

**Office of Undergraduate Studies. Top Strategic Priorities for AY 2009-10.**

**SP1. Implement the Achievement Centered Education (ACE) General Education Program for the fall 2009 entering cohort and begin the ACE assessment process.**

**OUS Benchmark for Assessment of ACE General Education Program.** During AY 2010-11, begin the five year rotation assessment process for each of the ACE Institutional Objectives and cognate Student Learning Outcomes. During AY 2010-11, Institutional Objective 1. SLOs 1, 2, and 3 will be assessed. Process will be completed, evaluated and a report for Institutional Objective 1. SLOs 1, 2, and 3 will be available to the campus by the end of AY 2011-12.

The ACE program fosters coursework and experiences that are based on thoughtful, assessable student learning outcomes. We have made considerable progress on all 2008-09 goals related to this priority. As of July, 2009, the I-ACE committee certified over 425 student learning outcomes, representing over 375 individual courses for program implementation in fall 2009. The goals and *progress to date* for each goal in support of this priority are:

**A. Guide and support implementation of the ACE program and assessment process at the institutional, college, department and course levels.**

- *The Director of General Education has communicated regularly with Academic Deans, Enrollment Management Council, Department Chairs/Heads, Academic Advisors, New Student Enrollment, Admissions, Registration and Records, Scholarships and Financial Aid, Academic Senate and ASUN. All ACE course proposals and accompanying syllabi are available at ace.unl.edu.*
- *UWAC has been meeting monthly since October 2008 to develop timelines for the ACE Assessment process. That group has approved a 5-year rotation for assessing all ACE learning objectives and outcomes. A reporting timeline and deadlines for the department, college and institutional levels has also been approved.*
- *The transition of the work of the I-ACE Committee over to the University Curriculum Committee has begun.*

**B. Continue communication with internal and external constituencies regarding the ACE Program, in particular, the ACE and UNL transfer policies.** The Academic Transfer Coordinator Coordinate will continue to meet with external constituents regarding ACE as it relates to transfer students/transfer credit. In addition to Transfer Guides for Community Colleges for UNL's Essential Studies requirements, new Transfer Guides have been developed for the new ACE requirements.

- *Meetings with faculty and advisers at Nebraska community colleges have been held or are scheduled. ACE Student Learning Outcomes have been added to the Transfer Course Equivalency List so that students know what outcome can be met with transfer courses. This concerted communication effort will allow prospective transfer students to plan their coursework at community college more efficiently in order to complete their UNL degree in a timely manner. To speed up the evaluation of transfer credit, UNL has a campus wide subscription to an on-line repository of college catalogs from across the nation with archives going back a decade.*

**C. Continue to enhance the University's reputation by making presentations at national conferences and publications.**

- *Since AY 2008-09, members of the former GEPT and current I-ACE group published three manuscripts and delivered 10 presentations about the ACE Program. The UNL ACE General Education Program has been identified by Association of American Colleges & Universities as an exemplar program.*

**SP2. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: from Compliance to Campus Commitment. Coordinate and support development of dynamic, sustainable program assessment based upon continuous improvement.** The goals and *progress to date* for each goal in support of this priority are:

**A. Continue development and implementation of the on-line assessment management system project.**

- *Seven undergraduate colleges, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Studies are now using the PEARL system for reporting their undergraduate assessment activities.*
- *The College of Arts and Sciences assessment committee is using the system to provide feedback to department's about their assessment activities. An institutional summary of assessment activities reported indicates that 87% programs were engaged in assessing their undergraduate major, 89% used direct measures, and 92% of those engaged in assessment used assessment results to identify issues or make improvements. The number of faculty, administrators and staff using PEARL has more than doubled from 79 in 2007-08 to 188 in 2008-09. A survey of PEARL participants (37 responses) in the fall of 2008 revealed 95% of respondents agreed that they needed to have their program assessed and 61% of respondents agreed that participation in PEARL has improved the quality of their program's assessment activities. Only 11% of respondents found the PEARL software difficult to use.*
- *Presentations about the PEARL system and UNL's assessment process occurred with Creighton and UNMC's institutional assessment committees this fall. Creighton has decided to use the system for its assessment process and the system is still under consideration as UNMC solidifies it plans for a campus-wide approach to assessment.*

**B. Coordinate UNL's participation in 2010 NSSE.** This will be UNL's fourth time to participate in NSSE. Through alignment with appropriate ACE student learning outcomes, we will be able to incorporate NSSE results as we move toward our overall assessment goal of continuous program improvement.

- *Results from 2007-08 NSSE were entered into UNL's College Portrait as a participant in NASULGC's Voluntary System of Accountability.*

**C. Continue progress in establishing processes for formally assessing OUS programs.** All OUS programs have undergone formal assessments and currently, are undergoing on-line peer reviews using the PEARL system.

- *As of January 2009, each OUS program has collected information about their program and is working towards documenting those assessment activities in PEARL. UCARE, Assessment, ACE, Transfer Students and Learning Communities have entered a PEARL assessment plan for 2009. Honors, Culture Center, EN Thompson and General Studies are in process of developing 2009 PEARL assessment plans.*

**SP3. Enhance the Academic Support and Opportunities for students in order to improve overall UNL retention and graduation rates so that we reach our peer group average retention rate of 85.4% and six year graduation rate of 67.7%% by 2012 (OUS Benchmark).**

Over the past six years, OUS faculty and staff have formed collaborative relationships that have enriched our efforts to understand and assist UNL students towards successful completion of their undergraduate degree. Although we have seen success in increased retention and graduation rates, we need to continue efforts toward increasing the 1st to 2nd year and 2nd to 3rd year undergraduate student retention rates, and the four and six year graduation rates. The goals and *progress to date* for each goal in support of this priority are:

**A. Improve UNL retention and six year graduation rates to reach peer group average of retention rate of 85.4% and six year graduation rate of 67.7%.** Continue to improve already successful programs and initiatives such as:

- *Division of General Studies. Advising that will continue to assist students as they investigate available programs of study and help prepare them for entry into one of the eight undergraduate colleges or professional programs. Though the first to second year retention rate of DGS students falls below the UNL retention rate, it is*

clear that of the DGS students who returned after their first year, 80% to 84% of students matriculate to a college by the end of their second year. DGS advisors will continue to personally contact and monitor the academic performance of all first year DGS students and work with the student on designing a viable program of study.

- **OUS Parents Newsletter.** During 2009 NSE, close to 1500 parents signed up to receive the OUS newsletter. The newsletter is designed to provide general information about the University on a regular basis. The content is generic, not focused on any particular areas of study and therefore relevant to the entire student body (and parents). The goal is to help parents to become more knowledgeable about academic issues that impact their students, therefore, improving freshman to sophomore
- **Mid Semester Check.** 85.1% of the 2,012 students who entered UNL in fall 2007 and attended MSC returned for their second year, which is greater than the retention 83.5% retention rate for the entire 2007 entering cohort.
- **Second Year Initiative.** OUS will work closely within the Division of Student Affairs on a Second Year Initiative. The second to third year retention rate of the entering cohorts have consistently dropped an additional 10%-12%. We will collaborate closely with the Academic Dean's Council, Director of Institutional Assessment, Academic Learning Community Coordinator, Division of General Studies, Enrollment Management Council and the Admissions, Advising and Retention Group as we work through this process.
- **OASIS.** OASIS staff have begun the planning for transition to the new facility (January 2010) as well as a new Director. The emphasis will remain on increasing the quality of the student experience and participation in programs such as NU Connections, Students Taking Academic Control (STAC) and COACH programs.

**B. NU Honors Program. Increase out of state recruitment to 26%, the diverse student population increase to 11.5%, first to second year student retention increase to 96% and the four year graduation rate will increase to 84% and the five year rate will be 98% (OUS Benchmark).**

- The average ACT composite score of the 2008 entering Honors Program cohort was 30.7. The 2008 cohort included a 10.5% diverse student population, exceeding our goal of 10%. The current first to second year retention rate is 95%. For AY 2007-08 the four year graduation rate for students in the Honors Program was 82% and the five year graduate rate was 97%. This increase is due to focused advising, development of community building activities and strong ties with honors faculty.

**C. UCARE.** The addition of Program of Excellence funds to the Pepsi Endowment has allowed the signature program UCARE to grow, meeting the needs of over 400 students per year (\$600,000). UCARE applications come from all over campus; there is a "healthy" mix of diverse disciplines, almost equally split between laboratory and non-laboratory disciplines

- Over 3000 undergraduates have gone through the program; over 500 faculty altogether have participated in the program. Because the first year of UCARE serves as a training ground for undergraduates in their chosen discipline, UCARE students have a better understanding of their field of study, with 75% of the students who have been in UCARE going on to graduate or professional school. UCARE also serves to give UNL students the needed experience to prepare for future opportunities. 95% of the students who apply for Fulbright, Rhodes, Marshall, Javits, Gates-Cambridge, Truman, and especially Goldwater applications, are actively engaged in research through the UCARE program. Students going to law school or medical school regularly participate in UCARE.

**SP4. Prepare for expansion of the William H Thompson Learning Community from an entering cohort of 123 students to 170+ students.**

The William H Thompson Scholars Learning Community is dedicated to UNL students who have received a scholarship from the Buffett Foundation. The purpose of the WHT Scholars Learning Community is to help students make transition to college, experience satisfaction/contentment with college experience and help students to perceive their own intellectual growth/development. Goals for AY 2009-10 are:

**A. Continue to monitor the academic progress of WHT Scholars toward degree completion and target students on probation.**

- *The Academic Program Coordinator will meet with each WHT scholar during fall semester about their academic program and needs.*
- *WHT students will obtain mid-semester grades from course instructors. These will be reviewed by the WHT academic team, and students with questionable grades will be asked to meet with the Academic Program Coordinators.*

**B. Develop and implement an assessment procedure for the WHT Scholars.**

- *The WHT academic team has met with the Director of Institutional Assessment and the Director of the ACE General Education program and developed a plan for assessing the academic progress of the WHT Learning Community members.*

**C. Establish Programming for 2nd Year WHT Scholars.**

- *Undeclared second year WHT Scholars will enroll to enroll in Ed Psych 097. Exploring Majors for fall 2009. Undeclared first year WHT Scholars will enroll in Ed Psych 097. Exploring Majors for spring semester 2010.*
- *A series of academic and life skill workshops appropriate to students at this level will be offered during AY 2009-010.(e.g. internship opportunities, resume building, etc)*

**D. Provide Faculty teaching WHT courses with information and support for meeting the specific needs of first-generation students and for working effectively with Learning Communities**

- *Faculty teaching WHT courses for fall 2009 attended an orientation session in August 2009. Ongoing consultation and communication will continue with WHT faculty and staff during the academic year.*

**SP 5. Increase collaboration, communication and involvement for institution-wide initiatives such as the EN Thompson Forum on Global Issues and the Nebraska Colloquium.**

**A. EN Thompson Forum on Global Issues.** The intent of the themes selected yearly by the Thompson Program Committee is to present a series of lectures and related events that promotes understanding of and encourages debate around international and public policy issues. The theme for AY 2009-10 is “Encountering China” One goal for enhancing the Forum is to strengthen the participation in and connection of the Thompson Forum to academic offerings on campus and continue to expand outreach in the community and across Nebraska.

- *During AY 2008-09 participation increased in the EN Thompson Lecture series by constituencies internal and external to UNL.*

**B. Nebraska Colloquium.** Now in its second year, the Nebraska Colloquium has established itself as a campus forum for conversation and debate on issues of current significance in our society. Using the theme established by the EN Thompson lecture series, the year-long conversation on ‘Democracy’s Future’ has been exceptionally successful. Building on next year’s Thompson theme of “Encountering China,” the Nebraska Colloquium will expand the scope of the conversation with its theme of “The Silk Road.” A priority is to increase representation of faculty from across the university, including faculty from agriculture, the arts and business.

- *During AY 2008-09, eleven UNL faculty offered lectures as part of the Nebraska Colloquium, representing the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Education & Human Sciences, Fine and Performing Arts, Journalism and Law. Over 30 students enrolled in the special Honors Program seminar, 198H. Nebraska Colloquium. Attendance at each of the lectures has averaged between 30 and 60 attendees. Video casts of each lecture are available at <http://nebcolloquium.unl.edu/>.*