

UW DIVERSITY OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

Student Ambassadors 1999-2001

Laura J. Collins, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the University of Washington (UW) Student Ambassador Project is to develop and maintain outreach and recruitment activities for minority students throughout Washington state. The project is based on the belief that Student Ambassadors can make a positive difference in how minority youths think about and plan for their futures. The Student Ambassadors, from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, plan events for prospective minority students to establish strong relationships with them; visit schools across the state to educate students on the realities of University life, requirements for admission, and reasons a college degree should be in their future; and support programs on the UW campus for students of many ethnicities.

Funded by Central Administration, the Student Ambassador Project is supervised by staff from the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) and the Office of Admissions. The Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) has been asked to evaluate projects instituted in response to the passage of I-200, one of which is the Student Ambassador Project.

METHODOLOGY

In January 2001, OEA staff met with a representative from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs to discuss projects funded in response to the passage of I-200 and to formulate an evaluation plan. Each project required different methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, including surveys, interviews, and observations.

For the Student Ambassador Project, group interviews were scheduled with all twenty-two active Student Ambassadors and the two graduate assistants for the project. At the beginning of each session, the participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation and of the report that would be written. Seventeen Student Ambassadors came to their interviews as did two graduate assistants. The interviews lasted at least 30 minutes and began with focused questions. Questions for the Student Ambassadors were:

- What is the impact of the Ambassador Project on student recruitment at UW?
- What support/documentation do you have on the outcomes of your efforts?
- What organizational and cultural factors seem to influence student recruitment?
- Describe some of the political/social/cultural points you address during interactions with students. What are your favorite activities?
- How can the University better support your project? What additional training do you need?
- What are the two most significant changes the University can make to encourage student recruitment efforts?
- What has been the impact of Student Ambassador activities on the UW campus climate?

The interviewer took notes during the process and asked questions for clarification.

The two graduate assistants were interviewed in separate sessions, in a similar format. Interview questions for the graduate assistants included:

- How long have you been with the Student Ambassadors?
- What are your duties?
- What is the most important thing you do?
- What is the most frustrating thing you do?
- What other support do you need?
- What ideas do you have for improving Student Ambassador outreach?
- How do you know you are making a difference?

All qualitative data was analyzed inductively using Glaser and Strauss's constant comparative method -- comparing incidents, integrating categories, and developing theories. Conclusions from the analysis are reported in general terms and do not mention specifics of one participant or school.

FINDINGS

Results of the qualitative analysis are presented in three sections: 1) Goals and Outcomes of the Student Ambassador Project; 2) Project Improvement Suggestions from Student Ambassadors; and 3) Conclusions from the Evaluation and Questions to Ponder.

Goals and Outcomes of the Student Ambassador Project

Originally started in the 1999-2000 academic year with six Student Ambassadors, the project now has two graduate assistants who supervise 22 Student Ambassadors. The goal of the Student Ambassador Project is to design outreach and recruitment activities for minority students throughout Washington State. At the beginning of the UW fall quarter, Student Ambassadors plan programs with large numbers of middle and high school students, such as the Martin Luther King Celebration, the Adelante con Educacion (ACE) Conference for Latino students, and the Diversity Fair. The Young, Gifted and Black Conference brought 300 students to the UW campus, resulting in ten students taking the initiative to write letters to their counselors about the impact of the program and stating their interest in attending the UW.

Student Ambassadors conduct evaluations of each project they plan, creating the evaluation questionnaire themselves. As a result, they know and can verbalize what worked and what could be improved for each event. After large events, Student Ambassadors contact students who attend and answer their more personal questions. This sometimes calls for speaking with students in their own language, which in many cases may not be English.

Later in the academic year, Student Ambassadors work with smaller numbers of students on a more individual basis, getting to know students better. Student Ambassadors also mentioned that they "enjoy working with other minority groups on campus" not just their own. Student Ambassadors have conversations about other cultures and try to educate themselves and understand differences. Since they know each other fairly well, they ask each other to speak at events, emphasizing the diversity of the Student Ambassadors themselves.

Realizing the importance of reaching high school students, three high schools were assigned to each Student Ambassador for contact this year. This contact allows high school students the opportunity to get to know the Student Ambassadors, to understand the process of admission to the UW, and for the Student Ambassadors to constantly reinforce with students the idea of excelling in their personal lives. Student Ambassadors show high school students different options for higher education, then "let students decide where to go to college." In this process, high school students can answer the question, "Who am I?" and then can define, "What do I want to do?" Student Ambassadors help with "how best to study, how to get a tutor for additional help," and "how to meet people on campus to make UW seem smaller," by addressing the benefits of meeting professors and others on campus.

Student Ambassadors are employed by the UW and are role models when they talk to prospective students. They tell high school students, "this is how you get into the UW" and make sure high school students understand "your classes during all four years of high school are important", but it is not just your grades that count, a "letter of recommendation from a Senator" might help, and "community service activities" show a well-rounded person. Believing that the personal touch is best, the project can have an impact when Student Ambassadors are looked up to and "really respected by students because they can relate on a personal level." According to one Student Ambassador, "the most dramatic impact is with one student and taking that student through the process of admission -- students want help and want immediate help."

The Student Ambassador Project designates specific ambassadors as "experts" in areas such as admissions, financial aid, and scholarships, that way "not everyone must be an expert in everything." Each Student Ambassador creates a one-page reference for others, so all Student Ambassadors are familiar with each area and know who to ask for more information or know to whom to refer a student.

Graduate Assistant Responsibilities

Beginning this year, the Student Ambassador project added two graduate assistant positions to aid in project organization and coordination. These one-year positions were opened in the fall after new Student Ambassadors had been hired for the year and report to a supervisor who has a joint appointment in the Offices of Minority Affairs and Admissions.

Each graduate assistant feels, "we have different strengths." When asked, "What is the most important thing you do?" the graduate assistants respond, "coordinate ambassadors, team building, develop rapport, communication, meet deadlines, plan Friday meetings, be organized!" Since the duties of the Student Ambassadors have been expanded this year, the duties of the graduate assistants must be responsive to their needs. Graduate assistants work on project details, such as contacting the keynote speakers, setting up workshops -- arranging times, places, and facilities. While this list seems like repetition of the work of the Student Ambassadors, the graduate assistants see it as necessary.

Supervisory duties include facilitating events, developing structure to the project, enforcing rules, making sure Student Ambassadors fulfill their jobs and complete their time schedules, and initiating contacts for outreach. One graduate assistant stated that she, "thought I was hired for program work, but it's administrative work now." This year they developed "a lot of structure of the program, groundbreaking." They also mentioned that "the graduate assistant must be a viable position in terms of authority. If Student Ambassadors miss 3 meetings they are supposed to be out of the program, can I enforce this?"

As one graduate assistant stated, she "needs to know I'm supported by my supervisor and that we present a united front," especially if a Student Ambassador contacts the supervisor with a concern.

They are liaisons with the supervisor, other UW faculty and staff, and local community members. One graduate assistant mentioned, " We try to make sure people do not approach the Student Ambassadors individually, it's a large group, and we need effective communication concerning who is doing what project." There are "different perspectives in the group too" that the graduate assistants have to address. Some of the time, graduate assistants have to "figure out ways to teach students to respect each other, which is frustrating. One-on-one sessions work well so I can figure out where they're at in their thinking, find out about their home life, boy-girl friends." Sometimes "group dynamics are tough to work with because of the different life experiences Student Ambassadors bring, so getting to know everyone has been a task." When asked about their relationships, one graduate assistant replied that she, "likes developing relationships with undergraduates, think I make a significant impact on their lives, I have an open-door policy."

In the fall quarter, Student Ambassadors were in ethnic-specific groups because the programs they were working on demanded that arrangement. As the winter quarter began, graduate assistants helped them organize cross-cultural groups which have remained during the spring quarter. For community outreach projects, graduate assistants let Student Ambassadors sign up for projects and help them understand and design positions.

For the graduate assistants, space for the program is a concern. Right now they are housed in one room with six computers. It is impossible for all the Student Ambassadors to be in the room at the same time, which is a concern that was repeated by many others who were interviewed. On the other hand, the graduate assistants can quickly mobilize the Student Ambassadors when necessary, like the time they needed to make outreach phone calls to Latino high school students and their families.

When questioned about the supervisory structure of the project, one graduate assistant replied, "Admissions and OMA are gray areas, especially understanding their relationships and connections." Key structural pieces "need to come from the top" according to the graduate assistants and "good administration of the project is needed." At times they find a "bureaucracy, like with purchase orders - who's authorized to sign? Because we do events, funding issues are critical yet inconsistent. One week I can sign, the next week I can't." Other difficulties with managing the project are "not being able to do programs for non-targeted groups," and "the time it takes to drive to Yakima, there are barriers to working outside Seattle."

When asked about their perspectives on the impact of the project, they replied, "We won't really know if we're making a difference, what are the measures of success? The Student Ambassador program is more than creating numbers." They suggest we need to "reinitiate a dialog on higher education, think outside the box."

Graduate assistants believe that funding is a key piece of outreach and recruitment efforts, "If the UW is dedicated, it must institutionalize programs like this for the duration, look at it as a long-term issue, decade to decade, then we can see a clearer picture of our impact." They also feel "we need more Student Ambassadors (in number) to do good work. They are leaders in other organizations, not just at the UW, they are recruiters full time creating new forms of outreach."

Key Questions from Minority High School Students

Student Ambassadors constantly field questions from minority students concerning life at the UW. Students are "afraid that they might come here and lose their culture; there may not be a place for them here." Some prospective minority student questions Student Ambassadors have been asked are:

Is there a community of natives on campus?

Why would I want to go there?

Can I come and find friendly faces?

Do people of color have a place here?

Are minorities actually accepted here (UW)?

Are there any Black people at the UW?

Are you the only Black person at the UW?

Am I the only one (minority student)?

Am I smart enough?

One Student Ambassador stated that she replies, " I tell high school students to work hard. Who will come after you? Go back into the community. After awhile, you don't care if you're the only Black student. Sit in front of the class, then you won't see that you are the only person of color."

High School Influences

Student Ambassadors realize the importance of outreach to high school students and feel that college information is not getting to them. Currently, one high school counselor is usually assigned to 500 students in the school, so "they are not involved so much in planning for college." The Student Ambassador impression is that "high school counselors need help, they are crisis counselors now and deal with lots of stuff, not just academics" and that they "don't let students know how to get to college." Another Student Ambassador mentioned that "disadvantaged schools aren't funded as well, teachers have large classes, and there is a high changeover of teachers in disadvantaged schools." One suggestion they mentioned was to "bring K-12 teachers to the UW for training on entrance requirements and scoring, point out opportunities for minority students," a practice currently in effect at the UW.

Even though Student Ambassadors need to travel to high schools, they do not have a lot of time to get to Eastern Washington. Most of the time they travel over their breaks, but they are "college students who would like to have breaks too." High school students like to have college students from their own backgrounds come to speak with them and like to hear individuals stories of college life. Because Student Ambassadors come from many backgrounds, high school students identify with and talk to them. "Minority students don't think they have the grades to come to UW, so don't consider it an option, feel they can't do it from the start," so Student Ambassadors tell them to "continue to do community service, be a well-rounded student and it might make a difference." The UW Site Counselors who are also assigned to high schools "do really nice student-to-student work, but high school students bring up stuff to Student Ambassadors that they wouldn't say to authority figures."

Student Ambassadors seem to feel that there is still "high school discrimination, institutional racism" because they "do not see anyone else out there recruiting minority students." One Student Ambassador mentioned that, "white kids know how to get to college, white students fill up programs, minority students

need to know." Minority students seem the least likely to tap into the pipeline of resources, or know about it. "No one is getting them the information."

Minority Student Preparation for College

Student Ambassadors usually ask high school students why they want to go to work instead of to college. Student Ambassadors seem to believe that high school students "do not understand the importance of going to college" even though Student Ambassadors tell them, "after college you can afford all that you want and more." High school students do not know how to fill out forms for application to college or for scholarships. As one Student Ambassador alleged, "There was a scholarship for Latino students to the UW, but the criteria had high GPA and SAT standards, too high for most Latino students, so who can apply for scholarships is limited, the UW should change criteria." Another Student Ambassador mentioned, "It's one thing to apply, another to get in." They feel, "the GPA doesn't reflect the type of person and the potential, it's a priority to survive." Migrant families work and expect their children to work, "they're tired at night and don't do homework; it's reflected in their GPA."

When asked if minority students should be provisionally admitted to the UW for one year, Student Ambassadors did not believe that would be enough time for minority students to acclimate. Student Ambassadors supported this belief by stating, "if minority students want to come to the UW, let them. Maybe they aren't ready on paper, but they might have the will. Research says students without the highest GPAs still do well in college if they have the desire." Student Ambassadors believe that minority students "must get help figuring out the system. It takes longer than one year to do this. Students don't know the drop and add system or that they can actually drop a class, don't know how to get class changes, don't know how to talk to professors" and that takes awhile to learn.

Most Student Ambassadors thought that we should "get high school students to the UW campus more often, both Eastern Washington and Seattle area students." An idea suggested was to do programs for high school students that the UW does for middle school students, like the Martin Luther King Celebration, because "we haven't really had these programs." High school students "see the end product if they have contact with faculty, they see outcomes of college and a career." One Student Ambassador felt that "if faculty come to speak, the payoff, reward is big. Students see the real thing, and some careers students had not thought about before." One of the benefits of UW campus visits for high school students is that, "sometimes when students of color come to campus they separate from their own race and their families and people back home, and get to be comfortable with many kinds of people."

Influential Cultural, Family and Economic Factors

For minority students, community and culture are intertwined and are critical, influential factors. Student Ambassadors hear, "If I go to college and come back to my community -- community members think I'm stuck up, think that I'm a bad person, I feel displaced." When they speak with minority students they sense the barriers within each community. The impression many minority students have is that they will be "looked down on if they move away from their culture and heritage." One Student Ambassador mentioned that she tells minority students that "the benefits of going to college are greater than the possibility of losing their positions in their community." For some minority students, Native Americans for example, "large UW classes are bigger than the whole community, some UW classes have 750 students and some Native American communities total 200 people."

Student Ambassadors also understand that each community has different factors of influence. For example, they know that the "African American community is hard to reach, there is a different mentality and attitude. African American students think they are not smart enough to attend college and don't take Student Ambassadors seriously, think we're a joke." African Americans "have different problems, and the dynamics seem to be tougher." Student Ambassadors feel they "must break personal barriers with African American students and the best way to break barriers is one-on-one," therefore they must have individual and small group interactions. African American students tend to "have no respect for authority, that's why it is challenging to establish rapport." One method the Student Ambassadors are beginning to develop for outreach to African American students is through their churches because "the church is a big part of the African American community, an untapped resource." If Student Ambassadors can "get the church to motivate students, promote students to excel academically" then this contact may prove a worthwhile avenue for outreach. Another reason that the UW must do church presentations is because "Latino students are always in church on Sundays, they are a captured audience at Sunday service."

Each minority group seems to require a different avenue of outreach. For Pacific Island students, Student Ambassadors have developed a "core of parents to reach out to the community" and they believe their "program is pushing the boundaries of UW outreach." Student Ambassadors are working toward addressing cultural and societal issues by planning a forum on domestic violence. This issue is "not questioned, never talked about, because minority students are afraid to confront their parents about family fights, not just Dad, but the whole family is sometimes embroiled in violence." These minority students "may think about going to college but might not do anything about it" because there are other factors of "higher concern." Student Ambassadors feel the need to address gender issues too. "If girls see a female physics professor who was an engineer in oil fields, it's a career they never imagined, and we need to break these stereotypes."

Family ties are strong for minority students, "Parents are the key." Student Ambassadors report that, "there is a battle to go to college when children should work and parents are concerned about letting go." One Student Ambassador indicated that the "family doesn't expect students to go to college, it expects them to take care of little ones, and it's hard for minority students to excel at school with this influence at home," which may be one reason that minority student grade-point averages tend to be low. Many students are from "migrant families that don't speak English and work seasonally. For them, survival is important and everyone has to work, there are different priorities so students' grades aren't the best." Student Ambassadors seem to feel that "there weren't many people talking to migrant students before us," so it is a priority to contact parents "some want their children to come, others are unaware of college benefits." Even though it is "hard to communicate with families when they speak a different language" Student Ambassadors see the need for the contact because most minority students are the first in their family to go to college and "do not know the process of admission."

Another cultural factor that influences minority student recruitment is United States citizenship. Latino students "might not be legal residents of the United States and it is expensive to get a Visa." It is hard for Student Ambassadors to do anything to help these students when they can not enroll in college or get financial aid. If Latino students do not go to college they might go to community college or to work, but as one Student Ambassador tells them, "they'll end up driving a 1990s Honda Accord" and do the same thing for the rest of their life if they do not go to college. Student Ambassadors have found that "migrant

families are hard to reach consistently" and they "must also reach Latino mothers" not just the father who is most often the authority figure.

Economics are another prohibitive factor for minority students when applying for college. Many families think the UW "is prestigious," but also that it "is expensive." When minority students think about the UW, "the dollar signs are big; economics are always an obstacle." Student Ambassadors hear, "We don't have money, how will we pay?" For Native American families, "money plays a difficult role in the family, they have to change how they spend money" because of the seasons in Alaska, there are times when money is plentiful and there are times when money is scarce. As one student suggested, "minority students have to spread money out, save it when it comes in a lump, spend so they can pay tuition, use it effectively at the UW." It is helpful if minority students know about scholarships, and it seems like "minority schools are not in the best neighborhoods and students don't seem to know about scholarships." Some minority students "have never heard of financial aid," related one Student Ambassador.

When minority students graduate from high school they think, "I'm in the real world now." They do not see anyone going to college. If they get a job at the hospital, people tell them, "You've made it." What incentive do we have for those students? Minority students need successful role models in their communities, "All I remember is my mom using medical coupons, there weren't those kinds of jobs in my community." "Kids reject education, don't see college as useful." "We need to show them tangible things." Even t-shirts or buying them lunch would help. "What incentive do these students have to meet with me after school? For every one minority student here at the UW, there's 100, 200, 300 you don't see. Why is the group not making it? Why should the kids come to campus, they don't even go home after school. They go to the community center." Students don't see long term, "they go where they pay you," there must be resources within the University.

Perceptions of the UW Campus Climate

Student Ambassadors report that they are starting to feel some difference in the UW campus climate. "There seems to be a boost in morale among students in ethnic groups on the UW campus, it feels like a positive thing." Many Student Ambassadors work on projects with UW student groups and take some responsibility in community groups. These young adults are leaders of other organizations, not just the Student Ambassador project, and they feel they "are speaking on behalf of the entire student body, so it's important that the UW listens."

"Are minorities actually accepted here?" is a question asked by prospective students and the Student Ambassadors themselves. When students express concerns, "the UW should automatically be responsive" but does not seem to be all the time. "Faculty need to know that speaking with minority students is a public relations factor," but some Student Ambassadors report that "faculty are difficult to approach; we don't know who to contact, we always get the same people as speakers." One Student Ambassador stated, "UW faculty are not always open to classroom visits by minority students." Student Ambassadors suggest that "UW administrators should come to our events, we always see the same faces, we need total support." Examples like these make Student Ambassadors question the campus' openness to diversity.

Student Ambassadors mentioned some situations that the UW community could improve:

A minority student wanted to study a particular kind of music here. The UW music department said it did not have that kind of music, but didn't refer student to the ethnic studies department.

The Pow Wow is central to Native American outreach. They come to UW because they were here before, like a homecoming, but UW students had to stir up UW administration to get it here this year at Hec Ed. The Pow Wow is really a celebration for Native people.

The BRIDGES program criteria changed after I-200, now white Mercer Island students who don't need the help get into the program, not just minority students.

The UW Instructional Center needs more money. It is off campus. Minority students use it because tutors are people of color and minority students feel they can relate, people look like me. You will find minorities congregated there.

Some people on campus rebuff Student Ambassadors, but we are just trying to do something for the university. We're viewed as grad assistants and hear, "I need to talk to a grown-up."

Students need to go to everybody to complain and get things done--parking, insurance, facilities. There is a turnover in staff and in students, so every year this is a new process. UW campus offices don't communicate with each other, for example: parking and facilities. We don't hear, "What can we do for you? How can we help?" \$25,000 to rent Hec Ed, \$10,000 to rent other facilities. There is a big circle of money on this campus if facilities are being rented by student groups. It's an institutional problem.

Another factor that influences minority student recruitment is the sense of community on campus. Student Ambassadors feel that at the UW there seems to be little sense of community, "It's a big school, students do their own thing and then go home, they don't live on campus." Student Ambassadors mention that "African American students usually live off campus, and 60% of the UW student body commutes to campus and live at home because it's cheaper." Washington State University is smaller, "that's why students go there, it's a different community."

The UW has to be a place where minority students can see themselves. African American students "usually go to historically Black colleges because students are used to an environment with lots of minority kids, they want to be in a family." The UW community "must tell them they can find a family here." Unfortunately, "the UW is big, scary, expensive, people don't look like me, my grades aren't high enough, I'm worried about competing."

Student Ambassadors comment on the feeling of belonging that some minority students look for when attending college. Many African American students want to go to predominantly Black colleges for that reason. If they live in Washington, they want to go somewhere else. The Black college tour is sponsored by a local group, and many local high school students attend. Student Ambassadors tell minority students "it is a fantasy world in that kind of college. They are never going to be in an all Black atmosphere in the work place; the real world is about teamwork." Student Ambassadors suggest that it might be difficult to assimilate to the work environment and go up through the ladder if students are from an all Black college. Students need to branch out and not be a member of one ethnic community.

Project Improvement Suggestions from Student Ambassadors

The Student Ambassador program has a strong focus. They each "feel the student ambassador program is the best campus has to offer." They articulate their vision and responsibilities proudly, "We really represent the UW." Their goal is to build relationships, not just during the process of application, but keep in contact with students they recruit through their years at the UW.

When asked, "Do students know them?" they respond, "All minority students know us!" These students are not just Student Ambassadors, "we're a cross-section of the UW student population." They are leaders in other campus organizations, and as Student Ambassadors they are working on projects that tie into their strong commitment to minority student organizations on the UW campus and nationally.

Student Ambassadors bring many groups of students together who have similar experiences and feel that they are "breaking barriers of ethnic groups by sharing perspectives." In the small office space assigned to the Student Ambassadors they spend time sharing stories and have learned to "respect each other" this year. Student Ambassadors have grown professionally and personally since joining the program.

One need expressed by Student Ambassadors is to gain respect from the University because they feel, "We're doing the University's job for them." Often, they do not feel appreciated for the outreach and recruitment that they do for the UW. "The whole campus needs to support us, the athletes, the Honors Program." The UW has great expectations and "forgets that we are students;" there are "staff people hired to do what we do." Keeping up with their classes and working on Student Ambassador projects seems to be quite a load for many, "Ambassadors can't fail out of college just to get other minority kids into the UW, we have to work on our grades too." Even though Student Ambassadors are all students at the UW, "we have jobs, have children, it's an overwhelming responsibility to handle all that we do."

Since Student Ambassadors develop UW outreach and recruitment events, they feel they "need more support from UW administration." When ambassadors try to make arrangements for programs "sometimes we find road blocks, we don't get respect when we call other UW offices because we aren't seen as a legitimate organization." One Student Ambassador stated that, "We need someone to work as a liaison between groups on campus so we don't have to reinvent the wheel each time we do a new project. Someone who knows how to get resources, knows who to call, knows lists of classes students can visit, knows newspapers to contact, know who to contact for catering." Student Ambassadors need to know where to go to "start the ball rolling on projects, how to get others to speak and get involved."

One hope they expressed is having "more dialog with UW administration, because the administration and campus need to know who ambassadors are and what we do." They mentioned ways to have the UW administration and faculty more involved -- Student Ambassadors "need people in different fields to talk with high school students to give students ideas about what they want to do, give students tools." They need a key UW resource person for faculty contact to let faculty know that students really want to know about their careers.

Student Ambassadors are glad to have an office, even though it is small. There were six Student Ambassadors the first year, 22 the second year. They need a "bigger office with a conference room and tables and computers. For projects, we need to be together and have work space and computers, office space! All ambassadors can't fit into one small room."

Their impression is that they "might have grown too much too fast." But on the other hand they say, " We need more Student Ambassadors, we have the whole state of Washington to cover." Sometimes they do a lot of program organization and do not get to talk to high school students as much. They are " working in the background planning programs to bring other UW students in to talk to students." One Student Ambassador suggested, "Ambassadors might divide their talents, have different job descriptions. Some are good at programming and like it, some would rather talk with students one-on-one, Ambassadors know what they do best."

As one Student Ambassador stated, "Now, ambassadors are doing what they were not hired to do, ambassadors have evolved into something else, spent a year finding out what to do, what the actual definition of the job is." Another added, " There is no job description, no expected outcomes, no structure, I ask what do I do next, how do I reserve a room, how do I give a presentation, what format should I use to write a letter from the UW, what should go in the packet, what are the guidelines? Don't dictate to me, help me." They like to build their own projects, "projects you can put your heart into," but need support. They also mentioned that "the job is overwhelming to new ambassadors, what do they do? There is no one to help them learn when they join, everyone is doing their own thing, it's hard to juggle and organize our work." Student Ambassadors feel they "are responsible for everything, students do all the work, should the responsibility always be on students?" they ask.

A suggestion from them is to hold "a retreat to make us into a team, improve communication, it's a big effort, a big group, we need training in group processes, teamwork, how to write proposals to get money for activities. We could use a summer orientation for training. When we volunteer at other organizations we get more training than we do here at UW, we need direction."

They also stated that they "need to know the admission appeals process to get minority students accepted. Student Ambassadors can give testimonials for some minority students and say that this student is most likely to be successful at the UW, we would like to be able to explain that to people." One Student Ambassador had a question he would like to ask, " One high school student was recruited and went to a Florida college, how did that happen? How did he get the information? How did they contact him. What's going on?"

Student Ambassadors are pro-active but see the need for money, in the form of permanent funding, to continue the program. They have been told, "We are running out of money." Money limits their ability to recruit, "It costs money to transport kids from Eastern Washington to Seattle, usually half of our project money goes for transportation and the other half goes for food, the invoice process is slow too." They feel, "There is always going to be work for Student Ambassadors because someone is dropping the ball in high schools. There is too much work for one UW Site Counselor at each high school for a half-day each week. Site Counselors do really nice student-to-student work, but high school students bring up stuff to us that they wouldn't say to authority figures," such as Site Counselors who have already graduated from college.

What are some possible incentives for Student Ambassadors? They could use "scholarship help, college credit for what we do." Actually they are putting the knowledge they have gained in three years at college to work. Although they do get paid an hourly salary, they feel there should be more incentives.

When asked what documentation they have about the impact of the program, they respond, "One group can't correct a historical problem right away." One Student Ambassador also told his perception that "the first year I was a freshman here, there were 61 African American students as freshmen too. It was easy to feel the campus climate then, because it was depressing. This year it seems stronger." Another Student Ambassador mentioned that "You can't really look at the numbers this year, look next year because the application deadline is too early, December, so we didn't have enough time to influence the numbers yet." When asked, "Where are the minority students on campus?" they answer right away, "Third floor of Schmitz."

When asked about their needs for support, they reply, "We need full-time personnel. Sometimes there are calls for Student Ambassadors from high school students, but students get busy signals. These students want to talk to an ambassador." A full-time staff person could organize programs, and they suggest "maybe a grad from business school would be good." The two graduate assistants seem to be learning the job this year, the first and only year of a one-year position. The transition might be rough next year too. The two graduate assistants are a "communication link, they talk to supervisors and smooth out conflicts." Student Ambassadors stated that they "see supervisors once or twice each week, when you need them, they're there." Student Ambassadors suggest that they "need someone with passion and capacity" as permanent personnel. Ideally this person could help them create a Student Ambassador publication, "something in print to leave with students, contact numbers and information. Good looking brochures to explain Student Ambassador program and give UW information," a need expressed by several Student Ambassadors.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVALUATION AND QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Two major conclusions can be drawn from the evaluation:

- The Student Ambassador Project deserves credit and respect for the energy and commitment of its members. They plan successful events and diligently evaluate them for ways in which each event can be improved. As a student-led project, the Student Ambassadors also have enthusiasm and vision about expanding their influence. This year, with the help of the graduate assistants, more project organization has occurred to support Student Ambassador work. Student Ambassadors also are aware of inconsistencies in behaviors of UW faculty and staff. Not always do they feel strongly supported and many times are witnesses to a lack of openness to diversity at the UW.
- Societal influences on prospective minority students are strong and varied. Each minority group has powerful forces that affect its members. Whether from family, community, or school, these forces have an effect on UW outreach and recruitment. Student Ambassadors understand these influences, confront them in their outreach activities, and recognize the vastness of the problems.

The question that arises from the evaluation and needs to be addressed by the UW community is:

How strong is the UW support the Student Ambassadors?

Student Ambassadors hear that funding is tight, but see the need to continue and institutionalize the project. Often, they must work one-on-one with minority students to break barriers and to support them during the process of admission, which is not reflected in large changes in minority student enrollment

numbers at the UW. One Student Ambassador summed it up when she said, "Basically what you need to do is change society, totally restructure society."