

Entry and Transition:

Becoming a University of Iowa Student

Dawn Bowlus	<i>Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center</i>
Tran Chau	<i>Undergraduate student</i>
Brian Corkery	<i>Academic Advising Center</i>
Jennifer Davis	<i>Undergraduate student</i>
Jane Dorman	<i>College of Engineering</i>
James Ehrmann	<i>Undergraduate student</i>
David Gier	<i>School of Music</i>
Dennis Moore, Chair	<i>Department of Rhetoric</i>
Mary Hall Reno	<i>Department of Physics & Astronomy</i>
Emil Rinderspacher	<i>Office of Admissions</i>
John Solow	<i>Department of Economics</i>

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ENTRY AND TRANSITION: BECOMING A UNIVERSITY OF IOWA STUDENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Iowa Promise Our Report Acknowledgments

THE IOWA PROMISE

The Iowa Promise: A Strategic Plan for The University of Iowa 2005-2010 identifies five major goals, and it says much about institutional priorities that the first goal concerns undergraduate education. As *The Iowa Promise* emphasizes, “The University considers excellent undergraduate education the core of its mission.”

Of the four main strategies for achieving this goal, the first focuses almost exclusively on entry and transition—

- Recruit and retain a student population that can succeed at a comprehensive research university, and nurture their success, by
 - Tailoring admission policies to ensure that admitted students demonstrate both strong preparation and motivation for college-level work;
 - Collaborating with K-12 education to help define academic competencies appropriate for college bound students;
 - Providing access through an appropriate blend of merit- and need-based financial aid and by increasing the amount of aid available;
 - Easing the transition for new students, guiding all students through their majors, and providing excellent academic advising.

This strategy reflects the great efforts that have been made in recent decades to improve recruitment and retention at The University of Iowa, as well as the promise that those efforts will continue and new initiatives undertaken.

Many recent developments are outlined in *Best Practices in Student Retention at the Regent Universities*, a 2005 report to the Iowa Board of Regents that shows how policies and procedures at the three state universities compare to those recommended in the ACT study, *What Works in Student Retention? Four Year Public Colleges* (Habley and McClanahan 2004). As noted there, Iowa has a long tradition of leadership in retention practices—boasting the oldest Writing Center in the nation, for instance. Several important efforts to support student success date from the 1990s, such as adding several new residential learning communities modeled on the long-established Language House (now International Crossroads), creating the Courses in Common program for block scheduling, and inaugurating the Four-Year Graduation Plan.

After 2000 came what the *Best Practices* report calls “a flowering of retention programs” prompted by the UI Task Force on Persistence to Graduation, chaired by Associate Provost Lola Lopes. This task force followed the lead of President Mary Sue Coleman in calling for a change in campus culture. In its final report, the Task Force urged the University to do more “to integrate students into a scholarly culture and to provide them with the intellectual skills and strategies that make the difference between success and failure.”

To bring about such a change in the campus culture, the Task Force recommended a series of specific improvements. For instance, it supported a joint proposal of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and the Academic Advising Center to establish a First-Year Success Program. This became the College Success seminar, which continues to serve second-semester students on academic probation, and which in turn gave rise to the much larger College Transition course. In a related effort, CLAS also created the First Year Seminar program. (All of these programs are discussed in detail later in this report.) The Task Force recommended that Courses in Common be made available to more students, and in Fall 2006 it involved 40% more students than in Fall 1999. A similar call for more learning communities helped lead to the current roster of over a dozen.

OUR REPORT

Our report examines these and other retention and enrichment programs, along with similar initiatives to improve admissions and aid, to increase the diversity of the undergraduate student body, to attract and retain high-achieving students, and so on. Our greatest challenge has been to balance breadth and depth. Although the members of our subcommittee brought to this task a great deal of experience in recruiting and supporting new undergraduates, none of us had a clear idea of all the countless programs and activities devoted to entry and transition on this campus. Even to compile a list identifying them was no small task.

From the outset, we have been impressed by the quality and range of programs and services the University uses to attract the right undergraduates and support them during the crucial first year on campus. As we have examined select offices and initiatives more closely, we have repeatedly been struck by the dedication, imagination, and resourcefulness with which members of the University community fulfill these functions.

We have likewise been impressed by major improvements in just the past few years, such as the opening of the impressive new Honors Center and the creation of the Center for Diversity and Enrichment (which occurred while this report was in preparation). Such matters will be highlighted in discussions of individual programs in the four chapters that follow this brief introduction.

In researching this report, we also came to a better understanding of constraints that limit, or at least shape, progress the University can make in certain areas. For instance, admission standards for most undergraduates are set not by the University but by the Iowa Board of Regents—which establishes uniform standards for UI, ISU, and UNI—making UI far less selective than peer institutions. Even here, the University's successful lobbying for a new statewide Admissions Index represents progress, since it motivates better preparation for college during the high school years. (This is typical of many ways in which the University improves entry by influencing K-12 priorities.)

Nor is the University's relative lack of selectivity in admissions necessarily a cause for complaint. Many members of the University community believe it contributes to a tendency toward openness and egalitarianism that characterizes many aspects of UI life. But there is no denying that Regents-mandated standards have far-reaching implications. As noted by the UI Task Force on Persistence to Graduation in its final report (2000), "The public universities with the highest graduation rates are those that are the most selective." By admitting some students who are not likely to return for a

second year, the policy makes it difficult for the University to raise the rate of retention, however exemplary its support services.

Each of the four chapters that follow represents the findings of two or three members of our subcommittee, as revised after discussion by the whole group. The first chapter examines the administrative units responsible for guiding most new students from recruitment through admissions and aid to orientation. The next focuses on programs that serve special populations, including the sorts of “entry” services covered in Chapter 2. The third chapter reports on the University’s approach to academic advising, a service essential to student success, while other basic student services are discussed in the fourth chapter. In the final chapter, we offer several suggestions for continuing improvements.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would have been impossible to complete this report without the help of many offices and individuals.

Elizabeth Whitt was particularly generous—joining the entire committee for one of its weekly meetings, conferring with the chair on several occasions, and sharing data from the Research on Iowa Student Experiences (RISE) study. The University is extremely fortunate to be able to benefit from the expertise provided by our own Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE), which she co-directs with Ernest Pascarella.

During her years as Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, Lola Lopes provided the leadership behind so many recent UI initiatives to improve entry and transition. We knew we needed to talk to her in order to understand the University’s challenges and achievements, and she kindly returned from retirement long enough to join us for a memorable discussion.

Tom Rocklin took time to meet with us and share his perspective on past, present, and future developments, in addition to guiding our work both through consultation with the subcommittee chair and through his guidance of the self-study steering committee. Working with him on this project leaves us more appreciative than ever of the advocacy and leadership he provides for undergraduate education at Iowa.

From the outset of this project, Carol Lammer has provided unstinting support to our subcommittee, from scheduling meetings to demystifying SharePoint, and it is a pleasure to have this opportunity to thank her.

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Online@Iowa Lisa Troyer
Performing Arts Learning Community Kathleen Forbes
Writer's Learning Community Jessica Renaud

CHAPTER 2

FROM RECRUITMENT TO ORIENTATION

Signs of Success
Recruitment
Admissions
Admissions: Nursing, Business, and Engineering
Financial Aid
Orientation

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

It may be best to begin simply by noting some indications of the degree of success the University is having in recruiting the desired students and in moving toward the goals of *The Iowa Promise*. According to the Office of Admissions, the “number of freshman applications [has increased by] 32% in the last 10 years (from 10,874 in 1997 to 14,350 in 2006).” During that same period, the number of entering students who meet all of the University’s high school course requirements has gone up from 91% to 96.5%.

These improvements reflect a particularly strong emphasis during the last five years on recruiting students who have shown themselves to be well-prepared and well-motivated for college. Thus Admissions has eliminated a past policy of admitting some students with “core deficiencies” in math and science, has begun reviewing (and sometimes withdrawing) offers of admission for students who perform poorly during their final year of high school, and has raised the Admission Index used for students who do not meet the rank-in-class criterion.

High school GPA, ACT score, and class rank have edged up slightly, though state-mandated admission standards make it difficult to achieve significant progress on these measures.

RECRUITMENT

The University of Iowa sponsors many activities—from sports camps to summer programs at the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and talent Development—that introduce prospective students and their families to our campus. We have focused attention here on activities whose primary purpose is recruitment of new undergraduates.

The administrative unit primarily responsible for recruitment is the division of Outreach Services in the Office of Admission. The mission of the Office of Admissions is to develop

successful admission and orientation/transition strategies that serve the larger institutional objectives of teaching, research and service. A component of Enrollment Services in the Office of the Provost, Admissions works actively with central administrators, college deans, faculty, staff, students and alumni to attract and maintain a diverse, talented, multicultural student body of appropriate size

and composition that will matriculate, persist, achieve academically and graduate from the University.

The five divisions of this Office manage the recruitment and admission of all but a few of the undergraduates (as well as most graduate and professional students), to work closely with the Office of Financial Aid, and to offer an orientation program for first-year and transfer students and their families. The divisions are

- Outreach Services
- Pre-Enrollment Services
- Admission Information Systems
- Publications and Administrative Services
- New Student Orientation Services.

For a table listing their principal activities, see SharePoint.

Outreach Services educates a diverse group of prospective students about the University, about its policies and procedures in admissions and enrollment, and about academic and co-curricular opportunities for students. One of its principal operations is the Admissions Visitors Center (AVC), which has both on-campus and off-campus activities. Campus visits are especially encouraged to help prospective students determine whether The University of Iowa fits them well. Activities include

- Campus tours
- Black and Gold Days (full-day programs for prospective students)
- Transfer Days
- An overnight visit program for high-ability high school seniors
- Special events with the Center for Diversity and Enrichment to recruit a diverse student population.

On the order of 8,000 prospective students visited the campus in 2005-2006, the majority of whom were high school students (approximately 90%), with a balance of in-state (approximately 45%) and out of state students. The Office of Admissions reports 1,585 departmental visits during that period. Many trained student employees and volunteers assist as tour guides and campus hosts.

Off campus, the AVC conducts high school visits (456 in 2005-2006), participates in College Fairs, and conducts virtual visits to high schools using the Iowa Communications Network reaching a large number of students. In the Hawkeye Hometown Visit Program, Undergraduate Volunteers return to their communities to represent the University.

The total number of student contacts for the Admissions Visitors Center in 2005-2006 was to more than 45,000 prospective students and 10,000 family and friends. A breakdown of the categories of off-campus and on-campus contacts appears on SharePoint.

Outreach Services also works directly with alumni groups such as the Iowa Black Alumni Association and the Latino/a and Native American Alumni Alliance. The UI Alumni Association co-sponsors a program called Alumni Seeking Iowa Students (ASIST), which involves approximately 700 alumni who help extend the geographic range of recruitment efforts.

Communication with prospective students and their families includes email, on-line chats, instant messaging and recruitment phone call projects. Email inquiries, for the admissions office as a whole, are at the level of 175,000 for 2005-2006, an increase from approximately 6,000 in 1996. 3500 high school counselors and educators receive

information several times a year via a newsletter. The Office of Admissions seeks to insure that information flows both ways: a 15-member board of high school counselors from across the state advises the Office about how its members view trends in admissions.

ADMISSIONS

The division of Pre-enrollment Services handles all elements of admissions for most first-year undergraduates and transfer students (as well as managing many aspects of graduate and professional admissions).

For most entering undergraduates, Pre-enrollment Services applies the admissions criteria set by the Board of Regents for the three Regents universities: the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa. (The limited exception—early admission to professional schools—is discussed in the next section.) For 2007, Iowa residents are guaranteed admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences if they have

- successfully completed of high school course requirements (4 years of English/language arts, 2 years of a single foreign language, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies and 3 years of math/Algebra I & II and Geometry);
- graduated in the top 50% of their high school class; and
- completed an application including ACT or SAT scores, transcripts and the \$40 application fee.

Recently, the Board of Regents approved a new Regents Admission Index that will be used for Fall 2009 enrollment that combines ACT scores, class rank, GPA and the number of courses in core subject areas. This is an important and welcome development, with the promise of improving the preparation of new undergraduates.

In some cases, Pre-enrollment services applies an alternative index based on ACT scores and class rank (two times the ACT composite score plus the high school percentile rank larger than 95). If the high school does not rank, the admission decision is based on a holistic review, a process which is also available to any applicant. In 2006, 26% of applicants were from non-ranking schools, and the number is growing. (For data first-year students from Fall 2006, see SharePoint.)

Pre-enrollment Services processes a vast amount of data every year: last year alone, over 4,000 applications, 83,000 transcripts and placement reports, 80,000 phone calls and over twice that many emails. This office likewise coordinates mailings that admitted students receive from various units in the University. These mailings demonstrate the University's interest in the students and their families, while providing additional information about the institution. By coordinating these mailings, the Office of Admissions assures a regular flow of information, reduces duplication, and helps maintain a high quality and consistency of presentation.

This is clearly an area where recent developments in information technology are having a major impact, and the UI's approach to admissions is changing with the times. For instance, this past year 71% of first-year applications were submitted online. Beginning next year, the data from such applications will be loaded directly into the UI's system instead of being printed out and entered by hand, as in the past. (Staff freed from data entry will be assigned to other operations, such as the increasing need for holistic reviews of applicants without class rank.)

The process of Admissions is a student's gateway into the University's system of academic records, including not only transcript evaluation but also credit by transfer and by examination. Here the new Student Information System will benefit students and administrators alike by integrating information about admissions, University academic records, progress toward graduation, registration, billing, and financial aid in a single system.

ADMISSIONS: NURSING, BUSINESS, AND ENGINEERING

Early admissions programs allow the Colleges of Nursing and Business to recruit a significant (if limited) number of exceptionally promising individuals to our University. Requiring other students to complete substantial relevant course work before admission to these majors allows students to make informed choices and helps maintain the distinctive professional standards of these Colleges. The College of Engineering conducts much larger scale efforts in the recruitment and retention efforts new undergraduates.

Nursing

Nursing is one of the top 10 undergraduate majors at the University of Iowa, enrolling approximately 2% of UI undergraduates. However, very few are admitted to the College of Nursing when they first enter the University. In Fall 2006, for instance, only 24 of 479 Nursing majors were first-year students. The bulk of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students are admitted after several semesters of college work, since the minimum prerequisites for admission to the nursing program ordinarily include 8-9 courses in biology, microbiology, rhetoric, etc., as well as a minimum GPA. (The admissions index for early admissions to Nursing is 148.)

Those first-year students who are selected for direct admission into the College of Nursing experience some distinct advantages, which include advising by the Executive Associate Dean of the College and eligibility for special scholarships.

Business

The situation in the Henry B. Tippie College of Business is similar, though in this case, 5% (approximately 80 out of 1600 undergraduate majors) are accepted for early admission directly into Business. (Here too the admissions index for these exceptional students is 148.) Combined first-year and sophomore early admission students make up 8% of the total number of business majors. The majority of business students apply to the program at the end of the sophomore year after taking 60 semester hours of course work including mathematics, economics and accounting.

The advantages of early admission include a seminar course for first-year students in their first semester at Iowa, opportunities to be involved in research and internships at an earlier stage, and more flexibility in developing a personalized program over the four years of undergraduate study.

The College of Business also offers a learning community for 50 of its students, the Leadership Community in Business and Entrepreneurship, located in Currier Hall dormitory.

It should be noted that one way the College of Business supports diversity and inclusiveness is through the Iowa Diversity in Business Initiative. A diversity awareness course (1 s.h.) is offered, and educational and social events focusing on diversity are scheduled.

Engineering

The College of Engineering plays a larger role in recruitment and retention of new undergraduates. Aside from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), which enrolled nearly 3900 new students in Fall 2006, the College of Engineering has the largest group of first-year students, 314. Engineering has a separate admissions standard from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, requiring an additional math class, a minimum ACT composite and math score of 25, and a class rank in the top 30% of the graduating class.

Unlike Nursing and Business, the College of Engineering has its own Director of Admissions and Outreach, though this person's are coordinated with the UI Admissions. For instance, off-campus recruitment of potential engineering undergraduates is done by the Outreach division of University Admissions, although the engineering material in the mailings is provided by the College of Engineering.

Engineering hosts its own campus visits for prospective students. In 2005-2006, approximately 375 students with their parents met individually with the Director. It also hosts group visits, organized through programs like Explore Engineering@Iowa, Black and Gold Days and the Workplace Learning Connection. Last year, approximately 850 students took advantage of one of these group visits. A key element of this program is the Student Ambassadors group, student employees who work 3-5 hours per week to support the outreach, recruitment and retention goals of the College of Engineering.

Recruitment efforts to increase the diversity of the student body in Engineering, both in terms of racial and ethnic diversity and gender diversity, is likewise coordinated with University Admissions. The Ethnic Inclusion Effort for Iowa Engineering, aimed primarily for graduate student recruitment and retention, helps with undergraduate recruitment as well, as does the College's publication, "Invent Your Future: Women and Minorities in Iowa's College of Engineering." An engineering faculty and staff organization (Faculty and Staff Fostering Inclusion) works to evaluate and improve recruitment and retention of students.

The 2006 first year class of engineering students is comprised of 56 women (18%) women and 258 men. Fifty six percent of the first year students are from Iowa, with a similar ranking of feeder schools as for the first-year students as a whole. Thirty-four percent of students are from Illinois. (A profile of the Fall 2006 first-year class in the College of Engineering is on the SharePoint..)

A too for both recruiting and supporting new students is the opportunity to belong to the engineering learning communities: Men in Engineering and Women in Science and Engineering. The student-to-student mentoring program for first year students called the "Engineering Connection," a seminar course in common for all first year engineering students, and free tutoring programs for all math, science and engineering courses work together to build a strong, supportive community for engineering students that is used to recruit new students to the program.

FINANCIAL AID

The primary mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid is

to address the financial needs of students in a way that enables student access to the University of Iowa, facilitates enrollment of a high-achieving, culturally diverse student body and encourages optimum graduation rates.

The Office works to ensure that qualified new and continuing students can find the financial resources required to attend the University. Several special programs provide opportunities for underrepresented students. The Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid is an Assistant Provost for Enrollment Services. The senior staff members meet regularly with the UI Financial Aid Advisory Committee, consisting of six faculty members, six students and two staff members.

The Office of Financial Aid reports that the percent of tuition revenue set aside for University grants and scholarships has risen over the past ten years from 15% to over 18% for FY08. This represents an even more impressive monetary increase of over \$30 million, going from approximately \$17 million to approximately \$48 million. Director Mark Warner writes,

...in FY97 the Office of Student Financial Aid administered \$96,514,115 in federal aid; \$2,365,675 in state aid; and \$89,207,824 in University and private aid for a total of \$188,087,614.

In FY06 (FY07 figures not yet available) the UI Office of Student Financial Aid administered \$168,870,189 in federal aid; \$2,477,962 in state aid; and \$145,166,180 in University and private student aid for a total of \$316,514,331.

This represents an overall increase of 68%. The University Tuition Set Aside allocations are part of these totals so as you can see that when total aid was increasing 68%, the UI had increased its allocations by 181%.

More than 80% of set aside funds now goes to students who filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and demonstrated financial need. Several major initiatives, such as the restructured Old Gold Scholarship program and the new Iowa Pathways Program are being funded by substantial new commitments (in the first case, new set aside funds, and in the latter, University controlled private money). In addition to increasing the amount of tuition set aside, Financial Aid has also undertaken a major initiative for new scholarship and grant money through the UI Foundation's Comprehensive Campaign. (Many people are surprised to learn that only 1% of the total assistance comes from the state.)

The Office of Student Financial Aid works closely with Admissions to serve incoming students. For instance, the Directors of the two offices recently conducted a systematic review of undergraduate aid programs. As a result, several important scholarship programs were created to continue increasing the diversity of the student population (see Chapter 3 below), and the two main competitive, merit-based scholarships—Presidential and Old Gold Scholarships—were restructured to help recruit more top scholars. (Everyone seems to applaud this change, though some argue that it did not go far enough and that the number of Old Gold awards should be decreased to fund an increase in the value of Presidential Scholarships, which are do not yet amount to a “full-ride.”)

Tables on SharePoint provide key financial data, for which it is worth noting two facts with policy implications. First, the dollar amount of tuition scholarships set aside for undergraduates is less than proportional to undergraduate contributions to the fund. Second, the State of Iowa currently provides financial support for students attending private colleges or universities but not for those who choose the University of Iowa, ISU, or UNI.

ORIENTATION SERVICES

The final division of the Office of Admissions to be discussed here is Orientation Services, whose mission is “to facilitate the successful matriculation of entering first-year, transfer, and international students to the University of Iowa by providing a comprehensive introduction to the University.” Orientation Services seeks to fulfill its mission by implementing the following goals:

- providing access to appropriate and accurate information and services;
- encouraging family members and guests to support their students by understanding and becoming involved in their educational careers;
- encouraging and supporting the continued professional and personal development of staff;
- developing programming based on research and knowledge of college student development, university student assessment, institutional needs, departmental priorities, availability of resources, and the skills and interests of staff; and
- including faculty, staff, students, and community members in the implementation of programming.

Attending Orientation is mandatory for all entering students. During the last academic cycle (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall 2006), the office worked with 4357 first-year students, 1917 transfer students, and 6348 parents and guests. Most first-year students and their guests attended one of nine two-day programs offered during June and July. Transfer students, and the fewer first-years who could not attend a two-day Orientation, are welcomed via a one-day program.

The primary focus of the student orientation is academic. It is designed to educate students about the make-up of a degree, academic expectations, General Education, requirements for majors, course selection, schedule building, and registration. In addition, the program features elements that introduce students to campus, promotes student organizations, highlight social networking, review residence hall living, and discuss being independent. Simultaneously, while new students are learning about such matters, their parents are taking part in a program designed to make them aware of basic academic information, introduce campus support programs, and offer insights about the transition ahead.

An important goal underlying both programs is a desire to have students and parents leave Orientation feeling relaxed, comfortable and excited about their future at the University. As one Orientation Service document explains (see SharePoint).

- In the end, we do whatever we can to show students that the university is a friendly, welcoming place where faculty and staff want them to succeed, the resources are here to assist them in this effort, and that opportunities abound to learn and grow.

Orientation provides a great deal of new information, but Orientation Services teaches its staff that even though students may not be able to recall the specifics of their experience, they will remember how the experience felt.

Likewise, Orientation Services takes seriously their role as representatives of the university and understands “the importance for program participants to be able to be able to identify with the staff and see themselves represented in that group.” Consequently, staff recruitment and selection results in a racially diverse team, coming from small and large towns across the country, who are involved in a wide- range of campus organizations and student activities. The Orientation staff undergoes extensive diversity training and is made aware of the variety university programs and activities that support diversity in its many forms. In addition, Support Service Programs (SSP) and Opportunity at Iowa (OI) staff have a long-standing tradition of participating in and contacting students through the orientation process.

Orientation Services partners with other campus offices in ways that extend their impact beyond their one and two day programs. It collaborates with the Academic Advising Center on the development, supervision, and implementation of The College Transition course. (See Chapter 3 below.) Orientation staff works with both the Office of Student Life and University Housing in the development and facilitation of the University’s *Welcome Week* program.

Both students and parents/guests are invited to evaluate their orientation experience and many do. (In the last cycle, nearly 4,000 students and over 1300 parents/guests.) These evaluations focus on staff qualities, program elements, knowledge gained, and transition readiness. (For the data, see reports on SharePoint.)

The students agreed that students advisers were friendly/approachable (98%), able to answer questions (96%), and organized (95%). They felt confident that they could use ISIS (92%), build a schedule (88%), contact their academic adviser (86%), and seek out university resources (76%). Looking ahead 66% felt they needed no more information, but others wanted know more about, building locations, clubs and activities, campus life, and transportation and parking. The most common complaints were that some felt that too much time was spent on schedule building, others felt there was “too much down time”, and some information was deemed repetitive. (Taken from Orientation documents)

The parents/guest found the parent staff to be friendly (98%), approachable (97%), and able to answer questions (94%). They found all sessions valuable and had no recommendations for eliminating or adding sessions. The most common improvement themes “too much down time after check-in”, a desire for students to see all of the parent program, more information on financial aid, and more structure during the University Social. Parents/guests also reported feeling better informed, less overwhelmed, and more comfortable about sending their child to college. (Taken from Orientation documents)

Programs this large always encounter complaints and difficulties, but the vast majority of the participants seem generally positive and happy with experience. The themes that emerge from these evaluations is coupled with experiential and collegial feedback and used to inform future improvements and modifications. Recent initiatives include
 implementing on-line placement testing,
 creating a conference format for evening resource presentations on Day One of
 summer Orientation,

incorporating new presentations for students and parents such as *Introduction to Academics, Getting Started, or Letting Go*, increasing involvement with the Honors Program, and moving the Hawkeye Dinner to the new Burge Market Place.

In the future they are looking forward to:
increasing their involvement with the newly reconfiguring SSP/OI,
adding *Computing at Iowa* to the conference format,
adding a “student life” discussion to the morning of Day Two of summer Orientation,
moving to an online, real-time Orientation registration format, and
increasing the involvement of University officials in the program.

We will return to the subject of orientation in our final section on continuing improvements.

CHAPTER 3

SELECTED POPULATIONS

Diversity Recruitment and Retention
Students with Disabilities
Top Scholars
Athletics Student Services

DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

In 2005 Provost Michael Hogan charged the Diversity Action Committee to recommend ways to improve diversity at the University. Their report (March 2006) presents a thorough discussion of the myriad issues concerning the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities, including an assessment of UI's current efforts and the significant differences between majority and minority recruitment needs and strategies:

Although The University of Iowa has a well respected academic and research reputation, a common concern for prospective undergraduate and graduate or professional minority students is how well the University can help them achieve their academic and career aspirations while also meeting social and cultural needs that give underrepresented minority students a positive holistic college experience. For the University's efforts to be successful, there is a need for a more personal approach to the recruitment of minority students (3).

The report offers 21 specific recommendations focused on Student Success, Faculty and Staff Success, Climate, University Coordination to Achieve Diversity, and Accountability. The recommendations found under "Student Success" are pertinent to the entry and transition of minority students:

1. Make minority student recruitment the responsibility of the entire campus.
2. Involve alumni in our recruitment effort.
3. Understand the needs of Iowa's minority students and focus on the special needs and concerns of Iowa communities with large minority populations.
4. Restructure and revitalize the university's scholarship and financial aid program.
5. Improve retention and graduation rates of underrepresented minority students.
6. Create a minority student advisory board.
7. Revitalize the cultural houses.

The DAC recommendations with regard to "Climate" respond to the UI Diversity Climate Survey produced by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, a study of the "overall diversity climate" at UI. The portion of the Diversity Climate Survey that focuses on undergraduate perceptions is based on a survey of 1,095 undergraduate students in the spring of 2005. The survey found that 80.1% of respondents felt as if "they belonged at the UI," but "students who are racial/ethnic minorities, non-US born citizens and 26 and older reported less access, equity and inclusion at the university, and they perceived less institutional commitment to diversity than majority, US-born and younger respondents."

One of the primary recommendations of the DAC report was to “foster the coordination of the University’s diversity efforts.” More specifically,

In order to articulate, emphasize, and pursue the University’s goal of diversity on a systematic basis, we urge the central administration to institute a coordinating mechanism that will bring together the many University offices focused on specific aspects of achieving diversity.

In July of 2006, while continuing as Associate Provost for Diversity, Marcella David was appointed Special Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity and Diversity, in which role she assumed chief responsibilities for coordinating diversity efforts, including those relating to recruitment and retention of minority students. Under David’s leadership are the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity—which in addition to dealing with issues of compliance, complaints of discrimination, etc., also assists in recruitment efforts—and, since March 2007, the newly-created Center for Diversity and Enrichment (CDE).

The CDE is a merger of Support Service Programs and Opportunity at Iowa, providing “leadership and coordination for outreach and service to underserved students from diverse backgrounds, including students of color, first-generation students whose parents have not received a baccalaureate degree and students from low-income families.”

The Center sponsors many individual programs and initiatives organized according to three major purposes: 1) those for pre-college students: “pipeline (or pool) development” and outreach, 2) programs and activities that enhance the social and educational environment of new students at the university, and 3) academic support of students. Their goals are similar: to recruit and/or retain a diverse student population at The University of Iowa, with particular emphasis on underrepresented minority students. The focus varies: the academic talent of the students, particular majors, TRIO-program eligibility, geographic location, or ethnicity alone. (For a complete list, see SharePoint.)

A number of the pre-college programs are not explicitly focused on recruiting minority students to Iowa but rather are intended to “increase the number of minority students who graduate from high school with the skills for college success.” Associate Provost David described these efforts as “pipeline development.” Examples include the Pen Pal program and the federally supported TRIO program Upward Bound (which also supports economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students). Participants are contacted subsequently by Admissions, Iowa Biosciences Advantage, and again by the Center for Diversity and Enrichment.

Some academic support programs fall under the auspices CDE. In addition to numerous less-formal programs (such as study circles, etc.), it administers New Dimensions in Learning (NDIL), a TRIO supported program that offers tutors, academic counseling and access to technology for those students who qualify. Some academic support is available through CDE for minority students who do not qualify for NDIL.

Advantage Iowa Awards are given to first-year students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents whose enrollment will contribute to a diverse learning environment. Academic support for Advantage Iowa recipients (formerly Opportunity at Iowa scholars) includes mentoring, tutoring, mid-term progress reviews, supplemental instruction and community-building activities.

Another new program is Iowa Pathways, designed to serve economically disadvantaged students from Iowa who graduate in the top 10% of their class (or alternatively have an admissions index of 136 or higher). This scholarship is a four-year commitment to cover direct educational costs not met by federal, state and University scholarships and requires that the student maintain a 3.0 GPA. This innovative program includes financial aid and financial management counseling sessions each year.

Other successful award programs remain in place, such as IMAGES (Iowa Minority Academic Grants for Economic Success), funded by tuition set aside funds and awarded according to guidelines determined by the state.

Another notable effort supported by CDE, initiated in Fall 2006, is The Iowa Edge, “a five-day transition program that immediately precedes opening of fall classes for African-American, Asian-American, Latino/a, and Native American students and all first-generation college students new to The University of Iowa.” Its goals are “(1) to familiarize students with the physical campus and the social and academic components of the University prior to the opening of classes and (2) to create opportunities and activities for students to build community.”

A number of other UI offices play a role in minority student recruitment and retention. The Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development sponsors several programs that focus on academically gifted minority students, including the Iowa Talent Program (ITP). The ITP “identifies a select group of highly able minority students from Des Moines when they are in 9th grade.” These students attend Central Academy (the gifted magnet school in Des Moines) as well as Belin-Blank summer programs. Upon high school graduation and successful completion of the ITP program, these students are rewarded with ITP scholarships to attend The University of Iowa. They then become members of the University Honors Program, live together in the Honors Learning Community, and meet regularly with Belin Blank staff. They may choose to participate in the Iowa Edge orientation program. The success rate of the Iowa Talent Program is impressive: 86% of ITP students graduate from college.

The Iowa Biosciences Advantage (IBA) “aims to enhance the academic and research competitiveness of underrepresented minority students at the undergraduate level and to facilitate their progress toward careers in the biomedical, behavioral and biophysical sciences...” The five to ten students selected yearly enjoy significant academic and transition support, including participation in The Iowa Edge and a specialized section of the College Transition course. They also receive “long-range academic planning” and peer mentoring by older IBA students. A key component of the program is connecting each IBA student with a faculty member and a research project, which allows students a unique learning experience and the support and encouragement of a faculty mentor.

The Iowa Talent Project and the Iowa Biosciences Advantage program are excellent models for reaching out to minority students and encouraging their enrollment at The University of Iowa, and their success in college, though it is fair to note that these programs serve a very limited number of students.

The Office of Admissions contributes in many ways to the recruitment of diverse students. One of the assistant directors has direct responsibility for activities and strategies for increasing the population of minority students on campus. There are specific publications developed, strategic mailings planned, and visits made to target schools and community organizations, in addition to the significant financial resources dedicated to the Iowa Advantage Awards.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

According to Director Dau-shen Ju, Student Disability Services (SDS) “assures and asserts the right to education for students with disabilities, and promotes and facilitates inclusion, understanding and appreciation of human differences, in particular in the areas of disability.” SDS’s goal is to “provide an inclusive, welcoming and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities, through community outreach activities, and service learning opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds.” This office reports jointly to the Vice President for Student Services and the Director of University Counseling.

SDS’s core function is providing academic accommodations (e.g., modification of classroom or testing conditions) for qualified students. SDS also works with other university units (the Housing Office, the Bionic Bus, etc.) to assist students who require other types of accommodations (e.g., housing, transportation).

SDS’s involvement with the recruitment and admissions process is primarily through information sharing through office visits, phone calls, publications, and the website. Through a collaborative effort (and funding support from Admissions), each year SDS sends a representative to the Choice Fair, a college information fair in Chicago for college-bound students with disabilities. SDS also participates in first-year orientation sessions, offering an informational meeting at each session for students with disabilities.

By law, students with disabilities must initiate contacts with SDS for accommodations. Each student is assigned to an SDS advisor, who works closely with the student to identify needs and facilitate accommodations. This one-to-one relationship is particularly helpful for students new to campus. Services may begin prior to students’ enrollment; once eligible students have accepted admission to Iowa, they can request a trial version of the assistive technology software, assistance with housing requests, or extended time on placement tests.

From 2005 to 2006, Student Disability Services has seen a 24% increase in the number of students registered with their office. Among 607 students registered with SDS during FY06, fifty students were first-year students. We noted that each year (freshmen through senior), the number of students *registered* with SDS increased (from 50 to 266), however those who *requested services* declined from 78% of the freshmen to only 47% of the seniors. SDS staff have expressed concern that first-year students with disabilities need additional support and systematic introduction to the university organization and resources, and it has proposed that students with disabilities be allowed to participate in the Iowa Edge program.

National debates over disability services find a place on the Iowa campus as well. For instance, some believe disability accommodations are best provided in a central location, whereas others favor a decentralized approach, with individual academic departments arranging most accommodations. SDS staff expressed the view that the former is becoming more common on this campus, which not only strains the resources of their office but arguably marginalizes students with disabilities.

TOP SCHOLARS

The second major part of the strategic plan's goal for undergraduate education includes "Strengthening the honors program and other opportunities for high-achieving students."

The key parties involved in recruiting and enrolling academically gifted students to the University are 1) the Office of Admissions, 2) the University Honors Program, 3) the Office of Student Financial Aid (in administering scholarship funds), and 4) the College of Engineering. Other interested parties include the Belin-Blank Center, through its many K-12 activities and its National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering (NAASE) program; the Colleges of Business and Nursing with their early admission programs; and other departments that provide significant scholarships for incoming top scholars (particularly Chemistry and Physics).

The Office of Admissions

The Office of Admissions has a Director of Scholar Recruitment, Anne Gannaway, who coordinates many of the activities on campus for prospective top scholars and is the primary personal contact for most. She meets with them individually during campus visits and communicates with the students and their families throughout the recruiting year. Her goals include involving more alumni in recruiting top scholars and personalizing the recruitment experience for these stellar students. The Director of Scholar Recruitment meets regularly with Honors staff to coordinate their joint efforts.

The Office of Student Financial Aid

As discussed in the previous chapter 1, the University has been working to improve scholarship programs aimed at attracting academically gifted students. These scholarships include the Presidential, the Old Gold, the National Scholars Award, the Advantage Iowa, and the National Merit Scholarship. There are also individual college scholarships, the greatest number being offered by the College of Engineering. These scholarships play a key role in recruiting stellar students—both by offsetting the cost of a college education and, sometimes more critically, by giving students recognition and a sense that this institution really wants them to enroll.

The University Honors Program

The University Honors Program has two primary goals: enrolling stellar students at The University of Iowa and creating an exceptional academic experience for them. Students may learn about Honors at Iowa through a variety of means, including the Admissions or Honors websites, key mailings from Admissions, other students, campus visits, and admission counselors. Some students first learn about the Honors Program when they have been admitted to the University and receive a letter of welcome from the Director of the Honors Program.

The number of students in the Honors Program continues to grow. Incoming students are eligible with an admission index of 148, the same as the cutoff for early admission to Nursing or Business. (Current UI undergraduates are eligible with a 3.33+ UI GPA.) For

Fall 2007, preliminary numbers indicate that 16% of the incoming freshmen (approximately 600 students) have been admitted into Honors. According to Bob Kirby, Associate Director of the Honors Program, approximately twenty-five percent of the undergraduate students at Iowa are in the Honors Program, which is 5,000-6,000 students.

One of the cornerstones of the program has been its high degree of flexibility. Honors at Iowa is not a curriculum but rather a collection of optional programs and experiences, dedicated staff members, and excellent facilities. For example, students can take Honors sections of courses, live in the Honors Learning Community, participate in scholarship workshops, etc. Honors students can be connected to the program and to each other via orientation sessions, peer mentoring, a welcome lunch, a listserv, etc.

The Honors Program has enjoyed such extensive development and support from the University in the last ten years that it is no exaggeration to speak of an ongoing transformation. The number of staff members has increased from 1.5 in 2000 to 6.25. Formerly housed in the old Shambaugh House and then a temporary location in the Jefferson Building, in 2004 it moved into its present quarters in the newly-built Blank Honors Center. Lines of administrative reporting have been simplified: instead of reporting both to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Provost, Honors now reports just to the Provost. The central administration has become more closely involved with the Honors Program, as evidenced by monthly meetings with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

This process of transformation continues, which means there continues to be considerable discussion about what shape Honors at Iowa should take. The Honors website says “The University of Iowa Honors Program is a small community of outstanding students within the larger university setting.” But how small? Outstanding in what ways? And how related to the rest of the university? Should Honors be academically more selective or more inclusive, with more weight being accorded to non-academic talents and abilities? Should the Honors community be better integrated into undergraduate life as a whole or, on the contrary, more exclusive? Should the course requirements remain relatively unstructured, as they are now, or should the program have more of its own distinctive curriculum? (For the current Director’s vision of what Honors should become, see “Honors_Nelson_26March07.doc” on SharePoint.)

The Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

The Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education has a great deal of knowledge about and interaction with academically talented students in grades K-12. The Center provides summer programs and year-round weekend activities for gifted students, as well as many resources for teachers of these students.

The Belin-Blank Center does a lot of “pool development” through Talent Search programs primarily focused on elementary and junior high students. They have a 50,000-name database of these students (grades 4-11) from Iowa, contiguous states, and Florida and purchase names from comparable programs at such places as Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Northwestern.

The Belin Summer Institute (BSI) is a very competitive summer program. Seventh and eighth grade students in Iowa are nominated by their schools: the best math student, the best science student, the best performing arts student, etc. 80-130 students are selected

from a pool of about 400. Participants are awarded a \$1,000 scholarship if they decide to attend The University of Iowa after graduating from high school, and about a third of them do enroll. The Center sponsors a wide variety of other summer programs, whose attendees are likewise entered into the UI Admissions database.

The National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering (NAASE), in existence since 2000, is a competitive academic program through which talented high school juniors decide to enroll at Iowa instead of attending their senior year of high school. Their college credits transfer back to high school and these students then graduate with their high school class having already completed a year of college. The recruitment of future NAASE students is primarily done through the names submitted to the Belin Summer Institute. NAASE students are given an automatic \$1,000 scholarship and are considered for all University scholarships (Presidential, Old Gold, etc.).

The NAASE program is an ideal model for providing opportunities and much support for incoming students—if money were no object. This small group of students all live in the Honors Learning Community, have one-to-one meetings with Belin-Blank staff members, receive priority registration, attend a year-long first-year seminar, attend the same summer orientation program, move in early, have access to a counseling clinic (at no charge), are involved with team-building events, attend cultural events together, and are given guidance from older students through a packet called “Hindsight is 20/20: What I Have Learned This Year.” In 2006-07, these services were provided to the 12 NAASE students and 6 Iowa Talent Project (ITP) students.

Nursing, Business, and Engineering

As noted in Chapter 1, the Colleges of Nursing, Business and Engineering follow special admissions procedures that hold students to a higher standard than most entering students. These Colleges collaborate with the Office of Admissions on identifying good “prospects,” sending out strategic mailings, hosting on-campus programs, meeting with prospective students, etc. They also share many students with Honors and the Belin-Blank Center.

ATHLETICS STUDENT SERVICES

Athletics Student Services provides full academic and support services to the 600-650 student athletes who participate in one or more of the 24 intercollegiate sports at Iowa. In addition, this office oversees the recruitment of student athletes, including monitoring compliance with NCAA, Big Ten, and University of Iowa guidelines. The mission of the office requires it to maintain strong working relationships with a wide variety of offices on campus, including many mentioned in this report, and complements the services these offices provide.

Each year there are 170-200 new first-year student athletes. Being an athlete can add considerable pressures to the college experience. Athletics Student Services pays special attention to first-year athletes to ensure that they make a smooth transition to University life. New student athletes meet their academic counselor at summer Orientation. First-year and transfer student athletes meet weekly with this counselor to monitor their academic and personal progress.

The office maintains a very proactive approach to the student athletes, monitors class attendance, and solicits ongoing feedback from the students' instructors. In the fall, new athletes participate in an extensive orientation and certification program that covers UI, Athletics, Big Ten, and NCAA policies on a wide variety of topics. In addition, they take a one-credit hour seminar on the transition to University and intercollegiate cultures. This resembles the College Transition course in that it covers study skills, time management, learning strategies, diversity, and campus resources. In addition, the students attend a structured study program that includes mandatory study tables, study groups, and free tutoring.

One way to measure the effectiveness of this program is to look at graduation rates. The six-year graduation rate of the 1999 cohort for all UI students was 66%; student athletes had a 71% graduation rate. The 2005-2006 UI self study for the NCAA recertification discusses graduation rates in section 2.1. The study can be found at www.uiowa.edu/-our/ncaa-cert/report/index.htm.

The Department of Athletics is committed to improving the recruitment and retention of minority student athletes and maintaining a supportive climate for them. They have developed a 5-year Minority Issues Plan which is being incorporated into the Department's strategic plan. Athletics Student Services involves faculty, staff, and business and professional leaders of color in networking/mentoring educational initiatives with student athletes of color. This promotes relationship building among athletes and these campus/community role models.

CHAPTER 4

ADVISING

Academic Advising Center Advising in the Colleges Courses and Programs to Foster Retention and Engagement

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER

It should be noted first of all that the Academic Advising Center has developed and implemented a number of the main programs for retaining students and fostering engagement, discussed in the final section of this chapter. These include College Transition, Transfer Transition, IowaLink, and Courses in Common.

Academic advising is mandatory for all undergraduates at The University of Iowa, meaning that the department, college, or adviser must authorize a student's registration each semester. Nearly all students must meet with an adviser for authorization, although some departments allow students to register without a meeting.

The Academic Advising Center (AAC), which was created initially to advise Open or undecided students, now advises almost all first-year students. Physics and Astronomy, Speech and Hearing Science, and Biochemistry are the only departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) that advise their own first-year students. AAC also advises many entering transfer students.

Most large institutions do not have mandatory advising or assigned advisers, but have advisers available on a drop-in basis only and students see whoever is available. UI students are assigned a specific adviser throughout their time at the Center. AAC served 8,800 undergraduates in 2005, and each adviser has a caseload of about 340 during the fall semester.

The Advising Center adheres to a personal, proactive philosophy of reaching out to students, and developing personal relationships and partnerships. Advisers help students assume responsibility for their own academic planning, yet advisers also go out of their way to contact students who have academic difficulty or problems with scheduling and those who have made significant academic achievements.

Because academic advisers establish durable personal contact with students, they are a major force for student retention. First-year students meet with their adviser at least five times, beginning with summer orientation. Advisers expect to meet with students a minimum of three times during fall. New student meetings are designed to help students understand how advising works. At planning appointments in late September and October, advisers create plans for graduation, compare possible majors, discuss problem areas and make referrals. In the early registration appointments in November and December, advisers approve course selections for the next semester and clear students for registration. The schedule repeats itself during second semester.

AAC is renowned across campus for its outstanding staff. Advisers are highly trained, extremely knowledgeable, and a valuable resource for staff and faculty as well as students, making the Center an information and referral source for the entire campus.

The Advising Center is an effective advocate for students and a change agent for the institution. Its staff has an important perspective on questions of how issues, policies, curricular changes affect students. In order to help improve the undergraduate experience, advisers provide departments and colleges with feedback on course offerings, curricular changes, policies, and procedures. As the Director of the Center points out, much of the Center's success can be attributed to the strong relationships advisers have built with other service offices, academic departments and colleges across campus.

The Center's training and development program is a nationally recognized model and has won numerous awards. For instance, the staff has been developing cultural competencies through the University staff development program. The Office has tried to establish a welcoming atmosphere to all types of students. Staff members served on the Diversity Task Force and participate in Admissions diversity recruitment programs.

Since the last reaccreditation visit, AAC has moved to offices in the new Pomerantz Career Center. A much-needed improvement, the new facilities are centrally located, provide private offices for advisers for the first time, and have ample room for student reception.

Each spring the Center asks students to evaluate their adviser and the Center's reception personnel. For the past two springs, more than 1500 students completed the evaluations and give advisers high marks "for doing his or her job well." Complete results of the 2005 and 2006 surveys are available on SharePoint.

AAC has recently begun implementing outcomes-based assessment for advising services. Staff are currently refining their mission statement and identifying learning outcomes. The next steps will be to map the outcomes onto different parts of the advising process, determine the resources and staff development necessary to help students achieve the outcomes, and assess learning and the delivery of services. As Pat Folsom, Director of AAC, notes, "All this requires a greater focus on advising as teaching."

ADVISING IN THE COLLEGES: CLAS, NURSING, BUSINESS, AND ENGINEERING

Almost all first-year Liberal Arts and Sciences students are advised by the Academic Advising Center, so the advising system within academic departments is largely beyond the scope of this report. (For details, see "Specialization: Education Within the Major.") However, we do share concern about the advising of new transfer students. Some departments are said to not make themselves available during the early transfer orientation programs and (contrary to CLAS policy) to refuse to make arrangements for advise these new students to be advised.

As noted earlier, new undergraduates admitted directly to the College of Nursing are advised by the Executive Associate Dean. In Business, they are advised by a member of the Undergraduate Program staff. As noted in Chapter 2, the largest population of new students outside CLAS is in Engineering. During Orientation, all new Engineering students are advised by professional staff from the Student Development Center. Once a student declares a major, he or she is assigned to a faculty advisor in that major. Until, then, they continue to be advised by staff of the Student Development Center.

Early Admissions students in Business participate in a special seminar during their first semester. Similarly, all first-year engineering students are required to take a one-semester hour seminar taught by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs (with the assistance of SDC staff members and advanced majors) and covering knowledge of the field, success strategies, and personal goals.

COURSES AND PROGRAMS TO FOSTER RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

College Transition Course

College Transition, Transfer Transition, IowaLink, and Courses in Common are sponsored by the Academic Advising Center.

College Transition is a two semester-hour “first year experience” course designed to help students make a smooth and successful transition to the college environment and academic life. The class is taught in small sections of 19 with an emphasis on class discussion and small group activities. Assignments emphasize self-reflection and improvement, as well as information and skills that students need in order to be successful at Iowa. Topics include goal setting, study skills, time management, diversity, personal finances, and wellness. Course instructors are University staff members from offices across campus. Enrollment in the course has grown from 471 students in 2002 to 1153 in 2006.

A primary stated goal of this course is to improve student persistence from first to second year. A recent retention study by the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education found that College Transition-takers were significantly more likely to return for their second year than non-takers. Another positive outcome of the course is that it has heightened instructors’ awareness of the experience (sometimes “plight” might be a better word) of the first-year student. This information is taken back to the instructors’ respective departments and used to enhance services to students.

The College Transition staff is in the process of implementing outcome assessment. Desired outcomes have been inventoried and assignments retooled in ways that produce better evidence of students’ ability to apply what they are learning. A portfolio learning project is also part of this assessment. In end-of-semester evaluations, students rate the course very highly. More than 95% of students said that the course helps them feel more comfortable as a new student at the University. (Evaluation results for 2005 can be found in the Regent packet document on SharePoint.)

Transfer Transition Course

One sign of the success of College Transition has been the development of Transfer Transition, which is closely modeled on it. Because the vast majority of transfers live off campus, they can feel isolated and not connected to campus life. This two semester-hour course is designed to introduce them to the institution and help them make a smooth and successful transition to this new academic and social culture. Assignments and activities have much in common with the College Transition course, plus a much heavier emphasis on exploring majors and careers. Enrollment has grown from 57 in 2004 to 98 in 2006.

As with College Transition, student evaluations rate Transfer Transition very highly. More than 98% of students said the course helped them feel more comfortable as a new student at the University and 95% stated that they felt more connected to the University as a result of the course. (Course evaluation results for 2005 can be found in the Regent Packet document on SharePoint.)

IowaLink Program

IowaLink is an academic support program for 30-50 recruited first-year students who do not meet the University's admission standards, but show potential for academic success. Recruited students include athletes, musicians, minorities, and first generation/low income students who are members of TRIO programs. It helps students develop the knowledge and skills essential for college success through a combination of instructional and academic support components designed to also provide social support. Students are required to complete a year-long seminar, enroll in specified general education courses, and participate in study groups. Supplemental instruction is one notable feature of the program, as recommended by the Task Force on Persistence to Graduation. In addition, each student works with an academic support team (composed of instructional and student services staff) that maintains frequent contact with the student, closely monitors her or his progress, and collaborates on early intervention efforts if needed.

The program has been quite successful. IowaLink students persist at a much higher rate than their academic profiles would predict. In fact, they persist at the same level as their regularly admitted student cohort. (Persistence and retention data for the last ten IowaLink cohorts can be found in the Regent Packet document on SharePoint.)

Courses in Common (CIC)

Courses in Common is a version of block scheduling that allows cohorts of 20 first-year students to take two or three required courses together. In fall 2006 more than 1150 students enrolled in the 57 different CIC options. CIC helps participating students integrate more quickly into the University by quickly establishing social and academic connections with one another.

Students like the CIC program. More than 98% of survey respondents indicated they would recommend CIC to a friend. More than 90% of respondents reported that their CIC involvement was a good way to meet people, made it easier to participate in class discussions, and was one of the most positive experiences of their first semester at Iowa. Instructors report that their CIC students had better class participation and interaction with peers compared to first-year students in general. (CIC participant survey results for 2005 can be found in the Regent Packet document on SharePoint.)

The RISE study showed that participation in Courses in Common had a statistically significant positive effect for first-year students on three of the seven outcome measures: growth in General/Liberal Arts education; personal/interpersonal growth; and overall/composite growth.

CLAS First-Year Seminar Program

CLAS First-Year Seminars are designed to introduce new undergraduates to the intellectual life of the University and help them make the transition to college-level

learning. Classes focus on discussion and honing other academic skills. Each seminar (worth 1 semester hour of credit) gives 15-16 students the chance to work closely with a faculty member on a topic related to his or her current research. Seminars are offered by a variety of departments giving students many choices. Some of the seminars use upper-class students as peer mentors, who report their experiences as being very powerful.

Although no formal evaluation has been conducted, there has been a growing interest from both students and faculty, with 45 seminars in 2006-07 enrolling 469 students. The College's goal is to offer 50 seminars each year, which would serve 750 students.

The RISE study showed that participation in a first-year seminar had a statistically significant positive effect for first-year students on four of the seven outcome measures: growth in General/Liberal Arts education; personal/interpersonal growth; growth in career/professional preparation; and overall/composite growth.

Online@Iowa Course

Last fall more than 2,700 students enrolled in this one credit-hour online course to help new undergraduates learn to navigate the digital world of the University. The course includes lessons about library databases, web sites, course management systems, ISIS, e-mail, and the HawkID. The course emphasizes responsible use of digital tools through topics such as e-mail etiquette, security, and plagiarism.

In both 2005 and 2006 students completed an evaluation of the course indicating the usefulness of each course topic, with 97% agreeing that course content was useful. In order for this course to continue to be successful, it will require adequate resources to stay current with the latest digital tools. (Course evaluation results survey results for 2005 and 2006 can be found in the OAI Evaluation document on SharePoint.)

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The Four-Year Graduation Plan, which has become a strong selling point to prospective students and parents, was first offered to first-year students in 1995. The Plan is a contract between a first-year student and the University. The University promises that graduation in four years will not be delayed by the unavailability of courses. The student promises to meet the established benchmarks or "checkpoints" for progress toward a degree. The benchmarks or checkpoints for each participating major can be found in the General Catalog. (A few majors cannot be completed in four years and therefore are not part of this program.)

First-year students may sign the Four-Year Graduation Plan Agreement at Orientation or at any time during their first two semesters at the University. Participation in the plan has grown steadily from 45% in 1995 to more than 80% in 2006.

This program has resulted in better planning on the part of both students and departments leading to improved course availability for all students and better advising information for academic planning. Research shows that students who sign the agreement have a higher 4-year graduation rate than students who do not sign. For the 2002 cohort, 44% of those who signed up for the Plan graduated in four years compared to 30% of those who did not sign. (Four-Year Plan participation and graduate rates can be found on page 6 of http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/profiles/20063_profile.pdf.)

CHAPTER 5

OTHER SERVICES TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

University Housing
Student Life
Recreation Services
Student Health Service
University Counseling Service
Campus and Community Relations

UNIVERSITY HOUSING

In addition to the central academic service of advising, the University supports student success with a variety of other services of the nature and caliber one expects. This chapter is particularly concerned with the impact that relevant offices have on first-year students, though as a group these services are likely to play an important role throughout an undergraduate's career, from recruitment through graduation. While many of these offices attend to such necessities as food, shelter, and health care, the mission of student services is increasingly likely to include student development, and their contribution to engagement and retention has gained greater recognition in recent years (see, e.g., Kuh et al. 2005, Pell Institute 2007).

“Residential living during college is consistently one of the most important determinants of a student's level of involvement or integration into the various cultural, social, and extracurricular systems of an institution” (Pascarella et al. 1994). With more than 90% of all first-year students living in one of ten residence halls, University Housing clearly plays a critical role in the experience of new undergraduates. At Iowa, 84% of first-year students who live in residence halls return for a second year of study, as contrasted with 63% of those who reside off campus. Even more impressively, students in residential learning communities have a retention rate of between 90 and 95% (Levine 2003).

The *2006-2007 Residence Halls Guidebook* provides an excellent overview of the role dormitory life can play in the transition to college:

The residence halls at The University of Iowa are more than just a place to live. In addition to safe and comfortable surroundings, living in an adult environment with limited supervision provides students with a glimpse of what living in society is all about: interacting with people from various backgrounds, taking responsibility for personal behavior, learning how a political governing system works, and learning how to have fun—and get along—with friends and neighbors. From classes, to interesting programs, to spontaneous fun, the residence halls at The University of Iowa provide for a living/learning experience on campus.

Prospective students are first exposed to residence hall living during campus tours offered by UI Admissions. Once a student has elected to attend The University of Iowa, one of their first major decisions pertains to selecting housing and identifying whether living in one of Iowa's 12 learning communities is of interest. University Housing recognizes the importance of what researchers refer to as “The College Effect”, the first

six to eight weeks on campus as the critical time for students to engage, form relationships, and integrate into the campus community. Resident Assistants (RAs) are trained to develop meaningful relationships with first-year students during their first weeks on campus. In this and other ways, University Housing plays a day-in and day-out role in the lives of most new students from the moment they move in and meet their roommates.

In interviews, several staff members noted that returning students serve as important mentors for first-year students by modeling appropriate behavior, both socially and academically. Often they serve as tutors as well, especially in Learning Communities. Although approximately one-third of the places in residence hall are reserved for returning students, Iowa's residence halls are currently at full capacity and that they are not currently able to accommodate all the students who would like to return.

It was evident from conversations with key staff that University Housing recognizes and is committed to its role in supporting student development. In 2006, University Housing developed and implemented a Community Development Blueprint intended to shift the focus from traditional programming to purposeful community development within the residence halls. In an effort to foster student learning, growth, and interaction, RAs plan programming around five outcomes:

1. Knowledge of Individual and Community Needs
2. Focus on Academics and Expanding Knowledge
3. Personal Wellness and Health Choices
4. Attending to the Well-Being of Others through Social Action
5. Commitment to Career Preparation

For instance, one of the ways University Housing discourages students from drinking alcohol is to provide alternative activities. Late on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, RAs are encouraged to provide "Late-Night Initiatives" such as a video game competition or a trip to a local mall. In addition, University Housing plans at least one program for each of the three campus neighborhoods (East, West, and North) every weekend.

It is also noteworthy that University Housing recently developed a policy of notifying a student's parents for use of alcohol or drugs and began imposing fines for drinking alcohol in the residence halls. The fine for a first offense is \$200 and increases to \$500 for a second offense. The rate of alcohol-related violations has dropped 30% since the fines were introduced.

Survey results indicate that student satisfaction is high and suggests areas for improvement. In fall 2004 University Housing distributed a Resident Satisfaction Survey (published by Educational Benchmarking, Inc.) utilizing a 7 point Likert scale, with 81 items focused on 15 factors of residence hall satisfaction. Results were compared to three sets of institutions: every college that distributed the survey (n=254), all institutions in Iowa's Carnegie class (n=66), and six selected by University Housing. The factors "satisfaction with floor or hall facilities" and "satisfaction with residence hall facilities" ranked Iowa top in our Carnegie class and second of all institutions surveyed. Dining services scores also received a high ranking. Factors concerning satisfaction with RAs, fellow residents, and roommates compared less favorably—results that Residence Services plans to take into account in their strategic planning process.

Learning Communities

Learning Communities widely recognized as a critical means of integrating first-year students into the University community. Research has demonstrated that participating students show an “increase in academic achievement, retention, motivation, intellectual development, learning, and involvement and community” (“Learning Communities”, 1999, ERIC Digest, ED 430512). On our campus, the importance of learning communities was further supported by the RISE report’s emphasis on early engagement as a key determinant factor for retention and student success.

The University of Iowa has 12 learning communities, each focused on a theme or field of study.:

- Art and Design
- Citizenship, Leadership, and Service
- Explorations in Computing, Mathematics, and Science
- Health Sciences
- Honors
- International Crossroads
- Iowa Writers
- Leadership Community in Business and Entrepreneurship
- Men in Engineering
- Multicultural Studies and Leadership
- Performing Arts
- Women in Science and Engineering

As noted above, the University retains approximately 84% of students who begin in the residence halls, whereas the rate increases to between 90 and 95% for those in a learning community (Levine 2003).

The University is committed to building on the strengths of this program. The Office of the Provost has recently appointed a Learning Communities Task Force to offer recommendations concerning the next stage of development. University Housing has recently created a new position, Manager of Academic Initiatives, whose duties include increasing consistency among the learning communities and to further implementing best practices from on and off campus.

STUDENT LIFE

The Office of Student Life (OSL) describes its mission as “to provide educational, leadership, and social opportunities for the greater University community, with a primary focus on students. Our staff works with, through, and for students and student organizations, and in conjunction with other University and community partners, to enhance the holistic development of students and their academic and co-curricular experiences.” http://imu.uiowa.edu/osl/about_osl/index.php

OSL provides diverse social, cultural, recreational and educational programs and activities for the University of Iowa community. It supports more than 400 recognized student organizations and sponsors major annual events, diversity initiatives, leadership opportunities, and arts and entertainment programs. The student organizations supported by OSL range from University of Iowa Student Government and SCOPE (Student Commission for Programming and Entertainment) to the Greek Community, SPEAK (Spreading Pet Education and Knowledge), and the University of Iowa Loose

Association of Very Silly People. Complete list at http://imu.uiowa.edu/osl/find_a_group/all_groups.php. Among the activities sponsored by the OSL are Dance Marathon, RiverFest and RiverRun, Homecoming, the 10,000 Hours Show and Welcome Week. Its other services include Student Credit and Money Management Services, Student Legal Services, and the University Box Office.

The OSL is integrally involved in many diversity initiatives. The four Campus Cultural Centers—the Afro-American Cultural Center, Latino Native-American Cultural Center, Asian Pacific American Cultural Center, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center—are units of the OSL, offering programs and services that include:

- Cultural celebrations and programs
- Liaison with community organizations and services
- Workshops, forums, and discussion groups
- Study and meeting spaces
- Computers
- Library and other resource materials
- Employment listings
- Film series, TV lounge, and games
- Party and social areas
- Fully-equipped kitchen
- Wheelchair accessible facilities

According to OSL's website, the Centers also give students "an opportunity to develop leadership skills through participation with program planning and evaluation committees."

The status of the Cultural Centers has been a concern for some years. The Director of OSL describes them as being in poor locations, receiving minimum upkeep, and lacking financial support. Such concerns were recently affirmed by the Diversity Action Committee, which recommended their revitalization. As that committee notes in its report, "The helpful model provided by the very successful Women's Resource and Action Center suggests that adequate funding and staffing would elevate the status of the cultural houses on campus, contribute significantly to the campus climate, and provide support for community outreach" (*DAC Report & Recommendations*, Recommendation 7).

The OSL also supports the annual Celebrating Cultural Diversity Festival, Martin Luther King, Jr/Human Rights Week, and the Multi-Cultural Calendar, which provides a comprehensive listing of multi-cultural events on campus and in the area.

http://imu.uiowa.edu/osl/culture_diversity/multicultural_calendar.php

The OSL's Student Leadership Development Program sponsors an annual one-day conference that offers a variety of general sessions, the majority of them student-facilitated, that provide students the opportunity to learn about leaderships. The program also includes regular Leadership Roundtables and the Student Leadership Institute (SLI), a two-day, off-campus retreat for advanced student leaders, with participants selected for their interest and potential in fostering a collaborative approach to leadership at The University of Iowa.

The annual Student Leadership Institute reserves 5 spaces for first-year students among the 30 selected to participate, and roughly 30 first-year students run for the ten seats in the University of Iowa Student Government that are reserved for first-year students in the Fall, and another five or six are elected in the March elections. First-year students

are chosen to hold positions on University charter committees. Roughly 700 (500 women and 200 men) first-year students sign up each fall for the formal recruitment process for the Greek system, and approximately 500 of these join a fraternity or sorority as a result of this process; another approximately 100 students join later in the year.

OSL provided no data on participation by first-year students. We did not receive an annual report, evaluations of how well it supports student organizations, or indications of the impact or effectiveness of the other services that the OSL provides. Some providers of those services (e.g., Student Legal Services) may have data that would facilitate such an evaluation.

RECREATION SERVICES:

Research indicates that student involvement in recreational sports programs, facilities and services plays a significant role in recruiting new students, supporting the learning environment, integrating students into the social community of the campus, affiliating them with the institution, and enhancing a number of student educational and developmental outcomes (Kovac and Beck, 1997; Maas, 1998, 1999). Those outcomes include enhanced recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff; higher grade point averages; greater student satisfaction with their overall college experience; and many other physical and intellectual benefits that accrue to students through their involvement (Astin, 1894, 1993; Kuh, 1995; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991) (Turman et al. 2004).

According to its website, the University of Iowa Division of Recreational Services exists “to serve the recreation needs of the University Community” by means of “a variety of programs for all ages, serving UI students, UI Faculty and Staff and members of the surrounding community. http://www.recserv.uiowa.edu/index_flash.htm

“Within the Recreational Services Program there are potential opportunities for physical, mental, and social growth and these may be realized to varying degrees by each participant in the many competitive and/or informal recreation activities. The program is geared to develop an appreciation for the meaningfulness and importance of the use of one's leisure time. This approach is believed to assist in the total education of the individual through informal association and opportunities outside the classroom.” <http://www.recserv.uiowa.edu/geninfo/mission.htm>

Recreational Services assists with the first-year experience when new students come to summer orientation. During the first evening, students are invited to the Field House for refreshments, to play sports like volleyball and table tennis, to use the climbing gym, or just to relax. This event provides a welcome break from the hectic but informative pace of orientation. In conjunction with the Office of Student Life and University Housing, staff members also offer a presentation entitled “What There Is To Do On Campus.”

Once students return to campus for classes, they can attend the Kickoff Classic, a welcome week event held during the middle of the day in Hubbard Park. The University community is invited to pick up information about Recreational Services, participate in an activity, and receive a free t-shirt. Recreational Services offers free orientations in its fitness centers and sponsors Fitness Week during the first week of school, when all of its

aerobic and cycling classes are offered free of charge. Each of these events is intended to introduce new students to Recreational Services programs and to create easy opportunities for them to get involved (Recreation_Services.doc).

Recreational Services justified development of the \$70 million Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (CWRC), slated to open in Fall, 2009, in part as a recruitment vehicle. Student fees for using the Center will be billed as part of tuition, so students will not need to pay an extra charge for admission, a policy meant to encourage student use. Recreational Services wishes to develop a “student union” type atmosphere at the CWRC by including lounge and café space, computer stations, and late-night hours, particularly on weekends, making the CWRC a central gathering place on campus.

Some changes over the past several years have included marketing a wider range of programs to appeal to more students. It now offers more intramural competitive group activities (resulting in a notable increase in women and co-ed participation), increased focus on self-directed fitness, and more lifetime leisure activities (1 semester hour credit) such as: kayaking and rafting. Recreational Services also connects with students by highlighting a different activity on the calendar monthly, publishing information to a listserv every two weeks, and by being a large employer of UI students, with over 450 part-time student workers and a very low turnover rate.

The Division of Recreational Services makes a point of providing recreation opportunities that appeal to international students, such as badminton, table tennis, martial arts, and soccer. In addition, it sponsors an international tennis sport club for international students.

Every year the Division of Recreational Services, in conjunction with several other departments, hosts the Cultural Diversity Festival. This international event is described by its organizers as “intended to reach people who might not attend traditionally labeled cultural activities...With last year’s attendance at more than 5,000 people, Celebrating Cultural Diversity Festival has become the second-largest non-athletic event sponsored by the UI.” <http://www.uiowa.edu/-ccdfest/about/index.shtml>.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

Student Health Service (SHS) is the primary health care resource for all University of Iowa students (undergraduate and graduate) and provides primary care, psychiatry, gynecology services, sports medicine, a full-service pharmacy, and travel/allergy clinics, as well as health promotion services through Health Iowa. As stated in the SHS annual report, the mission is “to provide competent and quality health care for all students, while recognizing their own individuality as it pertains to treating their particular problems; to promote preventive medicine and healthy lifestyles; to develop educational and outreach programs; and to make student visits an informational and educational experience.”

SHS and Health Iowa provide several programs specifically relating to recruitment, retention, and the first year experience. Health Iowa provides training for orientation advisors as well as ongoing training for resident assistants, hall managers, coaches, and faculty/staff in various areas. A majority of the residents in Iowa’s residence halls are first-year students, having a strong infrastructure of health-related support is a vital aspect of their transition

process. During Orientation, Health Iowa staff provides presentations to parents and provides MMR and Meningitis shots during the Orientation Information Fair. SHS is responsible for monitoring immunization requirements for all students on campus.

Many mental health issues surface during team and college years, so a strong mental health care system is a vital component helping students transition to college life. SHS works closely with University Counseling Service (see next section) to provide mental health diagnosis, counseling, and treatment. Health Iowa also provides substance abuse evaluations and early intervention, as well as dietetic counseling related to eating disorders. The SHS director serves as a health expert and consultant with several units on campus including Academic Advising, University Housing, the Vice President for Student Services, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in identifying students who may need academic or other accommodations in order to continue at Iowa.

SHS reports that “SHS services are supportive and inclusive of individual and cultural differences. The TB Surveillance Program helps foreign students to assimilate to the University, and training provided through the program provides support in using the U.S. health care system. All SHS staff members receive yearly training on diversity issues as they relate to health care and the student population. We have translated materials and a Language Line (translation via phone system) to assist patients who would prefer to receive information in their primary language. All our vaccine information is available in many different languages. Many SHS staff have gone through Safe Zone training and received additional training on GLBTQ and other diversity issues. The SHS works hard to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.”

Health Iowa was part of a joint effort implementing AlcoholEdu, discussed below in the Office of Campus and Community Relations section of this report. Furthermore, Health Iowa staff collaborated with the department of Health and Sport Studies to offer three sections of “Alcohol and Your College Experience” and three sections of “Tobacco and Your College Experience” courses beginning in fall 2006. The classes filled for all sections offered. Initial results show that students participating in a 3 month follow-up survey sustained declines in hangover, decreases in average number of drinks, and increases in protective behaviors such as being a designated driver, avoiding drinking games, and using a buddy system (see Pre-Post Summary—28:020: Alcohol and Your College Experience). In an effort to address alcohol issues at an earlier age, Health Iowa is considering the option of holding spaces, or setting aside sections, specifically for first and second year students.

One of the primary issues concerning SHS is mandatory student health insurance for all UI students. In an effort to evaluate the financial burden such a policy would create and how it might prevent students from attending the University, the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) conducted an extensive survey of incoming students. The committee concluded that mandatory student health insurance would be very unlikely to prevent students from coming to The University of Iowa (see SHS Annual Report 2005-06).

As outlined in the Annual Report, SHS provided 37,096 patient visits and the Nurse Call Line, which provides telephone consultation, received 17,311 calls. In addition, Health Iowa, the health promotion and education branch of SHS, conducted 28,733 workshops and consultations across campus. The data is not broken down by year of student at Iowa.

SHS measured Customer Perception of Care and Service by administering patient satisfaction surveys in November 2005 and April 2006. SHS asked patients to grade performance on a number of indicators using a A (great) to F (poor) scale including: ease of getting care (83.8%), waiting (86.8%), staff (90.1%), payment (77.6%), facility (83.25%), confidentiality (94.1%), safety (94.9%), use services again (94.6%) (see SHS Annual Report 2005-06).

SHS also collects and reviews customer input through SHS surveys, interactions, electronic mail, comment cards, the MI Shadow Survey, SHAC, and The University of Iowa First Year Student surveys. Improvement activities that resulted from patient input were development of a brochure about insurance, addition of information and forms on the SHS web site and the addition of another scheduler to facilitate ease of scheduling appointments. (For sample survey results, see SharePoint.)

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICE:

The University Counseling Service is the primary mental health service for University of Iowa students. UCS is staffed by 11 doctoral level licensed psychologists with over 150 years of combined experience in college student mental health and higher education, three full-time psychology interns, and 6 to 10 graduate psychology students completing required practicum courses in counseling. UCS also has one full-time project assistant and three support staff.

In addition to providing short-term individual, couple, and group counseling, UCS also provides consulting and presents educational programs on many topics, e.g., study skills, career choice, communication, diversity, and relationships. A complete list is at <http://www.uiowa.edu/-ucs/programs.html>.

University Counseling Services participates in programs geared to help ease the transition experience of first year students, including summer orientation for new students and orientation for new international students. During summer orientation, UCS staffs a table with information about counseling services and participates in the "Staying Safe; Staying Healthy" panel for parents.

UCS works with University Housing and the network of Residence Assistants to ensure that students receive the care they need. Even so, UCS staff expressed concern about the limited contact the office has with entering students. UCS typically connects with parents of students who are already receiving care prior to coming to the University and those who have a disability for which they need assistance, but it is much more difficult for UCS to reach students and parents services that they do not yet need. Most students seeking counseling are self-referred, yet Director Sam Cochran said many first year students would not realize how difficult the transition to college would be until they experienced it.

Director Cochran also noted that urban and non-white students at The University of Iowa seem to struggle the most during the transition process. He sees this as a reflection of the challenges the University faces to increase and retain a diverse population of students.

Director Sam Cochran said it would benefit UCS to find a way to disconnect the stigma between counseling and study skills. He expressed concern that students are leery of utilizing UCS educational programming due to concern that they will be seen as needing psychological counseling. In addition, he discussed the challenges of being located near Student Health. UCS has considered conducting some of their educational programs in the IMU, Residence Halls, and Wellness Center.

University Counseling Services reports annually on the number of students served through their program offering. According to UCS Annual Report 2005-06, a total of 9,061 participants were served through 245 outreach programs, regularly scheduled programs, and campus consultation. The three primary content areas include Academic Skills, Career Exploration Skills, and Personal/Interpersonal Skills. The percentage of first year students participating in educational programs is unknown.

With regards to counseling services, UCS' Clinical Services Annual Report states that they served 1,634 clients during 2005-06. Of these, the majority (673) were seen for one session. Most of the rest were seen within the informal agency limit of 10 sessions. Around 10% (165) were seen for 11 or more sessions. Of the 1,634 clients served 55.7% were self-referred. Of the students receiving counseling service 17.2% reside in the University's residence halls and 11.4% (187) were first year students. First year students make up the lowest percentage of students receiving counseling services according to year. The percentage of students seeking counseling gradually increases each year with the highest percentage of students at the graduate level. Specific information regarding the first year student in relation to University Counseling Services is not available at this time.

University Counseling Service collects client satisfaction data during a two-week survey period each spring. UCS received positive evaluations in all areas (see Clinical Services Annual Report 2005-06 Table 12). UCS does cross tabs on specific issues and outcomes across their entire caseload. Currently they do not cross tab on specific issues or outcomes by year which means that it is difficult to evaluate the counseling and educational needs experienced most frequently by first year students.

The Division of Student Services is currently conducting a University Counseling Service Review. The results and recommendations of this review have not been made public at the time of this report.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

The National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism report *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges* (2002) offers some startling national statistics:

- 1,400 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from unintentional injuries related to alcohol, including motor vehicle crashes, and half a million are injured.
- More than 600,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.
- About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of drinking, including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams and papers, and receiving lower grades overall.

31 percent of college students qualify for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse and 6 percent for alcohol dependence during the past 12 months, according to questionnaire-based self-reports. (See NACAAA 2002 for research citations).

In regard to first-year students, the report says many students increase their alcohol consumption during the critical first six weeks of college, which contributes to difficulties with the college transition. More generally, the transition to college is regularly associated with significant increases in drinking, heavy-episodic drinking, and high risk drinking behaviors, and with reductions in abstention and protective behaviors: the so-called “College Effect.”

A Call to Action highlights the importance of tackling college alcoholism using methods that have been proven successful through research: that is, comprehensive, integrated programs with multiple, complementary components targeting (1) individuals, including at-risk or alcohol-dependent drinkers, (2) the student population as a whole, and (3) the college and the surrounding community.

In response to this and other reports on student drinking, The University of Iowa has developed a multi-tiered approach directed through the Office of Campus and Community Relations, which strives to create a safer environment for students, emphasizing health and healthy decisions, primarily by helping to address binge drinking issues. As its name suggests, this office serves as a liaison between The University of Iowa and the local community, particularly Iowa City-Coralville.

On campus, Campus and Community Relations works in partnership with many interested offices including: The Office of the Vice President for Student Services, The Office of the Provost, The University of Iowa Parents Association, The Office of the Registrar, and Academic Technologies, as well as many of the units discussed in this report, including Student Health, University Housing, Admissions, and AAC.

One such office is Athletics. Campus and Community Relations has helped to establish a policy of no alcohol in Kinnick Stadium (where varsity football is played), to designate one tailgating lot as alcohol free, and to close Parking Lot 6, a high risk drinking location during football games. University Housing is another key partner, working with Campus and Community Relations to promote non-alcohol-related activities and education through brochures and bulletin board, such as the 2006-2007 advertising campaign, “You Can Overdo Anything. H

The University is working closely with the City of Iowa City to project a consistent message regarding excessive alcohol consumption and underage drinking. Nuisance property restrictions and party ordinances have been put in place. Businesses that serve liquor train servers to recognize underage and other high-risk drinkers. Iowa City has banned “all you can drink” specials, “ladies night” promotions, and Jello shot sales. PAULA fines have increased, and a new ordinance bans patrons younger than 19 from bars after 10 p.m.

A more comprehensive list of campus, community and state environmental changes aimed at reducing the problem of high risk drinking are available in “Environmental Changes, Campus, Community and State” on Sharepoint. This section concludes with brief discussion of two particularly notable programs.

Stepping Up

The Stepping up project is a coalition of citizens of The University of Iowa and Iowa City/Coralville area to create recreational programs and government policies that reduce high risk drinking and its harmful effects. The program received a series of grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that began in 1996 and ended in spring 2006. The University has assumed responsibility for continued but reduced funding and made Stepping Up part of the Office of Campus and Community Relations. (Stepping Up no longer provides financial assistance to organizations offering non-alcohol-related program alternatives.)

With Johnson Foundation funding, Stepping Up received data from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study. This information has been useful in planning institutional strategies for addressing alcohol-related behavior at The University. The dataset is available on SharePoint.

AlcoholEdu

Beginning in fall 2006, the University joined several other colleges and universities nationwide in administering AlcoholEdu to all first-year students. (Anyone affiliated with the University can participate in the course as well.) AlcoholEdu is an online, science-based alcohol abuse education and prevention program focusing on the impact of alcohol on the mind and body. AlcoholEdu is based upon best practices outlined in the NIAAA Report to College Presidents, including challenging student expectations that alcohol will facilitate sexual activity and allow students to have more fun. The primary goal of AlcoholEdu is providing students with the information and support they need to make solid decisions regarding alcohol use. The belief is that having all freshman students complete the course will provide a common language and understanding about alcohol and expectations for being a member of the UI community.

When participants were surveyed, they reported the following knowledge gains:

77% said they now know more about Blood Alcohol Concentration.

46% said they now know more about the ways alcohol affects someone's ability to give consent for sex.

The percentage of students who reported they know more than a "moderate amount" about the effects of alcohol nearly doubled for 39% before the course to 76% after they completed it.

Most also reported that AlcoholEdu was a positive experience, with 94% saying they paid attention to it, and 77% saying it helped them feel more prepared to handle situations involving alcohol that might come up in college.

The AlcoholEdu cohort experienced an increase in drinking from the summer of the senior year to the fall of their freshmen year at Iowa, illustrating the so-called "College Effect" mentioned earlier. However, when this cohort is compared with students from past years, they experienced fewer negative consequences and a decrease in some risky behaviors. The percent of students reporting high risk drinking was lower among the AlcoholEdu cohort, although not statistically significant. (For a more complete summary, see SharePoint.)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS

Institutional Research Coordination, Communication, and Shared Vision Becoming a University of Iowa Student

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

The first of our suggestions is the simplest. We want to add our voice to those who recommend the University establish an Office of Institutional Research. This suggestion bears on this report in two ways. First, we assume such an office would have helped us conduct our research by facilitating our access to much of the data we had to gather ourselves and by making additional information available.

More importantly, we value the support that such an office would provide for many of the programs we have discussed. Staff we interviewed from both the Office of Admissions and the Academic Advising Center emphasized that the new Student Information System being developed by Project MAUI will make more data available, with many potential benefits, but that offices providing student services will need technical assistance to use it.

Such an office would obviously help University personnel live up to their obligation to base policy on the best and most complete information available.

COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION, AND SHARED VISION

The University of Iowa has an impressive array of programs and services intended to attract the right students and provide them with appropriate support—to provide access and promote success. Our subcommittee's single greatest concern involves the familiar bureaucratic problem of coordinating these many efforts. Significant improvements have been made in this vital area: the formation of the Enrollment Management Team and Student Success Team are excellent examples. Continued improvement should be a high institutional priority.

Not surprisingly, this concern arose repeatedly in relation to some of the programs discussed in Chapter 3 "Selected Populations," since they enable entry and support transition in ways that sometimes overlap with the functions of Admissions, Aid, and Advising. Moreover, staff in such programs are likely to have a commendably strong attachment to the groups they serve, and individual students may have long-standing relationships with these programs through "pipeline development." As one administrator pointed out, if a program has carefully cultivated a relationship with a prospective student and is well-attuned to that student's needs, it is hard to abruptly turn him or her over to other administrative units when it comes time for a campus visit.

Problems in coordinating efforts to serve minority students have been widely acknowledged. The first observation made by the Task Force on Undergraduate Enrollment and Retention for Diversity (UERD) is that "There are many campus

initiatives and activities, but relatively little campus-wide coordination and communication.” The complicated administrative structure that governed Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Opportunity at Iowa, and Special Support Services contributed to the problem.

As discussed earlier, one of the main recommendations of the Diversity Action Committee was “to institute a coordinating mechanism that will bring together University offices focused on specific aspects of achieving diversity.” This mechanism is the recently formed Center for Diversity and Excellence. The new structure should greatly facilitate collaboration among units, but reorganization is in itself just the first step, and the recommendations of the UERD task force (appointed by Associate Provosts David and Rocklin) are another sign that necessary changes are under way.

Recruitment of top scholars is another area where there seems to be a consensus that coordination and communication need to be improved—but, in this case, without agreement about how to achieve it. The University Honors Program has been strengthened in various ways, yet great disagreement remains about many issues concerning the program, and the disagreements arguably become more serious as the program grows stronger. Honors seems to be at odds with Admissions, Aid, and Advising over such issues as the best way to impress prospective students, the most strategic use of limited scholarship dollars, and the role Honors should be allowed to play in recruitment, admissions, and advising.

In fact, as suggested in Chapter 3, there is basic disagreement about what the nature and function of the University Honors Program should be, which bears on the practical issues listed in the previous paragraph. The more one sees Honors students as a truly separate group (with their own curriculum, for instance), the larger the role it might make sense for Honors to play in their entry and transition. In the past, the vision of Honors at Iowa has been quite different, its role in such matters relatively small.

The other anomaly in this area is the role of the Belin-Blank Center, which does not seem well-integrated with other units that recruit high-achieving students. Great synergy could be achieved if this Center, the Office of Admissions (including its Director of Scholar Recruitment), and the University Honors Program could achieve better working relationships. To some extent, this involves some practical problem-solving, but it may ultimately depend on the achievement of a consensual vision of Honors at Iowa. At the very least, it requires a common vision for the recruitment of exceptional students.

A different sort of problem arises when programs for recruitment and retention involve coordinating activities across the administrative divide that separates student services from academic affairs. For instance, despite the sterling success of learning communities on this campus, problem frequently arise from issues of control and resources. Academic departments often see themselves as central to the mission of the learning community, since they see its mission as primarily academic, and it is “their” students who reside in them. University Housing, which provides the living space for the learning communities and, perhaps more importantly, hires the Residence Assistants (RAs), at times takes a different view. This has resulted in unnecessary friction over such questions as who chooses the RAs or how much special programming will be allowed to occur.

Our impression is that the current structure provides no single point of responsibility and decision-making regarding the learning communities, sometimes resulting in the sort of “turf war” that wastes energy and creates bad feelings. Given past problems with this decentralized structure, we are pleased that the charge to the Task Force on Learning Communities at the University of Iowa (described in more detail below)

specifically includes an examination of “successful practices in learning community design *and operation*” (emphasis added).

Still, the more general problem concerns us. After all, the soon-to-be-proposed Orientation Week is another good example of the sort of enterprise that will require coordination across the academic affairs/student services divide. “To integrate students into a scholarly culture” requires us precisely to work across that divide and to help students to see themselves as leading a life of learning that is not confined to the laboratory, classroom, or library but finds a home in dorm rooms, lounges, and cafeterias too.

BECOMING A UNIVERSITY OF IOWA STUDENT

At the beginning of this report, we noted the change in campus culture called for by the Task Force on Persistence to Graduation, which emphasized the University’s need to do more “to integrate students into a scholarly culture and to provide them with the intellectual skills and strategies that make the difference between success and failure.” We are encouraged by signs indicating that such a cultural change is under way. Much has been accomplished, thanks in no small part to improvements recommended by that Task Force, as well as to many other efforts, some examined in the preceding chapters.

Much more remains to be done. In this respect we are heartened by the Provost’s strong support for continued progress and innovation for student success, as expressed in the strategic plan. The University must remain committed to expanding programs that have proven effective at Iowa and adopting select practices that have proven successful elsewhere.

We particularly encourage the development of programs that help bridge the gap between academic study and extracurricular life, since these have the greatest potential for helping “to integrate students into a scholarly culture.”

Such integration is the basis for the impressive success of learning communities, and we are very pleased to see that the Provost has charged a task force to

- Identify successful practices in learning community design and operations.
- Describe elements specific to the University of Iowa environment that shape the possibilities for learning communities.
- Recommend a coherent, scalable learning communities program for the University of Iowa.

The effectiveness of learning communities in promoting student success is well established, and we welcome not only the idea of expanded access but also the recognition that the University may need to operate these communities in a more systematic, better coordinated way.

An initiative that could have a dramatic impact on campus culture is the establishment of a comprehensive pre-semester orientation program to introduce students to The University of Iowa. This program would provide involvement, connection, and community and would lay a strong foundation for the first-year experience. The general idea is to bring students to campus a week early so that they can experience an extended, enhanced orientation with greater emphasis on social and personal issues and on “a scholarly culture” than is possible in two days of summer orientation. Engaging incoming students in the academic mission of the university as soon as they arrive on campus is

crucial to first-year success, and a disproportionate number of those who fail to become engaged also fail to persist to the second year. In short, engagement matters, and it matters early. An extended orientation would help new undergraduates make a vital connection with the University, while enabling them to become acclimated to campus without the stress of classes and other responsibilities. Part of that acclimation would be a much-needed opportunity for students to learn about the supporting organizations discussed in this report. (As the RISE report notes, “the data are replete with this message: UI offers many opportunities for student engagement and success, but it is up to the individual student to find those opportunities, and create a positive experience, for herself or himself.”) Properly administered, such a program would foster cooperation between faculty and student support staff and among support organizations by allowing them to share responsibility for a program centered on student success.

Our understanding is that various interested parties (including Orientation Services, University Housing, and Student Government) have been discussing this idea for a couple of years and that a formal proposal is forthcoming, which could lead to a program as early as Fall 2008. Details of the proposal will surely be debated. The current suggestion that the program be named after the University’s sports mascot meets with instant criticism from those who favor other emphases; existing programs scheduled for that week would need to be taken into account; and so on. But the basic idea of an Orientation Week, or whatever the program is eventually called, holds great promise for building a sense of community based on common experience, providing early contact with faculty and staff, and inspiring a proper sense of what it means to become a University of Iowa student. We urge the Office of the Provost to give the proposal a favorable hearing.

Our subcommittee discussed other academic experiences that college and universities provide to all new students, thereby helping to bridge the gap between academic life and the other experiences students share outside the classroom. One increasingly common practice that many people find intriguing is to have all new students read the same book. In the end, we did not decide to recommend this idea—the suggestion simply arose too late for us to investigate it properly—but it is an example of what we mean when we encourage the University to consider new ways “to integrate students into a scholarly culture.”

Both the DEEP study and the RISE report strongly reinforce our sense that the University needs—all of us need—to do a better job of creating appropriate expectations among new undergraduates. We must find new ways to teach what it means—or, perhaps better yet, what we want it to mean—for someone to become an Iowa student. What kinds of learning do we want them to strive for? What kinds of relationships do we want them to build? What kinds of community do we want them to create?

One special concern related to this need is the problem of alcohol. Current efforts to combat this problem were discussed in the previous chapter. We have little to add here except to note that we are struck by the suggestion made by the seniors interviewed for the RISE report who

asserted that Iowa’s ‘reputation as a party school’ was associated with its perceived lack of academic challenge; that is, if UI provided more academic challenges, students would not be able to spend so much time partying as they do.

This compelling observation lends an unusual urgency to the goal of engaging students in the life of the University, and it is a good reminder of how every aspect of entry and transition turns out to be connected to all the rest.

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Note: Most documentation for this report is archived on the SharePoint site.