APPENDIX II-C: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESSES

Research Methodology and Processes

This appendix summarizes all data collection efforts that were initiated as part of the self-study process. These research efforts were outlined in Table II-1 on page 110 in the report. For each research project, a description of the method, sample, and limitations is provided. Research that was conducted on existing data sources, such as Registrar data, is not described in these appendices.

1. Entry and Transition Office and Department Interviews

Individuals in units and programs that have significant roles in the entry and transition of new undergraduate students were interviewed about how they perceive and carry out their roles, how they assess their effectiveness in those roles, and what changes they feel could improve their effectiveness.

Sample. The Entry and Transition subcommittee identified programs, activities, and events focused on entry and transition of new undergraduates and, via e-mail, requested descriptive and evaluative materials such as self-studies, reviews, and annual reports. Based on this information and on interviews with members of the central administration, the subcommittee selected individuals to interview in the following units: Academic Advising Center, Office of Admissions, School of Art and Art History, Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, Campus and Community Relations, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Office of Student Financial Aid, University of Iowa Honors Program, Office of Student Life, Orientation Services, Recreation Services, Student Disability Services, Student Health Services, University Counseling Service, University Housing, and the Women in Science and Engineering program. Thirty-two individuals from these units participated in interviews.

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Procedure. The subcommittee formed small teams (of two or three) to contact and conduct face-to-face interviews with the selected individuals.

Instrument. The small teams of subcommittee members used the following questions to guide their interviews.

> **Interview Questions**
>
> All questions should be understood to refer particularly to entry and transition—that is, recruiting new undergraduates and supporting a successful first-year experience that leads to their retention.
>
> 1. Would you like to expand or clarify anything from the information we received?
>
> 2. Why do you do the things you do in the area of entry and transition? Why do you do them the way you do? How do you know that what you're doing works?
>
> 3. How has your program changed in recent years? What changes do you foresee in coming years?
>
> 4. What do you see as the problems or issues that need to be addressed, and what changes would you like to see to address them? What improvements would you recommend? Are there programs at other institutions that you see as models for how we should do things at the University of Iowa?
>
> 5. If you could improve one part of your program by reallocating resources from another part, which areas would you choose? How would this affect entry and transition?
>
> 6. What opportunities might there be in your area to increase the engagement of first-year students with any aspect of University life?

7. In what ways does your program support the goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse campus community? In what ways does it draw on the diversity of our campus community to promote excellence in undergraduate education?

2. General Education Program Student Survey

To determine how students perceived the General Education Program, they were surveyed regarding their beliefs about how courses within various groupings (rhetoric, foreign language, interpretation of literature, historical perspectives, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, quantitative or formal reasoning, the general education distributed area, and the major [for comparison purposes]) had contributed to their growth along eight major learning outcomes categories (critical thinking, communication skills, understanding of world complexity, appreciation of diversity, understanding of scientific inquiry, social responsibility, appreciation of the arts, and life of the mind).

Sample. For distribution of the Undergraduate Experience Focused Satisfaction Survey (the Satisfaction Survey described in Section 6 below) and the General Education Program Student Survey (the GEP Survey), the Office of the Registrar provided University IDs and e-mails of all degree-seeking undergraduate students who were full-time on the first day of class in spring 2007 (N=16,501). Each survey was sent to half of that population at random except that all College of Engineering students were not included in the GEP survey described in this section. Students in the College of Engineering have general education requirements that differ slightly from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements that were the primary focus of the GEP Survey.

The GEP Survey was distributed via e-mail to 8,251 undergraduate students. Nine-hundred and seventy-two (972, 12%) usable surveys were returned. Actual frequencies vary depending upon whether students had taken the relevant course(s) and whether majors had been declared. Additionally, Ns fluctuate with some missing responses. Based on population figures kept by the University, responses overrepresented female students. Women make up 55% and men 45% of undergraduates (exclusive of the College of Engineering). Of the survey respondents, women made up 68% of the sample and men 32%.

Procedure. Sampled students were contacted via e-mail with a description of the study and an invitation to participate. Each e-mail contained a link to a WebSurveyor survey so students could complete the survey on-line. Students who completed the survey were directed to another web site where they could enter a drawing for either an iPod shuffle or an iTunes gift card.

Instrument. The following information and survey items were presented to students who clicked on the link in their e-mail.

General Education Program

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey.

General Education is designed to promote eight major learning outcomes which are listed below. We'll be asking you about each of the following:

Critical thinking includes skills in evaluating bodies of information and analyzing and judging values expressed by myself and others.

Communication skills include the ability to organize my thoughts clearly and to communicate them effectively in words, writing, and visual displays.

Understanding of world complexity includes understanding distinctive characteristics of different countries and the varied ways countries interact with each other.

Appreciation of diversity includes understanding my own uniqueness and also the uniquenesses of persons different from me.

Understanding of scientific inquiry includes the ability to collect and use dependable sources of data and follow standards of scientific method while evaluating results.

Social responsibility includes understanding the importance of bringing my educational skills to contribute to my local community and society as a whole.

Appreciation of the arts includes understanding how visual, written, and performing arts help us think and enhance our emotional lives.

Life of the mind includes developing interests and habits for life-long learning and enjoyment of creations of ourselves and others.

If you need to remind yourself of what any of these phrases refer to, you can always scroll back up to this list.

We know students vary in how many of these courses you take. But for courses you have taken in the course groups and your major, please give an estimate as accurately as you can of the degree of contribution those course made to meeting the learning goals listed.

1) Have you taken any **Rhetoric** courses at the University of Iowa?

     O   No (Skip to question 2)
     O   Yes

How much did **Rhetoric** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

2) Have you taken any Foreign Language courses at the University of Iowa?

    O   No (Skip to question 3)
    O   Yes

How much did **Foreign Language** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

3) Have you taken any Interpretation of Literature courses at the University of Iowa?

    O   No (Skip to question 4)
    O   Yes

How much did **Interpretation of Literature** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

4) Have you taken any Historical Perspectives courses at the University of Iowa?

    O   No (Skip to question 5)
    O   Yes

How much did **Historical Perspectives** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

5) Have you taken any Humanities courses at the University of Iowa?

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    O   No (Skip to question 2)
    O   Yes

How much did **Humanities** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

6) Have you taken any **Natural Science** courses at the University of Iowa?

  O   No (Skip to question 7)
  O   Yes

  How much did **Natural Science** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

7) Have you taken any **Quantitative or Formal Reasoning** courses at the University of Iowa?

  O   No (Skip to question 8)
  O   Yes

  How much did **Quantitative or Formal Reasoning** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

8) Have you taken any **Social Science** courses at the University of Iowa?

    O   No (Skip to question 9)
    O   Yes

How much did the **Social Science** courses contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

9) Have you taken any **General Education Courses** (such as Cultural Diversity, Fine Arts, Foreign Civilization and Culture, or Health and Physical Activity) at the University of Iowa?

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    O   No (Skip to question 10)
    O   Yes

How much did courses in one or more of these **Other General Education Courses** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

10) How much did courses in your **Major(s)** contribute to your growth in each of the following areas?

       O   I have not declared a major (skip to question 11)

	A great deal	A modest amount	Fairly little	Not at all
Critical thinking	O	O	O	O
Communication skills	O	O	O	O
Understanding of world complexity	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of diversity	O	O	O	O
Understanding of scientific inquiry	O	O	O	O
Social responsibility	O	O	O	O
Appreciation of the arts	O	O	O	O
Life of the mind	O	O	O	O

So we can make comparisons of viewpoints among students and groups of faculty, employers, and alumni, please provide us with some background information.

11) What is your present major(s) (or say "open major" if undecided)?

12) How many semester hours of class work have you completed toward completion of your undergraduate degree?

13) What is your sex?

      O Male   O Female

14) Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about your experience with your general education courses and how/whether they contributed to you realizing the central goals of the general education program at The University of Iowa (for example, the ones we have listed at the start of this questionnaire).

When you "Submit Survey" below, you will be directed to another website where you may enter your name and email address for a chance to win your choice of an iPod shuffle or an iTunes gift card.

Submit Survey

3. General Education Program (GEP) Faculty Focus Groups

To determine how faculty perceive the General Education Program, a series of focus groups were conducted. Participants were asked about the goals and delivery of General Education courses. A more detailed research report on these faculty focus groups will be available to the HLC consultant-evaluators in the University's resource room.

Sample. Forty-seven (47) faculty from 25 departments or programs participated in the focus groups. The participants included faculty who taught in the General Education Program and those who did not; respondents in the latter group were able, however, to talk about the impact of General Education courses on upper-level classes and

coursework in the majors. Faculty who responded to this e-mail were scheduled into a focus group as described below.

Procedure. An e-mail message from Tom Rocklin, then associate provost for undergraduate education (now vice provost) and co-chair of the Common Academic Experiences subcommittee, was sent to all University of Iowa faculty. Five focus groups were conducted between February 16 and February 26, 2007. Each group was conducted by a facilitator and note-taker. These roles were performed by students in the Graduate Programs in Student Affairs in the UI College of Education, all of whom had training in qualitative research methods. In addition, each group was observed by a member of the Common Academic Experiences subcommittee. Interviews were tape recorded and lasted about one hour.

Instrument. The focus groups were loosely organized around two topics, as described in this outline for each session.

Topic 1: Goals of the General Education Program at UI

- What are the goals of the General Education Program at Iowa?
- To what extent is the General Education Program accomplishing those goals? In what ways is it not accomplishing them?
- In what ways, if any, should the goals be different?

Topic 2: Delivery of the General Education Program

- Who should teach General Education courses?
- In what ways, if any, does the designation of a course for General Education credit affect the way you teach the course? In what ways should designation of a course for General Education credit affect the way it's taught? Is this the same for all General Education courses?
- What are the incentives for teaching in the General Education Program? What factors discourage teaching in the General Education Program? What incentives (or removal of what obstacles) would most improve the General Education Program?

4. General Education Program (GEP) Employer Interviews

A sample of employers were contacted to ascertain their perceptions of University of Iowa interns and graduates. Employers were asked about the value they place on specific skills when hiring, whether the UI students hired are adequately prepared in those areas, and what skills not listed by the interviewer might also be especially valuable.

Sample. The Common Academic Experiences subcommittee interviewed 9 employers who recruit University of Iowa students with no explicit liberal arts major specified. Occupational spheres represented included corporate retail (*e.g.*, sales or service), public sector (*e.g.*, government employee, public safety), public relations and marketing, and staff positions in professional settings. The following companies were represented: HNI Corporation, Target Corporation, Allied/Nationwide, Enterprise, Great America Leasing, Paul McAndrew Law Firm, University of Iowa Public Safety, City of Coralville, and the University of Iowa Foundation. Interviewees were from middle to upper management and included representatives of general hiring networks from their fields (*e.g.*, a local franchise manager of a national corporation or a local professional with national connections).

Procedure. Contacts were identified through the University of Iowa Career Center and associations of subcommittee members. Interviews were in person when possible and over the telephone when not. Contacts were made via e-mail. Interviews were performed face-to-face, or by phone in a few cases when scheduling a meeting was prohibitive.

Instrument. The following letter was sent to employers selected by the subcommittee. The General Education Program survey of students (see above) was also included in the material sent.

Letter to Employers

Dear Sir or Madam:

Would you be willing to talk with me for 15 minutes about the General Education Requirements which make up part of the undergraduate curricula at The University of Iowa? I could call you at a time convenient to you, or meet you at your offices.

The University of Iowa is in the middle of an extended process of evaluation for re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association, a process which will continue until spring 2008. Many of our university programs are now preparing self-evaluations, a major one being an assessment of the General Education Requirement (sometimes called the "core" requirement) which makes up about one-third of a student's 120 hour graduation total. We have asked students in a mailed survey for their comments on these General Education Requirements. We have set up focus group discussions with faculty and teaching assistants to learn their views about this portion of the undergraduate program. **We would also like very much to know the views of employers of University of Iowa students about these General Education Requirements.**

For your information, I have attached a copy of a cover sheet sent to students about their survey, which includes information on the goals of General Education (from the standpoint of the University). Courses intended to fulfill these goals come from nine groups of departments (rhetoric, foreign language, interpretation of literature, history, the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, quantification courses, and a mixed group (including the arts and physical education).

I would appreciate your views on these three questions.

1. To what extent are these skills (listed on the enclosed cover sheet) valuable to you in hiring employees to your company?

2. If the skills are valuable in your priorities for identifying, hiring, and retaining employees, are University of Iowa students adequately prepared in these areas when they graduate?

3. What general skills in this list of eight, as part of a General Education program, would you add? Or subtract? (Jane Schildroth of The University of Iowa Career Center has worked with our department for some years helping us develop a special course that links the academic careers f students with employer expectations. This is why I approached her for ideas about people, such as yourself, that could provide the employer viewpoint on this required or "core" set of courses in The University of Iowa curricula.)

I will call to see if you have a slot of time to talk with me. Or, please feel free to e-mail me to suggest a time, and I will accommodate to your schedule (stephen-wieting@uiowa.edu).

Thank you for considering this; your perspective will help us a great deal.

Sincerely,

Stephen G. Wieting
Associate Professor of Sociology
HLC Common Academic Experience Subcommittee

Encl.

5. Education within the Major Survey of Department Executive Officers

Departmental Executive Officers were surveyed to obtain information about department-specific programs and practices, including advising; mentoring programs; research and other co-curricular opportunities for undergraduate majors; programs to enhance diversity; and mechanisms to define departmental goals and assess outcomes.

Sample. Sixty departments at the University of Iowa that offer undergraduate degrees were contacted for participation. These programs were selected by the Office of the Provost. Surveys were sent to Departmental Executive Officers of each department and 54 responses were obtained (90%).

Procedure. E-mail addresses of DEOs for selected departments were obtained, and a link to a web survey was sent to each DEO. Personalized e-mail reminders were sent to non-respondents.

Instrument. The following information and survey questions were presented on-line to respondents.

> ### DEO / Program Director Survey
>
> The HLC Subcommittee on Education Within the Major is seeking your help in collecting information from departments/programs on 1) undergraduate advising, 2) undergraduate curriculum, 3) outcomes assessment, and 4) future plans. The information supplied in this survey will be used to prepare our self-study in preparation for reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and School. Thank you for your help.
>
> Eric Gidal
> Associate Professor
> Chair, HLC Self-Study Subcommittee on Education Within the Major

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1) Name of person completing survey

2) Department / Program

Undergraduate Advising

1) Please provide a brief description of the regular advising services provided by your department or program.

2) What specific positions for undergraduate advising does your department or program staff?

3) How are these positions staffed?

       ☐ Faculty
       ☐ Professionals
       ☐ Graduate students
       ☐ Other (please specify)

       If you selected other, please specify:

4) What particular advising events does your department or program regularly schedule for undergraduates?

Undergraduate Curriculum

Total for questions 1-4 should equal 100%

1) What percentage of courses for the major is taught by regular faculty?

2) What percentage of courses for the major is taught by adjunct faculty?

3) What percentage of courses for the major is taught by lecturers?

4) What percentage of courses for the major is taught by graduate students?

5) What formal mentoring is provided for new faculty and TAs on how to teach and/or how to advise?

6) What research opportunities, if any, are available for majors? What are the criteria for student participation?

7) In the interest of fostering an extra-curricular climate for majors, does your department or program provide or coordinate efforts with student lounges, student publications, and/or student organizations, and what special events, if any, department or program sponsor for undergraduate students?

8) What programs are in place to attract a diverse student body to your major?

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Outcomes Assessment

1) What mechanisms does the department use to define goals and assess outcomes?

[ ]

2) What professional exams, if any, exist that are relevant for assessing outcomes in the department's major? Is information available on the pass rates for these professional exams?

[ ]

3) What sources, if any, exist to provide information on how your undergraduate programs are ranked among their peers at other institutions?

[ ]

Future Plans

1) What plans are underway or in discussion regarding planning for the future with regard to undergraduate majors?

[ ]

Thank you for your participation. If you would like additional information about the self-study and the HLC, or to provide information about UI programs that affect undergraduate education, please visit the HLC Reaccreditation Work Site at http://www.uiowa.edu/reaccreditation.

[Submit Survey]

6. Undergraduate Experience Focused Student Satisfaction Survey

Undergraduate students were surveyed about their satisfaction with their major programs and with programs and parts of the University outside of formal classes that did or could have helped them develop as people and acquire skills. The Education within the Major subcommittee contributed a set of questions that addressed the availability of majors, the effectiveness of advising when selecting a major, the availability of courses within a major, advising within a major, and the level of interaction with faculty within a major. The Cultivating Student Potential subcommittee contributed a set of questions designed to assess student experiences with University life outside of coursework. These included open-ended questions and questions about some targeted programs and units.

Sample. For distribution of the Undergraduate Experience Focused Satisfaction Survey (the Satisfaction Survey) and the General Education Program Student Survey (the GEP Survey), the Office of the Registrar provided University IDs of all degree-seeking undergraduate students who were full-time on the first day of class in spring 2007 (N=16,501). The Satisfaction survey was sent to half of that population including all students from the College of Engineering.

The Satisfaction Survey was distributed via e-mail to 8,250 undergraduate students. Eight hundred ninety-two (892, 11%) usable surveys were returned.

Procedure. Students randomly sampled from the population pull were contacted via e-mail with a description of the study and an invitation to participate. Each e-mail contained a link to a WebSurveyor survey so students could complete the survey on-line. Students who completed the survey were directed to another web site where they could enter a drawing for either an iPod shuffle or an iTunes gift card.

Instrument. The following information and survey items were presented to students who clicked on the link in their e-mail.

UI Majors and Programs

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey.

We are studying the programs and parts of the University of Iowa that help students develop as people outside of their formal classes. Please think about aspects of the University of Iowa that have helped you grow as a person and acquire the skills you will need to succeed after your graduate.

1) In addition to your classes and teachers, what programs and people at the University of Iowa have helped you grow as a person? Please be as specific as possible.

2) What program or parts of the University of Iowa have interfered with your growth as a person? Please be as specific as possible.

3) For the services you have used, please indicate how much each service helped you **increase your skills**.

	Have not used	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Writing Center	O	O	O	O	O
Math Lab	O	O	O	O	O
Opportunity at Iowa	O	O	O	O	O
University Libraries	O	O	O	O	O
Student Disability Services	O	O	O	O	O
University Honors Program	O	O	O	O	O
Academic Technology Services	O	O	O	O	O
Health and Wellness Services	O	O	O	O	O
Academic Advising	O	O	O	O	O
Career Center	O	O	O	O	O
University Housing	O	O	O	O	O
Support Service Programs/New Dimensions in Learning	O	O	O	O	O
Women's Resource and Action Center	O	O	O	O	O

4) For the services you have used, please indicate how much each service helped you **grow as a person**.

	Have not used	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Writing Center	O	O	O	O	O
Math Lab	O	O	O	O	O
Opportunity at Iowa	O	O	O	O	O
University Libraries	O	O	O	O	O
Student Disability Services	O	O	O	O	O
University Honors Program	O	O	O	O	O
Academic Technology Services	O	O	O	O	O
Health and Wellness Services	O	O	O	O	O
Academic Advising	O	O	O	O	O
Career Center	O	O	O	O	O
University Housing	O	O	O	O	O
Support Service Programs/New Dimensions in Learning	O	O	O	O	O
Women's Resource and Action Center	O	O	O	O	O

5) Outside of your formal courses and teachers, what programs and people at the University of Iowa have helped you develop the skills you will need to live well and successfully after you graduate?
Please describe how they have helped you.

6) Please describe ways that specific programs or parts of the University of Iowa could have better helped you grow as a person.

7) How satisfied are you with the availability of majors at the University of Iowa? *(1=not satisfied; 5=very satisfied)*

    O 1   O 2   O 3   O 4   O 5

8) How satisfied are you with the advising process in selecting a major? *(1=not satisfied; 5=very satisfied)*

    O 1   O 2   O 3   O 4   O 5

9) How satisfied are you with your ability to get into courses within your major when you need them? *(1=not satisfied; 5=very satisfied)*

    O 1   O 2   O 3   O 4   O 5   O Have not declared a major

10) How satisfied are you with the advising within your major? *(1=not satisfied; 5=very satisfied)*

    O 1   O 2   O 3   O 4   O 5   O Have not declared a major

Appendix II-C: Research Methods and Process

11) How satisfied are you with the level of interaction you have with faculty in your major? *(1=not satisfied; 5=very satisfied)*

      O 1   O 2   O 3   O 4   O 5   O Have not declared a major

12) What is your present major(s) (or say "open major" if undecided).

13) Please tell us anything else you feel is relevant to your experience at the University of Iowa that has helped you grow as a person.

14) If you are willing to be contacted to follow-up on your responses, please enter your email address here.

When you "Submit Survey" below, you will be directed to another website where you may enter your name and email address for a chance to win your choice of an iPod shuffle or an iTunes gift card.

Submit Survey

7. Co-Curricular Involvement Office and Department Interviews

To collect information about student involvement activities on campus, information requests were sent to a wide array of offices across campus. Interviews were also conducted to gain greater insight into the nature of the activities available to students.

Sample. Requests were sent to offices and departments across campus that have involvement with undergraduate students. Twenty-four (24) offices returned information. In addition, professionals in 16 offices were interviewed in more depth about the ways they involve students.

Procedure. Invitation letters were sent to offices across campus, and a student opportunity checklist was included with the letter. Offices that returned surveys were contacted, and interviews were set up with offices as scheduling would allow.

Instruments. Two instruments were used: (1) a checklist of student involvement opportunities, and (2) an interview protocol. These are presented below, along with the letter of invitation to offices and departments to participate.

Letter of Invitation to Offices and Departments

November 16, 2006

Dear Colleague:

In spring 2008, The University of Iowa will be undergoing a reaccreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Sponsored by Provost Michael Hogan and chaired by Associate Provost Tom Rocklin, the Office of the Provost is currently conducting a self-study in preparation for the reaccreditation visit. Five sub-committees have been organized to gather

information regarding the special emphasis for the self-study, which will focus on undergraduate education: 1) Entry and Transition: Becoming a University of Iowa Student; 2) Common Academic Experiences: The General Education Curriculum; 3) Education Within the Major; 4) Getting Involved: Education Beyond the Classroom; and 5) Cultivating Student Potential: Support for Teaching and Learning.

We are the co-chairs of the "Getting Involved" subcommittee, and it is in that capacity that we are writing you this letter. You have been identified as one of the key individuals who we need to interview as part of the reaccreditation self-study. One of the members of our subcommittee (see enclosure) will be contacting you within the next two weeks to schedule an interview to help us learn how your department or program enhances student involvement outside of the classroom. The interview questions are enclosed for your review in advance of the interview. The following is the entire list of enclosures:

- University Official (Non-Student) Interview Questions
- University Official (Non-Student) Interview Teams
- Getting Involved Subcommittee Membership List
- Interview Pairings
- Checklist of Student Involvement Opportunities
- A flyer re: The University of Iowa Self-Study Process for Reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission
- The University of Iowa 2005-2010 Strategic Plan – *The Iowa Promise*

We want to express our appreciation in advance for your participation in the self-study process. We need to learn about your programs – and your student "success stories" – so that we can accurately document student involvement beyond the classroom at Iowa. If you have any questions, please contact any one of us. Again, we appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

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William Nelson, Ph.D.
Associate Director, University Life Centers
  and Director, Office of Student Life

David Grady, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Student Services
  and Director, University Life Centers

Scott McNabb, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership Studies

Checklist of Student Involvement Opportunities

(1) Does your department/program provide or facilitate any of the following student involvement opportunities?

(2) Does your department/program *anticipate* providing or facilitating any of the following student involvement opportunities *in the near future*?

☐ Advisory board membership (i.e., boards with designated student positions)
☐ Campus-based service/volunteerism
☐ Career/professional networking
☐ Community-based service/volunteerism
☐ Connecting cocurricular activities with academic course work
☐ Connecting or facilitating networking opportunities with alumni

☐ Diversity training/education
☐ Event/program/workshop planning and production by students (e.g., arts, educational, entertainment, leadership, major annual, multicultural, recreational, social); identify subject matter _____
☐ For-credit courses
☐ Guest lecturer/speaker/panelist opportunities for students
☐ Health and wellness activities/initiatives
☐ Internships or practica (for credit and/or non-credit); indicate which _____
☐ Internships (paid)
☐ Leadership training, education, and development
☐ Leadership opportunities within student organizations
☐ Non-credit topic-based workshops facilitated by non-students
☐ Opportunities to interact with people from different cultures
☐ Opportunities to represent UI off campus at national/regional meetings
☐ Peer educators (students educating students); identify subject matter _____
☐ Peer mentoring (1:1 interaction between mentor and mentee)
☐ Service learning
☐ Spiritual exploration and understanding
☐ Student employment
☐ Student governance (e.g., ARH, IFC, NPHC, PHC, UISG, hall government, presidential charter committees); identify subject matter _____
☐ Student involvement in presentations, research, and scholarly activity with faculty/staff
☐ Student involvement in publication or media development
☐ Student involvement on department-wide committees
☐ Student involvement on University-wide committees
☐ Student organization advising
☐ Student organization office space
☐ Student organizations
☐ Student exhibitions and performances
☐ Undergraduate research and/or teaching assistantships; please identify which _____ **A-45**
☐ Undergraduate teaching assistantships

Office and Department Interview Protocol

1. When looking at the checklist (please refer to the *Checklist* document):

    a. What areas of student involvement does your department/program specialize in or focus on?
    b. What areas of student involvement need to be developed further or are   in the planning stages of being developed?
    c. Are there student involvement opportunities provided by your department/ program that are **not** represented on the checklist? If not, what are they?

2. How do students learn about your department's/program's involvement opportunities for students? How are you intentional about securing student involvement in the opportunities provided by your department/program?

3. How does your department/program determine which involvement opportunities it provides? What are the philosophies and policies that inform the development of these opportunities?

    a. What are the desired learning outcomes of these opportunities?
    b. How are the outcomes measured?

4. How does your department/program assess or evaluate the effectiveness of the student involvement opportunities you provide?

       a.   Do you believe that your assessment or evaluation efforts are effective? Why or why not?
       b.   How does your department/program utilize the data/information you collect during the assessment or evaluation effort?
       c.   What plans do you have for assessment or evaluation in the future?

5. How do your student involvement opportunities align with your department's/ program's mission and strategic plan, as well as the University's mission and the Iowa Promise? Cite specific examples of alignment (or non-alignment).

6. When students get involved through your department/program:

       a.   How does it benefit them in their personal lives?
       b.   How does it benefit them in their academic pursuits?
       c.   What philosophies, policies, programs, and practices employed by your department/program promote student involvement?
       d.   What philosophies, policies, programs, and practices employed by your department/program hinder student involvement?

7. How do you help students make meaning and learn from their involvement experiences (e.g., reflection activities, opportunities to tie the experience into other learning)?

       a.   What do you find effective about these approaches?
       b.   How do you believe you could improve these approaches?

8. How are you intentional in your outreach efforts to students who are **not** involved?

       a.   Describe your efforts.
       b.   What have you found to be most effective ways to secure involvement from student who are **not** involved?

9. Please share a story about a student who gained a lot and who demonstrated significant growth/development from being involved through your department/program.

8. Co-Curricular Involvement Student Organization Focus Groups

To collect information about involved students' perceptions of co-curricular opportunities at The University of Iowa, the Getting Involved subcommittee conducted focus group interviews with the executive board members of selected student organizations.

Sample. Executives from five organizations that represent large undergraduate student constituencies were contacted to schedule a focus group (Associated Residence Halls Executive Board, Interfraternity Council Executive Board, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Panhellenic Council Executive Board, and University of Iowa Student Government Executives). The groups were selected because of the range of ages and genders of members, because of their level of activity, and because of the perceived likelihood that they would participate. All five organizations participated.

Procedure. Following initial contact via letter, focus groups were arranged. Focus groups were conducted by a member of the Getting Involved subcommittee.

Instrument. The following is a sample letter sent to a student leader. Similar letters were sent to other student leaders to request their presence at a scheduled focus group. Focus group questions are also presented below.

Sample Letter to Student Leaders

January 22, 2007

Dear Anne,

In Spring 2008, The University of Iowa will be undergoing a reaccreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Sponsored by Provost Michael Hogan and chaired by Associate Provost Tom Rocklin, the Office of the Provost is currently conducting a self-study in preparation for the reaccreditation visit. Five sub-committees have been organized to gather information regarding the special emphasis for the self-study, which will focus on undergraduate education: 1) Entry and Transition: Becoming a University of Iowa Student; 2) Common Academic Experiences: The General Education Curriculum; 3) Education Within the Major; 4) Getting Involved: Education Beyond the Classroom; and 5) Cultivating Student Potential: Support for Teaching and Learning.

As members for the "Getting Involved" sub-committee, we are writing to request your participation in a focus group of Panhellenic Council members. Your positions as council members make your group a key constituent in the data collection for the reaccreditation process. We would like to schedule a focus group during your executive council meeting time within the next few weeks. The focus group will last approximately 45 minutes.

Your opinions and experiences as a University of Iowa students are important and valued, and we would like to express our appreciation in advance for your participation in the self-study process. Please notify us of your willingness to participate and available days and times by Friday, January 26, and be sure to let us know if you have any questions. We may be reached via email at william-nelson@uiowa.edu or angela-bong@uiowa.edu, or may be reached by phone at 335-3059.

Sincerely,

William Nelson, Ph.D.   Angie Bong
Associate Director, University Life Centers   Advanced Practicum Student
  and Director, Office of Student Life   Office of Student Life

cc: Jason Pierce, Assistant Director, Office of Student Life

Semi-Structured Interview for Students

1. In what ways have you been involved outside the classroom at Iowa?

      a. How did you learn about involvement opportunities at Iowa?
      b. How did you decide what you wanted to become involved in?
      c. What did the University do that helped you get involved initially?
      d. What could the University have done differently that would have better facilitated your
         involvement initially?

2. Think about your student involvement experiences outside the classroom at Iowa:

      a.   How has your involvement benefited you in your personal life?
      b.   How has your involvement benefited you in your academic pursuits?
      c.   Are there philosophies, policies, programs, and practices that relate to student involvement
         that seem to help students get involved at Iowa? Talk about them.

> d. Are there philosophies, policies, programs, and practices that relate to student involvement that seem to get in the way of students getting involved at Iowa? Talk about them.

3. What's missing here at Iowa?

4. How have your student involvement experiences been helped or hindered by the staff and resources at Iowa?

5. Share one story that best describes how being involved at Iowa has contributed to your learning and success as a student.

> a. What have you learned about yourself from your involvement?
> b. What skills have you gained from your involvement?
> c. What impact have you had on others because of your involvement?

6. What is the one best piece of advice you could give incoming students about getting involved at Iowa?

9. Learning Environments Student Survey

To determine how students perceive learning spaces on (and off) campus, the Learning Environments subcommittee designed a survey that asked questions about the residence halls, the Iowa Memorial Union, the University Libraries, classroom buildings, classroom technology, the Instructional Technology Centers, and off-campus study locations.

Sample. The Learning Environments Student Survey was distributed via e-mail to 3,000 randomly selected non-first year undergraduate students (new students were excluded given the survey delivery at the start of the fall term). Two hundred eighty two (282, 9%) usable surveys were returned. The students who responded to the survey represented a wide variety of colleges and majors, and 74.5% reported having lived in a residence hall at one point.

Procedure. Students were contacted via e-mail with a description of the study and an invitation to participate. Each e-mail contained a link to a WebSurveyor survey so students could complete the survey on-line.

Instrument. The following survey was presented to students who clicked on the link in their e-mail.

Survey of Learning Spaces

For the purposes of this survey, please use the following guidelines:

- For every one hour of credit, students should plan to study outside of class 2 hours. Thus, a student with a 12 semester hour load should study at the minimum, 24 hours per week. A "significant portion" of that would be at least 15 hours.
- The use of the word "conducive" as in "My residence hall room is conducive for study" means reliably quiet, comfortable and well-lit.

Please indicate your primary area of study or major:

- O Arts & Humanities
- O Business
- O Education
- O Engineering
- O Math/Computer Science
- O Natural Sciences
- O Nursing/Health Sciences
- O Social Sciences
- O Other (please specify)

Appendix II-C: Research Methods and Process

If you selected other, please specify:

[   ]

Have you lived in a residence hall?

    O Yes   O No

The following questions pertain to your experiences in the Residence Halls.

Which residence hall do you/did you live in?

- ☐ Burge
- ☐ Daum
- ☐ Currier
- ☐ Hillcrest
- ☐ Mayflower
- ☐ Parklawn
- ☐ Quad
- ☐ Rienow
- ☐ Slater
- ☐ Stanley

The residence hall atmosphere is/was conducive to study.

    O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

My room is/was adequately furnished for serious study.

    O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I study/studied in the common spaces (e.g. lounges) in my Residence Hall.

    O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

How much time do you\did you spend studying in your residence hall room during an average week?

| O All of my study time | O Most of my study time | O About half of my study time | O Some of my study time | O None of my study time |

I do not/did not study in my residence hall for the following reasons:

	Contributing Factor	Primary Reason
My roommate.	☐	☐
The commons spaces are not conducive to study.	☐	☐
The residence hall environment is too distracting.	☐	☐
The desks and chairs are uncomfortable.	☐	☐
The lighting is inadequate.	☐	☐
I need external resources (library texts, ITC computers).	☐	☐

Additional comments:

[   ]

Appendix II-C: Research Methods and Process

I am aware of the Learning Communities on campus.

     O Yes   O No

Learning Communities make studying easier.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Learning Communities add a positive social dimension to studying.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The following questions pertain to your experiences at the Iowa Memorial Union.

How much time do you spend studying at the IMU during an average week?

    O All of my   O Most of my   O About half of my   O Some of my   O None of my
        study time   study time   study time   study time   study time

The public spaces at the IMU are good informal learning environments.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The public spaces at the IMU are comfortable, welcoming, and student-oriented.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Additional comments:

I do not study at the IMU for the following reasons:

     ☐   The commons spaces are not conducive to study.
     ☐   The desks and chairs are uncomfortable.
     ☐   The IMU environment is too distracting.
     ☐   The lighting is inadequate.
     ☐   Wireless network coverage is poor.
     ☐   Other (please specify).

If you selected other, please specify:

I don't know where to study at the IMU.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I perceive the IMU as an entertainment and extracurricular venue.

     O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The following questions pertain to your experiences in the University Libraries.

How much time do you spend studying in the University Libraries during an average week?

O All of my study time   O Most of my study time   O About half of my study time   O Some of my study time   O None of my study time

I spend a significant amount of time studying in the following libraries (check any that apply):

☐ Main Library
☐ Art Library
☐ Biological Sciences Library
☐ Business Library
☐ Education Library / Curriculum Lab
☐ Engineering Library
☐ Geosciences Library
☐ Hardin Library for the Health Sciences
☐ Law Library
☐ Math Library
☐ Music Library
☐ Physics Library
☐ Psychology Library

The libraries where I study are open when I need them to be.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

There is adequate transportation between my living space and the libraries I use.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The following questions pertain to your experiences with campus academic buildings.

The public spaces in classroom buildings are good places to study.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The public lounges in classroom buildings are conducive to interacting with faculty and graduate students.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

If study rooms were made available in classroom buildings, I would use those rooms.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Classroom buildings provide the space I need for personal study.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Classroom buildings provide adequate space for group project work.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Classroom buildings are welcoming places to study during the evening hours.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Adequate wireless connectivity is available to me in classroom buildings.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I am currently a student in the University Honors program.

O Yes   O No

How much time do you spend studying in the Blank Honors Center, in an average week?

O All of my   O Most of my   O About half of my   O Some of my   O None of my
study time   study time   study time   study time   study time

What would you improve about the study space at the Blank Honors Center?

The following questions pertain to your experiences in campus classrooms.

University classrooms are up-to-date with regard to multimedia technology.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Small Classroom (less than 20 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Average Classroom (20-50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Large Classroom (more than 50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Science Laboratory	O	O	O	O	O

The multimedia technology in University classrooms is readily available for student presentations.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Small Classroom (less than 20 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Average Classroom (20-50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Large Classroom (more than 50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Science Laboratory	O	O	O	O	O

University classrooms are well maintained.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Small Classroom (less than 20 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Average Classroom (20-50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Large Classroom (more than 50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Science Laboratory	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix II-C: Research Methods and Process

University classrooms have good acoustics; it is easy to hear instructors and other students.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Small Classroom (less than 20 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Average Classroom (20-50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Large Classroom (more than 50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Science Laboratory	O	O	O	O	O

University classrooms have appropriate lighting for my courses.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Small Classroom (less than 20 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Average Classroom (20-50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Large Classroom (more than 50 seats)	O	O	O	O	O
Science Laboratory	O	O	O	O	O

The technology in University classrooms that is most helpful for learning is:

- ☐ Audiovisual equipment (e.g., DVD, VCR)
- ☐ Internet Connectivity
- ☐ Clicker Technology
- ☐ Presentation Software
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify:

The following questions pertain to your experiences in the ITCs.

How much time do you spend studying in an ITC during an average week?

O All of my study time   O Most of my study time   O About half of my study time   O Some of my study time   O None of my study time

I primarily use the ITCs to do my homework (word-processing, use of computer programs).

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I use the ITCs to do social networking (e.g. Facebook).

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The ITCs are well maintained.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The ITCs are conducive to study.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Please tell us why the ITCs aren't conducive to studying.

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ITCs are open at hours that meet my needs.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

The following questions pertain to your experiences studying off-campus.

I spend a significant amount of time studying at off-campus public locations (e.g. coffee houses, Iowa City Public Library).

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I prefer to study at off-campus locations instead of on-campus.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

If you live off-campus, how much time do you spend studying at home during an average week?

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

I am satisfied with my ability to connect to campus technology resources from off-campus.

O Strongly Agree   O Agree   O Neutral   O Disagree   O Strongly Disagree

Please click the submit button below to record your responses.

If you wish to have your name entered into the prize drawing associated with completing this survey, please enter your email address on the following page.

Submit Survey

10. Learning Environments Faculty Questionnaire and Focus Groups

To gather information about faculty perceptions of learning environments at The University of Iowa, the Learning Environments subcommittee held focus group discussions and distributed a short survey asking questions about physical and virtual spaces and about the availability of equipment in classrooms.

Sample. Focus group discussions were held with faculty on the University of Iowa Classroom Committee. Also, questionnaires were sent to 25 faculty who had received teaching awards over the prior three years. Five (5, 20%) usable questionnaires were returned.

Procedure. Thomas Rocklin, chair of the self-study steering committee and Vice Provost, e-mailed the informal survey to the selected faculty members on behalf of the Learning Environments subcommittee. Surveys were to be completed and sent back via e-mail.

Instrument. The following invitation and survey were e-mailed to selected faculty.

E-Mail to Selected Faculty

September 4, 2007

Dear Faculty:

As you know, The University of Iowa is undergoing reaccreditation and has chosen to emphasize undergraduate education as the focus of the self-study. The subcommittee for Learning Environments is asking you to reflect on the environments (physical and virtual, formal and informal) we provide for our undergraduate students. A small group of faculty generated a list of concerns and suggestions for improvements which we include here. Attached is a print version and an electronic version of the list which we would like you to read and then rank the items. If you choose to fill out the print version (pdf file), please print the form, fill it out, and return in campus mail to Assoc. Provost Tom Rocklin, Provost's Office, 111 JH. If you choose to fill out the electronic version of the form (doc file), you must fill it out and save it to your computer first. You may then send the attachment via email me at thomas-rocklin@uiowa.edu.

Thank you so much for your time. We appreciate your input.

Tom Rocklin
Self-Study Coordinator for Reaccreditation
319.335.0148 / 319.335.3560 (fax)

Learning Environments

Physical Spaces and Equipment: Please rank the following 14 suggestions for improving our campus learning environments in order of importance to you. (Ranking of 1 being the most important.)

_____	More classrooms for class sizes 50-55.
_____	Better seating to facilitate discussion in mid-range classrooms.
_____	Seating to facilitate discussion in larger classrooms (e.g. wide rather than deep and with center aisles).
_____	Improved acoustics.
_____	Seminar style classrooms for smaller undergraduate classes.
_____	Improved technology in the smaller classrooms.
_____	Lighting consistent with technology (e.g. lights on while projector in use).
_____	Blackboards/whiteboards that can be used when screens are down.
_____	Classrooms with wireless technology.
_____	Classrooms with responder technology.
_____	Continued support of student library use with library liaisons.
_____	Improved mechanism for getting video material from libraries.
_____	Maintaining and improving writing and speech center spaces.
_____	Improving access for students with disabilities.

Do you have any additional suggestions to improve The University of Iowa's campus learning environments?

_____

_____

Virtual Learning Environments: Please rank the following 4 suggestions for improving our virtual campus in order of importance to you. (Ranking of 1 being the most important.)

_____ Availability of and training with technology for online discussions and office hours (e.g.Elluminate!).
_____ Expanding options for varied course formats.
_____ Spaces for students to listen to and participate in online discussions.
_____ Facilitating virtual spaces (hardware and software) for students with disabilities.

Do you have any additional suggestions to improve The University of Iowa's virtual campus?

_____

_____

ICON Course Management System: Please answer the following questions regarding ICON.

YES   NO

_____ _____ Are you familiar with the ICON Course Management System?
_____ _____ Do you utilize ICON in your courses?
_____ _____ Do you feel it's important to offer ICON training every year for new faculty and staff?

If you do not currently use ICON, please tell us what changes would encourage you to do so.

_____

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