

# Academic Matters

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**FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR:**

Welcome to the second edition of *Academic Matters*, an e-mail newsletter from the UW Colleges Office of Academic Affairs. The purpose of this newsletter is to help us to keep in touch with you, to talk about proposed initiatives, and to get your feedback.

This edition features an article on the GISE Awards, data on student success, and information about the ESCR Pilot Program. If you want to know what the acronyms stand for, you will have to read the articles.

I want to especially thank the Senate Assessment Committee for their contribution of an assessment update to this edition. Assessment on all fronts continues to be a major initiative across the United States and in the UW Colleges. As the Chancellor noted in Central Stuff, the last time the NCA evaluated the UW Colleges' accreditation status, we were found to be deficient in the area of assessment. Since 1996, we have developed, implemented, and worked to improve the assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness. We must remain committed to assessment and work to improve our data gathering methods and the use of that data if we are to receive a favorable review by NCA in spring 2003.

Speaking of NCA...The NCA visit will occur on March 10-12, 2003. We have made a great deal of progress since the NCA Coordinating Committee and the Working Groups began data collection and evaluation in fall 2000. The Working Groups are now finishing their reports, which will go to Dave Gratz and Shirley Hensch, our NCA Coordinators. Dave and Shirley will be working this spring and summer to form those reports into an integrated self-study that is due to NCA in October of 2002.

We are conducting a HERI Faculty Survey as part of the NCA activities. If you have not yet completed your survey, please do so and return it to HERI in the envelope provided. We need your input!

**New Distance Education Director**  
**By Margaret Cleek**

Barbara Stinson has been named the Director of Distance Education for the UW Colleges. She interviewed for the position after having served as the interim director for the last several months and having been DE's administrative program specialist since last spring. Barbara came to the Colleges with an adult education, administrative, and Student Financial Aid background and has taught at UW-Madison, UW-Whitewater, and in various regional returning adult programs. She also currently teaches two DE courses for the UW-Extension and assists on the Extension's medieval trips abroad as often as possible to keep abreast of her field of study, Medieval Art History. She serves on NCA and Academic Staff Personnel committees here at the Colleges.

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**Grants to Increase Student Engagement (GISE) Awards**  
**By Rex Hieser**

Recently, the first recipients of the GISE grants were announced when Provost Margaret Cleek accepted the recommendation of the Professional Development Committee to award grants of up to \$4000 for the following:

UW-Baraboo: "Enhancing the First-Year Experience: Transforming a Campus into a Community of Writers," proposal by David Cole.

UW-Barron: "Esperanza and the First-Year Experience: Engaging Students in the University," proposal by Nancy Chick and Mary Hoeft.

UW-Fond du Lac: "Interdisciplinary Service Learning," proposal by Sondra Smith-Gates, Pat Eby, Marsha Goin, Elizabeth Hayes, Ruth Holstein, and Michael Nofz.

UW-Marathon: "Bridging the Social and Intellectual Divide," proposal by Theodoros Koupelis, Doug Hosler, Paul Martin, and Annette Hackbarth-Onson.

UW-Marinette: "Introduction to College: The UW-Marinette Extended Freshman Orientation Program," proposal by Dan Kallgren.

UW-Richland: "Love of Learning II," proposal by Deborah Cureton, Marnie Dresser, Jim Gollata, and Tom Kleese.

UW-Waukesha: "Enhancing Student-Faculty Research at the UW-Waukesha," proposal by Bob Bermant, Salah Bassiouni, and Margaret Hirschberg.

The Professional Development Committee indicated that all of the proposals submitted were good ones. Unfortunately, the limited funding meant that only 7 grants could be awarded. We

hope to offer this grant opportunity next year, if the budget allows, and anticipate that a similar set of creative and thoughtful proposals will be advanced.

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**Town Meeting to Focus on Freshman Seminar and Learning Support Center**  
**By Greg Lampe**

The Office of Academic Affairs is pleased to announce that the third UW Colleges-wide compressed video Town Meeting will take place on Friday, February 15, from 12:00 to 12:50 p.m. As you might recall, the Office of Academic Affairs received exciting nominations from five campuses to present their first year programs at a Town Meeting. In December, the UW-Marinette and UW-Marathon County campuses were featured. Over seventy members of the institution attended the meeting. On February 15, the UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, UW-Fond du Lac, and UW-Rock County will present their first year programs. John Whitney (Art) and Christa James-Byrnes (CSEP) will discuss UW-Baraboo/Sauk County's Freshman Seminar. They will share the goals, history, structure, student participation, staffing, successes and problems, and new directions of the Freshman Seminar on their campus. Linda Reiss (Director of Student Services) and Elizabeth Hayes (Biology) will provide information about the development of the UW-Fond du Lac integrated studies Freshman Seminar course entitled, "Transformations: Ecological, Social, and Personal Change." The presenters will describe the components of the course and discuss the on-going assessment of the class. Mary Schlais (Director of Academic Skills) and Gary Kriewald (English) will discuss the evolution of UW-Rock County's Learning Support Center. They will share how the Learning Support Center developed, why the Center is succeeding, and the plans for assessing the program.

The last ten minutes of the Town Meeting will be reserved for questions and discussion. Mark your calendars and plan on attending the meeting. Come and learn about these innovative and exciting first-year programs!

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**Assessment Update**  
**By Carolyn Polodna**

And is assessment alive, and well, and living in the Colleges?

In a word, yes. Activities are underway in three areas, about which you will hear more in the coming weeks. The first is a question. At your Spring Department meeting, your Department Assessment Coordinator, or "DAC", will ask you how best to advance assessment within your department, and what funding would be needed to support these efforts. The ideas you generate together will be discussed at the semi-annual DAC meeting in early June, and a plan for fund-raising developed. The Senate Assessment Committee, "SAC", is committed to seeking grant funding to support continued and expanded assessment activities. But we need your creative input. For example, do you and other department members want training in selecting and using Classroom Assessment Activities? Is there an assessment specialist in your discipline that you want to hear? Is there a particular assessment project that your department would find meaningful? What resources are needed to make these ideas a reality? We appreciate and look forward to your thoughtful responses.

These department-specific projects will become part of the larger institutional plan for assessment in the Colleges. At our recent January meeting, DACs and SACs worked together to update our vision of what assessment can become. We asked ourselves, in the ideal, why we would do assessment, what we would assess, how, where and when assessment would be done, and who would do it. We sought to more fully articulate our guiding principles. We looked to the far horizon, exploring where we have yet to go and celebrating how far we have come. As a result, an updated institutional assessment plan is being drafted and will be coming to you for review at department meetings in the fall.

Finally, the pilot program to assess our Associates Degree is continuing. Each department has selected one spring course that typically enrolls at least 30 sophomore students. In these courses, results from assessing the proficiencies are reported separately for students with 45 or more credits on beginning the course (and eligible for the degree at the end of the semester) from those with less than 45 credits. To allow for maximum instructor flexibility in selecting assessment methods and instruments, DACs teamed by Associate degree designation are exploring the creation of scoring rubrics for our institutional proficiencies. Early attempts look promising and will continue in June. If you are teaching a pilot course, your participation in the pilot is very valuable in developing a workable, effective process for future degree-level assessment.

Yes, assessment is alive and well because of the concerted efforts of many people. Faculty who participate and report their results. DACs who envision, develop rubrics and plans, and write reports. SAC members who draft plans, facilitate meetings, and seek funding. Administrators who actively support all these efforts. Heartfelt thanks to everyone making it happen.

The Senate Assessment Committee members are Ro Cahill, Steve Folstein, Greg Lampe, Tom Marty, Carolyn Polodna and Linda Reiss.

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## **Teaching and Learning in the UW Colleges**

**By Gregg Nettlesheim**

How effective is the teaching carried on in the UW Colleges? This is an interesting question. But in the spring of 2003 the subject of effective teaching will become more than merely “interesting.” At that time the North Central Association (NCA) accreditation team will visit the UW Colleges and will ask that we “demonstrate that effective teaching characterizes our courses and academic programs.”

### **The Relationship Between Teaching and Learning**

A common method of measuring effective teaching is through measurement of student learning. However, the difficulty with this method comes with determining what part of learning is the result of teaching, and what part is the result of the student’s own effort outside of the

classroom. There is not a simple direct relationship that allows us to infer that each “unit” of student learning is the result of a “unit” of teaching.

One way around this difficulty is to focus on those students whose academic records indicate they have not been successful learners. If a student (a.) has not had academic success in high school, and (b.) has university admission test scores that indicate they are not likely to have success in the university, then we have reason to believe that the learning these students experience in our classrooms is likely the result of effective teaching. Put another way, proven learners, who have had success in high school, and whose test scores indicate they will be successful in college, are more likely to experience learning at the university regardless of the effectiveness of teaching.

### **New Freshmen in the UW Colleges**

While the UW Colleges draws new freshman admissions from the same pool of high school graduates as the other UW institutions, our mission as the UW institution of access translates into admitting large numbers of minimally or under-prepared students. Combining the new freshmen that began at the Colleges in the fall of 2000 and the fall of 2001 into one cohort we find:

- Over 1/3 were not admissible at any other UW institution based on standard admissions criteria in place for the term they were admitted
- 50% had graduated in the bottom half of their high school class (that is, from the third and bottom quartile).

### **Measuring Learning –the Results**

For the cohort described above, of the new freshmen that were not admissible at any other UW institution, 50% achieved a first term grade point average (gpa) of 2.0 or better on a 4-point scale. This compares to 71% of students who could have gone to another UW institution. This is a remarkable accomplishment for a group of students that would otherwise not have been able to enroll in any other University of Wisconsin System institution.

For the same cohort, of the entering freshmen who graduated in the bottom half of their high school class, again, nearly 50% achieved a first term grade point average of 2.0 or higher. Even more remarkable is the fact that 42% of the students who graduated from high school in the bottom quartile of their class achieved a first term gpa of 2.0 or higher.

These measurements (along with many other pieces of evidence we’ve collected) are convincing indicators of the high quality, effective teaching carried on at the UW Colleges.

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**The E-Short Course Reimbursement (ESCR) Pilot Program**  
**By Rex Hieser**

We are excited about another new grant program announced by Provost Margaret Cleek via e-mail on January 31, 2002. The E-Short Course Reimbursement (ESCR) Pilot Program will reimburse faculty and instructional academic staff members (.40 position or greater) for taking a short course through FATHOM, an Internet course provider (<http://www.fathom.com/>). Online learning presents a professional development option that may be particularly attractive, especially with our busy schedules, locations sometimes remote from other higher education sites, and limited professional development funds for travel.

Fathom's member institutions present courses and seminars across every area of interest - from business to global affairs, from arts to technology. The member institutions include Columbia University, Cambridge University Press, London School of Economics and Political Science, New York Public Library, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, British Library, American Film Institute, RAND, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Victoria and Albert Museum.

Why Fathom? We have several reasons for starting with FATHOM. Using a single provider simplifies the approval process. The reputations of FATHOM's member institutions and course providers give an expectation of high quality courses. The range of course topics is broad, thereby allowing most potential applicants a reasonable chance of finding a course of interest. The cost for E-Short Courses is generally \$50 or less, thereby allowing a larger number of participants in the program.

If the assessment of this program is positive, we hope to be able to expand it to course providers in addition to FATHOM. Please check out the web site and see if they have something of interest to you. The application procedures are available in the UW Colleges Public Folders: All Public Folders → Professional Development → ESCR Pilot Program → ESCR Announcement.

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**PeopleSoft Update**  
**By Patty McGregor**

The Registrar's Office is currently working on testing the scheduling of classes and has successfully registered the first students in classes. This will allow the Financial Aid and Student Financials modules to start initial testing on awarding aid and assessing fees.

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## **Colleges Receive \$6,000 Global Studies Grant**

**By Diane Pillard**

The UW Colleges' Office of Continuing Education & Extended Services has received a \$6,000 grant from the UW System Institute for Global Studies in support of "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Study Abroad," a proposal focusing on a three-week study abroad opportunity in the Yucatan.

This interdisciplinary program, taught by Professors Rose Marie Galindo and Allan Meyers, UW-Rock, combines Spanish and Archaeology. In order to include students from other UW Colleges' campuses, the course begins with an asynchronous section, scheduled for mid February through early May, featuring seven lessons that provide the base of knowledge necessary to fully appreciate the travel component. The 21-day tour of Yucatan, scheduled for May 21-June 11, highlights Mayan archaeological sites, Spanish colonial haciendas, and modern Yucatecan cities. Day trips from the larger cities will acquaint students with the contrasts of urban and rural life in the region. The course considers the past and present cultural systems of Yucatan, including such topics as economy, politics, religion, art, and architecture.

The course includes participation in a week-long archaeological field project at Hacienda Tabi, an 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century plantation site, where students will be involved in excavation around the remains of traditional Mayan houses which have long been viewed by anthropologists as the "domain of women." Mayan women will also be interviewed, establishing a link between archaeology and gender studies. After their return, students will complete a project that integrates the perspectives of the different disciplines involved. Professors Galindo and Meyers will prepare technology based learning objects which will be archived at the Institute for Global Studies and made available for non-commercial, educational use by UW System faculty and staff.

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## **Community College Survey of Student Engagement**

**By Greg Lampe**

This past January, Chancellor Bill Messner announced the UW Colleges involvement in the study for a new national survey focusing on teaching, learning, and retention in two-year institutions. The project, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lumina Foundation for Education and conducted by the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. The CCSSE is designed to provide information on learning-centered indicators of quality for two-year institutions nationwide. The survey instrument, *The Community College Student Report (CCSR)*, contains items examining student engagement and retention issues. It is a versatile, research-based tool with multiple uses. Identifying what our students do in and out of the classroom, knowing their goals, and understanding their out-of-class responsibilities can help the UW Colleges create an environment that can enhance student learning, engagement, development, and retention.

The survey will be administered in classes during March and April. Classes surveyed will be randomly selected by CCSSE to ensure a representative sample and to preserve the integrity of the survey results. Instructors whose classes are selected for survey administration will receive specific information from their campus survey administrator. The survey administrator will be responsible for the administration, collection, and return of surveys.

As Chancellor Messner stated in his message earlier this semester, "The UW Colleges is committed to being a leader in education, and this survey can assist us in identifying where we are and what further action may be helpful in our continuing work to support and strengthen teaching and learning."

We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this exciting national survey. The results from the survey will be useful for diagnosis, benchmarking performance, and monitoring progress of improvement efforts. Ultimately, the survey results will assist the UW Colleges in enhancing our educational programs and services to students.

You can learn more about the CCSSE from the project website at [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org). If you have any questions about the CCSSE project, please contact Greg Lampe, CCSSE Survey Coordinator for the UW Colleges, at [glampe@uwc.edu](mailto:glampe@uwc.edu).

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***Happy Valentines Day!!!***

