

End of Year Report
A PENTAGON OF INITIATIVES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Executive Summary:

On June 12, 2003 Jane Decker, Associate Dean for Academic Planning and Interim Vice-Chancellor, together with the General Faculty Organization for the University of Washington, Bothell, charged our Academic Strategic Action Initiatives Committee to identify and elaborate five strategic academic initiatives to be implemented over the next five years. Further, these initiatives were to be “specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, responsive and time-bound.” After preliminary meetings in the summer of 2003 we held two public forums and met with numerous groups (including the GFO, GSO, ASUWB, TLC, and various departments, administrators and individuals, many of whom had been connected with prior strategic planning efforts) in order to solicit ideas from the wider UWB community. The committee also compiled and reviewed documents relating to mission, vision, needs assessment, accreditation, and planning. These documents are now centrally located for the first time and available on the web, <http://www.uwb.edu/committees/5for5/>. The result of these consultations and reviews was to create a list of over 30 separate initiatives that the committee subsequently discussed and ranked. The ASAI committee then took those initiatives back for discussion in two town meetings in the Winter Quarter. With campus-wide consent, in the spring of 2004 we were able to explore specific steps that would realize five broad initiatives we envisioned.

The five major initiatives we identified are:

- *To expand our capacity for scholarly inquiry through the creation of an office for sponsored research and by developing a Research Assistance Program.*
- *To initiate, support and promote a program of undergraduate research*
- *To create an administrative support system for experiential learning involving internships and action research*
- *To increase access to cross-programmatic minors and interdisciplinary graduate work*
- *To build and maintain a database of scholarly activities located in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to be used to tell our stories on and beyond our campus*

These initiatives are part of broader arenas designated for strategic enhancement. Thus, a number of other steps and targets are identified in the report. More fundamental, however, is the way we see the initiatives moving forward. Ultimately, everything must be tied to our campus mission and value statements. The implementation of the goals enumerated must always reference the core value of our institution, that the faculty-student relationship is paramount and arises out of our mutual engagement in the construction, application, and dissemination of knowledge. The purpose of this relationship is transformational learning that enriches our lives and the lives of those in our communities. Accordingly, implementation of the ASAI cannot

simply be added onto existing work. Instead there must be a fundamental recognition of how our reward structure is aligned to our mission. This will require a further activity:

5for5's Prerequisite for Successful Implementation

•Campus conversations are essential to reconcile the strains between traditional concepts of scholarship, teaching and service and our desire to be a distinctive and entrepreneurial campus as defined by our mission and vision.

REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC STRATEGIC ACTION INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

The idea of the university has been described and discussed for centuries. For some, the function of the university is to preserve culture and human values, whereas others, instead, understand the university as the site of a quest for truth regardless how this may upend existing society. Still others eschew the notion that the university can or should have any center or core ideal, but rather see it as home to the universe of all human endeavors involving the mind. These open disagreements over the mission of the university have encouraged criticism from the outside, requiring the academy to demonstrate its value. Educators who embrace this challenge recognize that this demonstration, itself, requires an act of education. After a year of deliberation we are ready to begin that act of educating ourselves, and others, by embracing academic initiatives in support of core values. The specific initiatives we put forward are intended to advance our campus vision to “enrich the lives of our surrounding communities,” at the same time that we, ourselves, are “transformed” through our learning.

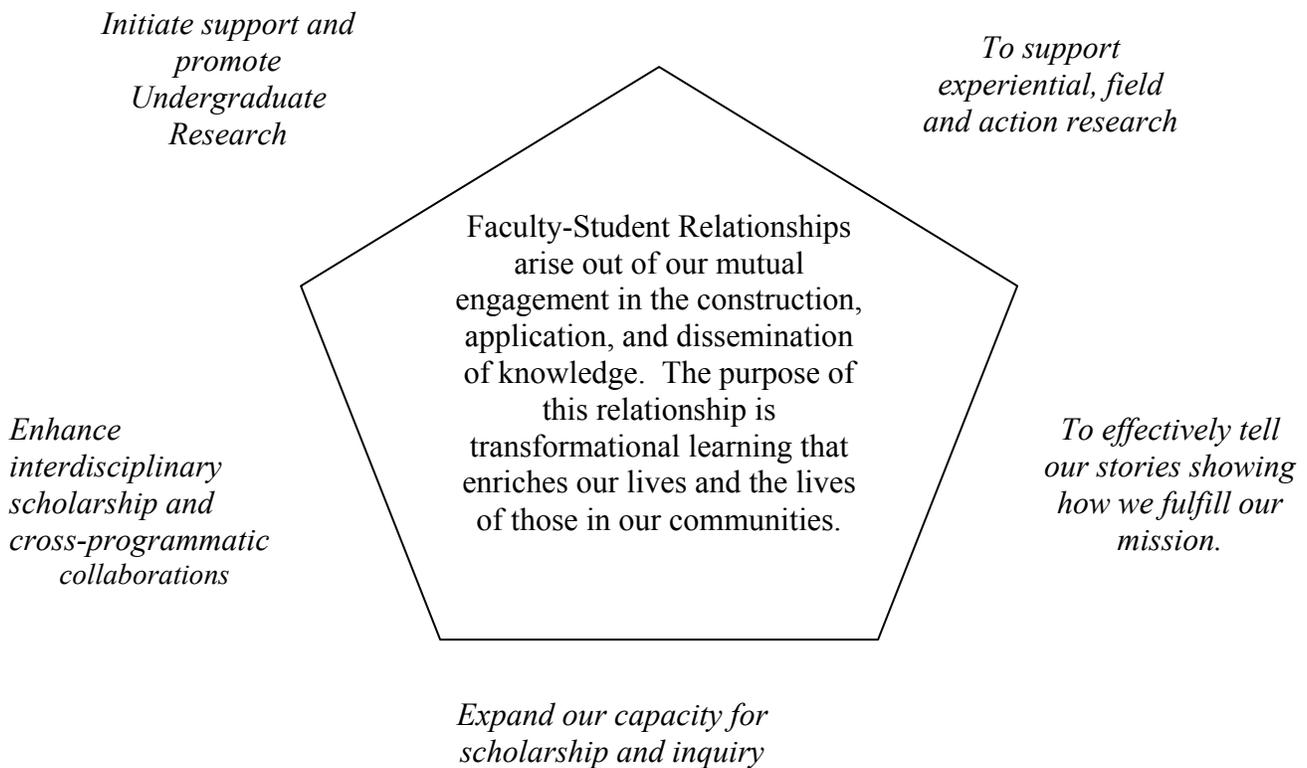
Ours is a small campus, born as a fragile experiment amidst a challenging landscape of competing demands. To be successful, priorities are necessary and some limits must be imposed. Over the years we have staked out a position that has prioritized the faculty-student relationship. The competing demands of academic life require that we continually reaffirm our mission and give it sustainable form and meaning. Once again we affirm the primacy of faculty-student relationships and commit ourselves to activities that demonstrate this relationship can fruitfully be centered on scholarly inquiry. Campus deliberations have encouraged us to recommend five strategic arenas essential to renewing the imagination and talent of our community towards the fulfillment of our mandates.

Having listened carefully to those desires, our committee has identified initiatives that are consistent with our mission and vision. We approach strategic planning from our center. Thus, we designate five arenas for action to implement the institutional mission. The center of our pentagon of initiatives is formed by faculty-student relationships that arise out of our mutual engagement in the construction, application, and dissemination of knowledge. The purpose of this relationship is transformational learning that enriches our lives and the lives of those in our communities. We prioritize five academic action arenas to accomplish this goal.

5 Academic Arenas for Focus

- Expand our capacity for scholarship and inquiry
- Initiate, support and promote undergraduate research
- Support experiential, field and action research
- Enhance and expand interdisciplinary scholarship and cross-programmatic collaborations
- Effectively tell our stories showing how we fulfill our mission.

THE ARENAS OF FOCUS FOR 5FOR5'S ACADEMIC INITIATIVES



What distinguishes our report is our prioritization of the academic activities to which scarce institutional resources are to be committed. In some arenas we have identified specific short and long term initiatives we believe can be fruitfully undertaken. In other arenas, on-going work by other taskforces and committees must be relied upon to enumerate and assess the viability of specific initiatives in an uncertain budget environment. Our recommendations are designed to encourage community members to collaborate in ways that transform our thought and practice. Simultaneously, our proposals for priorities and specific initiatives are designed to encourage civic engagement that enriches the lives of our communities.

Arena 1. Expand our capacity for scholarship and inquiry

Recommendation in Brief:

In order to expand our capacity for scholarship and inquiry, we recommend that UWB develop an office of research and sponsored programs, as well as develop a program to use Research Assistants (RAs) to protect scholarly time and promote shared inquiry.

Rationale:

We begin by reaffirming that we are a community of scholarly inquiry whose work, to be effective, must be supported and recognized. Scholarly inquiry includes research and other activities that generate, extend, apply and disseminate knowledge. Ambiguity surrounding the concept of scholarship creates tensions within the academy that, while occasionally fruitful, often prove debilitating. We can reduce this ambiguity by recognizing that here at UWB our commitment to scholarship must succeed within the context of the mission we have adopted.

Thus, the promotion of scholarship requires that we see ourselves as a community of inquiry in which faculty-student relationships help us refine the questions we ask and deepen the issues we consider. The promotion of our scholarly community—a commitment that includes our students and staff as well as our faculty—is also pursued in the context of the other action arenas proposed in this report.

As a community, we endorse and embrace academic freedom of faculty to pursue any scholarly endeavor and we will always defend that right. Yet defending academic freedom is not the same as committing institutional support for every activity a member of our community wishes to undertake. Scholarly activities that accord with other aspects of our academic priorities have a greater claim on limited institutional resources.

Within this context, however, UWB is an institution of higher learning that is characterized by research and scholarship involving knowledge production, discovery, integration, interpretation, dissemination and application. By strengthening the research and scholarship culture in our institution, we strengthen the dynamism of our learning community. We must find ways of helping faculty who struggle with the ambiguity of research/scholarship expectations at the same time that they confront teaching expectations that are higher than those of faculty at the Seattle Campus. To this end, we expect the two specific actions we have identified—an office of research and sponsored programs and the creation of an RA program—will prove important in expanding our capacity for scholarship and inquiry.

2. Initiate support and promote undergraduate research

Recommendations in Brief:

In order to advance undergraduate research, we recommend that UWB initiate, support and promote a program of undergraduate research.

Steps along the way:

- AAHE/Carnegie project on “Sustaining the Student Voice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” currently spearheaded by the UW Bothell Teaching and Learning Center—This initiative will survey faculty and students to understand the kinds of undergraduate research experiences students seek, the skills they will need, and assess the best delivery modes for producing these results. A pilot project in which a new class is initiated to conduct team research may be implemented in 2005.
- Fall 2005 retreat for faculty development on Undergraduate Research and Experiential Learning

Rationale:

UWB faculty and students demonstrate interest in exploring new possibilities for shared inquiry at UWB, including partnerships that take the form of undergraduate research. In addition to the customary role research plays within upper-level undergraduate coursework, students and faculty sometimes require arrangements that extend beyond single courses or their components. Through the UW Office of Undergraduate Education, UWB students and faculty are eligible (and some have opted to) participate in such UW programs as the Mary Gates Scholars Program and OUE online listings of faculty research projects available to student participation. Other efforts have been accomplished locally through less formal means, including independent studies, involvement in faculty grants, and projects through the Teaching and Learning Center.

To form meaningful and vital faculty-student relationships requires a variety of interactions outside the classroom. The notion of scholarship is likely to remain only vaguely understood if students never observe or experience or participate actively in the construction of knowledge. Scholarly inquiry strengthens our critical capacity by giving immediate understanding of the subtleties of knowledge claims and the rigor involved in substantiating them.

To build a UWB-based program in undergraduate research requires that we devise policies of sound practice, mechanisms for early identification of student participants, gateway curricular options to position students for eligibility, and practices for disseminating/celebrating these substantive and reckoned research partnerships. The UWB Teaching and Learning Center will be instrumental in advancing this work.

3. To support experiential, field and action research

Recommendations in Brief:

In order to support experiential learning, we recommend that UWB create an administrative structure to support service learning, internships, and action research.

Steps along the Way:

- Inventory of service/action/undergraduate learning projects underway at UWB conducted by Teaching Learning Center
- Pilot and assess internships begun under Office of Student Affairs and Experiential Learning
- Fall 2005 retreat for faculty development on Undergraduate Research and Experiential Learning

Rationale:

Students at UWB have expressed a strong interest in expanding the variety of opportunities available by which they may expand their learning. Having listened carefully to those desires, our committee has identified steps towards a major initiative that supports our mission and vision. Experiential learning plays an essential role in enabling students to test theoretical understanding through application in real world settings. Internships and field placements are major forms of experiential learning. Action research has received special attention on our campus and often functions both to expand experiential learning while also serving to develop undergraduate research. Action research emphasizes all parties when each is an active community participant. We also desire to support undergraduate research that accent scholarly relationship between faculty and student outside the classroom. Such research is also experiential as students' fieldwork involves assisting faculty as they forge new understandings or make applications of knowledge, becoming partners in the community of scholarship.

The steps discussed below form three legs of a strategy designed to create long-term momentum. First, we gather data through specific activities outlined below. Second, we create pilot projects and secure funding. Third, we assess the work with the intent of identifying and supporting an appropriate administrative structure to sustain these vital activities.

We must ensure that the inventory and assessment projects that have already begun advance to become the basis for further thinking. With the help of the Internship Coordinator employed through the office of Student Affairs, important work supporting internships has already begun. Separately, David Goldstein, coordinating with the Teaching and Learning Center, has begun to research service and active learning activities currently in place. Finally, the AAHE/Carnegie Project described in the previous section on undergraduate research likely overlaps with these activities.

Our 5for5 committee believes it important to encourage the conversations currently conducted under the auspices of the Teaching and Learning Center by urging other stakeholders to join those conversations. Our hope is that this will make the TLC the central planning group to support and enhance our thinking on experiential learning and undergraduate research. The TLC has tentatively identified a need for a Center for Community Partnerships that would act as a conduit of information for many decentralized projects. While it is premature to conclude that this is the necessary or sufficient administrative vehicle to support future work, the TLC conversations are promising. Student Affairs has, and we expect will continue to, coordinate its work effectively with the TLC.

Finally, we recommend that the Autumn 2005 retreat be used to focus the findings of our inventories, assessments, and continued conversations as a necessary way-step in our decision about the administrative structure necessary to support experiential learning and action learning. The retreat may be combined with a regional conference on community partnerships and active learning.

4. Initiatives To Support Cross Program and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Recommendation in Brief:

To increase access to cross-programmatic minors and interdisciplinary graduate work.

Rationale:

Interdisciplinary work is an essential component of our vision of a transformational learning community. The underlying assumption is that faculty and students, raised and/or schooled using important but fragmented frameworks, benefit by expanding the scope of questions they ask. It is precisely this that transforms us as individuals and scholars. An essential component for transformative work involves collaborations across scholarly traditions. Such work enriches educational opportunities for students and faculty members alike. Traditions within the professions constitute one form of interdisciplinarity, while our interdisciplinary arts and sciences programs constitutes a second approach. Cross-programmatic work that bridges the professions and the liberal arts constitute a vital component in our strategy to distinguish our campus.

However, mounting such collaborations require faculty to overcome a wide range of barriers including the demands of service, teaching and research within their respective programs. At an institutional level we must overcome the problems associated with FTE accounting, including the fact that our structure as a senior institution in which the general education of freshman and sophomores is the work of other institutions.

In order to advance effective cross-programmatic and interdisciplinary curricular initiatives it will be necessary to consult with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Office and the GFO in order to create mechanisms that foreground cross-programmatic and interdisciplinarity in curricular planning, faculty collaboration across programs and in interdisciplinary activities.

Two immediate goals are to facilitate accessible cross-programmatic minors and to facilitate cross-programmatic and interdisciplinary graduate work. As one specific initiative towards this end, we recommend that the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs bring the disparate parties responsible for graduate work together to consider whether they may more effectively integrate course work to avoid redundancies and thereby increase interdisciplinary resources

5. To Improve Internal and External Academic Communications

Recommendations in Brief:

In order to promote internal and external communication, we recommend that UWB build and maintain a database to facilitate the telling of our stories to stakeholders on and off campus.

Rationale:

No organization can long endure if it is not clear about its goals. We must clearly communicate to ourselves and to those with whom we interact what our mission and vision is and how we go about achieving it.

ASAI recommends that the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs develop an effective and updated database of scholarship, including scholarly relationships with students that sustain transformational learning and/or improve the life of the community. We wish to make such engagements visible in the buildings, in the web page, in print publications, and in the awareness of our surrounding communities.

We believe that such a database devoted to scholarly inquiry will be a first step in effectively communicating with an outside community that desires to understand us better. Communications with the outside community should be developed through the Academic Offices that are closest to our mission.