a year-long program involving one early career faculty member from each UWS institution in the study of teaching and learning, collectively and individually. Fellows attend UW System Faculty College, a week long seminar in late June and come together in a one-day workshop each semester during their fellowship year. But a central feature of their fellowship is a scholarly teaching project that uses principles of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) to understand "best practices" that enhance student learning. Tracy's project, "Using a Case Study to Improve Student Understanding of the Nature of Scientific Inquiry," addresses the question "Is there a way to help students master biology content without misleading them regarding the nature of scientific inquiry?" To study this question, Tracy will develop "an iterative case study approach that moves students through the history of research that laid the foundation for one well-developed explanation in biology." In the current academic year, Tracy directs a SoTL project funded by OPID for UW Colleges biology faculty to study strategies for helping students understand the role of evidence in scientific inquiry.

UWS Wisconsin Teaching Scholar: Nancy Chick was named the 2006-2007 UW System Wisconsin Teaching Scholar. Nancy, an Associate Professor of English, is also a member of the UW-Barron County faculty. Since fall 2004, Nancy has served as the UW Colleges Faculty Representative to OPID and is a member of the OPID executive committee. The Wisconsin Teaching Scholars Program brings together mid and late career faculty members, one from each

UWS institution, who are recognized for their outstanding teaching and who have served as a role model and a resource for their peers through their research on teaching and learning. During their fellowship year, Scholars are expected to engage in a project that will advance the practice of teaching through scholarly inquiry into student learning and to then play a leadership role in advancing UW System SoTL work. Nancy's project, "What is Literary Studies? The "Larger Vision of Disciplinarity," follows a similar line of inquiry to that of Tracy. In this case, the focus is helping literature students "to learn what it means to approach a text as a literary scholar." Using her online introductory literature course as the focus of her study, Nancy will develop activities that help her students engage a series of questions as they approach their literary texts and deepen their disciplinary understanding throughout the semester. She will then assess their ability "to do literary studies" rather than just interpret individual works of literature.

UWC Chancellor's Teaching Fellows: Andrea De Palma, Assistant Professor of Computer Science at UW-Marshfield/Wood County, and Mohamed Ayoub, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at UW-Washington County, were named 2006-2007 UW Colleges Chancellor's Teaching Fellows. During her fellowship year, Andrea will address the question of how to help students put concepts learned in lectures in her introductory computer science course into practice, or, as she put it, "how to turn students' difficulties into a positive learning environment." She will use the SoTL literature to guide her in developing classroom techniques and laboratory exercises in which students work together in teams to think analytically, understand concepts and solve problems. In his project, "Integrating Molecular Modeling in General and Organic Chemistry Courses," Mohamed will design exercises that help students understand and visualize chemical concepts. Molecular modeling will allow students to think more clearly about fundamental concepts like structure, stability and reactivity; they will be able to build models, do calculations and analyze the results.

UWS OPID Conference Development Grants Recipients: Mohamed Ayoub, Eric Giordano, Cary Komoto and John Pruitt were awarded OPID Conference Development Grants. The grant Mohamed received will fund a workshop on teaching chemistry concepts in a manner more consistent with modern chemistry research and is open to faculty and instructional academic staff in chemistry, physics, biological sciences and mathematics. The resource person for this workshop is Frank Weinhold, UW-Madison.

The grant authored by Eric Giordano, Assistant Professor of Political Science at UW-Marathon, will fund a workshop "to launch the SoTL movement within the [UW Colleges Political Science] department with a quality workshop and create a culture of professional acceptance of this important vein of research." Craig Wendorf of the UW-Stevens Point Department of Psychology will facilitate the workshop that will be focused on Politics 101. Wendorf is a leader in a federally funded program, Faculty Alliance for Creating and Enhancing Teaching Strategies (FACETS), which has pioneered efforts to help faculty understand the latest research in teaching and learning strategies.

Cary Komoto's grant, "Using Lesson Study to Address Common Misconceptions in Physical Geography and Geology," continues the work, funded by an OPID SoTL grant, begun two years ago by members of the department under Cary's leadership. Their resource person is Bill Cerbin, Professor of Psychology at UW-LaCrosse. Cary is an Associate Professor of Geography and Geology at UW-Barron County.

A grant to fund, “English Department SoTL Workshop, 2006,” continues work initiated at a UW Colleges SoTL conference in 2004 and carried on as a group SoTL project on peer critique and the department’s 2005-2006 assessment project. Greg Valde, Associate Professor of Educational Foundations at UW-Whitewater, will lead a one-day workshop for the UW Colleges English Department on SoTL and peer critique. John Pruitt, Assistant Professor of English at UW-Marshfield/Wood County authored the grant.



The UW Colleges AMSLC Undergraduate Research Program
By Nora McGuire

Each year, the University of Wisconsin System conducts the American Multicultural Student Leadership Conference (AMSLC). The conference is intended for students who are members of the racial/ethnic groups that are the focus of Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity. The targeted racial/ethnic groups are: African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians and Asian Americans, particularly Southeast Asians.

One activity associated with the conference is a research competition. To promote student interest in this aspect of the conference, the UW Colleges initiated a UW Colleges AMSLC Undergraduate Research Program. Working with the ESFY coordinators and other staff, each campus was invited to nominate students interested in submitting research projects and attending AMSLC. To participate, students had to identify a member of the faculty or staff who would mentor them for purposes of the project. Each student who completed and submitted a project for consideration by the AMSLC judges received a Certificate of Recognition and a \$50 Research Recognition Award.

Eight UW Colleges students submitted research projects. Kristina Fletty, UW-Marshfield/Wood County, had the honor of being selected to present her paper, “The Filipino American- An Anonymous Minority” at the conference held in October. Pa Houa Yang, UW-Sheboygan, received honorable mention in the visual arts category for her drawings of Hmong women in traditional dress. Her project was titled “Individual Hmong.”

Once the timing of the next AMSLC is determined, The Office of Academic Affairs will announce this important research opportunity—so, stay tuned!



Community College Survey of Student Engagement
By Gregg Nettesheim

In the spring of 2005, UW Colleges students in randomly selected class sections participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). You may recall that this survey was also conducted in the spring of 2002. The UW Colleges’ participation in CCSSE is underwritten by the UW System administration, as is the participation of the other UW system institutions in the National Survey of Student Engagement.

As the UW Colleges seek to improve upon our efforts to engage students in the learning process, the CCSSE has proven to be a useful tool for assessing those efforts. It is designed explicitly to measure student engagement in two-year institutions. In 2005, the survey was administered to over 133,000 students at 257 two-year institutions in 38 states.

The survey collects and analyzes student impressions in five key areas of engagement. These areas have been shown through research to be important in successful educational practice. The five areas measured are:

- ∞ Student faculty interaction
- ∞ Support for learners
- ∞ Active and collaborative learning
- ∞ Academic challenge
- ∞ Student effort

The table below summarizes the mean survey scores for UW Colleges' students in these five areas for both the 2002 and 2005 years. The table also shows the 2005 decile rank (percentile scores that divide the frequency of benchmark scores into ten equal groups) for UW Colleges' students when compared to all other students who participated. As you study the table, please note that in the areas of Student faculty interaction, Academic challenge, and Student effort, the answers our students gave put them in the top 10 or 20% of all participating students. In the areas of Support for learners and Active and collaborative learning, UW Colleges students ranked closer to the middle of all students in 2005. However, in both these areas there were significant gains when comparing 2002 scores to the 2005 scores.

Areas of Engagement	2002 UW Colleges mean scores	2005 UW Colleges mean scores	2005 UW Colleges decile rank*
Student faculty interactions	42.0	53.6	80%
Support for learners	40.5	49.9	50%
Active and collaborative learning	38.4	50.8	60%
Academic challenge	58.7	53.7	90%
Student effort	50.5	54.3	90%

*e.g. in the area of student effort the Colleges' mean score was greater than or equal to 90% of scores for all other participants



The Future of First-Year Seminar
By Chris Taylor

When we first implemented our ESFY (Engaging Students in the First Year) Initiative (2003-2004), we decided that our initial focus should be on First-Year Seminar (LEC 100) classes. The course is designed to help students make the transition to the challenges and opportunities of academic life. First-Year Seminar has three primary goals: 1) to promote active learning as well as student involvement and responsibility in the learning process, 2) to assist students in the development of

life management skills, and 3) to engage students on the campus. Our own research shows that students who take our First-Year Seminar have higher grade point averages and better retention rates than students who do not take the course. First-Year Seminar is growing, both in quantity and quality.

Prior to the first year of ESFY implementation, several campuses had already been offering nearly 40 sections of First-Year Seminar, and the Fall 2003 semester saw a growth to 62 sections. During 2004-2005, 12 campuses were offering more than 70 sections. This year, we have more than 90 sections taught at all 13 of our campuses, and next year, we plan to offer more than 100 sections of LEC 100 across the UW Colleges. This is exciting news. More than 1/3 of our new students are experiencing the benefits of First-Year Seminar across our institution.

Another exciting area of growth is the many different configurations being used to teach this course. During the next year, LEC 100 will be offered in several formats:

- ∞ **Stand-alone:** This is the traditional model, in which students take LEC 100 simply as one of their regular classes.
- ∞ **Linked with one class:** In this model, students take LEC 100 in conjunction with one of their other courses. Students might take a LEC 100 linked with, for example, BIO 109.
- ∞ **Learning community:** This model includes LEC 100 as part of a cluster of courses that enroll the same group of students.
- ∞ **Online/hybrid courses:** A team of LEC 100 instructors at UW-Marathon County is developing a LEC 100 specifically designed for our online students as well as a hybrid LEC 100 that can be used on campuses. Projects and assignments from these formats will be adaptable to face-to-face LEC 100 classes as well.
- ∞ **New Approaches to Subject of Inquiry:** Each section of LEC 100 has a subject of inquiry, a content that provides context for students as they meet the challenges of the course. Many instructors successfully use an issue from their primary academic discipline as a subject of inquiry, and others are branching in some new directions. Courses that are linked to one class or to a learning community naturally find a subject of inquiry in the content of the other courses. Several instructors have begun to use their campus common readings as a LEC 100 subject inquiry, and some campuses are now developing sections of LEC 100 targeted to students in specific majors as well.

Our ESFY campus coordinators and First-Year Seminar instructors are putting a great deal of energy into designing courses that address student needs and interests in multiple ways. The ongoing attention to course design and to our students demonstrates our commitment to excellence throughout the UW Colleges.

Upcoming ESFY Events

- ∞ ESFY Spring conference—Saturday, March 11, at UW-Marshfield/Wood County
- ∞ First-Year Seminar Instructor Retreat—Friday, June 23, location TBA

Campus Assessment Activities 2005 – 2006
By Renee Gralewicz

The campus assessment program is taking a strong turn this year due to the hard work of many people. The campus assessment coordinators in conjunction with other campus faculty and staff created a wide variety of assessment plans each valuable and meaningful to the campus. The Senate Assessment Committee was pleased at the diversity and depth these plans took.

There were three main foci for campus assessment this academic year:

1. Assess the activities of the campus using either the campus or the UWC strategic plan.
2. Assess the campus common reading or theme.
3. Assess the extent to which current practice helps students master the core skills of writing and quantitative literacy and what might be done across the curriculum to reinforce these skills.

Those selecting to assess their common reading or theme have well defined plans and interesting means of assessing the successes of the program. Their plans are very inclusive and detailed. The ten campuses which chose to review and assess portions of the Strategic Plan (their campus' or institutional) this academic year encompass a plethora of issues. Each plan is unique to the campus and demonstrates the uniqueness of our institution. Here are a few issues being assessed:

- ∞ Student success and retention
- ∞ Student advising
- ∞ First year experiences including ESFY
- ∞ Student Organizations
- ∞ Inter-institutional connections (UWC and four-year or technical college connections)
- ∞ International outreach
- ∞ Community outreach

What is impressive is the willingness of campus members to volunteer in these activities. The amount of participation is inspiring! Many campuses are using interdisciplinary approaches for assessment, and all of them include student input. Some of the means of gathering data include: Teaching Circles, focus group discussions, classroom surveys, surveys of students/faculty/staff/, surveys of student organizations, and the numbers of students involved in research via the Undergraduate Research & Performance Conference.

The Senate Assessment Committee offers its appreciation to the campus assessment coordinators and the campuses for their efforts in making assessment meaningful and useful. These campus plans will be available for everyone to view next semester. They will be uploaded onto the UWC Assessment web page: <http://www.uwc.edu/resources/assess/index.htm>.

Grants Office Activities Update
By Eric Smith

This is the busy season for grants. Even though the federal budget has not been finalized, many of the federal offices are announcing grant opportunities for programs that appear to be on solid footing for eventual funding. Over the next two months the UWC Grants Office will be working with a number of campuses on such grants as Talent Search (encouraging low income students to enroll in college), Educational Opportunities Centers (encouraging adults to return to college), and a Learn and Serve Grant (promoting service-learning opportunities). With the Learn and Serve grant, we are joining in with our UW-Extension colleagues to plan a statewide program that will produce a good collaborative model that can help initiate our new institutional partnership and develop service-learning.

An important goal of our Grants Office is to encourage faculty to include grant development as part of their regular work role. Since September, I have conducted six grants workshops that have been attended by over 80 UW Colleges faculty and staff. During the next semester, several more grants workshops will be scheduled including one that is already scheduled for January 19 (9-12) at UW-Rock County. These workshops cover all aspects of grant writing from the design of projects to the actual writing. A special emphasis is placed on how to find grants. Workshop participants are provided with information and access to several key databases that help make grant searching much easier and less time consuming. A new feature soon to be added to our grants tool box is an updated website that can be accessed from our UW Colleges site. This site will feature a variety of updates on current grant opportunities as well as serving as a one-stop site for faculty and staff on grant writing techniques, budget development, and procedures for submitting proposals.

As always, please be sure to contact my office when you need assistance or advice on grant writing or proposal development (esmith@uwc.edu).

Higher Education Reauthorization
By Dan Vande Yacht

There are provisions in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 about which the UW Colleges has concerns. The Registrar's Office is troubled about the potential impact of certain provisions of federal legislation proposed in the reauthorization of the Act. These provisions include the federalizing of matters related to the transfer of academic credit and some changes to financial aid that will further deplete an already underfunded aid system. The Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (WACRAO) Executive Committee and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) share these concerns and have communicated with the Wisconsin members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate to encourage them to reject the legislation.

It is important for all of us to be aware of this pending legislation and its likely academic and workload consequences. For more information, please see Alan Contreras' article, "Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due", that appeared in the October 14, 2005, Chronicle of Higher Education, Section: The Chronicle Review, Volume 52, Issue 8, Page B12. This article provides an excellent summary, directed toward faculty and administrators, about the likely impacts on the transfer of academic credit if the legislation is passed. Additionally, you are encouraged to contact your representatives and senators and urge them to reject the provisions in question.

2006 UW Colleges Colloquium
By Wava Haney

Join faculty and staff from across the institution on Wednesday, May 24, 2006, at the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County for the 2006 UW Colleges Colloquium. Each year, the colloquium brings us together to learn, engage in lively dialogue and make acquaintances in a professional and collegial setting. In early January, you will receive an invitation to submit abstracts, proposals and other ideas to the UW Colleges Colloquium Planning Committee. The deadline for responding to this call for proposals will be mid- February.

Heidi Rosenberg, Assistant Professor of English at UW-Barron County, chairs the 2006 UW Colleges Colloquium Planning Committee. Other members of this enthusiastic planning group appointed by the Senate Steering Committee are: Mohamed Ayoub, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at UW-Washington County; Andrea De Palma, Assistant Professor of Computer Science at UW-Marshfield/Wood County; Ellyn Lem, Assistant Professor of English at UW-Waukesha; Dan McCollum, Assistant Campus Dean for Business Services, UW-Marshfield/Wood County; Martin Rudd, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, UW-Fox Valley; and Carey Woodward, Lecturer in Physics and Astronomy, UW-Fox Valley.



Have a Wonderful Holiday Season
