



Foundations of Excellence[®]

Improving the Engaging Students in the First Year Initiative at the University of Wisconsin Colleges

Final Report

Submitted by Foundations of Excellence
Improvement Plan Working Group

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COLLEGES

The freshman/sophomore UW campuses

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Major Findings	3
Philosophy	3
Organization	4
Learning	5
Campus Culture	6
Transitions	7
All Students	8
Diversity	8
Roles and Purposes	9
Improvement	10
Improvement Plan	12
Improving the First College Year through Teaching and Learning	12
Improving the First College Year through the Curriculum	14
Improving the First College Year through the Co-curriculum and Student Engagement	15
Improving the First College Year through Institutional Structures	16
Appendices	20
Appendix A: Foundational Dimensions (Two-Year College Version) ...	20
Appendix B: Application to Participate in Phase II (Pilot Project)	23
Appendix C: Task Force Members/Dimension Subcommittee Assignments	27
Appendix D: The Foundations of Excellence Report Card	29
Appendix E: Improvement Plan Working Group	32
Appendix F: Engaging Students in the First Year Mission and Goals ..	33



Foundations of Excellence®

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Executive Summary

In February 2005, the Policy Center on the First Year of College invited all two-year institutions in the United States to participate in Phase I of the Foundations of Excellence Project (<http://www.fyfoundations.org/projectOrigins.aspx>). The University of Wisconsin Colleges was one of 87 institutions that gathered a Task Force to review Foundational Dimensions in use by four-year institutions across the nation.

The Foundational Dimensions statements (see Appendix A) constitute a model that provides two-year colleges with a means to evaluate and improve the new student experience. This model recognizes the multiple roles and functions of two-year institutions as well as their service to diverse student populations that have widely varying educational backgrounds and goals. As an evaluation tool, the model enables two-year institutions both to confirm their strengths and to recognize the need for improvement. As an aspirational model, the Dimensions provide general guidelines for an intentional design of the new student experience. The Dimensions rest on four assumptions:

- The academic mission of an institution is preeminent.
- The experience of new students is central to the achievement of an institution's mission because it lays the foundation that enables students to achieve their educational goals.
- Systematic evidence provides validation of the Dimensions.
- Collectively, the Dimensions constitute an ideal for improving not only the new student experience, but also the entire college experience.

Because the UW Colleges participated in the review of the Foundational Dimensions used by four-year institutions, the UW Colleges was eligible to apply to participate in the two-year pilot of the Foundations of Excellence project. The application process was completed in May 2005 (see Appendix B), and our institution was notified in June 2005 that it was one of ten Founding Institutions selected from a pool of 72 applicants. In August 2005, the Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Senior Information Manager, and the Assistant Engaging Students in the First Year (ESFY) Coordinator attended a Summit Meeting in Asheville, NC. Along with representatives from the other nine Founding Institutions, they learned about the Foundations of Excellence process and the technology used to collect, store, and report on our data and analysis.

While in Asheville, the UW Colleges team leaders began to identify potential members of the Foundations' Task Force. Because of the Task Force's primary role in working closely with the nine foundational Dimensions, Task Force members needed to represent a wide variety of institutional roles, campuses, and work units. After returning from the Summit Meeting, the UW Colleges Foundations of Excellence team leaders issued an invitation to 16 members of the institution; all accepted. The Task Force included campus deans, department chairs, faculty and instructional academic staff from seven different academic departments, student services professionals, and administrators with Colleges-wide responsibilities. The Foundations of Excellence Task Force included Cindy Bailey, Nancy Chick, Deborah Cureton, Patricia Eby, Jennifer Flatt, Ken Grant, Mary Hoeft, Greg Lampe, Nora McGuire, Jeff Meece, Keith Montgomery, Tom Neal, Martha Nelson, Gregg Nettesheim, Tom Peneski, Cassandra Phillips, Kristin Runge, Barbara Stinson, and Christel Taylor.

In Fall 2005, work on the self-study began in earnest. The first part of the self-study involved a Current Practices Inventory (CPI), in which campus ESFY coordinators, department chairs, and other leaders in the institution reported on first-year programs and interventions, committees and councils, first-year policies, high-enrolling courses, first-year demographic information, and first-year data and assessments. The CPI was followed by surveys of faculty and staff (October) and students (November) in regards to their experiences with the students' first year in the UW Colleges. It should be noted that the self-study was conducted immediately following several years of peak enrollment for the UW Colleges. The data was collected during the 2005-2006 academic year, and some information was based on 2004-2005 institutional research.

After gathering the data, the next phase was to write a report on each of the nine Dimensions. Each report had five components: performance indicators, a description of the current situation in the UW Colleges in regards to the Dimension, an identification of areas of concern, the development of specific action items that could work to address those concerns, and an overall grade of how the institution is doing in the area. Members of the Task Force co-chaired subcommittees to write the reports (see Appendix C). Each subcommittee used the data collected for this project as well as existing institutional resources to identify our strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for continued growth. In addition, some subcommittees conducted additional research to further investigate information that came to light during their analysis of existing data. Dimension Co-chairs were as follows: Philosophy—Greg Lampe and Christel Taylor, Organization—Deborah Cureton and Ken Grant (replaced mid-year by Keith Montgomery), Learning—Cassandra Phillips and Kristin Runge, Campus Culture—Cindy Bailey and Mary Hoeft, Transitions—Nancy Chick and Martha Nelson, All Students—Jeff Meece and Barbara Stinson, Diversity – Patricia Eby and Nora McGuire, Roles and Purposes—Jennifer Flatt and Tom Neal, and Improvement—Gregg Nettesheim and Tom Peneski.

As part of the Foundations of Excellence project, the UW Colleges received a site visit from one of the National Policy Center staff. On April 10 and 11, 2006, the UW Colleges hosted Dr. Betsy Barefoot, Co-director and Senior Scholar of the National Policy Center for the First Year of College. Dr. Barefoot spent the first day of her visit at the UW-Waukesha campus where she met with administrative and faculty leaders, conducted a student focus group and a faculty/staff focus group, and made a public presentation on engaging students. Dr. Barefoot spent the second day of her visit meeting with the institution's administrative leaders in Madison, conducting a compressed video Town Meeting, previewing the Online First-Year Seminar course, and meeting with Foundations of Excellence Task Force members and ESFY Campus Coordinators. Dr. Barefoot left Wisconsin with a broader and deeper understanding of the UW Colleges and its comprehensive, intentional approach to the first year of college. In addition, she offered many suggestions for helping the UW Colleges improve the first college year for our students and asked thought-provoking questions about the structure and organization of the institution.

After completing the dimension reports, reviewing the feedback from the Policy Center, and looking at the Foundations of Excellence Report Card (see Appendix D) that gathered our self-assigned grades for each dimension, the Task Force began developing an action plan. Several themes have emerged from the work of the Task Force as needful of our attention: funding, professional development, student motivation and behavior, curriculum, communication, and accountability and assessment. A special Improvement Plan Working Group (See Appendix E) then worked to develop an improvement plan that specifies goals and plans for improving the first college year through teaching and learning, the curriculum, the co-curriculum and student engagement, and institutional structures.

Major Findings

These findings are grouped according to the Foundational Dimensions. This is consistent with the process by which the self-study was conducted. The findings are framed in a variety of ways, indicating notable information and discoveries, evaluative comments, or specific actions. This variety reflects the diversity of the different Dimension Subcommittees and parallels the individual Dimension Reports.

Philosophy: *Foundations Institutions intentionally cultivate learning environments for new students that emerge from a philosophy of two-year colleges as gateways to higher education.*

Key Findings:

- ESFY Mission & Goals statement (see Appendix F) effective in guiding decisions related to ESFY programming
- No evidence that this document influences curricular or co-curricular decisions outside of First-Year Seminar

Discussion:

Overall, the UW Colleges' first year initiative is very strong in this area. Our ESFY Mission & Goals was approved in 2003 and has consistently guided ESFY-related decisions. However, the Task Force found no evidence that this document influences curricular or co-curricular decisions outside of the programming specifically under the ESFY umbrella. While some departments do discuss issues related to the first year of college, most of our institution's departments and units do not seem to look back at the institutional philosophy in making decisions that affect their first-year students. This suggests that what we say about engaging students in the first year has not yet become part of the institution's culture.

Organization: *Foundations Institutions provide a comprehensive, coordinated, and flexible approach to the new student experience through effective organizational structures and policies.*

Key Findings:

- Weak as an institution, although individual campuses may be strong
- No coordinated institution-wide plan for interacting with students during their first semester, except perhaps for those students who are in First-Year Seminar classes.

Discussion:

As an institution, this dimension is weak, although individual campuses may be quite solid. The high value placed on campus autonomy slows efforts toward "standardization," perhaps appropriately. However, accomplishing full 'buy-in' of common specified goals for first-year students has been a slow process. Resources, too, are a major factor. Currently, about 40% of new freshmen are accommodated in First-Year Seminar courses. Resources are a major factor in continued growth.

Each campus seems to have its own procedure for interacting with "first-time-at-your-campus" students, including orientations and course advisement, but there isn't a coordinated institution-wide plan for interacting with students during their first semester, except perhaps for those students who are in First-Year Seminar classes—and institutional interaction in this instance is limited to evaluation of the

courses. This state of affairs is in contrast to the focused and coordinated recruitment efforts of the institution. The UW Colleges made significant progress in branding all the campuses as "the UW Colleges" in the late 1990's, and we use a common slogan, "The best start for the life you want..." Recruitment efforts are well organized, orchestrated, and monitored in accordance with a centralized plan.

The quality of collaboration between Student Services and academic affairs (instruction) is dependent upon the organizational process on individual campuses. At the institutional level, the responsibilities of the chief student affairs position concern compliance and special programming, not necessarily the core programming of the institution.

Learning: *Foundations Institutions deliver curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage new students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the institutional mission, students' academic and career goals, and workplace expectations.*

Key Findings:

- Clear definition of learning goals consistent with institutional mission
- Disparity between faculty and IAS awareness of learning goals (due to differences in orientation and department participation)

Discussion:

The UW Colleges has clearly defined learning goals that are consistent with the institution's mission of preparing students for success at the baccalaureate level. To carry out this mission, the UW Colleges commits to developing in students a set of proficiencies that prepares them for baccalaureate and professional programs, for lifelong learning, and for leadership, service, and responsible citizenship. To provide students with the skills for success in these roles, the UW Colleges regards the following areas of proficiency to be of primary importance in the education of our students: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, and Aesthetic Skills. To assess student learning in these four areas, instructors measure student proficiency using common standards applied across the academic disciplines. The accumulated results are then used as the basis for implementing changes in teaching and curriculum. In addition to establishing institution-wide student learning goals, a majority of academic departments within the UW Colleges have developed discipline-specific learning goals. When assessing student mastery of these discipline-specific learning goals, instructors use common standards developed within each department. The results from these assessment activities are used to improve student learning, teaching, and curriculum within the department.

Although the full time faculty are aware of the institution-wide and discipline-specific student learning goals identified above for preparing students for success at the baccalaureate level, part time instructional academic staff might not be aware of these goals and how they are assessed. This lack of information about student learning goals can be attributed, in part, to part time instructional academic staff not attending academic department meetings. Student learning goals and assessment results are discussed at the fall and spring meetings of the departments. Another area of concern is that not all academic departments have developed discipline-specific student learning goals.

The Student Services offices on most campuses seem to operate from a campus perspective rather than from an institution-wide perspective. Because our students' experiences occur in a campus context, this may or may not be a problem. If each campus is reviewing its own practices and using that as a basis for improvement, then the students will still benefit. However, in academic affairs, departments and other units work institution-wide to make programming decisions that are then manifested on a campus-by-campus basis. Departments benefit from other perspectives and new ideas when they do this; perhaps this should be encouraged in Student Services as well. In academic affairs, the view is institution-wide; in Student Services, the view is campus-specific. This view could be expanded to include a Student Services institution-wide perspective as well.

Campus Culture: *Foundations Institutions make new students a high priority for faculty and staff.*

Key Findings:

- Communication and compensation major concerns
- Different orientation for faculty and instructional academic staff (IAS)
- Faculty/IAS ratio in high-enrolling courses

Discussion:

Much of this dimension report centers around communication between and among faculty, staff, and students. Some very specific suggestions to improve this area were identified. Two other areas were identified as needing institutional attention: resources and faculty/staff orientation.

The concerns about resources were, not surprisingly, related to budget and compensation. Currently, First-Year Seminar courses are taught as an overload, with instructors being paid a stipend. Campus ESFY coordinators receive a three-credit course release per academic year or its equivalent. The Task Force believes that expanding this compensation (or at least maintaining it) is vital to the future of the ESFY Initiative.

The process of how faculty are encouraged to make new students a high priority is solid. New faculty attend an orientation from our leaders in the Office of Academic Affairs, and at this orientation they learn about various institution-wide initiatives. Instructional academic staff (lecturers), however, do not receive any institutionally-sponsored orientation at all. Campus orientation for these instructors is inconsistent and, on most campuses, consists of learning photocopying codes and procedures for placing textbook orders. Unless they receive direction from their academic departments (which we know from the Philosophy dimension that they do not), IAS receive no communication from the institution about the ESFY Initiative and the value of our new students.

This is of critical importance because of the high percentage of IAS teaching our five courses that enroll the greatest number of first-year students (English 101 and 102, Math 105 and 110, and Psychology 202). The three disciplines that enroll the highest number of new students are English, math, and psychology. The curricular reports from the Fall 2005 semester provide information that we need to study closely. Faculty taught 36% of our sections of English 101 and 102, with the remaining 64% taught by instructional academic staff. Faculty taught 39% of Math 105 and Math 110, with instructional academic staff teaching 61%. At some campuses, the two highest-enrolling math classes for new students are taught entirely by IAS. These percentages are disturbing in light of the difference in orientation for new faculty and IAS. In the faculty/staff survey, non-tenure track instructors report less-than-positive responses in the areas of acknowledgement and recognition of teaching and in communication during the hiring process about the success of new students. Because of the large numbers of our new students taught by IAS, we need to carefully consider how we bring these instructors into the institutional culture of student success and engagement.

Transitions: *Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions beginning with outreach and recruitment and continuing throughout the period of enrollment.*

Key Findings:

- Disparity in faculty/staff and student perceptions of discussions about academic success
- Importance of first-year student connections with
 - Instructors
 - Continuing students
 - Other new students
 - Academic support services

Discussion:

The Task Force found a disparity in how faculty/staff and students report the frequency or effectiveness of faculty discussions of how to be academically successful. Either faculty have an inflated sense of their discussions of academic success, or students do not recognize or retain those discussions about their success. Either way, this communication needs improvement to help students in the transition from high school to college.

We identified the need for improvement in how first-year students establish connections with instructors, with continuing students, with other new students, and with academic support services. Families of new students should be receiving more of our attention as well, especially as we work to attract and retain increasing numbers of non-traditional students.

Students appear to feel satisfied with the quality and amount of academic advising that they are receiving, in both their first and second year of college. The institution provides a range of advising and programming to new students, both in group and individual formats. There is less formal advising intervention for students after their first year, and there is less formal programming to address the advising needs of students who are not academically successful and may need some additional intervention to help them readjust their academic goals or change study habits. There is also the potential for programming to assist students with transition out of the institution, primarily to transfer institutions, but sometimes to employment situations as well.

All Students: *Foundations Institutions serve all new students according to their varied needs.*

Key Findings:

- Not enough attention paid to whether we are meeting the academic, social/personal, and safety needs of all populations of students.
- Need for additional studies of student needs

Discussion:

The primary finding from this report is that we have not paid close enough attention to whether we are meeting the academic, social/personal, and safety needs of all populations of students. This is not to say that we do not attend to these needs, just that we are not intentional about it. Most of our action items indicate a need to further study particular sub-populations and their needs.

Diversity: *Foundations Institutions ensure that new students experience ongoing exploration of diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and participation in pluralistic communities.*

Key Findings:

- Examine the curriculum to ensure that students understand diverse ideas and world views
- Ask the UW Colleges Holistic Admissions Task Force to clarify the UW Colleges' definition of the word "diversity"
- Continue to recruit diverse faculty and a diverse student body.

Discussion:

Faculty perceptions about the effectiveness of current efforts in exposing students to diverse ideas and world views are significantly higher than student perceptions about the extent of such programming. This gap suggests that the curriculum and the methods used to deliver course material and other activities should be examined to ensure that students perceive that they are being exposed to diverse ideas and world views. The understanding of what constitutes "differing backgrounds and cultures" is not universal. There also may be different understandings pertaining to the qualitative nature of interactions and their impact on student and faculty perceptions. The results of the survey do not coincide with the increasing number of nonacademic misconduct cases and a growing concern among faculty and students about the lack of civility in the classroom. The question comes to mind as to the reliability of the faculty responses to the question concerning the institutional conveyance of expectations for student behavior since expectations of this nature are not generally communicated in course syllabi.

Roles and Purposes: *Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education and those unique to two-year institutions, both for the individual and society.*

Key Findings:

- Help students understand the value of a liberal arts education
- Improve institutional and campus websites
- Improve student/ faculty advisor connections

Discussion:

This report identified several potential areas for growth, particularly in our communications with students. One is helping students understand the purpose of a liberal arts education and how higher education prepares students for future employment, personal growth, engaged citizenship, and serving the public good. Because of students' increasing reliance on the Internet as a source of information, we should ensure that our websites (the institutional website as well

as the websites for individual campuses) provide this information clearly and readily.

The UW Colleges also should improve student/ faculty advisor connections. As an institution, we need to facilitate means by which students and advisors connect on more consistent and meaningful levels. Also, while a majority of students feel that they understand the College's goals for them, fewer students feel that they are given an opportunity to explore their own individual motivations for pursuing a college education. Given the fact that campuses do provide individual academic advising for new students, it is possible that students are expressing a desire for more in-class opportunities to consider their motivation for pursuing a college education.

Improvement: *Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to effect improvement.*

Key Findings:

- Review placement processes for introductory English, Mathematics and World Languages courses
- Begin to assess mid-term grading practices and outcomes
- Apply a consistent assessment of campus common readings
- Revise assessment of the First-Year Seminar

Discussion:

This report identified several areas where additional assessment of current practices would be useful. As regards course placement processes, the placement tests used by UW Colleges to place students into the appropriate Math, English and World Languages courses have been developed and are regularly reviewed at the UW System level. However, a review of the entire placement process is needed. Despite growing numbers of students enrolled in developmental courses, the Colleges continues to have large numbers of students failing introductory credit courses, in particular in Mathematics.

In the area of mid-term grading processes, there is wide agreement regarding the usefulness of mid-term grades. At the same time there is considerable inconsistency in mid-term grading practices. There are also some technical limitations that make advising unnecessarily difficult. For example, neither students nor advisors have electronic access to mid-term grades posted in PRISM.

The use of common readings as a means of engaging students is a growing practice at the UW Colleges campuses. Given this growth it is time to adopt a common assessment tool to facilitate sharing of best practices in this area.

Regarding assessment of the first-year seminar, there is a need to more fully integrate the assessment of LEC 100 with the university-wide assessment initiative. This includes developing and implementing measures of specific learning objectives for this class.



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Improving the Engaging Students in the First Year Initiative at the University of Wisconsin Colleges

The UW Colleges Foundations of Excellence Improvement Plan Working Group makes the following recommendations for improving the first college year for our students. Analysis of

Improving the First College Year through Teaching and Learning

To improve the first college year through teaching and learning, the UW Colleges must help instructors be committed to continuously improving their teaching and their students' success and help students be committed to engaging in learning actively.

Goals

- 1) Create a UWC Teaching & Learning Center to distribute information, coordinate programs, and increase sharing of scholarly teaching practices across UWC campuses.
 - a) Increase awareness and implementation of scholarly teaching (UWC Professional Development Coordinator)
 - b) Address perceptions of faculty indifference to students (Lead Associate Campus Dean)
 - c) Develop strategies to involve faculty and IAS in conversations about how to engage students in the classroom in meaningful ways (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - d) Improve orientation for new faculty and IAS that covers ESFY initiative, information about high-risk courses, understanding who our students are, and "best practices" for engaging students in class (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - e) Increase access to information about conferences, research, and journals on teaching, learning, and higher education (Professional Development Coordinator)
 - f) Develop white papers (e-documents that would resemble the e-newsletters by professional societies): **focused, brief documents effectively written to be read on a screen.** (UWC ESFY Coordinator)

Some ideas for white papers generated by the FoE analysis include the following:

- i) How interpersonal communications will make us better teachers, scholars, and advisors (syllabus statement about open availability,

- supportive statements on exams/papers, campus posters, how to initiate out-of-class contact, show student perception of indifference and offer ways of combating, create study groups)
- ii) Teaching to diverse students
 - iii) Pedagogies of Engagement (the concept in general, about individual pedagogies)
 - iv) How and why to help students organize study groups
 - v) How and why to integrate academic success skills into courses (vs. separate course) (e.g., “How to Succeed/Fail in This Course” handout, how to read in this course, how to do well on exams in this course)
 - vi) Situating your discipline in the liberal arts—syllabi statement, suggested class activities, etc
 - vii) How to challenge students to discover relevance of course to life/career goals, other courses
 - viii) Student perception of faculty indifference: what’ll you do about it?
 - ix) Because we sometimes delete these documents without looking at them or don’t consider an idea necessary until a later date, we should include a brief list of past white papers linked to an online archive.
- g) Coordinate programming via Wisline or CV Brown Bag Lunches (BBLs) and F2F workshops (OPID grants), relevant to teaching and learning (Professional Development Coordinator)
- Some ideas for BBLs generated by the Foundations of Excellence analysis include the following:
- i) Begin discussion with departments and faculty about high-risk classes with high DFWI rates (frequently referred to as “gatekeeper courses” and high AB classes (frequently referred to as “gateway courses”)
 - ii) Individuals or collaborators present findings of SoTL projects (good SoTL projects have implications for wider audiences—entire departments, across the curriculum, advisors, etc)
 - iii) Reading Circles (participants volunteer to read and summarize a book/article on a rotating basis): Scholarly Teaching, The Liberal Arts, Etc
 - iv) Why service learning? How? What does it look like?
 - v) How interpersonal communications will make us better teachers, scholars, and advisors
 - vi) Teaching to diverse students
 - vii) The Liberal Arts: Situating the Disciplines in the Liberal Arts, The Uses of a Liberal Education, Teaching an Engaged Citizenry for the Public Good
 - viii) Pedagogies of Engagement
 - ix) These sessions could be coordinated by the relevant coordinators— from recruitment of presenters to arranging the technology to advertising—but all should be coordinated on a central document to help the coordinators coordinate. Finally, some of the presenters of a

Brown Bag Lunch could develop an e-white paper based on the session.

- 2) Advance pedagogies of engagement ¹
 - a) Develop success strategies for engaging at-risk students (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - b) Develop, expect, and reward high quality LEC 100 instruction (Provost)
 - c) Communicate high expectations to students (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - d) Build out-of-class learning opportunities into class expectations or evaluation (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - e) Clarify to students the benefits of student and faculty engagement in campus activities (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - f) Foster deeper understanding of engaged citizenship and serving the public good (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - g) Increase awareness of and opportunities for service learning (esp. with UW-Extension) (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)

Improving the First College Year through the Curriculum

To improve the first college year through the curriculum, the UW Colleges must study and, when necessary, revise the curriculum (looking at individual courses, course sequences, and programs of study) to ensure that its appropriateness and relevance to our students.

Goals

- 1) Study and communicate information about courses
 - a) Study current placement processes (Institutional Researcher)
 - b) Determine methods for communicating to faculty, staff, and students information about high-risk classes and DFWI rates (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
- 2) Review curriculum in light of what we know about First-Year Students (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)

¹ “**Pedagogies of engagement**” are, according to former President of the American Association of Higher Education and Director of the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning Russ Edgerton, approaches to teaching and learning that actively involve or engage students in new ways of learning. Examples are service learning, problem-based learning, peer-assisted learning and study groups, field-based learning, collaborative learning, out-of-class engagement activities (like a cross-curricular passport), learning communities, active learning, and many others.

- 3) Attend to our high-risk students
 - a) Develop a clear and universal definition of “high-risk”
 - b) Identify current successful structures and programs across the UW Colleges (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)
 - c) Support the implementation of the structures and programs at other campuses and with other student populations (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)

Improving the First College Year through the Co-curriculum and Student Engagement

To improve the first college year through the co-curriculum and student engagement, the UW Colleges must enhance the role of out-of-class learning experiences in our students’ overall college experience.

Goals

- 1) Make co-curricular learning experiences (e.g., campus activities, out-of-class assignments and activities, advising, registration) a higher priority (Provost)
 - a) Gather more information about co-curricular learning across the institution and share with all campuses (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - b) Develop assessment processes for co-curricular learning activities (Institutional Assessment Coordinator)
- 2) Make advising a very high priority
 - a) Revisit importance of faculty advising as a way to enhance students’ out-of-class connections with faculty (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - b) Improve guidance for math advising (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
- 3) Use institutional resources to support co-curricular learning (Provost)
- 4) Clarify to both faculty/staff and students the benefits of student and faculty engagement in campus activities. (UWC ESFY Coordinator)

Improving the First College Year through Institutional Structures

To improve the first college year through institutional structures, the UW Colleges must ensure that its various administrative, department/unit, campus, and

assessment structures can support current efforts to improve the first college year and be flexible enough to allow for future growth.

University of Wisconsin Colleges administration

- 1) Expand role of UWC ESFY Coordinator
 - a) Work to align the oversight of LEC 100 with other academic programs
 - (1) Develop templates for varying types of LEC 100 (e.g., based on common reading, based on particular skills, linked to another course or as part of a Learning Community linking seminar, supporting a particular major, etc.) for ease of Senate approval (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)
 - (2) Provide assistance for the approval process of LEC 100 sections by Senate Curriculum Committee (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - (3) Provide assistance for campus recruitment of effective LEC 100 instructors (Provost)
 - (4) Make sure LEC 100 is scheduled throughout the year (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - (5) Work to promote full acceptance of LEC 100 as a viable and important course (Provost)
 - b) Facilitate the increase of and engagement with ESFY-related programming on campuses and UWC-wide
 - (1) Provide assistance in developing support for our students' families in their transition to college (e.g., family day, family workshops, convocation activities, all-campus picnics, new student orientations) (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)
 - (2) Convene ESFY Conference about deeper understanding of engaged citizenship and serving the public good (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - (3) Encourage faculty and student services staff to attend ESFY meetings (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - (4) Enhance role of campus ESFY Coordinators (help them communicate ESFY issues with campus, collaborate with assessment coordinators) (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
 - (5) Disseminate ESFY Progress Reports UWC-wide, including common reading practices, learning community ideas and strategies, etc (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)
 - (6) Coordinate compressed video Brown Bag Lunches relevant to ESFY (UWC Assistant ESFY Coordinator)
 - c) Coordinate with departments in writing first-year philosophy and planning for how to deal with first-year students more effectively (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - d) Develop on-going assessment of implementation of the Foundations of Excellence Improvement Plan (UWC ESFY Coordinator)
- 2) Expand role of Professional Development Coordinator

- a) Improve ways we acknowledge participation in professional development, especially related to ESFY (Professional Development Coordinator)
 - b) Improve the reward structure for participation in ESFY –related programming (Provost)
 - c) Coordinate compressed video Brown Bag Lunches relevant to professional development (Professional Development Coordinator)
- 3) Create role of Advising Coordinator (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management)
- a) Develop white papers related to Individual Advising Tips (e.g., math, placement, emotional problems [see *College of the Overwhelmed*]) (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - b) Work with Assistant Deans for Student Services
 - i) Oversee enhancement of advising for continuing and transfer students (Assistant Deans for Student Services, (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - ii) Oversee enhancement of connections between students and faculty advisors (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - iii) Oversee enhancement of communication about a liberal arts education and the purpose of general education coursework (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - c) Clarify advising on prerequisites, course requirements, and faculty expectations to students and advisors (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - d) Coordinate Brown Bag Lunches relevant to advising (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
 - e) Work with UW Colleges Registrar to enhance the effectiveness of PRISM
 - i) Make sure PRISM prevents students from registering for courses without first meeting prerequisites (Registrar)
 - ii) Increase communication about PRISM helpline (Registrar)

Department/Units

- 1) Align what departments are teaching as part of their discipline with what we know about the value of a liberal arts education (Provost)
 - a) Increase understanding of and engagement with goals of liberal arts and sciences education: to help students think about why they are here, to situate disciplines in the liberal arts, and to show students how to relate courses to their life/career goals (Provost)
 - b) Departments work with the Advising Coordinator to document information about majors in their disciplines and information about best transfer

- institutions for these majors (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
- c) Promote understanding of the role of discipline-specific knowledge in a liberal arts education (Provost)
- 2) Departments write philosophy for how to deal with their first-year students more effectively (Provost)
 - 3) Departments make available course goals and syllabi for high-enrolling courses to all instructors, including IAS, and make available resources on effective instructional methods within their disciplines (Department Chairs)

Campuses

- 1) Explore stronger partnerships between academic affairs and student services
 - a) Intentionally coordinate curricular and co-curricular activities
 - b) Intentionally coordinate curricular activities with library services
- 2) Establish a committee devoted to the first year
 - a) Committee will support and promote goals of ESFY Initiative
 - b) Committee will further goals in Foundations of Excellence Improvement Plan
 - c) Committee will work to have a structure in place to enhance relationships between Campus Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean for Student Services, and Campus ESFY Coordinator to develop more focused and coordinated approach to the first college year.
- 3) Coordinate advising efforts for career, curricular, transfer, and financial aid advising.

Assessment

- 1) Investigate and disseminate reports about student engagement (e.g., Community College Survey of Student Engagement) (Institutional Researcher)
- 2) Devote a year of institutional assessment to Ethnic Studies and assessing student understanding of diverse views. (Senate Assessment Committee)
- 3) Assess student attendance patterns to study what impact, if any, student attendance has on student engagement and student success (Institutional Researcher)
- 4) Clarify uses of assessment results for LEC 100 (Institutional Assessment Coordinator)
- 5) Assess student services programming with learning outcomes (Institutional Research, UWC ESFY Coordinator, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, Assistant Deans for Student Services) (Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Services)
- 6) Coordinate Brown Bag Lunches relevant to assessment (Institutional Assessment Coordinator).

Appendix A

Foundational Dimensions (Two-Year College Version)

These Foundational Dimensions statements constitute a model that provides two-year colleges with a means to evaluate and improve the new student experience. This model recognizes the multiple roles and functions of two-year institutions as well as their service to diverse student populations that have widely varying educational backgrounds and goals. As an evaluation tool, the model enables two-year institutions both to confirm their strengths and to recognize the need for improvement. As an aspirational model, the Dimensions provide general guidelines for an intentional design of the new student experience. The Dimensions rest on four assumptions:

- The academic mission of an institution is preeminent.
- The experience of new students is central to the achievement of an institution's mission because it lays the foundation that enables students to achieve their educational goals.
- Systematic evidence provides validation of the Dimensions.
- Collectively, the Dimensions constitute an ideal for improving not only the new student experience, but also the entire college experience.

Foundations Institutions intentionally cultivate learning environments for new students that emerge from a philosophy of two-year colleges as gateways to higher education. The philosophy is explicit and easily understood. It is consistent with the institutional mission, reflects a consensus of internal and external constituencies, and is widely disseminated. The philosophy is also the basis for organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, and resource allocation to support the new student experience. (Philosophy)

Foundations Institutions provide a comprehensive, coordinated, and flexible approach to the new student experience through effective organizational structures and policies. These structures and policies guide and align all aspects of the new student experience. Through effective partnerships, critical stakeholders such as instructional, administrative, and student services units provide a coherent experience for new students that is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements. (Organization)

Foundations Institutions deliver curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage new students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the institutional mission, students' academic and career goals, and workplace expectations. Both in and out of the classroom, these learning experiences promote critical thinking, ethical decision making, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. (Learning)

Foundations Institutions make new students a high priority for faculty and staff. A culture of responsibility for the experiences of new students characterizes these institutions. This culture is realized through high-quality

instruction, services, and support as well as substantial interaction with students both inside and outside the classroom. Campus leaders nurture this culture and support it by appropriate institutional recognition and rewards. (Campus Culture)

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions beginning with outreach and recruitment and continuing throughout the period of enrollment. They communicate clear curricular/co-curricular expectations and possibilities, and they provide appropriate preparation and support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. These institutions create and maintain communication with secondary and other postsecondary institutions, families, employers, community agencies, and other sources of support for students. (Transitions)

Foundations Institutions serve all new students according to their varied needs. These institutions anticipate, identify, and address the needs of traditional and non-traditional students in response to their individual abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. These efforts are subject to assessment and adjustment as needed. Institutions also ensure campus environments that are inclusive and safe for all students. (All Students)

Foundations Institutions ensure that new students experience ongoing exploration of diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and participation in pluralistic communities. Institutions cultivate an open and civil community in which students interact with people from varied backgrounds and cultures. These institutions guide students to reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others. (Diversity)

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education and those unique to two-year institutions, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include learning for personal growth, career enhancement, workplace preparation and retraining, transfer for additional education, engaged citizenship, and serving the public good. Institutions encourage new students to examine their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college. Students are exposed to the value of both a general education and focused study in an academic or career field. (Roles and Purposes)

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to effect improvement. Assessment provides feedback to new students to guide their learning, to faculty to guide their teaching, and to the institution to guide planning, resource allocation, decision making, and improvement of programs and policies. As a way to facilitate improvement, these institutions are knowledgeable about current practices at other institutions as well as relevant

research and scholarship. (Improvement)

The Foundational Dimensions were developed by John N. Gardner, Betsy O. Barefoot, and Randy L. Swing of the Policy Center on the First Year of College in collaboration with 87 two-year colleges. The following ten campuses provided national leadership in the inaugural use of the Dimensions: Kennebec Valley Community College, Longview Community College, Middlesex Community College, Montgomery County Community College, Oakton Community College, Pellissippi State Technical Community College, San Jacinto College South, Spokane Falls Community College, University of Wisconsin Colleges, and Virginia Highlands Community College.

Source: Foundations of Excellence website, www.fyfoundations.org, Policy Center on the First Year of College

Appendix B

Application to Participate in Phase II (Pilot Project)

Describe your college's current approach to the new student experience. Please indicate your college's length of experience with the major components of this total approach. Indicate the proportion of new degree-seeking students served by each component. (500 word limit)

Our Engaging Students in the First Year (ESFY) Initiative is fairly new; we are in the first year of implementation, although the initiative has been in development since 2000. As an institution comprised of 13 unique, we have intentionally let this initiative develop slowly in response to intense collaboration between people on different campuses and in different institutional roles. All of our campuses have individual ESFY efforts that work well for them, and the institution supports the continuing development of new ESFY programming at the campus and departmental levels through grant programming and course releases for campus ESFY coordinators. This has been important in building support for our initiative: while we expect cooperation with institution-wide programming, this is not at the expense of efforts that individual campuses have developed over a period of time. We do an environmental scan each year to determine what ESFY-related programming is offered on each of our campuses.

At the same time as these different efforts grow, we are working to develop programming that is institution-wide. As a two-year school, nearly all of our students are commuter students; our primary contact with them is in the classroom. Accordingly, the first phase of our ESFY implementation has been to develop curricular programming. Some campuses were already offering FYS in various forms; we are now all offering or developing a one-credit course consistent with institutionally-approved course guidelines and common assessment processes. Instructors who teach this course receive a stipend. Approximately 30% of our new degree-seeking students enrolled in First-Year Seminar classes during the Fall 2004 semester, although this percentage is not consistent across all our campuses. While the 2004-2005 academic year was the first year we officially implemented the institution-wide FYS course, many of our campuses offered the course with the approved course guidelines during Fall 2003-2004.

In conjunction with our curricular development, we have been developing assessment processes to give us information about the effectiveness of our course. Our primary assessment instrument is the First-Year Initiative Survey. We now have two years' worth of data to help us identify major threads of strength and concern. Additionally, we conducted a pilot focus group with second-year students on one of our campuses and we studied written comments from our institution-wide Student Survey of Instruction. By using multiple measures of assessment, we have already identified that students strongly value the connections they make with their instructors and peers.

During the next academic year, we are supporting the development of FYS courses that are linked with other courses as partnerships or learning communities. Again, this support is largely through stipends. These First-Year Seminar classes will not supplant the existing stand-alone FYS classes; rather, they provide an alternative to students and instructors who might prefer to have a more explicit connection between FYS and other curricular experiences.

Our next steps will include expanding our environmental scan, developing co-curricular programming such as new student orientation, expanding service learning opportunities for our students, and developing additional measures of assessing how we are helping students succeed.

**What is your college's vision for participating in Phase II of this project?
What do you hope will be the outcome of your participation?**

We have worked very hard over the past few years to develop and institutionalize our ESFY program. Our next steps are completely in alignment with Phase II tasks. We hope you will help us assess our program in ways that are valued externally as well as internally. Because our initiative is still relatively new, we are at an important point in our program. We value the guidance from the Policy Center in identifying our strengths and weaknesses as a path to planning for our future. At the same time, we have already begun to develop a program. Phase II offers us an opportunity to reflect on our efforts early enough in the process to be able to implement changes based on the recommendations fairly easily, and it provides us with access to experts in the first-year experience.

As an institution, we facilitate the first-year experience for more students than almost any other institution in our state. We must do it well. We hope to develop strategies and tools to help us establish a culture of on-going improvement in our ESFY program. It is easy to think of assessment as part of accreditation. The real value of assessment, however, is that it helps us provide a stronger experience for our students.

Phase II can help us step up the commitment to our ESFY program across the entire institution. By providing us with intense support at little cost to us, you are offering us the opportunity to invite members of our institution into an important conversation about what we do, what we value, and what we want for our students in ways that, for once, do not involve the question, "Who's paying for it?" By looking at the program outside a budgetary context, we have a special opportunity to dream.

What unique qualities and areas of expertise would your college bring to the Foundations of Excellence Project? Why should the panel select your campus? (300 word limit)

The first-year experience exists at the intersection of instruction, student services, and institutional values. Success demands collaboration among people with different perspectives on students and learning and the processes of higher education.

Our strengths come from the nature of our institution and from the foundation of our ESFY program. As an institution of 13 campuses, we reach across an entire state. Our unique structure forces a high degree of cooperation and collaboration--within the UW Colleges campuses, within the UW System, and among the other institutions of higher education throughout the entire state of Wisconsin. At the same time, our ESFY program is grounded in collaboration and consensus. Without support across the entire institution, our dreams would never take shape. We have become quite good at establishing and facilitating ESFY working groups that represent multiple perspectives from within the institution.

We offer a model of how to share the uniqueness of our individual experiences while identifying values, strategies, and experiences that we can all build on to further our programming. While most two-year institutions do not inhabit as broad a geographic space as we do, they all face similar challenges in collaboration; from institutions with one campus and a few extension sites to community colleges which blend baccalaureate programming with professional training (not to mention multiple connections with their communities), developing and valuing communication is vital if colleges are to provide students with a solid first year of college.

We have recently weathered and overcome an enrollment crisis, and we face as on-going budgetary and political challenges. Throughout this, we have developed and grown a first-year experience programming that our assessment suggests is working.

While we have much to learn, we believe other institutions can learn a few things from us as well.

- Nancy Chick, Associate Professor of English, UW-Barron County
- Deborah Cureton, Campus Dean/CEO, UW-Richland
- Maggie Flamingo, student government representative, UW-Marathon and UW Colleges
- Linda Gentes, Campus ESFY (Engaging Students in the First Year) Coordinator, UW-Richland
- Ken Grant, Professor of English, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, and Department Chair, UW Colleges

- Mary Hoefft, Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts/World Languages, UW-Barron County
- Beth Jozwiak, Assistant Professor of History, UW-Rock County
- Theo Koupelis, Professor of Computer Science, Physics, and Engineering, UW-Marathon County
- Greg Lampe, Interim Vice Chancellor, UW Colleges
- Bob Margrett, Professor of English, UW-Sheboygan
- Nora McGuire, Chief Student Affairs Officer, UW Colleges
- Tom Neal, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County
- Martha Nelson, Director of TRIO Program, UW Colleges
- Gregg Nettesheim, Senior Information Manager, UW Colleges
- Jim Perry, Campus Dean/CEO, UW-Fox Valley
- Roger Peterson, Professor of Mathematics, UW-Washington County
- Scott Silet, Director of Library and Media Services, UW-Waukesha
- Susanne Skubal, Student Services Coordinator, UW-Manitowoc
- Jennifer Stolpa, Assistant Professor of English/World Languages, UW-Marinette
- Christel Taylor, Assistant ESFY (Engaging Students in the First Year) Coordinator, UW Colleges
- Julie Tharp, Professor of English, UW-Marshfield/Wood County, and Assistant Chair of Department of English, UW Colleges

Appendix C

Foundations of Excellence

Task Force Members/ Dimension Subcommittee Assignments

The table below indicates the membership of the Foundations of Excellence Task force as well as the co-chairs of each Dimension Subcommittee. While the subcommittees analyzed the data and wrote reports for the project, the group met as a whole to discuss overall progress and to identify emerging patterns that spanned multiple Dimension Reports.

Subcommittee	Co-Chairs
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greg Lampe, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs• Christel Taylor, Assistant ESFY Coordinator, Office of Academic Affairs/UW-Waukesha
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deborah Cureton, Campus Dean/CEO, UW-Richland• Ken Grant, Professor of English, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, and Department Chair, UW Colleges (replaced mid-year by Keith Montgomery, Associate Professor of Geography-Geology, UW-Marathon County, and Department Chair, UW Colleges)
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cassandra Phillips, Associate Professor of English, UW-Waukesha• Kristin Runge, Lecturer of Communications and Theatre Arts, UW-Fox Valley, and Campus ESFY Coordinator
Campus Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cindy Bailey, Assistant Dean for Student Services, UW-Marinette• Mary Hoeft, Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts/World Languages, UW-Barron County, and Campus ESFY Coordinator
Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nancy Chick, Associate Professor of English, UW-Barron County• Martha Nelson, Assistant Dean for Student Services, UW-Washington County
All Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeff Meece, Assistant Dean for Student Services, UW-Marshfield/Wood County• Barbara Stinson, Director of Distance Education, UW Colleges
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patricia Eby, Associate Professor of Music, UW-Fond du Lac, and Associate Dean• Nora McGuire, Chief Student Affairs Officer, UW Colleges
Roles & Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jennifer Flatt, Associate Professor of

	<p>English/World Languages, UW-Marquette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tom Neal, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, and Campus ESFY Coordinator
Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gregg Nettesheim, Senior Information Manager, Office of Academic Affairs• Thomas Peneski, Associate Professor of Mathematics, UW-Sheboygan, and Department Chair, UW Colleges

Appendix D

The Foundations of Excellence® Report Card

This report card represents the final step in the Foundations of Excellence process. It is the culmination of a nine- to twelve-month effort of analysis and planning focused on the first year. This report card is based on an aspirational model of the first year produced in 2003 by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and its research partners in collaboration with 219 four-year colleges and universities. That model, consisting of nine Foundational Dimensions,® identifies characteristics of excellence in the first year. Because the Dimensions focus on institutional structures, policies, and processes (the decisions institutions make about organizing and delivering the first college year), the model is useful in confirming effective practice and/or providing direction for improvement efforts.

The core work of the project was conducted by your institution's Foundations of Excellence Task Force with assistance from the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. By using a series of performance indicators and a variety of data sources, the Task Force carefully reviewed the campus efforts that align with each Dimension. These reviews resulted in a collective judgment about your institution's level of achievement on each of the performance indicators.

The final step in the process was to produce single-grade indicators of the institution's achievement of each Dimension. Because these grades are based on judgments made by your campus task force, they are not intended to be used in comparison to any other institution or in a ranking system. The Foundations Report Card can be used most effectively as an indicator of relative grades within your institution. The grades reflect the best collective judgment of the task force and are supported by the evidence collected during the project. Grades will not be made public by the Policy Center in any manner that identifies individual institutions.

Foundational Dimensions	Grade
Foundations Institutions intentionally cultivate learning environments for new students that emerge from a philosophy of two-year colleges as gateways to higher education. The philosophy is explicit and easily understood. It is consistent with the institutional mission, reflects a consensus of internal and external constituencies, and is widely disseminated. The philosophy is also the basis for organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, and resource allocation to support the new student experience. (Philosophy)	B+
Foundations Institutions provide a comprehensive, coordinated, and flexible approach to the new student experience through effective organizational structures and policies. These structures	B-

<p>and policies guide and align all aspects of the new student experience. Through effective partnerships, critical stakeholders such as instructional, administrative, and student services units provide a coherent experience for new students that is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements. (Organization)</p>	
<p>Foundations Institutions deliver curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage new students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the institutional mission, students' academic and career goals, and workplace expectations. Both in and out of the classroom, these learning experiences promote critical thinking, ethical decision making, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. (Learning)</p>	B
<p>Foundations Institutions make new students a high priority for faculty and staff. A culture of responsibility for the experiences of new students characterizes these institutions. This culture is realized through high-quality instruction, services, and support as well as substantial interaction with students both inside and outside the classroom. Campus leaders nurture this culture and support it by appropriate institutional recognition and rewards. (Campus Culture)</p>	B
<p>Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions beginning with outreach and recruitment and continuing throughout the period of enrollment. They communicate clear curricular/co-curricular expectations and possibilities, and they provide appropriate preparation and support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. These institutions create and maintain communication with secondary and other postsecondary institutions, families, employers, community agencies, and other sources of support for students. (Transitions)</p>	B-
<p>Foundations Institutions serve all new students according to their varied needs. These institutions anticipate, identify, and address the needs of traditional and non-traditional students in response to their individual abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. These efforts are subject to assessment and adjustment as needed. Institutions also ensure campus environments that are inclusive and safe for all students. (All Students)</p>	B
<p>Foundations Institutions ensure that new students experience ongoing exploration of diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and participation in pluralistic communities. Institutions cultivate an open and civil community in</p>	C+

<p>which students interact with people from varied backgrounds and cultures. These institutions guide students to reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others. (Diversity)</p>	
<p>Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education and those unique to two-year institutions, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include learning for personal growth, career enhancement, workplace preparation and retraining, transfer for additional education, engaged citizenship, and serving the public good. Institutions encourage new students to examine their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college. Students are exposed to the value of both a general education and focused study in an academic or career field. (Roles and Purposes)</p>	<p>B-</p>
<p>Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to effect improvement. Assessment provides feedback to new students to guide their learning, to faculty to guide their teaching, and to the institution to guide planning, resource allocation, decision making, and improvement of programs and policies. As a way to facilitate improvement, these institutions are knowledgeable about current practices at other institutions as well as relevant research and scholarship. (Improvement)</p>	<p>B-</p>

Appendix E

Foundations of Excellence

Improvement Plan Working Group

This group worked closely with the recommendations that came out of the Dimension Reports to develop the Foundations of Excellence Improvement Plan.

- Nancy Chick, Associate Professor of English, UW-Barron County
- Patricia Eby, Associate Professor of Music, UW-Fond du Lac, and Associate Dean
- Mary Hoeft, Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts/World Languages, UW-Barron County, and Campus ESFY Coordinator
- Greg Lampe, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs
- Gregg Nettesheim, Senior Information Manager, Office of Academic Affairs
- Thomas Peneski, Associate Professor of Mathematics, UW-Sheboygan, and Department Chair, UW Colleges
- Christel Taylor, Assistant ESFY Coordinator, Office of Academic Affairs/UW-Waukesha

Appendix F

Engaging Students in the First Year

Mission:

The University of Wisconsin Colleges' first year of college experience will focus on first year students as they make the transition from their high school or post high school experiences to the college experience. This intentional, comprehensive curricular and co-curricular initiative will promote an understanding and appreciation of liberal education, and will assist students with developing strategies and attitudes that will maximize academic success. It will familiarize students with campus resources and how to use them, foster the development of positive relationships between and among students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and prepare students to become life-long learners, responsible citizens and leaders.

Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1. Promote an Understanding and Appreciation of Liberal Education.

➤ ***Sub-goals:***

- a. Fostering an aesthetic appreciation of the liberal arts
- b. Fostering an understanding of the liberal arts tradition
- c. Providing a liberal education
- d. Promoting the appreciation for the importance of the college experience
- e. Fostering a joy and respect for learning

Goal 2. Engage Students in Academic Pursuits.

➤ ***Strategies that could be used by UW Colleges' faculty and staff to achieve this goal:***

- a. Promoting active learning (students need to be actively engaged in the learning process)
- b. Offering First-Year Seminars
- c. Offering Learning Communities
- d. Offering interdisciplinary studies opportunities
- e. Promoting student involvement and responsibility in the learning process
- f. Defining institution-wide expectations for first year students
- g. Providing study abroad opportunities
- h. Providing students with opportunities to share what they are learning
- i. Providing students with opportunities to actively apply knowledge to life experience
- j. Investigating individual learning styles
- k. Assisting students with learning how to learn

Goal 3. Engage Students on the Campus.

➤ ***Strategies that could be used by UW Colleges' faculty and staff to achieve this goal:***

- a. Encouraging involvement in athletics and intramural sports
- b. Encouraging involvement in campus committees, clubs, and societies
- c. Encouraging involvement in the Student Government Association
- d. Providing an organized, structured Mentoring Program that promotes faculty-student interaction
- e. Encouraging participation in study groups
- f. Providing Convocation activities
- g. Providing orientation activities
- h. Developing and implementing opportunities for collective student experiences (i.e., with a work of art, theatre production, musical production, film, or common reading)

Goal 4. Engage Students in the Community.

➤ **Strategies that could be used by UW Colleges' faculty and staff to achieve this goal:**

- a. Providing opportunities for service learning
- b. Providing opportunities for volunteerism
- c. Providing opportunities for field trips
- d. Providing internship opportunities
- e. Involving students in campus-community projects and partnerships
- f. Participating in government-related activities

Goal 5. Provide Students with the Skills Necessary for Academic and Life Success.

➤ **Strategies that could be used by UW Colleges' faculty and staff to achieve this goal through teaching:**

Academic Success Skills:

- a. Reading skills
- b. Writing skills
- c. Listening skills
- d. Speaking skills
- e. Library skills (i.e., information literacy, online search techniques and tools, and the ability to critically evaluate information resources)
- f. Researching skills
- g. Note-taking skills
- h. Test taking skills
- i. Problem-solving skills
- j. Goal setting skills
- k. Organization skills
- l. Setting priorities skills
- m. Small group skills
- n. Reading and following directions skills
- o. Time management skills
- p. Critical thinking skills
- q. Technology skills

Life Management Skills:

- a. Enhancing students self-understanding
- b. Providing assistance for life planning
- c. Promoting open-mindedness
- d. Assisting with value clarification
- e. Assisting students in developing personal values
- f. Providing opportunities for leadership training
- g. Instilling a commitment to health and wellness
- h. Providing guidance for managing a budget
- i. Providing opportunities for financial planning

Tools Necessary for Navigating University Culture:

- a. Providing financial aid information
- b. Providing opportunities for career and major exploration
- c. Advising students as to how to register for classes
- d. Understanding university policies and procedures
- e. Providing student learning support centers