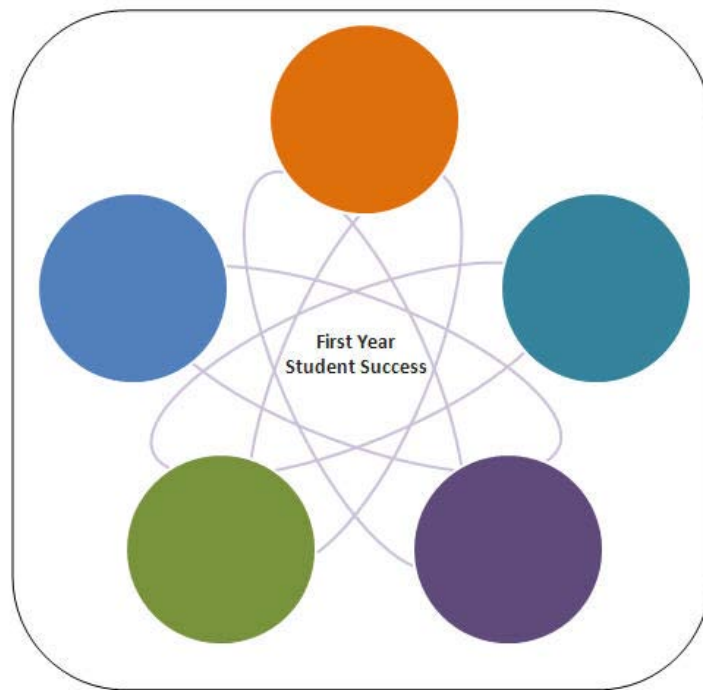


UWT and the First Year: Our Institutional Imperative



**University of Washington Tacoma
Foundations of Excellence Report
11/24/09**

<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/foe/>

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Introduction

Our campus was founded in 1990 to provide access to higher education for upper-division and graduate place-and-time-bound students in the South Puget Sound. In 2006 we fundamentally altered our original mission and admitted our first freshman class.

The Legislature's charge to implement lower division study at UWT was immediate—in May of 2006 we were instructed to begin lower division offerings in just three months. Faculty and staff rallied around this challenge and devised our current learning community model for the freshman year. After a summer of planning we opened our doors to freshman in fall 2006. Since that time, we have continued to develop lower division curriculum as well as other components of the lower division undergraduate experience.

We committed ourselves to evaluating our first year program in its third year, and we selected the Foundations of Excellence program to assist us with this goal.¹ Our year long, comprehensive program evaluation was begun in fall 2008 and engaged two liaisons, a steering committee, faculty, staff, and students serving on nine dimension committees, and extensive evidence based assessment activities campus wide.

The nine dimension committee reports provide a number of recommendations units across campus can use to further enhance the experience of first year students at UWT. We also recognize faculty governance responsibility for a number of the issues addressed in this report, and we hope after reviewing the report and recommendations, productive discussions among faculty within programs and across academic units will continue with the goal of enhancing the educational experience of our first year students.

Now as we gather and review information from our Foundations of Excellence effort we recognize the exemplary work of all who participated in this thoughtful process, with special recognition of the UWT faculty, staff, and students on our nine dimension committees; the dimension reports are universally thorough, informed, thoughtful, and imaginative. The results of the Foundations of Excellence work will guide our work for the coming years, as we refine our first year program.

Findings

The University of Washington Tacoma is institutionally unique, and proudly so. We are part of the University of Washington, one of the nation's premier research universities, yet our campus is relatively small, intimate, institutionally youthful, and grounded in a

¹ For a detailed introduction to the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education's Foundation of Excellence program see www.fyfoundations.org.

dynamic and developing urban locale. Our young, growing, and innovative institution is the setting for our first year experience.

The first year experience is part of UWT's complex campus culture; a culture composed of institutional and individual values, academic policies, procedures, and our distinctive physical campus and buildings. The campus culture reflects who we are and how we structure our work. Our culture is our praxis—our values in action.

Our Foundations of Excellence work has helped us see with fresh eyes our institutional culture, and helped identify five factors essential to the success of our first year students. Although the Foundations of Excellence self-study focuses exclusively on institutional behavior as it impacts first year students, once some of the recommendations listed in this report are implemented they will positively impact students beyond the first year. Evidence shows that what happens in the first year affects students in subsequent years. These factors, woven into our unique cultural fabric, need to be recognized, resourced, focused, and energized on the good work of supporting excellence in the freshman experience. *We present them as policy imperatives: a call to action.*

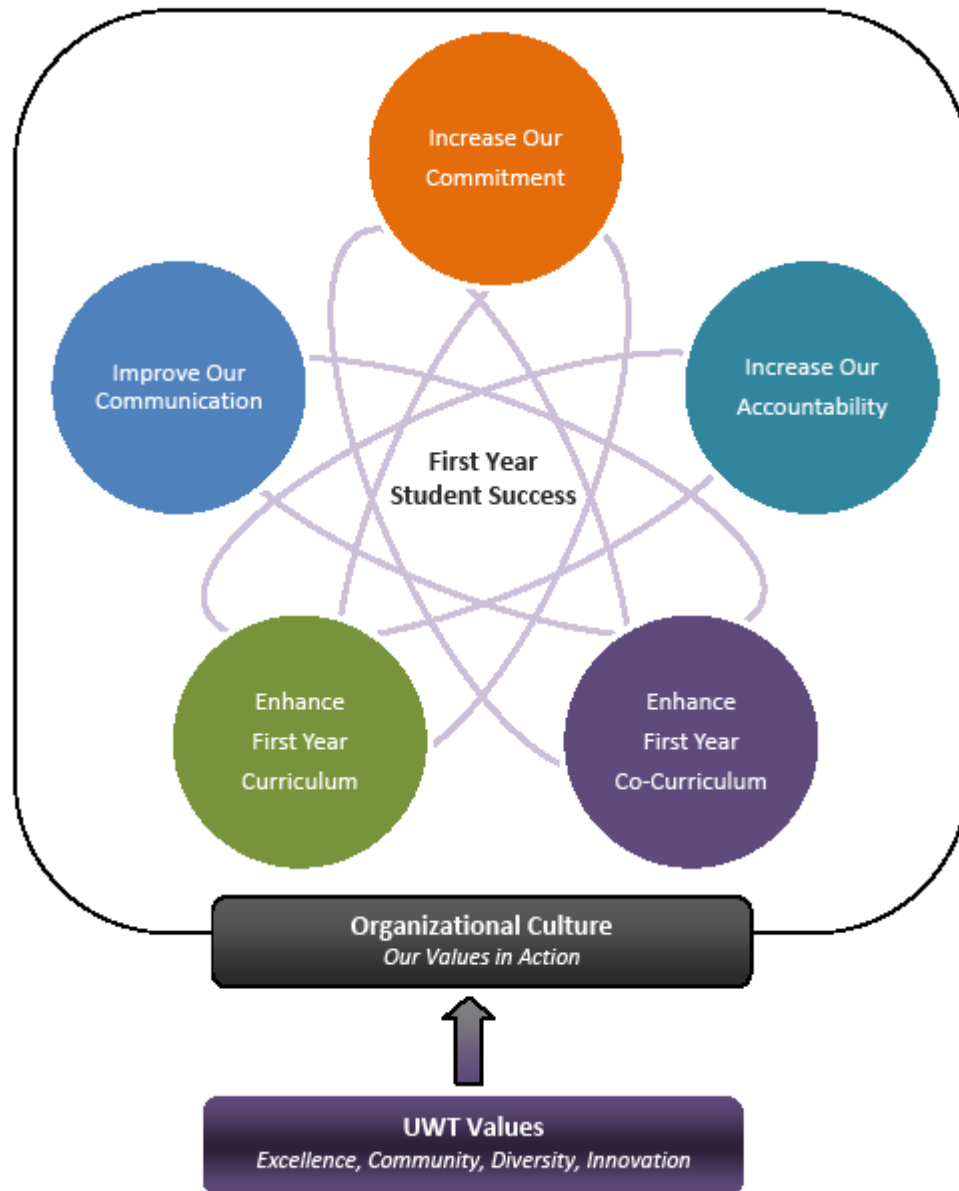
Enhancing the success of first year students at UWT is critically dependent upon these five imperatives:

- **We must *improve communication across campus to support first year student success.***
 - Communication must engage campus members in their roles as contributors to FY student success.
 - Program philosophy, policies, and procedures must be communicated with target audiences.
 - Our communications must use multiple and current modalities.
- **We must *increase accountability of ourselves, our governance and procedural systems, our instruction, and course content to support first year student success.***
 - Institutional systems, policies, resources, objectives must be aligned with FY student success.
 - Ongoing assessment of FY student success must be institutionalized; a culture of evidence must be the foundation of a systematic and iterative improvement protocol.
 - The entire campus must be held accountable for unique and appropriate contributions to FY student success.
- **We must *increase our commitment to first year students and our first year programs.***
 - Faculty and staff across campus must be conscious, responsible, and appropriately engaged in the FY student population.
 - University committees and governance structures must be attentive to, and aligned with, success of the FY student experience.

- Community and familial partners must be cultivated and engaged to support FY student success.
- We must create a leadership culture of administrators, faculty, and staff which embraces its responsibility for FY student success.
- **We must enhance the first year curriculum to support student success.**
 - The FY instructional objectives must be explicit and powerfully engaged across the entirety of the FY curriculum.
 - FY curriculum and instructional models must support FY student success, and the integration of the FY student within the UWT campus culture.
 - Faculty teaching FY students must be provided ongoing faculty development opportunities and ongoing support as they work collaboratively to develop the first year curriculum.
- **We must enhance the first year co-curriculum to support student success.**
 - The co-curriculum must socialize the FY student as a vested UWT citizen.
 - The FY academic support services must be focused on, and responsive to, FY student success.
 - FY co-curriculum must connect the FY student to campus, to the community, and to a culture of inquiry.

Conceptual Framework

UWT and the First Year: Our Institutional Imperative



Imperatives and Recommendations

Imperative #1: We must *improve communication* across campus to support first year student success.

Our campus is young and dynamic. Established in 1990 as a two-plus branch campus of the University of Washington, our academic growth and campus development have been defined by the programmatic needs of upper division and graduate studies. This focus on advanced curriculum has, by default, resulted in a campus organized more around disciplinary/programmatic units and less around proactive, comprehensive academic planning.

Three years ago we added lower division programs to our campus—a campus characterized by programmatic silos. We developed our first year General Education Program along with the Core Curriculum. General Education oversees lower division education—working with faculty across UWT academic programs to develop courses specific to the needs of first-year learners. General Education also provides general academic advising for pre-majors at UWT. The Core Program is a three quarter cohort based model that introduces students to the university’s three areas of knowledge (I&S, NW, VLPA) and composition through 20-25 credits, some of which are team taught in the fall (writing and a discipline), and at least 5 credits each in winter and spring. Students also take non-Core courses at the 100 and 200 level. Once we created the General Education Program and the Core, we created an additional silo.

Our programmatic atomization has diminished the quality of communication on campus. Poor communication across the institution has diminished our ability to support FY students and their success. Although both academic and administrative units contribute to the management of distinct aspects of the first year, increased communication between these units is crucial to the development of a standing structure that provides comprehensive oversight of the first year.

The FY academic program will remain organizationally segmented and our FY students challenged in their quest for academic success unless we improve our institutional communication. FY student success at UWT is dependent upon a more fluid, accurate, and responsive communicative culture.

UWT’s Foundations of Excellence initiative suggests the following strategies to achieve this goal:²

- *Develop a philosophy of the first year experience*
 - Create, disseminate, and practice a FY philosophy that
 - Expresses the UWT values of excellence, community, diversity, innovation

² For a complete list of recommendations of all Foundations of Excellence dimension committees see Appendix B, “Dimension Committees’ Recommendations.”

- Illuminates and promotes the concept of a “learning community” to students, faculty, staff
 - Responds to the unique character of the FY student: demographically, developmentally, behaviorally, academically
 - Articulate the purpose of Core to FY students and the UWT community
 - Its logic, intellectual integrity, structure (learning community, team teaching, linked courses)
 - Clarify FY learning objectives and their alignment with the FY philosophy
- *Develop formalized FY communication system*
 - Use the web as a primary communication tool
 - Use digital tools with currency for youth: Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, texting, etc.
 - Our conversations must embrace modalities which are relevant to youth culture; their look, language, and method should respond to the user, not the provider
 - Use effective communications to publicize campus and community events of interest to FY students
 - Create just-in-time availability of policies and procedures of interest to FY students
- *Improve university wide communications which FY students use*
 - Better publicize our learning/living support resources for FY students
 - Create consistency within our current communication activities in content, look, and modality
 - Make information easy to find, easy to use for FY students
 - Create virtual or physical hub for FY services; a one-stop-shop
 - Assemble counseling services, disability services, Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), job placement/career assistance, etc.
 - Provide easy to access advising resources
 - FY students need accurate, comprehensive, and accessible major information
 - Improve the signage on campus for venues of interest to FY students

Imperative #2: We must *increase accountability* of ourselves, our governance and procedural systems, our instruction, and course content to support first year student success.

During the past several years our assessment efforts have advanced. UW Seattle has required increased assessment of our programs and productivity. We hired our first director of institutional research, produced our first institutional strategic plan, and articulated our institutional, program, and curricular outcomes. We have been focused in this effort and have advanced our institutional assessment capacity, albeit only recently.

This past year's Foundation of Excellence initiative reflects our growing commitment to programmatic assessment and accountability. As an academic community we understand the importance of being proactive, informed, and reflective in our decision-making.

We have advanced our institutional capacity to evaluate our work and create change. Yet there may be no place in our community in which there is greater ambiguity relative to student success and individual responsibility than our first year programs. The success of our first year students and our success in the creation of an exemplary UWT education is reliant upon an increase in our individual and institutional accountability.

As we work to refine and improve our students' first year experience the importance of evidence-based decision-making becomes critical. We must use current information of high quality to advance the FY experience.

UWT's Foundations of Excellence initiative suggests the following strategies to achieve this goal:³

- *Identify who is responsible*—individuals, programs, offices
 - Develop accountability measures for responsible parties
 - Make explicit the expectations for contributing to the FY experience
 - Include these expectations in position descriptions, program operational plans, our campus strategic plan
 - Annually evaluate performance of FY contributions and encourage improvement with rewards
 - Annually identify FY courses with high rates of DFWI (drop, fail, withdraw, incomplete)
 - Develop interventions to decrease non completion rates in these courses
 - Annually assess effectiveness of these efforts
 - Assess the effectiveness of advising for FY students
- *Establish Undergraduate Advisory Council. This is not a policy making body, though there may be recommendations for policy that are generated from the work of the Undergraduate Advisory Council and then directed to appropriate councils, committees, or groups. The Undergraduate Advisory Council has the following responsibility:*
 - Responsibility for the first year experience and providing holistic oversight for the undergraduate experience at the University of Washington, Tacoma
 - Responsibility to integrate the FY experience within the entire undergraduate program
 - Focus on assessment of FY programs (human, budgetary, physical); propose reallocation as needed

³ For a complete list of recommendations of all Foundations of Excellence dimension committees see Appendix B, "Dimension Committees' Recommendations."

- Evaluate all university programs relative to their potential to contribute to the FY experience and Core
 - Our institutional expectation should be that Tenure Track faculty and all academic programs contribute to the FY experience and/or Core (i.e. developing curricula, teaching courses, sharing expertise with new faculty teaching first year students, etc.)
 - The Undergraduate Advisory Council must work with Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, faculty members, representatives from the library, Teaching and Learning Center, academic advising, and students to examine FY Program effectiveness
 - The Office of Academic Affairs must support these efforts in providing incentives for the level and quality of contributions
- *Institute continuous FY assessment*
 - We must improve the quality and collection of data for our FY programs
 - And increase our accountability for the effective use of data in FY program decisions; we must create a culture of evidence based decision making
 - We must assess our FY learning outcomes
 - Is the Core effective in producing our desired learning outcomes?
 - Investigate the effectiveness of team taught v. linked course v. other non-learning community curricular models
 - Evaluate our FY learning outcomes relative to student recruitment and marketing of our undergraduate program; is our program attractive to potential first year students?
 - Develop FY diversity outcomes
 - Develop FY co-curricular outcomes
 - Assess our FY recruitment, retention, and degree completion rates
 - What are measurable outcomes of FY student success at UWT?
 - Develop annual performance metrics and publish results
 - Use results of this assessment to enhance FY program
 - Align our FY assessment with larger institutional assessment initiatives and goals
 - We must manage our FY assessment activities to promote the evolution of initiatives, and diminish our inclination to forget and redo

Imperative #3: We must *increase our commitment to first year students and first year programs.*

Since our establishment in 1990 our campus has grown programmatically, organized around upper division, graduate, and professional studies. Faculty and staff have contributed to the growth of our individual programs and the success of UWT students.

Three years ago with the addition of lower division programs came new expectations for us. A new curricular program, the Core, and a new stratum of students with needs different from our advanced students were added to our campus. We quickly realized our infrastructure was not particularly well organized to meet the needs of this new and younger group of students.

Institutional resources were not appreciably increased to revamp our institutional systems and fully attend to our new first year population. Our charge was to accept the obligations of lower division students, and integrate this new and additional work within our existing work traditions.

Our institutional focus had been exclusively on upper division, graduate, and professional students. As we now realize, our orientation toward advanced studies does not effectively transfer to the needs and capacity of our lower division students. In many ways we continue to feel more like our old selves—identities which are aligned with advanced study. We must continue to move toward fully embracing our new identity as educators of first year students. Our Foundations of Excellence work this year has made clear the importance of our embracing our new identity as an institution responsible for educating first year students as well as upper division, professional, and graduate students.

As members of the UWT community we must take responsibility for the success of our students, in all programs and at all levels. We aspire to build a culture of excellence and we define student learning and student success as our primary objective; we are, at our core, proud to be a learning community. We each have a stake in the success of students, and particularly with the success of the foundational experience in our students' academic career—the first year.

We must accept our shared responsibility in the success of UWT's first year students, both individually and institutionally, and do so in voice and action. Each of us must exhibit active leadership in contributing to the FY experience; it's time for us to truly welcome our first year students.

UWT's Foundations of Excellence initiative suggests the following strategies to achieve this goal:⁴

- *Create a leadership culture of faculty, staff and administrators which embraces its role and responsibility for FY student success.*
 - Administrators:
 - Model the way forward, in speech and in practice
 - Actively advance a campus culture which values FY teaching

⁴For a complete list of recommendations of all Foundations of Excellence dimension committees see Appendix B, "Dimension Committees' Recommendations."

- Reward faculty and staff for commitment to, and demonstrated outcomes of, FY student success; articulate this to faculty and staff
 - Affirm the place of the FY student at UWT
 - Hire faculty with a commitment to, and capacity for, FY student success
 - Refocus programmatic reward structure to support FY student success and diminish territoriality at the lower division level
 - Faculty and Staff:
 - Cultivate and subscribe to training which supports FY student success; engage and promote personal and peer pedagogical development
 - Identify successful strategies for FY success; advocate taking them to scale
 - Better understand issues of gender, disability, first generation college, low income, historically underrepresented, multilingual students, and academically under preparedness in the FY student; raise comfort level through knowledge and practice
 - Develop and communicate best practices
 - Be an educator first; maintain a collaborative, constructive, positive perspective on the challenges and characteristics of FY students
 - Commit to the success of UWT's FY students
 - Personally engage with FY students; provide first year students as many opportunities as possible to interact with faculty, staff, and their peers.
- *Assist in and encourage the development of a student culture which embraces its role in FY student success, and identifies each FY student as a constructive and vested member of our learning community.*
 - Make explicit FY student responsibilities as co-constructors of our learning community
 - FY student expectations of rigor and success remain high; cultivate FY student assertiveness in effectively utilizing institutional support resources
- *Engage the campus and external community in FY student success*
 - We must all actively contribute to a welcoming community for FY students
 - We must notice, value, and engage our FY students as collaborators in our learning community
 - We can support FY student success by creating cross disciplinary, cross program, cross class interactions
 - Engage the regional community, extending our learning community and capitalizing on the diverse resources and cultures of our urban location

- Cultivate external relationships in supporting the transition of our FY students from high school to our UWT learning community
 - With local high schools, counselors, stakeholders
 - With parents, families, familial/cultural communities

Imperative #4: We must *enhance the first year curriculum* to support student success.

In 2006 we created new curriculum for the first year experience—the Core. The Core was a learning community. A learning community is the pedagogical design of UWT’s first year Core experience. It provides a cohort-based, interdisciplinary approach to the first year of higher education. The Core was to be the foundational experience of undergraduate education at UWT. It was a program unlike any other on our campus; team-taught or linked courses organized around thematic ideas investigated in a cross disciplinary/interdisciplinary manner.

The curricular model for our first year students stood in contrast to our existing curricular organization. The manner in which we funded instructors for the Core, the young and less academically mature students in the Core, and the ambiguity regarding what constituted a learning community all contributed to a sense of tension around the first year program. And although we have made substantial improvements, this tension continues today.

Not only was implementing a learning community new for UWT, but perhaps more importantly, we did not fully anticipate the unique developmental needs of our first year students. The academic level of freshmen, the variance of skill level within a Core classroom, and the communication methods and social patterns of these young people challenged us from day one.

The character of Core students and the Core curriculum continues to distance our first year students from the larger UWT community. This separation is historic both by design and by default. Our faculty and students feel the divide, voice concern, and admit to its impact on diminishing the success of our first year students. It must be bridged. We must fully integrate our first year program within our larger institutional culture, committing ourselves to the academic success of our young and lively first year students. Doing so will reap benefits for all students, faculty, and staff.

UWT’s Foundations of Excellence initiative suggests the following strategies to achieve this goal:⁵

- *Increase curricular capacity of FY programs*
 - Faculty

⁵ For a complete list of recommendations of all Foundations of Excellence dimension committees see Appendix B, “Dimension Committees’ Recommendations.”

- Subscribe to professional development opportunities addressing team and linked course pedagogies
 - Increase the clarity of shared theme; increase the subject focus within each unit of the learning community
 - Assess and mitigate low completion rates (DFWI) in FY courses
 - Identify, understand and address the unique cognitive, emotional, and kinesthetic developmental needs of FY students
 - Attend to these issues in classroom management, syllabi development, communication methods
 - Maintain academic rigor while attending to diverse academic character of FY students
 - Be proactive in utilizing academic early warning system
- *Weave the FY learning community into the cultural fabric of UWT*
 - Establish learning objectives for FY students' institutional experience
 - Across all FY courses
 - Across co-curricular units and initiatives
 - Create shared themes with breadth beyond specific courses
 - Capitalize on UWT guests and special events to integrate FY learning into the larger university culture of inquiry
 - Involve more faculty, staff, and students across campus in the Core and FY student programs
 - Engage FY course objectives with UWT majors
 - Involve major programs in FY curriculum and student success; include both people and disciplinary content
 - Engage FY students as vested citizens in our academic community
 - Demonstrate our roles as scholars, teachers, social activists, artists, leaders
 - Facilitate substantive and ample interaction between faculty mentors and FY students
 - Students
 - Bridge Program
 - Our success with the Bridge Program in the effective transition of students into the first year should be capitalized upon. We should acknowledge the program's successful strategies and scale them up within the entire FY curriculum.
 - TLC
 - Increase math and writing support; increase subject specific support; increase supplemental instruction
 - Increase access with additional hours
 - Increase support for students for whom English is a second language
 - Develop academic success course

- Space
 - Create a “Learning Commons”
 - Physical or virtual; a hub for increasing contact and collaboration among the many individuals, offices, and programs which are involved in FY student success

Imperative #5: We must *enhance the first year co-curriculum* to support student success.

During the university’s first sixteen years we developed a culture which was, in many ways, antithetical to the unique developmental needs of FY students; not only was our curriculum designed apart from the needs of FY students, but in some ways our pedagogical and social realms were absent of their unique needs. After three years of admitting first year students we now understand that the intellectual, organizational, social, and physical needs of FY students can be critically different from that of transfer or graduate students.

As we move our campus forward our values and practices must remain focused on the advanced study of upper-division and graduate education, yet create, include, and actively support an additional and different focus—the needs of entry-level FY students. In policy and practice, in intent and commitment, UWT must create multiple foci, and in so doing, foster a welcoming, inclusive, and exemplary academic community.

UWT’s Foundations of Excellence initiative suggests the following strategies to achieve this goal:⁶

- *Increase FY student connection to campus*
 - Socialize FY students as engaged and contributing citizens of the UW community
 - Enhance academic socialization
 - Develop an explicit “culture of inquiry” within the FY experience
 - Create an explicit link between curricular and co-curricular activities
 - Incorporate service learning into the FY experience
 - Connect FY students and their learning to the Tacoma community
 - Incorporate research opportunities into FY experience
 - Encourage FY student involvement in faculty research activities; publicize this
 - Develop a wider range of events and activities for FY students
 - Sports, art activities, etc.

⁶ For a complete list of recommendations of all Foundations of Excellence dimension committees see Appendix B, “Dimension Committees’ Recommendations.”

- Design more UWT traditions: outdoor art, lectures, and other “wow” things to create a vibrant culture
 - Develop diversity events of interest to FY students
 - Solicit event ideas from FY students
 - Generate FY student participation in events
 - Integrate into Core curriculum
 - Develop Core social events
 - Monitor physical safety of FY students on campus; our FY students are a physically vulnerable campus population
 - Investigate additional blue light posts, create an annual “night walk” safety assessment, promote health/wellness trainings, etc.
 - Examine the development of student services at UWT
 - Emphasize services which promote FY student success
- *Increase academic support efforts for FY students*
 - Develop transitional experiences and early interventions
 - Require math assessment testing of all entering FY students
 - Require writing assessment testing of all entering FY students
 - Develop and implement an academic early warning system
 - Implement the “Writing and Retention” proposal
 - Attend to the unique needs of ESL/ELL students
 - Provide teaching support and training for pedagogy to accommodate the breadth of math and writing skills within Core
 - Increase role of peer advisors in Core
 - Provide individual tutoring in math and writing at TLC
 - Provide adequate study space on campus
 - Enhance the summer Bridge Program
 - Implement the “2007 Bridge Proposal”
 - Coordinate with feeder high schools to increase students’ math and writing skills
- *Create a comprehensive and integrated first year advising experience*
 - Evaluate and improve advising practices
 - Adopt mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits
 - Maintain advisors which deal exclusively with FY students
 - Each student assigned one advisor for all FY needs: CORE, general advising, pre requisite/pre major advising
 - Provide FY students with timely prerequisite advising
 - Implement academic early warning system
 - Develop career discovery opportunities and connect to students’ selection of major

Moving Forward

Implementing Recommendations

The recommendations included in this report have been organized as high, medium, and low priority items based exclusively on the work of the nine dimension committees. The nine dimension committees developed the recommendations based on the evidence gathered from student, faculty, and staff surveys, data gathered by UWT's Institutional Research Office, and the institutional evidence (i.e. strategic planning documents, reports, etc.) included in the evidence library developed by UWT faculty and staff.

First Year Program Evaluation: Suggestions for the Future

This report is the beginning of an iterative assessment process of the first year experience on our campus that should occur annually at the least. The attached draft of the Action Plan is based on the dimension committee report recommendations. The attached action plan shows which items have already begun implementation, which will be part of future work, and which due to budgetary restrictions or other complications, may take a temporary lower priority. All action items will be evaluated and become part of the UWT assessment cycle. Most of the action items will become part of Director's reports or other appropriate accountability processes. We recognize that as units across campus review the report and the work they are currently doing and planning for the future that parts of the action plan will most likely be modified.

Action Plan

(See following page)

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Institution	ALL STUDENTS	Creating an inclusive campus environment	Hire more faculty from marginalized groups. Track our enrollment of minority students and develop ways to increase enrollment in these groups, to include working with community colleges on their enrollment goals and practices.	Faculty Institutional Research, Enrollment Services Assistant Chancellor for Equity and Diversity
Institution	DIVERSITY	Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity	Ensure that the Statement is clearly understood, embedded in campus culture, and provides a strong and all-encompassing description and definition of "diversity"	Chancellor
Institution	FACULTY	Cultural shift	Develop a culture that values FY teaching and consistently includes discussion of FY issues and expectations throughout hiring, new faculty orientations and monthly faculty meetings.	Faculty
Institution	FACULTY	Formal Infrastructure	Develop a formal infrastructure for supporting and recruiting faculty to teach in the core faculty from programs across campus.	VCAA, Director of General Education, Academic Directors and Dean
Institution	FACULTY	Strategic Plan	Develop a norm where general education is considered in the strategic plan for each program.	Academic Directors and Dean with VCAA
Institution	FACULTY	Faculty hiring	Develop consistent articulation of expectations across programs during faculty hiring process.	Faculty
Institution	FACULTY	Promotion and Tenure	Start a discussion led by Academic Affairs and Faculty Assembly about how involvement in the CORE impacts promotion and tenure. Program criteria may need to be adjusted to reflect teaching first and second year students	Faculty Assembly Executive Council
Institution	FACULTY	Articulation of rewards for faculty	Articulate clear guidelines at all levels of organization for rewarding faculty at all levels of their career, to ensure that faculty are not penalized in merit or tenure and promotion decisions, and instead rewarded for dedication to	Faculty Assembly Executive Council

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
			first-year teaching.	
Institution	FACULTY	Instigate a FY-specific pedagogical award	Instigate an award for "Innovation in FY student learning". This would be an annual award to an individual (not necessarily a faculty member) who had made a significant contribution to FY student learning.	Undergraduate Advisory Council
Institution	IMPROVEMENT	Promote a better understanding of systematic assessment institution-wide, including close consideration to the full cycle of necessary tasks pertaining to assessment (goal setting, data collection, analysis of results, and making changes based on the results, and then repeating this cycle with new goals aiming at improving the given situation).	<p>Continue to monitoring of systematic assessment, so that initiatives may "evolve" instead of repeating the same goals over and over again/year after year.</p> <p>Improve institution-wide assessment by integrating different units and activities at the conceptual and practical level. More specifically the units dealing with the first year experience need to develop and improve their specific assessment tool in tandem with a systematic assessment defined by an institutional policy. This has been identified by other committees as an area to be improved. We support this recurrent recommendation.</p> <p>Create of a campus-wide Task Force including faculty, staff, and students, using the resources of the Institutional Research Office, to oversee the coordination of campus-wide assessment systems and results.</p> <p>Develop a communication system among units involved in the first-year experience and campus-wide communication using available technologies, easily accessible and comprehensible guides, and clear references. There should be a one-stop shop where all the information and resources are integrated. This applies to both (a) a technological hub or website dedicated to the first year experience and (b) a physical place/facility where we have all the units and services integrated, so students can not only know where to find but also utilize available services.</p>	The Director of General Education will work with the new Assessment Committee to systematize assessment work and integrate results from all levels of assessment
Institution	IMPROVEMENT	Plan a public event at the beginning of the academic year to	None provided	FoE Steering Committee will make these plans.

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
		connect all the committees, acknowledge their work, and have a campus-wide campaign informing about the results of the FoE process and its implementation		
Institution	LEARNING	Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units	None provided	Faculty
Institution	LEARNING	Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models	None provided	Faculty Assembly Executive Council
Institution	ORGANIZATION	Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication	<p>This could be accomplished if the existing discrete structures are linked through formal, regular mechanisms including standing committees, frequent communication, and policy coordination.</p> <p>An integrating mechanism such as a First Year Council could provide holistic oversight of the First Year and be accountable for fulfilling the FY mission. Coordination could also be accomplished through centralizing more control of the First Year in the existing General Education unit, expanding its mission to include all FY courses and services rather than just</p>	Draft proposal for an Undergraduate Advisory Council to be presented to campus stakeholders

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
			<p>the core. The expertise (such as financial aid or course scheduling) could continue to reside in staff attached to different units, but General Education would gain authority, resources, and accountability to coordinate these functions. In either case, regular campus wide communication and consultation regarding the First Year should be initiated.</p>	
Institution	ORGANIZATION	<p>Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures</p>	<p>The working group should include both academic and student affairs units. Its charge should be to identify conflicts and gaps so that policies can be changed or added where needed.</p>	<p>The Undergraduate Advisory Council will have the responsibility to conduct this review; recommendations for changes will go to appropriate governance & policymaking bodies</p>
Institution	ORGANIZATION	<p>Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve.</p>	<p>Undertake a unified, systematic approach to determining what assessment/evaluation data is needed to make informed decisions on improving the first-year experience, following guidelines set out by the Policy Council on the First Year of College. This information should be broadly communicated to all campus constituencies at agreed upon intervals.</p> <p>Clarify the role of Institutional Research & Planning in supporting the First Year. Given limited resources, some clarification is needed from administration as to whether IRP should be expected to focus more on internal needs. Improved communication around internal needs is required between the units and IRP so that evaluations are conducted efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>Part of the charge of the Undergraduate Advisory Council</p>
Institution	ORGANIZATION	<p>Support coordination of First Year oversight</p>	<p>Improved management of the first year need not require new resources, whether it occurs through formation of a coordinating body (such as a First Year Council) or through increasing the authority and accountability of the</p>	<p>Resource needs will be assessed on an ongoing basis. The VCAA will</p>

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		through reallocation of existing resources.	General Education Director. Because support for rapid FTE growth from the state is unlikely in the next few years, existing resources targeted toward student intake should be reallocated toward addressing the coordination and learning needs identified in the Foundations of Excellence process. Improving the administration of the first year will create new responsibilities and possible shifts in workload, particularly for some staff functions, which should be considered in making future resource allocations to units.	monitor resource needs, request additional funds, and work with others to identify potential new sources of revenue.
Institution	ORGANIZATION	Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from FoE	Because a replacement search for the director is currently underway, we strongly urge that the search committee be kept informed of the results of the Foundations of Excellence process as it unfolds. In particular, the changes recommended here for improving the organization and management of the first year at UWT are likely to have implications for the Director of General Education position. Job responsibilities, accountability, and authority levels may change in the near future, thus candidates should be informed of possible changes and evaluated relative to these expected needs.	New director hired with full knowledge of Foundations of Excellence process and preliminary recommendations
Institution	PHILOSOPHY	Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy	<p>We recommend the formation of a committee to draft a statement of UW Tacoma's philosophy of the first year experience.</p> <p>Because the process for developing a campus-wide philosophy is long-term and potentially complicated, the committee should first create a plan and timeline with clear goals. The process should be inclusive of faculty, staff, and student perspectives from across campus, and the final draft should be reviewed and affirmed by the entire campus community.</p>	To be added to the agenda for the Undergraduate Advisory Council.
Institution	PHILOSOPHY	Disseminate and practice the campus-	Once developed, every department/program on campus should meet, discuss the philosophy, and consider how to practice and support UW	To be added to the agenda for the

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		wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy	Tacoma's approach to first year students. Discussions may investigate how to integrate this philosophy into the curriculum or explore how to build the programs, services, and/or infrastructure necessary to support this philosophy. The committee charged with developing the philosophy may also determine several ways of distributing the philosophy and assessing its implementation. Including departments and programs across campus in the process will increase communication, awareness, and understanding of the first year experience, and if this drafting process is inclusive, it will set a strong foundation for empowering UW Tacoma faculty, staff, and students to put the philosophy into practice.	Undergraduate Advisory Council.
Institution	TRANSITIONS	Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide-level.	This will provide a single point of contact for communicating new ideas, recommendations and decision making authority.	Part of the charge of the Undergraduate Advisory Council

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Co-curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Making connections with others.	<p>The campus should make more efforts to link family members of students to UWT. This might include "Family Day" at UWT, special programs in which parents are specifically invited, and a "Core Commencement" ceremony. In addition, a section of the Website specifically for parents should be developed, as well as a quarterly parent-focused information newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. "Core Colloquium" is an event that could happen quarterly where projects completed each quarter could be presented. b. Create some "Family Day" opportunities. For example, when UW Seattle has "Parent Day" in association with a football game, then UWT should have "Family Day" at a place where we have the football game on big screen. Also, we might try a "Family Meet/Greet" breakfast/dinner with the Chancellor and selected Core course faculty 	Student Affairs has a staff member with assigned responsibility for family relations.
Co-curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Opportunities for out of class activities	<p>As a campus we need to have consistent messaging across all units as well as to staff and faculty that work with first-year students</p> <p>Instructors may promote participation by requiring brief reports of campus activities. For example, students could be required to write 1-page descriptions of activities they attended per quarter.</p> <p>There should be better communication to Core students about out of class activities available to UWT students. Communications should consider those used by the freshmen, i.e., text messaging.</p> <p>During Welcome Week, a student organization fair would provide an opportunity to learn about out-of-class activities that are available for Core students.</p>	Student Affairs, faculty

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			<p>Core faculty should be encouraged to announce outside activities available to Core students.</p> <p>Additional technology vehicles should be used to communicate about outside activities. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a Text Line that would send text messages to students every Monday telling them about events on campus for the week. b. Create a weekly Core bulletin that will be read by the Core professors to the students about events for the week, and also give a handout that the Core students can physically read. c. Create a weekly Core bulletin that will be taped to the blackboard every week telling students about opportunities for out of class activities. d. Develop a text line that would send text messages to students when campus clubs or boards that are looking for student members or board members, which will be directed primarily at the first year student. e. Develop a "What's going on" twitter system for use by Core students (or the larger campus). <p>Continue to increase the variety of activities at UWT in order to increase participation and awareness of campus life such as team sports competitions using low cost sports such as Frisbee golf, bridge tournaments and debates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider having a work-study or staff position with responsibilities for managing team sports. <p>Create an "Adopt-a-Core" program where juniors and seniors make "dates" with freshman and take them to fun outings near UWT.</p> <p>Work with Tacoma (UWT area) merchants to create partnerships with food and retail establishments that are geared toward students' budget and other needs.</p>	

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Co-curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Opportunities for campus involvement.	<p>Student leaders should create a first year retreat that would bring the Core group together. This way campus tradition is formed, and the need for unified campus environment is stressed at the beginning of their college experience.</p> <p>Consider Core (or campus wide) focus on the "wow" factor. Address what can be done to make UWT an interesting and exciting place to be and action steps toward promoting a better sense of community. Ideas include: (a) free ice cream day; (b) development of campus traditions; (c) development of large outdoor art projects; d) increase use of Phillip Hall or the Longshoreman's Hall as a gathering place (i.e., viewing UWT football or open-microphone events; (e) development of a "soap box" on campus; (f) expansion of intramural program; sand volleyball court; and (g) development of an electronic "community wish list" in which students, faculty and staff write what they wish they could see/have on campus.</p> <p>Better communication is needed about campus organizations and events. First-year students need outreach from organizations. This might include: (a) an organization fair just for first-year students; presentations by various organizations in Core classes; (b) a "twitter" system (and other technology) for announcing campus events and meetings; and (c) an "each one bring one" system for club members to invite a Core student to a meeting or event.</p> <p>Create one or more campus events just for Core students e.g. a dance, film, or bowling night.</p> <p>Make student leaders/peer advisers an active part of any University 101 program/class created at UW Tacoma so they can serve as role models for involvement at UW Tacoma.</p>	Student Affairs

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
			<p>Increase opportunities for service learning and connecting the academic environment at UW Tacoma to our greater community.</p> <p>Create more options for Campus Housing to encourage involvement and staying on-campus for longer periods of time.</p>	
Co-curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Creating an inclusive campus environment	<p>Maintain data on the extent of participation by first-year students and diverse groups in campus clubs and organizations.</p> <p>Promote outreach by student organizations representing diverse groups to the Core students.</p> <p>Increase advertising in the Cores about campus events that are specifically targeted toward issues on diversity.</p>	Student Affairs
Co-curriculum	DIVERSITY	Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness	None provided	All campus units
Co-curriculum	DIVERSITY	Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students	Such events would be available to the entire campus and would serve to highlight the importance of first year students' learning for the entire campus community	Assistant Chancellor for Equity and Diversity, Faculty, all campus units

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Co-curriculum	ORGANIZATION	Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization	<p>Establish a forum that integrates faculty into planning and participating in academic socialization activities.</p> <p>Schedule activities with faculty and students in mind.</p> <p>Assess the impact of these activities relative to desired learning outcomes.</p>	Part of the charge of the Undergraduate Advisory Council

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Communication	DIVERSITY	Develop mechanisms to increase timely awareness on campus of community diversity events	These events might be at other institutions in the Tacoma/Pierce County regions [such mechanisms could involve direct, repeated, and personalized invitations to FYE students to participate].	Communications staff
Communication	TRANSITIONS	Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes.	<p>Includes marketing, management and development</p> <p>Reallocate current resources to address the need for a Web Marketing and Communications manager to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategic plan for web marketing and communications • Survey/observe constituencies regarding their online behaviors 	The UWT web pages are undergoing substantial revisions in light of these recommendations. New web pages will be designed with student questions and concerns

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design sites consistent with university branding • Administer and maintain campus-wide content management system • Research emerging technologies, tools, and trends among student populations <p>Incorporate the use of external social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter) and develop internal social networking tools (blogs, forums) where appropriate.</p> <p>Involve individuals and groups using social networking tools increase the availability of online academic forms and online form submittal</p> <p>Create more targeted web sections to address specific needs and the lived experiences of our student, faculty, staff and support network populations - Student Affairs, and the main current students pages are priority.</p>	in mind.
Communication	ALL STUDENTS	Accurate communication of information prior to attending the campus about academic expectations, majors, tuition, financial aid issues.	<p>Academic advisers from the various programs should be an active part (i.e. not just at a table at a Majors Fair) of Freshman Advising & Registration sessions. These advisers should conduct a series of workshops that provide information about various study options.</p> <p>Greater linkages are needed between UWT and high school counselors to provide accurate information to prospective students. The development of CD, video, and/or web-based materials with UWT information that can be given by counselors to students should be explored.</p> <p>Students should have greater clarity about academic majors.</p> <p>a. Communication can be increased through development of targeted web-based information and development of handout materials during advising.</p>	Academic advisers

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			<p>b. Create a ½ or 1 day "Majors Fair" where all advisers would staff tables with information about the major. Thus, students could do "one-stop" shopping to obtain information about a variety of majors.</p> <p>Within the first month of the students' first quarter, student leaders that are assigned to specific Cores should present workshops on understanding specific majors, selecting majors, and how to understand Financial Aid. The students will then engage in a round table question and answer session.</p> <p>In addition, advisers should specifically ask: "Do you have any questions about majors at UWT?" during initial advising meetings.</p> <p>The reasons that 25% of students rate communication about academic majors poorly are not clear. Further information is needed to assess the nature of the dissatisfaction in this area.</p> <p>Information about financial aid should be made available in multiple places and formats: web, handouts, pod-casts, Facebook, etc.</p> <p>UW Tacoma should review how they provide information and activities at the Freshman Advising & Registrations sessions since that serves as a first impression of a student's college experience. These sessions need to incorporate fun and information and provide an opportunity for students to really learn what it takes to be successful at this university.</p> <p>Students should be able to receive all of their General Education, Core and pre-requisite advising through one adviser.</p> <p>Develop a system so that Core students are able to access the pre-requisites that they need to apply in a timely fashion to their majors.</p> <p>Collect and use data from prospective students to see what majors and</p>	

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
			<p>programs they are looking for to help guide our growth.</p> <p>Improve information so that Core students are able to access the pre-requisites that they need to apply in a timely fashion to their majors.</p> <p>Be more transparent with students about the purpose of "Core" classes. Explain why students need to take the classes, i.e., what is the value added.</p>	

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Curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Making connections with others.	A University 101 class should be developed for 1-2 credits during the student's first quarter to allow for a structured environment to present information about various resources around UW Tacoma. This class could be led by a student/staff member and faculty and would be a CR/NC elective-based class. It would need to have many experiential components getting students out and about both around campus and in the community.	Executive Council of Faculty Assembly
Curriculum	ALL STUDENTS	Creating an inclusive campus environment	Integrate greater awareness and interaction with diverse groups into the Core curriculum and assignments.	Core faculty
Curriculum	DIVERSITY	Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning	Such goals should be detailed and specific to improve learning in the CORE from both faculty and student perspectives	Undergraduate Advisory Council, Director of General Education will address this
Curriculum	DIVERSITY	Develop a	This might take the form of a committee, a coordinating group, etc. and	Assistant Chancellor for

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		mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi	would enable faculty and staff to develop, recommend, or learn about diversity-related events at least a quarter in advance of a given class.	Equity and Diversity
Curriculum	DIVERSITY	Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of instructional support	Additional student incentives might include recognition of student involvement in diversity-related organizations or activities [noting that such events or activities must be coordinated with faculty input to insure their relationship to academic learning]	Faculty
Curriculum	DIVERSITY	Develop structured program for first year students to contribute recommendations	This would include contributions about diversity-related issues and learning opportunities that they wish to see in the CORE and might be accomplished through focus groups, interviews, etc.	Assistant Chancellor for Equity and Diversity, with Director of General Education
Curriculum	FACULTY	Campus-wide	Re-establish the CORE/General Education committee with a charge to	VCAA

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
		discussion about General Education	evaluate and discuss the FY academic experience, and to communicate information about Gen Ed across campus.	
Curriculum	LEARNING	Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models	None provided	Alternative model is under consideration for implementation in autumn 2010
Curriculum	LEARNING	Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development	None provided	Faculty Assembly Executive Council
Curriculum	LEARNING	Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs	None provided	The VCAA and Director of General Education are addressing this need with the Academic Directors/Dean.
Curriculum	ORGANIZATION	Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs	Coordination is needed to determine course offerings, staffing, and schedule, particularly for courses required by more than one Program's majors. Programs offering these "service" courses should be provided with appropriate resource support. Develop a web-based mechanism for making curriculum planning information easily accessible for Program coordinators.	Program Administrators and Directors/Dean will be charged with developing a strategy for doing this coordination.
Curriculum	ROLES AND	Explore the	Service learning provides students the opportunity to link concepts and	VCAA, in conjunction

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
	PURPOSES	development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year	theories learned in the classroom to the community. This also supports the goals of personal growth, serving the public good and engaged citizenship. The Center would develop the opportunities in the community and provide training and consultation to faculty regarding ways to incorporate service learning into the Core classes.	with faculty
Curriculum	ROLES AND PURPOSES	Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshman	TCORE 100 is currently an elective course designed to introduce new students to university culture, resources, and practices. In TCORE 100, undergraduates learn the skills they need for academic success, including note-taking, test-taking, writing, revising, researching, reading difficult material, and managing time. The course also helps students with academic planning and career paths. Finally, students emerge from the course knowing how to access university resources (Teaching and Learning Center, Academic Advising, Library, Diversity Resource Center, Counseling Center, Student Life). Data from the Summer Bridge program, which provides the same introduction to the University, indicates that students enrolled had a 100% retention rate. This indicates that a required course covering university culture, resources, and practices could impact both retention rates and fulfill the goals of knowledge acquisition for personal growth and preparation for future employment.	This recommendation will be considered by Undergraduate Advisory Council, and then recommended to the appropriate faculty governance committee.

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Faculty support	FACULTY	Faculty awareness of FY student needs	Provide mechanisms for all FY faculty involvement with New Student Orientation, Student Programs, Peer Advisor Program and CORE peer advisors to promote connections with first year students.	Undergraduate Advisory Council
Faculty support	FACULTY	Pedagogical	Provide continued pedagogical support for faculty teaching in the FY at the	Undergraduate Advisory

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		support	campus level. This should use current faculty expertise, draw on the existing CORE camp, and may include innovative technologies (such as online learning modules) to assist with access to such support.	Council
Faculty support	FACULTY	Resources for faculty teaching CORE courses	Provide additional resources for CORE faculty. These could take the form of funding and salary for attending "Core Camp" and for faculty developing a new CORE course.	VCAA in conjunction with Director of General Education and faculty
Faculty support	FACULTY	Resources for non-CORE faculty	Provide resources for faculty teaching predominantly first-year courses that are not part of the CORE. This could take the form of reduced class sizes, supplemental funding for staff or discipline-specific peer tutors	VCAA in conjunction with Director of General Education and faculty
Faculty support	FACULTY	Professional Development	Offer and support attendance of workshops that clearly define and address issues and challenges associated with teaching FY students in order to clarify expectations of faculty undertaking FY coursework.	VCAA
Faculty support	LEARNING	Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development	None provided	Director of General Education and VCAA
Faculty support	LEARNING	Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff and communicate them.	<p>Development opportunities should prepare faculty and staff to address students' academic and co-curricular needs and development. Identify priorities for professional development that would involve all faculty, particularly those teaching lower-division courses, and staff (especially advisers).</p> <p>Develop improved mechanisms for those individuals participating in off-campus conferences and workshops to share their information/expertise on campus.</p> <p>Given that we have staff at UWT with expertise in development, we recommend that organization development staff take formal responsibility for needs assessment as well as coordinating and evaluating development opportunities for all functions related to the First Year.</p>	Plans for appropriate faculty and staff development are being coordinated between Gen Ed, Academic Affairs, and the TLC

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Faculty support	LEARNING	Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty	None provided	The VCAA and Director of General Education are addressing this need with the Academic Directors/Dean.
Faculty support	ROLES AND PURPOSES	Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices	The Core faculty must have consistent support throughout the year to help them develop the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with freshman and keep the students engaged in the classroom. In focus groups, Core faculty reported that the summer Core Camp is useful for syllabus preparation and setting expectations, but additional support could be used regarding classroom management, skill and content building in curriculum, and designing meaningful assignments. Developing a common set of best practices would also ensure consistent communication of the University's learning outcomes: communication and self-expression, civic engagement, critical inquiry, global perspectives, diverse cultural views, and the ability to solve problems. These best practices may involve including common statements on syllabi explicitly stating the purpose of the interdisciplinary curriculum as a means to encourage personal growth, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. A common assignment exploring these topics would also be beneficial.	Plans for appropriate faculty and staff development are being coordinated between Gen Ed, Academic Affairs, and the TLC

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Ensure	1. * Provide a consistent offering of workshops such as Writing 101, How	

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		<p>preparation and skills appropriate for college level work</p>	<p>to Write a Research Paper, and Study Skills, as an addition to the first year out-of-class offerings. Consider developing a survey course of "College Survival Skills" that would be about 16-20 hours, focusing on essential study skills. This course could be offered before classes started (i.e. late August/early September, but students would enroll for the course in the fall, to capture the FTEs associated with the course.</p> <p>2. * Instructors should help students form study groups. Instructors may choose to incentivize group study time. For example, instructors may require "peer review" as part of writing a paper.</p> <p>3. Students should be assessed prior to or at the beginning of their Core experience to determine their level of basic academic skills acquisition and preparation.</p> <p>4. Students should be taken on a "field trip" near the beginning of the Core experience. This trip should include the TLC, library, computer labs, and study places. This could be conducted in a fun way (i.e., scavenger hunt, historical perspective (history of building in which service is located), etc.)</p> <p>5. The Summer Bridge Program (SBP) appears to be excellent preparation for students entering UWT; however, it is available to only a limited number of students. Marketing of the SBP should be considered in partnership with area high schools.</p> <p>6. Expand the Bridge program to an elective course offered in high school.</p> <p>7. Students identified as deficient in some academic skills should be</p>	

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			<p>linked with upper division mentor/tutors.</p> <p>8. Allow students to observe a real class setting in orientation by having faculty members instruct mini mock classes as a demonstration.</p> <p>9. Develop a "Prepare for College" manual for all new students that focuses on college expectations and opportunities.</p>	
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Making connections with others.	<p>An "early warning system" should be developed in the Core to assess students who may be having difficulties and linking them with helping resources. Instructors should have access to empirically validated measurements to help them assess students' social and academic needs.</p> <p>Since 1 in 5 students believe we are not doing a good job in connecting them with academic support outside the classroom, greater efforts need to be made to link students to these supports. While information is presented in orientation, it may be necessary to present it again early in the Core sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have subject-oriented game hour in the TLC during orientation, followed by once a month game night. b. Send students regular emails reminding them about campus support systems. c. Increase advertising about the special study workshops by student leaders to improve attendance. 	Academic Advisers, TLC
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Services for assistance with academic challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the visibility of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) through signage on the outside and inside of the Keystone Building. Make sure that the signage indicates why students would utilize the TLC as the name of the office isn't always clear to a first year student. 2. Provide a consistent offering of workshops such as Writing 101, How 	

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			<p>to Write a Research Paper, Study Skills, etc as an addition to the first year out-of-class offerings.</p> <p>3. Monitor the need for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutoring as we increase the number of EFL students.</p>	
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Meet personal and social needs that may be a barrier to college success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * Increase communication about counseling and other supports for Core students. This may need to occur periodically during the first quarter rather than providing the information briefly only once. Multiple sources of information should be developed. Be sure faculty and staff have business cards for counseling points of contact. 2. Increase assessment of student knowledge of resources, (i.e., counseling, TLC). Expand individual mentoring for students with academic difficulties, especially in the areas of math and writing. 3. Students with possible undiagnosed learning disabilities should be helped to find appropriate assessment. 4. There appears to be no formal mechanism to identify and provide programming for gifted students. Examine formal and informal methods to promote gifted student programming. 5. Create a clinic where students can be evaluated for acute minor illness and medication needs. Advertise counseling services in the clinic. Also, if hiring a prescribing nurse practitioner, this person could work with psychologists and offer medications for treating stress/mental health conditions. 6. Increase the visibility of Health and Wellness options and services at UW Tacoma through increased signage both inside and outside the Mattress Factory. Also increase the visibility of the staff through introductions or short presentations in the Core classes or in the University 101 class, if and when it is developed. 7. Provide workshops for faculty to increase awareness of who their students are and what the demands and stressors are for their students. 8. Present a panel discussion at Orientation or the first year that is 	

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			<p>comprised of juniors and seniors who were not tested for learning disabilities until they reached college.</p>	
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Individualized attention from faculty/staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase opportunities for undergraduates to do research with a faculty member. 2. Survey faculty about their research projects and then post research opportunities open to Core members on the UWT website. 3. Advisers in General Education should be advising on all pre-professional programs (i.e. pre-med, pre-law, pre-dental) since those are programs that need to be started during the first year. 4. After reviewing the result from the focus group, students are displeased with the available courses at the institution. Students believe there are not enough spaces available for every student to receive the best possible education. Specific space should be left available in elective classes for the first-year students. 	
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Academic support outside of the classroom.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * It is not clear why 38% of students rate academic advising low. Further assessment is necessary. One idea is to have a brief consumer satisfaction card filled out after <i>each</i> advising session with a student. Cards would be reviewed on a monthly basis with feedback given to advisers. This system might be used with Financial Aid advising as well. 2. *Advisers of all types (e.g., academic, financial aid, etc.) should be evaluated on a quarterly basis, similar to the way that professors are evaluated per class. 3. Increase communication with students about what they can expect from an advisor at UWT and how best to access and make use of that connection. This could be done through Freshman Advising & Registration, 	Academic advisers

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			<p>Orientation, Core or various other communication means.</p> <p>4. Provide more dedicated, quiet study space around campus for both individual and group study sessions.</p> <p>5. Ensure adequate study spaces and nooks in all new buildings and renovations.</p>	
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Creating an inclusive campus environment	Provide better signage for the Diversity Resource Center so that first-year students are aware of where this resource is on campus.	Facilities
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Physical safety	<p>Once a year, Campus Safety and Facilities should hold a "night walk" around campus with students, faculty and staff to assess areas that need more light, more monitoring, or unsafe areas.</p> <p>Continue adding more blue emergency towers in and around campus.</p> <p>Create a program specifically designed to promote the well-being and protection for female students with activities such as self-defense and safety awareness programs.</p> <p>Encourage everyone to enroll in the text message alerts.</p> <p>Increase signage around campus about escort services.</p> <p>Have campus safety attend new student orientation.</p> <p>During orientation, provide a brief discussion on how to engage with panhandlers and street people to include encounters on The Link.</p>	Health and Safety Committee, Student Affairs

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Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Student support	ALL STUDENTS	Student education about responsibilities to practice safe behaviors.	<p>Continue doing the good job that is being done in campus climate, expected behavior and safety issues.</p> <p>Continue to promote communication and discussions between diverse campus groups.</p> <p>Develop training about conflict resolution for faculty, staff, and student groups.</p> <p>Provide events and clubs that promote personal safety such as self-defense classes and personal safety awareness workshops.</p> <p>Increase awareness as to specific actions that might be taken when disrespect is encountered.</p>	Student Affairs, Health and Safety Committee
Student support	DIVERSITY	Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support	None provided	VCAA will work with TLC and others on campus to identify specific needs for support
Student support	DIVERSITY	Enhance Summer Bridge Program	Develop this and other such mentoring programs with specific attention to closing the retention gap identified for some current student populations.	Summer Bridge program was expanded in the summer of 2009, and will likely expand some in the summer of 2010.
Student support	ORGANIZATION	Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with	<p>Use current research to develop an advising model based on the theories of developmental and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.</p> <p>Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both</p>	A new Advising Coordinating Committee is being formed to address this issue.

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
		Advising.	<p>for pre-major and major advising.</p> <p>Improve coordination among Admissions and General Education advising to improve advising effectiveness.</p> <p>Adopt mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.</p> <p>Rename the advising center to make it easier for students, faculty and staff to locate assistance. Consider relocating the center to increase visibility and accessibility.</p> <p>Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).</p>	<p>Mandatory advising will be adopted for first year students in 2009-2010.</p> <p>Web pages that target students (prospective and current) are being developed, with an eye toward better communication about requirements of majors and minors.</p>
Student support	ROLES AND PURPOSES	Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum	<p>Peer advisors are instrumental in addressing student questions about the structure of the core classes, ways to contribute in the college classroom, and how to participate in student activities. Currently the peer advisors are underutilized and only have a few minutes in the classroom to publicize events and opportunities. The committee recommends that peer advisors be tapped to work in the Summer Bridge program and TCORE 100 classes. Their interaction with the learning communities during the first year could also be expanded so they are more useful in the classroom. In addition, there need to be more support and training for the advisors to ensure that they are better able to address the vision of the University.</p>	<p>Director of General Education will work with core faculty to find ways to enhance the role of peer advisors</p>

WORKING DRAFT

Domain	Dimension Committee	Recommendation	Explanation	Status/Responsibility
Student support	TRANSITIONS	Create a full first year advising experience for students	<p>Maintain a group of advisors that deal exclusively with first year students.</p> <p>Rename General Education and relocate the center to increase visibility and accessibility.</p> <p>Appoint a task force to develop policies for the full first year experience. These policies should target mandatory processes that all first year students must adhere to. Areas should target advising, retention, co-curricular, major's exploration, and academic scholarship probation, and punitive actions.</p> <p>Finalize the development of the mandatory 2 credit course "College 101" course for first year students to address university policies and procedures, major's information, college expectations, student behavior and conduct and basic college skills.</p> <p>Adopt a mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.</p> <p>Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).</p>	<p>Undergraduate Advisory Council will address the policies for the first year experience and the College 101 course.</p> <p>Gen Ed advisers have adopted a mandatory advising plan for first year students.</p> <p>Online materials are being developed.</p>
Student support	TRANSITIONS	Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model.	<p>Updated model will be based on theories of development and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.</p> <p>Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.</p>	Advising Coordinating Committee

Appendices

Foundation of Excellence Dimensions

Philosophy

Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices.

The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation.

Organization

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year.

These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

Roles and Purposes

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society.

These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e., the major).

Learning

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission.

Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Transitions

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission.

Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support, as appropriate.

Diversity

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs.

The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

Faculty

Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty.

These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans, and department chairs and supported by the institution's reward systems.

All Students

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs.

The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

Improvement

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement.

This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis — a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institution's overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way to achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on the first college year.

Dimension Committee Membership

Steering Committee

Deirdre Raynor, Liaison (Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences)
Beckie Etheridge, Liaison (Director, Teaching and Learning Center)
Ginger MacDonald, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Scott Marsh, Visiting Scholar
Beth Rushing, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Beth Kalikoff, Director, General Education
Jim Coolsen, Special Assistant to the Chancellor
Cedric Howard, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Derek Levy, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services
Sharon Parker, Assistant Chancellor for Equity and Diversity
Jim Posey, WESS Administrator (Director, Institutional Research and Planning)

Organization Dimension Committee

Jill Purdy, Chair
Marcily Brown
Julie Buffington
Tomieka Garrett
Jim Gawel
Bobbe Miller-Murray

Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee

Christine Stevens, Chair
Nicole Blair
Erica Coe
Sara Contreras
Linda Dawson
Elise Nicholl, student
Scott Pinkston

Learning Dimension Committee

Phil Heldrich, Chair
Martine De Cock
Joyce Dinglasan-Panlilio
Laura Feuerborn
Divya McMillin
Patrick Pow
Riki Thompson

Transitions Dimension Committee

Darcy Janzen, Co-chair
Trista Huckleberry, Co-chair
Brian Anderson
Jennifer Bautista Llarenas, student
Karin Dalesky
Elizabeth Fernandez, student
Rachel Diane Frank, student
Jill Haugen
Jeannie Jacobson
Michael Johnson

Diversity Dimension Committee

Suzanne Klinger, Chair
Gabriela Crosby
Marti Curtis
Linda Ishem
Christine Kipelidis, student
Bernie Liang
Marcia Monroe
Lia Wetzstein

Faculty Dimension Committee

Sian Davies-Vollum, Chair
Erica Cline
Judy Colburn
Karen Landenburger
Carole Svensson

All Students Dimension Committee

Jerry Finn, Chair
Shaziana Bano, student
Melody Ferguson
Heather Galloni
Lauren Hildesheim, student
Adrienne Ione
Julie Kinn
Shanna Kinzel
Ruth Rea

Improvement Dimension Committee

Jeri Carter, Co-chair
Amos Nascimento, Co-chair
Jo Enscoe

Diane Kinder
Rachel May
Valli Rebsamen
Angela Zurcher

Philosophy Dimension Committee

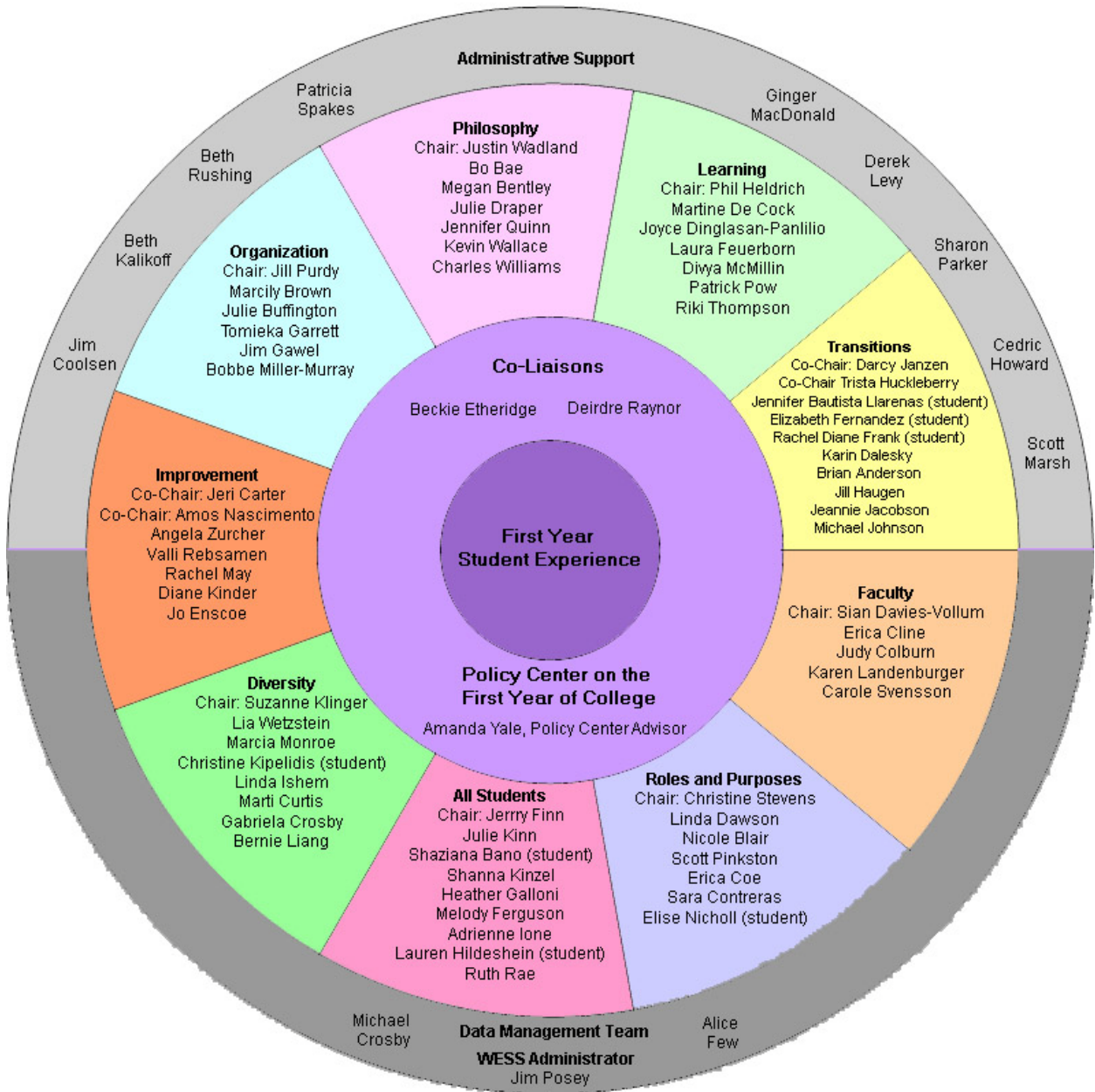
Justin Wadland, Chair
Bo Bae
Megan Bentley
Julie Draper
Jennifer Quinn
Kevin Wallace
Charles Williams

Data Management Team

Jim Posey, WESS Administrator
Michael Crosby
Alice Few

STEERING COMMITTEE

Dimension Chairs
 Co-Liaisons
 WESS Administrator
 Administrative Support



UWT Foundations of Excellence Task Force

Foundations of Excellence Recommendations

The following recommendations are taken verbatim from the nine dimension committee reports. Categorized as high, medium, and low priority, these recommendations may be found in each of the dimension reports.

HIGH PRIORITY

PHILOSOPHY DIMENSION

Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy.

We recommend the formation of a committee to draft a statement of UW Tacoma's philosophy of the first year experience. Because the process for developing a campus-wide philosophy is long-term and potentially complicated, the committee should first create a plan and timeline with clear goals. The process should be inclusive of faculty, staff, and student perspectives from across campus, and the final draft should be reviewed and affirmed by the entire campus community.

Although we do not want to be prescriptive about the statement of philosophy, we do suggest that it combine or at least consider the following elements:

- The purpose of undergraduate education at UW Tacoma and the goals of the Core Curriculum.
- The missions of General Education and UW Tacoma.
- The transitions of students from high school to first year and from first year to later years of college
- The relationship between curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Importance of physical environment in fostering social and academic interactions.

PHILOSOPHY DIMENSION

Disseminate and practice the campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy.

Once developed, every department/program on campus should meet, discuss the philosophy, and consider how to practice and support UW Tacoma's approach to first year students. Discussions may investigate how to integrate this philosophy into the curriculum or explore how to build the programs, services, and/or infrastructure necessary to support this philosophy. The committee charged with developing the philosophy may also determine several ways of distributing the philosophy and assessing its implementation. Including departments and programs across campus in the process will increase communication, awareness, and understanding of the first year experience, and if this drafting process is inclusive, it will set a strong foundation for empowering UW Tacoma faculty, staff, and students to put the philosophy into practice.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising.

- Use current research to develop an advising model based on the theories of developmental and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.
- Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.
- Improve coordination among Admissions and General Education advising to improve advising effectiveness.
- Adopt mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.
- Rename the advising center to make it easier for students, faculty and staff to locate assistance. Consider relocating the center to increase visibility and accessibility.
- Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication cross campus about First Year issues.

This could be accomplished if the existing Discrete Structures are linked through formal, regular mechanisms including standing committees, frequent communication, and policy coordination. An integrating mechanism such as a First Year Council could provide holistic oversight of the First Year and be accountable for fulfilling the FY mission. Coordination could also be accomplished through centralizing more control of the First Year in the existing General Education unit, expanding its mission to include all FY courses and services rather than just the core. The expertise (such as financial aid or course scheduling) could continue to reside in staff attached to different units, but General Education would gain authority, resources, and accountability to coordinate these functions. In either case, regular campus wide communication and consultation regarding the First Year should be initiated.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from Foundations of Excellence report.

Because a replacement search for the director is currently underway, we strongly urge that the search committee be kept informed of the results of the Foundations of

Excellence process as it unfolds. In particular, the changes recommended here for improving the organization and management of the first year at UWT are likely to have implications for the Director of General Education position. Job responsibilities, accountability, and authority levels may change in the near future, thus candidates should be informed of possible changes and evaluated relative to these expected needs.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Support coordination of First Year oversight through reallocation of existing resources.

Improved management of the first year need not require new resources, whether it occurs through formation of a coordinating body (such as a First Year Council) or through increasing the authority and accountability of the General Education Director. Because support for rapid FTE growth from the state is unlikely in the next few years, existing resources targeted toward student intake should be reallocated toward addressing the coordination and learning needs identified in the Foundations of Excellence process. Improving the administration of the first year will create new responsibilities and possible shifts in workload, particularly for some staff functions, which should be considered in making future resource allocations to units.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures applicable to first year students.

The working group should include both academic and student affairs units. Its charge should be to identify conflicts and gaps so that policies can be changed or added where needed.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff related to FY mission. Coordinate and communicate development opportunities and outcomes consistently.

Development opportunities should prepare faculty and staff to address students' academic and co-curricular needs and development. Identify priorities for professional development that would involve all faculty, particularly those teaching lower-division courses, and staff (especially advisers).

- Provide consistent, ongoing professional development for faculty and staff related to first-year students and communicate those opportunities consistently.
- Develop improved mechanisms for those individuals participating in off-campus conferences and workshops to share their information/expertise on campus.

- Given that we have staff at UWT with expertise in development, we recommend that organization development staff take formal responsibility for needs assessment as well as coordinating and evaluating development opportunities for all functions related to the First Year.
-

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs

Coordination is needed to determine course offerings, staffing, and schedule, particularly for courses required by more than one Program's majors. Programs offering these "service" courses should be provided with appropriate resource support.

Develop a web-based mechanism for making curriculum planning information easily accessible for Program coordinators.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising.

- Use current research to develop an advising model based on the theories of developmental and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.
 - Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.
 - Improve coordination among Admissions and General Education advising to improve advising effectiveness.
 - Adopt mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.
 - Rename the advising center to make it easier for students, faculty and staff to locate assistance. Consider relocating the center to increase visibility and accessibility.
 - Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).
-

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization.

- Establish a forum that integrates faculty into planning and participating in academic socialization activities.

- Schedule activities with faculty and students in mind.
 - Assess the impact of these activities relative to desired learning outcomes.
-

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve.

- Undertake a unified, systematic approach to determining what assessment/evaluation data is needed to make informed decisions on improving the first-year experience, following guidelines set out by the Policy Council on the First Year of College. This information should be broadly communicated to all campus constituencies at agreed upon intervals.
 - Clarify the role of Institutional Research & Planning in supporting the First Year. Given limited resources, some clarification is needed from administration as to whether IRP should be expected to focus more on internal needs. Improved communication around internal needs is required between the units and IRP so that evaluations are conducted efficiently and effectively.
-

LEARNING DIMENSION

Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development

LEARNING DIMENSION

Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models

LEARNING DIMENSION

Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units

LEARNING DIMENSION

Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development

LEARNING DIMENSION

Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs

LEARNING DIMENSION

Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models

LEARNING DIMENSION

Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty

LEARNING DIMENSION

Implement Plans from Summer Bridge Proposal '07 (Evidence Library Doc 17)

This is an important document that should be used to direct future Summer Bridge Programs.

LEARNING DIMENSION

Implement Plans in Writing and Retention (Evidence Library Doc 77)

Along with the ideas already noted in the Learning Dimension Report, see this important document for future CORE class and program planning.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Create a full first year advising experience for students.

- Maintain a group of advisors that deal exclusively with first year students.
- Rename General Education and relocate the center to increase visibility and accessibility.
- Appoint a task force to develop policies for the full first year experience. These policies should target mandatory processes that all first year students must adhere to. Areas should target advising, retention, co-curricular, major's exploration, and academic scholarship probation, and punitive actions.
- Finalize the development of the mandatory 2 credit course "College 101" course for first year students to address university policies and procedures, major's information, college expectations, student behavior and conduct and basic college skills.
- Adopt a mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.

- Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).
-

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide level.

This will provide a single point of contact for communicating new ideas, recommendations and decision-making authority.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes.

- Includes marketing, management and development
 - Reallocate current resources to address the need for a Web Marketing and Communications manager to
 - Develop a strategic plan for web marketing and communications
 - Survey/observe constituencies regarding their online behaviors design sites consistent with university branding
 - Administer and maintain campus-wide content management system
 - Research emerging technologies, tools, and trends among student populations
 - Incorporate the use of external social networking tools (Face book, Twitter) and develop internal social networking tools (blogs, forums) where appropriate.
 - Involve individuals and groups using social networking tools increase the availability of online academic forms and online form submittal
 - Create more targeted web sections to address specific needs and the lived experiences of our student, faculty, staff and support network populations - Student Affairs, and the main current students pages are priority.
-

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model.

Updated model will be based on theories of development and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.

Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity

Ensure that the Statement is clearly understood, embedded in campus culture, and provides a strong and all-encompassing description and definition of "diversity"

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop a mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi

This might take the form of a committee, a coordinating group, etc. and would enable faculty and staff to develop, recommend, or learn about diversity-related events at least a quarter in advance of a given class.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events

Additional student incentives might include recognition of student involvement in diversity-related organizations or activities [noting that such events or activities must be coordinated with faculty input to insure their relationship to academic learning]

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of instructional support

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop structured program for first year students to contribute recommendations

This would include contributions about diversity-related issues and learning opportunities that they wish to see in the CORE and might be accomplished through focus groups, interviews, etc.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students

Such events would be available to the entire campus and would serve to highlight the importance of first year students' learning for the entire campus community

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop mechanisms to increase timely awareness on campus of community diversity events

These events might be at other institutions in the Tacoma/Pierce County regions [such mechanisms could involve direct, repeated, and personalized invitations to FYE students to participate].

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Enhance Summer Bridge Program

Develop this and other such mentoring programs with specific attention to closing the retention gap identified for some current student populations.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning

Such goals should be detailed and specific to improve learning in the CORE from both faculty and student perspectives

ROLES AND PURPOSES DIMENSION

Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices

The Core faculty must have consistent support throughout the year to help them develop the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with freshman and keep the students engaged in the classroom. In focus groups, Core faculty reported that the summer Core Camp is useful for syllabus preparation and setting expectations, but additional support could be used regarding classroom management, skill and content building in curriculum, and designing meaningful assignments. Developing a common set of best practices would also ensure consistent communication of the University's learning outcomes: communication and self-expression, civic engagement, critical inquiry, global perspectives, diverse cultural views, and the ability to solve problems. These best practices may involve including common statements on syllabi explicitly stating the purpose of the interdisciplinary curriculum as a means to encourage personal growth, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. A common assignment exploring these topics would also be beneficial.

ROLES AND PURPOSES DIMENSION

Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum

Peer advisors are instrumental in addressing student questions about the structure of the core classes, ways to contribute in the college classroom, and how to participate in student activities. Currently the peer advisors are underutilized and only have a few minutes in the classroom to publicize events and opportunities. The committee recommends that peer advisors be tapped to work in the Summer Bridge program and TCORE 100 classes. Their interaction with the learning communities during the first year could also be expanded so they are more useful in the classroom. In addition, there need to be more support and training for the advisors to ensure that they are better able to address the vision of the University.

ROLES AND PURPOSES DIMENSION

Explore the development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year

Service learning provides students the opportunity to link concepts and theories learned in the classroom to the community. This also supports the goals of personal growth, serving the public good and engaged citizenship. The Center would develop the opportunities in the community and provide training and consultation to faculty regarding ways to incorporate service learning into the Core classes.

ROLES AND PURPOSES DIMENSION

Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshman

TCORE 100 is currently an elective course designed to introduce new students to university culture, resources, and practices. In TCORE 100, undergraduates learn the skills they need for academic success, including note-taking, test-taking, writing,

revising, researching, reading difficult material, and managing time. The course also helps students with academic planning and career paths. Finally, students emerge from the course knowing how to access university resources (Teaching and Learning Center, Academic Advising, Library, Diversity Resource Center, Counseling Center, Student Life). Data from the Summer Bridge program, which provides the same introduction to the University, indicates that students enrolled had a 100% retention rate. This indicates that a required course covering university culture, resources, and practices could impact both retention rates and fulfill the goals of knowledge acquisition for personal growth and preparation for future employment.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Plan a public event at the beginning of the academic year to connect all the committees, acknowledge their work, and have a campus-wide campaign informing about the results of the FoE process and its implementation

Promote a better understanding of systematic assessment institution-wide, including close consideration to the full cycle of necessary tasks pertaining to assessment (goal setting, data collection, analysis of results, and making changes based on the results, and then repeating this cycle with new goals aiming at improving the given situation).

Continue monitoring of systematic assessment, so that initiatives may "evolve" instead of repeating the same goals over and over again/year after year.

Improve institution-wide assessment by integrating different units and activities at the conceptual and practical level. More specifically the units dealing with the first year experience need to develop and improve their specific assessment tool in tandem with a systematic assessment defined by an institutional policy. This has been identified by other committees as an area to be improved. We support this recurrent recommendation.

Create of a campus-wide Task Force including faculty, staff, and students, using the resources of the Institutional Research Office, to oversee the coordination of campus-wide assessment systems and results.

Develop a communication system among units involved in the first-year experience and campus-wide communication using available technologies, easily accessible and comprehensible guides, and clear references. There should be a one-stop shop where all the information and resources are integrated. This applies to both (a) a technological hub or website dedicated to the first year experience and (b) a physical place/facility where we have all the units and services integrated, so students can not only know where to find but also utilize available services.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Specific recommendations concerning the five Initiatives (Task Forces)

See full report.

Recommendations from other committees
(Summary, focused only on those related to ASSESSMENT)

The recommendations of the Improvement Committee are consistent with the findings and recommendations of other FoE committees. Below are the points highlighted by other committees in their reports. For more information, we refer to the individual reports of each dimension.

High priority (university-wide)

1. Philosophy

- Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy (High priority)
- Disseminate and practice the campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy: (High priority)

2. Organization

- Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication
- Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from FoE (High priority)
- Support coordination of First Year oversight through reallocation of existing resources. (High priority)
- Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures (High priority)
- Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve. (High priority)

3. Learning

- Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs (High priority)

4. Faculty

- Work to accomplish the integration of the General Education program across all units on campus
- Formalizing a commitment to General Education in unit strategic plans and developing a recruitment procedure for faculty teaching in the CORE.

5. Transitions

- Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model. (High priority)

6. All students

7. Diversity

- Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity (High priority)
- Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning (High priority)

8. Roles & Purposes

According to specific Units

In addition, here, we use the following code in order to classify how specific recommendations of other FoE committees address the five initiatives defined by the Improvement Dimension:

- Recruitment and Admissions (RA)
- Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) (ACAD)
- Students (STUD)
- Faculty and Staff (FACST)
- Retention (RET)

1. Philosophy:

2. Organization

- Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs. (High priority)
- Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising. (High priority)
- Reclassify the General Education unit as an Academic Program rather than an Academic Support Unit. (Medium priority)
- Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization (High priority)
- Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff and communicate them. (High priority)

3. Learning

- Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units (High priority)

- Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development (High priority)
- Implement Plans from Summer Bridge Proposal '07 (Evidence Library Doc 17) (High priority)
- Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development (High priority)
- Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models (High priority)
- Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models (High priority)
- Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty (High priority)
- Implement Plans in Writing and Retention (Evidence Library Doc 77) (High priority)

4. Faculty

- Clearly articulate expectations for faculty member hired to teach FY students.
- Provide additional funding and support for innovative interdisciplinary connections
- Provide articulated support at the unit and campus level, equity in distribution of the first-year teaching load (to insure that faculty are aware of the unique challenges when evaluating teaching portfolios for tenure and promotion)

5. Transitions

- Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes. (High priority)
- Appoint a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current two-step process. (Medium priority)
- Create unified tracking process. (Low priority)
- Create a full first year advising experience for students. (High priority)
- Create university-wide data catalog. (Low priority)
- Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide level. (High priority)
- Align transition services with the strategic goals and objectives of Student Affairs. (Medium priority)

6. All Students

- Accurate communication of information prior to attending the campus about academic expectations, majors, tuition, financial aid issues.
- Preparation and skills appropriate for college level work.
- Making connections with others (students and faculty).

- Information about the organization and opportunities of UWT.
- Opportunities for out of class activities
- Services for assistance with academic challenges.
- Meet personal and social needs that may be a barrier to college success.
- Opportunities for campus involvement
- Inclusive campus environment
- Provide Physical safety (to/of students)
- Provide Psychological safety (to/of students)
- Offer student education about responsibilities to practice safe behaviors
- Individualized attention from faculty/staff
- Academic support outside the classroom

7. Diversity

- Enhance Summer Bridge Program (High priority)
- Develop classroom best practices for engaging in difficult conversations about diversity issues (Medium priority)
- Develop pre-orientation session or support and mentorship program for diverse students (Low priority)
- Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of instructional support (High priority)
- Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support (High priority)
- Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students (High priority)
- Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness (High priority)
- Develop a mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi (High priority)
- Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events (High priority)

8. Roles & Purposes

- Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum (High priority)
- Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshman (High priority)
- Incorporate career discovery opportunities into Core curriculum (Medium priority)
- Explore the development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year (High priority)
- Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices (High priority)

Other Actions

It is our recommendation that FoE and UWT further develop systematic assessment of these practical recommendations presented by the committees and articulates them with the general recommendations of the Improvement Dimension.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Admissions

The Admission process needs to be reviewed and evaluated annually by an interdisciplinary committee with faculty, staff, and students

There is a need to measure the revised admission standards against the "mission, vision, and values" of UW Tacoma.

UW Tacoma needs to evaluate and track outcomes for students admitted under all the various standards.

UW Tacoma needs to evaluate both the academic and overall success of those admitted under the "Alternative Review" standards and be prepared to academically support these students as needed.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Academic

AFW's suggested two-three year review date is too far out; especially in light of the FOE and current Academic Advising Task Force (AATF) processes. Overlap within these two "task force" bodies is evident in the concern for the role of the General Education Center/cohort curriculum.

Overall assessment process for evaluating lower division offering needs as well as implementation needs improvement. There is a varied clarity in the way in which new courses are offered. Findings appear assessment heavy.

More strongly define who is responsible for lower division/pre-requisite coursework that are essential to first-year students as they move toward the majors.

UW Bothell offers a curriculum model that includes CUSP (similar to UWT's General Education Center) having comparatively, more authority over lower division offerings. For example, CUSP schedules the following courses under the heading "University Studies" examples include: Math, Bus. Law, Psych, Art, and a variety of Foreign Languages.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Faculty/Staff

Incorporate systematic assessment tools that document the extent of staff contribution to the first year experience.

Create framework and procedures to analyze and improve staff participation.

Use already existing faculty assessment to improve the first year experience.

Create more specific tools to complement and expand already existing procedures in order to better evaluate faculty impact on first year experience.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Retention

Expand assessment activities of Retention Subcommittee to include tracking data related to each goal and objective, analyzing those data, reviewing and reporting accomplishments and repeating the cycle.

Use assessment activities to increasing understanding of retention and to improve practices.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Admissions

UW Tacoma needs to create assessment tools to evaluate both the academic and overall success of those admitted under the "Alternative Review" standards and be prepared to academically support these students as needed.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Academic

AFW's suggested two-three year review date is too far out; especially in light of the FOE and current Academic Advising Task Force (AATF) processes. Overlap within these two "task force" bodies is evident in the concern for the role of the General Education Center/cohort curriculum.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Faculty/Staff

There is a need to incorporate systematic assessment to document staff contribution to the first year experience. The already existing assessment methods and procedures for faculty should be expanded in order to more directly assess faculty impact on first year experience.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Retention

The subcommittee of the Enrollment Committee needs to implement the goals and intentions it has defined, making use of the recommendations that have been made.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Admissions

Very little, UW Tacoma is still trying to figure out its identity.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Academic

Overall assessment process for evaluating lower division offering needs as well as implementation needs improvement. The above mentioned AFW may be a step in an improved direction. There is varied clarity in the way in which new courses are offered at UWT. There appears to be semi-regular assessment of need, however the implementation of goals remains unclear (perhaps due to budget constraints/ limited faculty/ lack of communication between academic programs). Additional balance between the degree of assessment and implementation is needed.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Faculty/Staff

Based on the items described in PI 9.1. we can differentiate the following points:

Revision of the Faculty Code and the UWT Faculty By-Laws: These documents were assessed and revised in order to include the particularities of the Tacoma campus into UW official language and documents, to motivate more faculty participation in shared governance, and provide opportunities for faculty involvement in activities that impact the first year experience. Indirectly, these revisions contribute to curriculum

development, budgetary decisions, planning and assessment, but these elements have not been integrated and assessed in a systematic way.

The Climate Report indicates the extent of faculty and staff involvement in UWT.

Faculty Assembly committee reports. These documents indicate that committees work rather closely, so that there is neither a campus-wide exposure to and discussion of curriculum issues nor a campus-wide discussion of student issues.

Teaching assessments: Student issues are not addressed in this assessment.

Other materials: There is little evidence of systematic assessment. Consequently, there is limited study and little observable impact on student success.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Retention

Since there has been little systematic assessment including all aspects of the assessment cycle it is difficult to credit assessment activities for understanding; however, the documents available to the Task Force verify the Retention Subcommittee's sponsorship of the Campus Retention Retreat in May 2008 designed in part to increase campus understanding of retention.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Admissions

Very little, there is a lack of understanding throughout the entire campus surrounding the first-year experience.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Academic

Very low. We need to review similar institutions and exchange information. For instance, UW Bothell offers a curriculum model that includes CUSP.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Faculty/Staff

Low. This is consistent with the Faculty/Staff Survey findings.

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION

Retention

In general, low. This degree is even lower regarding the exposure to external staff and exchange with other experts.

MEDIUM PRIORITY

ORGANIZATION DIMENSION

Reclassify the General Education unit as an Academic Program rather than an Academic Support Unit.

Regardless of whether a centralized or decentralized method of coordination is chosen, the General Education unit should be labeled in the organizational structure in a manner that more closely matches its academic mission and purpose.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Appoint a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current two-step process.

The current two-step admission process should be analyzed and other alternatives should be considered.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Align transition services with the strategic goals and objectives of Student Affairs.

Develop a division-wide Student Leadership Program

Develop a co-curricular transcript program to for recording student involvement

Develop a plan for student/faculty engagement programs

Develop a marketing plan to increase campus community awareness of administrative units

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

The committee discovered a number of smaller or technical concerns that are not directly related.

Although not directly tied to transition services, these concerns need to be addressed in relation to delivery of transition services.

The following issues were noted:

- Student Affairs wishes to streamline the process for issues of academic integrity and the grievance process. Students are often at a loss for such issues.
- Administration will need to address language issues and how diverse populations are included and described.
- The various roles of student support staff are not always clear to staff, faculty or students.

UWT webpage needs to be brought up to Web2.0 technologies and must cater towards specific audience needs.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop mechanisms to alert students as soon as possible to off campus learning programs

Such programs might include study abroad opportunities and other cross-cultural learning experiences such as exchange programs with the United Negro College Fund or Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop classroom best practices for engaging in difficult conversations about diversity issues

ROLES AND PURPOSES DIMENSION

Incorporate career discovery opportunities into Core curriculum

There currently are several career discovery opportunities available to students that can greatly contribute to knowledge acquisition for personal growth, employment preparation, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. Career Discovery Week, coordinated by the UW Alumni Association in partnership with academic advisers, is a career education and exploration event held in early winter for UWT students and alumni with sessions on a variety of career topics, including alumni panels. In the

Spring, the Career and Internship Fair allows students to explore future career options and network with employers and recruiters. The Husky Career Network is an online community of alumni volunteers who make themselves available to students curious about their major, their career options and how the two interact. Alumni can impart to students tips to succeeding in their particular trades and make them aware of position openings, internships and/or job shadowing opportunities in their respective places of business. The Department of Student Development also provides numerous resources to assist students in developing, evaluating, and implementing career and educational decisions. By incorporating these events and resources into the Core curriculum, students would be encouraged to explore career opportunities and majors early in their academic career.

LOW PRIORITY

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Create unified tracking process.

Improve tracking process to understand when, where and how students access information regarding their matriculation. Process of tracking should be uniform across departments.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Create university-wide data catalog.

Create data catalog of research related to University of Washington Tacoma programs, procedures and statistics. The committee noted several instances where data has been gathered and research collected on various programs, potential programs and/or improved practices. There is little oversight and open access to such data, thus important information is often overlooked or redone, suggesting an inefficient use of resources and ineffective use of information.

TRANSITIONS DIMENSION

Increase linkages with local businesses.

This will encourage campus visitation and socialization during off-class times.

DIVERSITY DIMENSION

Develop pre-orientation session or support and mentorship program for diverse students

Such a program would support retention and help create a sense of community for diverse students

Dimension Committee Reports

Philosophy Dimension Report University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation.

1. Committee Leader

Justin Wadland, Librarian, Library

2. Committee Members

Bo Bae, Student Leadership Specialist, Student Affairs
Megan Bentley, Office Assistant III, General Education
Julie Draper, Associate Director for Student Services
Jennifer Quinn, Professor, IAS
Kevin Wallace, Diversity Resource Center
Charles Williams, Assistant Professor, IAS

3. Current Situation

The committee did not find an explicitly stated philosophy for the first year experience at UW Tacoma. We did, however, see elements of what might be called UW Tacoma's philosophy expressed in several of the planning documents that guided the transition to a four-year campus. Some of these elements later reappear in the mission statement of General Education, as well as in the strategic plans of the university, Academic Affairs, IAS, Student Affairs, and other departments who work with first year students. Although these documents reflect an effort to consider the first year experience, they do not appear to be linked into a central philosophy. The institution as whole still seems to be in the discovery phase, in need of a comprehensive philosophy that is widely communicated, implemented, and practiced.

Many of the recurring values, goals, and priorities that represent a philosophy were first stated in the document "Charting the Future of UWT - Interim Report," which was completed by the Curriculum Planning Committee in 2005. This document was the blueprint for the Core Curriculum now in its third year at UW Tacoma. This document identifies several guiding principles for an approach to the first year experience:

To produce citizens who have the skills and proclivity to engage in lifelong learning through an integrated curricular experience that challenges students to expand their own capabilities, creativity, and wisdom. Students will gain increased depth of understanding of themselves and their relationship to the social and natural worlds through exposure to an interdisciplinary curriculum representing the arts, humanities, and sciences (natural, social, and behavioral). Undergraduate education at UW Tacoma emphasizes a global perspective, enhancement of critical thinking through an exposure to a variety of modes of inquiry, comprehension of the diversity of human experiences, civic engagement, and facility with various forms of communication/self-expression.

According to this document, the goals of undergraduate education at UW Tacoma - global perspective, inquiry and critical thinking, diversity, civic engagement, and communication/self-expression - are achieved in the first year through learning communities, specifically the modified cohort model. In developing the Core Curriculum, UW Tacoma largely followed the recommendations of this document, so it is the closest thing to an explicit philosophy, but we are uncertain about its impact beyond the faculty and students in the Core.

Other planning documents articulate some broader elements of a philosophy. For example, the document titled "Report on the Future of UW Tacoma" (completed in October 2004) largely presents the transition to a four-year campus as an expansion of the university's mission to "[educate] diverse learners and [transform] communities by expanding the boundaries of knowledge and discovery." Also, this document describes the transition as beneficial because it will allow UW Tacoma to, "Better serve transfer students, offer talented South Sound high school graduates the opportunity for a unified four-year baccalaureate experience without relocating, and make UWT a stronger academic institution." Overall, this document frames the first year experience as within the larger mission and vision of UW Tacoma.

Pieces of a "philosophy" appear in the strategic plans (completed or currently being drafted) of the university, departments, units, and programs, especially those that deal directly with first year students. Many of these strategic plans emphasize building both the services and facilities needed for first year students, such as improving advising, expanding lower division classes, increasing co-curricular opportunities, and developing the necessary physical space on campus. Although these plans share some common themes and point to the necessity of enhancing the infrastructure for first year students, they could benefit from tapping into a central philosophy that expresses the institutional priorities for the first year experience.

The Foundations of Excellence (FoE) survey results revealed that faculty and staff ranked having a formalized institutional philosophy as highly valuable, giving an average score of 4.02 on a scale of 1 to 5, higher than the FoE goal of 3.5. When it came to the degree of UW Tacoma's commitment to the success of first year students, the average score put UW Tacoma at 3.78, also above the FoE goal. In terms of communicating and operating on a basis of shared philosophy, however, the average scores ranked below the FoE goals:

- In response to whether an institutional philosophy had been communicated to respondents, the score was 3.02
- In response to whether a department philosophy had been communicated to respondents, the score was 2.97
- In response to whether departments operated from a common philosophy, the score was 2.92
- In response to whether the institution operated from a common philosophy, the score was 2.69

The lower scores may be attributed to a number of factors, such as the absence of a clearly articulated philosophy and the relatively recent transition to a four-year institution. Also, due to a lack of time and resources, the elements of the philosophy that do exist have not been adequately communicated beyond the faculty and staff who work directly with first year students.

4) Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

UW Tacoma is a small, relatively new institution: UW Tacoma was established in 1990, and without a long tradition or history to fall back on, it is in a position to be innovative about its approach to developing a philosophy of the first year experience. Also, given the size of UW Tacoma, there are fewer barriers between faculty and staff, which create an atmosphere that may allow collaboration on a philosophy that the entire campus can support.

UW Tacoma recently transitioned to a four year campus: UW Tacoma is only in its third year of offering first year classes, and the campus is in an excellent position both to assess how it's doing and to make improvements. Developing a philosophy of the first year experience can draw from and expand upon the thought, intention, and work already invested in planning for the Core Curriculum.

Challenges

Budget and resources limitations: Like many state-funded institutions of higher education in Washington State and the country, UW Tacoma is facing budget cuts. At a time when everyone is being asked to do more with less, several questions about the efficacy of developing and implementing a philosophy of the first year experience must be addressed. Ideally, the philosophy should reflect the values, goals, and priorities of the institution, and yet it will have to take into account serious economic realities.

The "newness" of UW Tacoma and its first year program: UW Tacoma's opportunities are also its challenges. Because UW Tacoma is a relatively new institution, it's in the process of establishing its identity, especially in relationship to the UW Seattle campus. Also, it's still building the infrastructure, services, and courses to meet all levels of students. In this context, much of the thought and planning for the transition to a four year campus was focused on creating the first year curriculum, and it didn't give as much attention to the integration of first year students into the university

environment as they progress in their academic careers. To better serve first year students, UW Tacoma will need to consider how much the first year prepares them for their entire university experience.

5) Sources of Evidence

- Report on the Future of University of Washington, Tacoma
- Charting the Future of UWT, Interim Report Mission of General Education, stated on website
- Strategic Plans from: University of Washington, Tacoma; Academic Affairs (Draft); Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (Draft); Student Affairs Strategic Plan;
- Academic Foundations Workshop Report
- Interviews with: Beth Rushing, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs; Beth Kalikoff, Director of Core Curriculum; Cedric Howard, Associate Vice Chancellor Student Affairs/Chief Student Affairs Officer
- Results from FoE Faculty and Staff Surveys

Recommended Grade: D+

Recommended Action Items:

- Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy (*High priority*)

We recommend the formation of a committee to draft a statement of UW Tacoma's philosophy of the first year experience. Because the process for developing a campus-wide philosophy is long-term and potentially complicated, the committee should first create a plan and timeline with clear goals. The process should be inclusive of faculty, staff, and student perspectives from across campus, and the final draft should be reviewed and affirmed by the entire campus community.

Although we do not want to be prescriptive about the statement of philosophy, we do suggest that it combine or at least consider the following elements:

- The purpose of undergraduate education at UW Tacoma and the goals of the Core Curriculum.
 - The missions of General Education and UW Tacoma.
 - The transitions of students from high school to first year and from first year to later years of college
 - The relationship between curricular and co-curricular activities.
 - Importance of physical environment in fostering social and academic interactions.
- Disseminate and practice the campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy: (*High priority*)

Once developed, every department/program on campus should meet, discuss the philosophy, and consider how to practice and support UW Tacoma's approach to first year students. Discussions may investigate how to integrate this philosophy into the curriculum or explore how to build the programs, services, and/or infrastructure necessary to support this philosophy. The committee charged with developing the philosophy may also determine several ways of distributing the philosophy and assessing its implementation. Including departments and programs across campus in the process will increase communication, awareness, and understanding of the first year experience, and if this drafting process is inclusive, it will set a strong foundation for empowering UW Tacoma faculty, staff, and students to put the philosophy into practice.

University of Washington Tacoma

Philosophy Dimension Feedback

January 12, 2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

Philosophy Statement Feedback:

Justin, Bo, Megan, Julie, Jennifer, Kevin, and Charles....Congratulations on completing the 1st of nine dimension reports!

You have worked hard examining a number of planning documents which exist in the sources of evidence library. Each of these documents do express elements of what a first year philosophy statement might look like for the University of Washington (UWT). You conducted interviews with key individuals on your campus. I especially enjoyed reading the personal interview in the evidence library because it provides input directly from a professional who has helped the institution move forward in the direction to offering lower division curriculum. Your committee also took into careful

review and consideration the results of the FOE surveys in your review. Finally, as a committee, you each brought forth from your own professional positions and experience at UWT significant and important insights related to these changes. This is a time of opportunity for UWT!

As an institution, in many ways you are so very fortunate to be able to have the opportunity to assemble a framework for the first year experience for the very first time in the history of the institution. I do understand that UWT is a young institution which has primarily focused on upper-division students. As such, you have many opportunities on your campus. I believe your campus is at a fascinating crossroads in determining your mission and core values for undergraduate education beginning with the first year. There are very few institutions across the nation who had the opportunity to “commence” a first year experience from the ground up and for the very first time are admitting first year students.

The documents that you reviewed in the sources of evidence library for the study of this dimension are very pertinent to guiding the development for what a comprehensive first year philosophy might look like. The document entitled “Charting the Future of UWT” will be of significant value in the construct of a comprehensive philosophy for the first college year. Your core curriculum model is a good example of this. I do believe that several elements for a first year effort do appear in the mission statement of General Education, as well as, in the institution’s strategic plan and department/divisional documents. Most of these statements will serve as a great source from which a comprehensive philosophy may be developed.

You also pointed to several other documents which provide a broader element of a philosophy for the first college year. I believe the one entitled “Report on the Future of UW Tacoma” may be particularly relevant as you consider the varied “transitional” needs of a first year student through a wider lens. It will be important for you to consider how UWT will meet the academic, social, personal transitional needs of your students. I do believe that you can use this document as a means of framing the first year within the vision, mission, and values identified for UWT.

You pointed out a number of services that now need to be re-considered for first year students. I thought about some additional ones that you may wish to introduce into the discussion. As UWT moves to admitting first year students, you will need to strategically plan for marketing campaigns, recruitment and admissions processes and communications, orientation services for students and their families, financial aid services and scholarships, career services for major exploration, academic advising services, curriculum (core/learning communities), co-curricular activities, organizations, honoraries, early intervention processes, academic policy considerations, housing and residence life, and facilities. Each of these services are impacted by this newly set direction for the institution.

As a committee, you effectively used the results of the FOE survey to assess and report back on the critical importance of establishing a comprehensive philosophy for the first year. The scores show that your community believes in the value of a comprehensive philosophy that is widely communicated and implemented. Their low scores on the questions regarding a “department philosophy” are consistent with your assessment that a clearly articulated first year philosophy has not yet been developed.

This challenge will open an opportunity for your institution. Now that you have been marketing, recruiting, admitting, and educating first year students you have an opportunity via the FOE process to evaluate the first year experience for these students and determine the strengths and areas for improvement that need to be addressed in the learning, living, and social environments for your students. As a young institution you have an opportunity to be creative and innovate in your approach. I do believe that your core curriculum initiative is a good example of this.

I do believe that you addressed one of the needs for developing a comprehensive first year program, that is, the integration of these students into your existing collegiate environment. Faculty and staff need to understand the needs of first year students as they transition to college. They need to be informed and educated on who these students are, not only the demographics, but more so, their attitudes, aspirations, and behaviors as they transition to UWT. Some of the literature that exists on Millennial students may assist in this process.

You recognize clearly the need for a campus-wide statement on the first year for UWT. You also recognize that this process should be inclusive of faculty, staff, and students. While you express as a committee that you do not want to be prescriptive about the statement of philosophy, I am pleased that you provided guiding suggestions that should be considered in the process which are inclusive of curricular and co-curricular needs. You listed five important elements for UWT to consider as this statement is prepared and each of these are critical to where you are as an institution in introducing first year students to the UWT living and learning culture an first year students to the faculty and staff at UWT. UWT will need to be introduced to the needs, values, and behaviors of these students. While you suggested the formation of a committee to draft such a statement, you may find that as each of the dimensions develop their self-study reports, a common organizational framework for this process may bubble up from the totality of this work.

While budget is a challenge for our public institutions across higher education today, I do believe that these are the times in which individuals bring forth some of the most innovative and creative ideas. I believe that the FOE process can be a time to build momentum. I do believe that it is important for you to identify those activities that will best attract first year students and those activities and services that will help them to be successful. It will be important to gather the right people from all across campus to identify and operationalize the strategies. It may be useful to focus on about 4-5 initiatives which define and operationalize the first year for UWT.

Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on this FOE dimension! Your work is comprehensive and thorough. You have considered a number of elements in the development of the report. Most significantly, you have created a strong foundation for the next eight dimension groups to work from.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Organization Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

1. Committee Leader:

Jill Purdy, Associate Professor, Milgard School of Business

2. Committee Members:

Marcily Brown, Coordinator Community College Relations, Academic Affairs

Julie Buffington, IAS Program Administrator

Tomieka Garrett, General Education Advisor

Jim Gawel, Associate Professor, IAS

Bobbe Miller-Murray, Director Registration and Financial Aid/Registrar

3. Current Situation

The committee identified UWT's organization structure for the first year as composed of discrete units that have limited coordination among them. Both academic and administrative units contribute to the management of distinct aspects for the first year (enrollment, advising, coursework), and these units do collaborate, but the committee found no standing structure that provides comprehensive oversight of the first year.

Faculty and staff generally understand where functions are located (although administrators and professional staff consistently score higher than faculty on knowledge of structure). They are fairly successful in referring students; 65% of students indicated that faculty and staff refer them to right office when they have questions, and only 9% indicated they did not.

However, knowledge of structure is less evident among students. As the table below indicates, students are relatively well informed about where to get help with academic and administrative matters, but far fewer are aware of how to participate in campus activities or how to get help with personal matters. One of the consequences of UWT's decentralized model may be that first year students are not equally aware of the types of support the university offers to them.

Do you know how to get help with:	Students responding 4 or 5 on 5 point scale
Coursework	62.6%
Administrative questions	49.5%
Institution-sponsored organizations and events	28.1%
Non-academic/personal matters	28.9%

Based on the committee's investigation of a wide range of structural issues (detailed later in this report), we have concluded that UWT lacks a system for managing the first year. While integration across the units is not entirely absent, coordination in managing the first year is neither routine nor holistic. In support of this conclusion, on the survey only 15% of faculty and staff felt that collaboration between student and academic affairs was 'high' or 'very high.' Ratings on routine communications between first-year functions were well below the scale midpoint, ranging from faculty members' rating of 2.9 on a 5-point scale down to technical, clerical and service personnel's rating of 2.67. Furthermore, faculty/staff members had an average score of only 2.49 out of 5 on a question regarding their individual voice in decisions about first-year issues. This was the lowest rated item among all Organization dimension survey items on the Faculty/Staff survey.

The committee found numerous examples of units working together to manage specific first year issues. However, in some cases collaboration occurred only when problems arise, and in other cases it appears to be linked to key individuals in whose absence collaboration might not occur. The organizational structure has not yet evolved to include routine communication that spreads understanding of FY issues across a wide number of staff and faculty who are responsible for implementing the FY. The lack of systematic coordination creates both gaps in services to students and redundancy in addressing issues that overlap different areas.

Despite the existence of some cross-functional committees related to the first year (such as Enrollment Management or Retention), the committee did not find evidence of an individual or group responsible for broad oversight of the first year. Academic oversight is shared among General Education and the academic units without explicit coordination, and oversight of Student services is shared across more than one administrative function without explicit coordination. Comprehensive management of the First Year would require integration both within and across academic and student affairs.

The lack of routine, holistic integration across the first year structure means that first year policies, practices, and programs are not always aligned. For example, current policies allow us to admit students whom we cannot serve with appropriate assessment and coursework in mathematics. Better alignment of policies might yield more efficient use of human and financial resources, as well as a better quality First Year experience for students. Resources for first year courses were a concern on the faculty/staff survey, with 79.6% rating the resources as only moderately, slightly, or not at all adequate.

4. Opportunities and Challenges

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The General Education unit is currently labeled as an Academic Support Unit according to UWT's Organization Chart. This category includes such functions as Information Technology and the Library. Although General Education does not have faculty assigned to it, it does perform academic functions that make it significantly different from the other units in the category. It more closely resembles Global Honors, which is considered an Academic Program although it also lacks its own faculty.

INTEGRATION ISSUES: ADVISING

Currently the General Education Center is responsible for advising first-year students who have not been directly admitted to their academic programs, this includes all freshmen CORE students and transfer pre-major students. Students are advised by GEC until a major is declared. The following concerns related to student advising were identified:

- Students are able to enter UWT and attend classes without being seen by an adviser. By the time many of them do seek out assistance a quarter or more has already gone by and it becomes more difficult to help the student get on the right track.
- Currently the General Education Center, which is primarily responsible for first-year students, does not have the advising staff and/or administrative staff needed to ensure all students are being served. In addition, the advisers in General Education spend a large proportion of their time working out admissions issues and re-evaluating transcripts, which leaves less time to actually work with students and develop meaningful relationships.
- The General Education Center is essentially the Undergraduate Advising Center of UWT; however, the name of the center often confuses new students. The physical location on campus is out of a main traffic area, and it seems that many faculty/staff are unaware of the functions of Gen Ed other than CORE.
- First-year students and pre-major students are often not able to be seen by academic program advisers. Walk-in hours for prospective students are not offered by Business which is one of the most popular programs on campus. There is not a streamlined process for students to get information about majors/minors on campus. Much of the material printed by the academic units is geared towards transfer students and not first-year UWT students.
- Advisers on campus have limited professional development opportunities.

INTEGRATION ISSUES: POLICIES/PROCEDURES

After a number of conversations with staff and a review of the policies posted in the CPI, we find that a number of policies/procedures related to first year students have evolved over the last three years. Most are not in any written format, but rather reside informally within the departments responsible for various components of the first year. Examples include:

- Core Admission policies: Are all freshman required to enroll in the Core? Are there exceptions, and if so, what are they?

- Warning/Probation policy: The warning/probation policy for first-year students contains the added element of putting a hold on registration.
- Reinstatement policy: Contains an added component that requires a student to attend another institution, usually a community college, for a minimum of one quarter in order to show successful completion of courses before being reinstated to UW Tacoma.

In addition, some existing policies that were designed to address the needs of transfer students are being applied to first year students with unintended consequences, for example, policies that may affect academic progress or status.

INTEGRATION ISSUES: COURSE SCHEDULING & CURRICULUM PLANNING

Currently there are no established procedures for coordinating course scheduling and shared curriculum planning across Programs for first-year students at UWT. In the past, there was little need for scheduling across programs except for elective courses as shared lower division courses were not offered at UWT.

General Education does coordinate the scheduling of instructors for the CORE courses, but often the number of instructors needed is not known until the beginning of fall quarter, making it difficult to schedule full-time faculty to teach these since the scheduling process for full-time faculty takes place in the prior winter quarter. This leads to a greater dependence on part-time lecturers who may not be as invested in or knowledgeable of UWT's curricular focus.

Other attempts at coordinating scheduling are done by individual Program faculty coordinators without an agreed upon mechanism or timeline for accomplishing this, or for dealing with conflicts that arise. This is an especially critical deficiency as courses that serve as prerequisites or requirements for degree offerings across Programs (e.g. economics, mathematics, physics, and writing) must be scheduled to accommodate students also taking required courses in their own Programs.

INTEGRATION ISSUES: SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENTS (ACADEMIC & NON-ACADEMIC)

Extra-curricular activities can be an integral part of student learning. Activities that build upon classroom learning help cement this knowledge by placing it in a larger context and connecting the subject outside the walls of the classroom. Even more strictly "non-academic" activities (e.g. dances, sports, parties) are important in building networking skills, creating a sense of community, and strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Although the UWT campus has made great inroads in the last year or two in increasing extracurricular offerings to first-year students, coordination with faculty has been limited and little effort made to garner feedback from faculty for strengthening and planning extracurricular offerings to maximize the "academic socialization" of first-year students. The opportunity to increase the sense of community involvement is great when faculty participate in or lead some of these activities, giving students the chance to interact with faculty outside the classroom in an informal learning environment.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Interviews conducted by Organization Subcommittee members with leadership of various campus departments and Academic Programs revealed that people feel they are not able to get the data they need to make informed judgments on issues related to the first-year student experience. Evaluation of the First Year is weak for two reasons. First, communication across discrete units engaged with the First Year is limited, so no full picture of effectiveness can emerge. Results are not consistently accessible, in part because some evaluations are conducted by individual units and others by Institutional Research and Planning. Timely, systematic data and communication of evaluation results across units would enable faster, more efficient improvements in delivering the FY. Second, the work of Institutional Research and Planning does not always effectively support the internal evaluation needs of campus units to address specific first year operational and policy issues. Its data collection for the First Year is more oriented toward national initiatives and external audiences.

FACULTY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Initially development related to the first year was strong before the first class of first-year students arrived on campus in the fall of 2006.

- A faculty and staff development day of workshops with a focus on first year students was offered in May
- Faculty scheduled to teach the CORE courses for first-year students met to design the curriculum.
- Staff from Enrollment Services went to Washington State University, Vancouver to discuss enrollment and recruiting issues.
- At least four UWT administrators and two faculty members attended a national conference on first-year students. (Information from these experiences was not widely disseminated on campus and three of the four administrators have since left UW Tacoma.)

Currently, professional development opportunities regarding first year students are very limited, sporadic and usually restricted to discrete units. The UWT staff and faculty survey indicates below-midpoint responses on all questions related to professional development on a 5-point scale:

Attending conferences or workshops at this institution	2.57
Attending national/regional conferences or meetings	2.35
Reading professional materials	1.89
Presenting at conferences or contributing to publications	1.64

Some development opportunities exist, for example faculty "Core camp," attending conferences, and training in the Teaching and Learning Center. But an informal survey by the Organization Subcommittee of units on campus about professional development opportunities regarding first-year students indicated that faculty and staff in most units do not have access to or are unaware of such opportunities. UW Seattle often serves as

our model for dealing with first-year students and often our needs in Tacoma are quite different from theirs, so other models are needed.

RESOURCES

Accomplishment of the First Year mission is dependent upon the units who contribute to the mission working together with respect to resources, as campus financial practices support local control of budgeting within units. No funding exists to specifically support oversight of the First Year. Funds allocated to units are not specifically earmarked for the First Year. For example, General Education's advising staff handles advising for all pre-majors and so is not exclusive to FY students. Units allocate varying amounts of financial, technical, and staff resources to FY administration, e.g. participation in committees, meetings and task forces related to the First Year. Many of these cross-unit administrative activities are not exclusive to managing the First Year (e.g. Enrollment Management, Retention, and Advising) but address wider institutional concerns. Budgeting for First Year functions within the units usually occurs independently of the other units who contribute to the FY mission. An opportunity exists to designate or coordinate funding for specific First Year initiatives to gain greater leverage and impact.

5. Sources of Evidence

- Charting the Future 2005 report (evidence library)
- Interim report Fall 2005 (evidence library)
- Map of First Year created by Subcommittee members based on Current Practice Inventory in consultation with campus units (evidence library)
- Interviews with staff and faculty in academic and administrative units supporting the First Year
- Current Practices Inventory: Inventory of First Year Programs (part B), Councils (part C), Policies (Part D) and Assessments (Part G)
- Current and Proposed University Budgets
- Student and Faculty/Staff Foundations of Excellence Survey

Recommended Grade: C-

Recommended Action Items:

- Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication (*High priority*)

This could be accomplished if the existing Discrete Structures are linked through formal, regular mechanisms including standing committees, frequent communication, and policy coordination. An integrating mechanism such as a First Year Council could provide holistic oversight of the First Year and be accountable for fulfilling the FY mission. Coordination could also be accomplished through centralizing more control of the First Year in the existing General Education unit, expanding its mission to include all FY courses and services rather than just the core. The expertise (such as financial

aid or course scheduling) could continue to reside in staff attached to different units, but General Education would gain authority, resources, and accountability to coordinate these functions. In either case, regular campus wide communication and consultation regarding the First Year should be initiated.

- Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from FoE (*High priority*)

Because a replacement search for the director is currently underway, we strongly urge that the search committee be kept informed of the results of the Foundations of Excellence process as it unfolds. In particular, the changes recommended here for improving the organization and management of the first year at UWT are likely to have implications for the Director of General Education position. Job responsibilities, accountability, and authority levels may change in the near future, thus candidates should be informed of possible changes and evaluated relative to these expected needs.

- Support coordination of First Year oversight through reallocation of existing resources. (*High priority*)

Improved management of the first year need not require new resources, whether it occurs through formation of a coordinating body (such as a First Year Council) or through increasing the authority and accountability of the General Education Director. Because support for rapid FTE growth from the state is unlikely in the next few years, existing resources targeted toward student intake should be reallocated toward addressing the coordination and learning needs identified in the Foundations of Excellence process. Improving the administration of the first year will create new responsibilities and possible shifts in workload, particularly for some staff functions, which should be considered in making future resource allocations to units.

- Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures (*High priority*)

The working group should include both academic and student affairs units. Its charge should be to identify conflicts and gaps so that policies can be changed or added where needed.

- Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff and communicate them. (*High priority*)

Development opportunities should prepare faculty and staff to address students' academic and co-curricular needs and development. Identify priorities for professional development that would involve all faculty, particularly those teaching lower-division courses, and staff (especially advisers).

- Provide consistent, ongoing professional development for faculty and staff related to first-year students and communicate those opportunities consistently. Develop improved mechanisms for those individuals participating in off-

campus conferences and workshops to share their information/expertise on campus.

- Given that we have staff at UWT with expertise in development, we recommend that organization development staff take formal responsibility for needs assessment as well as coordinating and evaluating development opportunities for all functions related to the First Year.

- Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs. (*High priority*)

Coordination is needed to determine course offerings, staffing, and schedule, particularly for courses required by more than one Program's majors. Programs offering these "service" courses should be provided with appropriate resource support.

Develop a web-based mechanism for making curriculum planning information easily accessible for Program coordinators.

- Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising. (*High priority*)

Use current research to develop an advising model based on the theories of developmental and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success. Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.

Improve coordination among Admissions and General Education advising to improve advising effectiveness.

Adopt mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs. Rename the advising center to make it easier for students, faculty and staff to locate assistance. Consider relocating the center to increase visibility and accessibility.

Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).

- Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization (*High priority*)

Establish a forum that integrates faculty into planning and participating in academic socialization activities.

Schedule activities with faculty and students in mind.

Assess the impact of these activities relative to desired learning outcomes.

- Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve. (*High priority*)

Undertake a unified, systematic approach to determining what assessment/evaluation data is needed to make informed decisions on improving the first-year experience, following guidelines set out by the Policy Council on the First Year of College. This information should be broadly communicated to all campus constituencies at agreed upon intervals.

Clarify the role of Institutional Research & Planning in supporting the First Year. Given limited resources, some clarification is needed from administration as to whether IRP should be expected to focus more on internal needs. Improved communication around internal needs is required between the units and IRP so that evaluations are conducted efficiently and effectively.

- Reclassify the General Education unit as an Academic Program rather than an Academic Support Unit. (*Medium priority*)

Regardless of whether a centralized or decentralized method of coordination is chosen, the General Education unit should be labeled in the organizational structure in a manner that more closely matches its academic mission and purpose.

University of Washington Tacoma

Organization Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

Organization Dimension Report Feedback:

Jill, Marcily, Julie, Tomieka, Jim, and Bobbe....

Congratulations on completing the 2nd of nine dimension reports!

You have completed a very comprehensive and thorough report on the organization dimension. Your research and use of evidence is outstanding!! The use of the CPI (Charting the Future 2005 Report, Interim Report Fall 2005, Map of First Year, policies, assessments, and budgets), faculty/staff and student surveys, interviews with faculty and staff leadership, and other sources of evidence are clear and evident throughout your summary.

The recommendations that you offer at the end of the document should help to guide the development of the final report. It is clear that you carefully considered how you are currently organized to meet the needs of first year students and what may be useful to consider in the future as you develop your efforts campus-wide and systemically for meeting their needs.

Your report identified that UWT's structure for the first year is composed of discrete units that have limited coordination among them. As part of this structure, individual units contribute to the management of distinct aspects for the first year and that some collaboration does exist, but no particular areas provide comprehensive oversight for the first college year.

Additionally, you have noted that faculty and staff do understand where functions are located. It is not unusual for administrators and professional staff scores to be higher than faculty on this information. Often a self-study like this one will also be a way to inform and educate faculty on what types of services and programs are available for students. You used the survey information effectively to highlight specific results demonstrating evidence that your faculty and staff do understand what functions exist and their purpose. It was interesting to note that students are less knowledgeable about the structure. In particular, you reported that students are less knowledgeable about how to participate in campus activities and how to get help with personal matters. I am wondering whether your structure would allow these "introductory to services" sessions as part of your orientation program and/or integrated within the core during the first year.

It is not unusual to find that many of our campuses offer a decentralized model for supporting first year students where the social and personal assistance might be organized within one structure and the academic support and advisement assistance may have a separate reporting structure. I would like to suggest that the *actual structure* is a lesser matter, than how the units collaborate and partner together to work toward a common philosophy or set of goals for the first year experience. Leadership across the divisions/departments need to set a high value for developing relationships to improve services and programs for first year students through collaboration. Collaboration occurs when there is a strong trust built among the units. Often this trust foundation can be strengthened through working toward a common goal for the first year. I find that relationships often need to be strengthen across the divisional structures to create an effective movement in a specific direction. Regular sharing meetings are often a good way to begin these efforts. Sharing information on services and programs is commonly a good foundational effort which can lead to collaborative planning and development of programs and services for first year students. You may wish to consider using your classroom management system as a means of communicating across divisions on important programs and services as updates and informational items. It provides an easy way to provide updates and important information on critical programming updates and services offered to first year students.

You may note that I have some strong thoughts here because in the 1990s, we had very little collaboration across departments and divisions. The only time communication occurred was when challenges arose. With the turn of the millennium, we had severe enrollment challenges. We could not afford to continue to operate in the same way and expect to get different results. We started our cross-collaborative efforts by setting regular monthly meetings by having enrollment services (recruitment, orientation, retention, advising, freshman seminar and LCCs) meet with student life staff (residence life, athletics, intercultural programs, student leadership, health services, and activities and organizations). The meetings served initially as sharing information about programs and services. After a short while, discussions were moved to sharing challenges and asking for input. Later, they moved to planning programs together and taking responsibilities for different parts of a particular program. The

process for collaboration became part of our culture. It is transformational to share budget, personnel, and space. Over the years, we were able to eliminate duplication of services, address issues in a preventive manner, and learn to value each area's contribution to the university. While initially, a few key people were the primary leaders of these efforts, over time advocacy grew outward and multiple levels of leaderships across the departments have now become the norm.

Later in your report, you also identified another very important factor regarding the importance of aligning policies and practices to the students you are serving. Since first year students are newer (past three years) to your campus, you are beginning to examine and note some challenges with the outcomes of math placement and establishing sufficient course work to meet the needs. You recognize that it is so very important to meet the basic course needs of students as they enter the university in order for them to be successful and persist. I also appreciate that you noted that it was concerning that students can enter UWT and attend classes without being seen by an adviser. I recognize that this can cause students to be mis-advised and placed in inappropriate course work. You also noted that the General Education Center which is primarily responsible for first-year students does not have sufficient advising personnel to serve students. It also sounds as though the staff assigned to the center is spending a good amount of time re-evaluating transcripts, leaving less time to develop relationships with students. It is important to determine why "re-evaluation" of transcripts is occurring. If the admissions office is responsible at UWT for evaluating transcripts, I am wondering whether there is insufficient staff, lack of knowledge on credit evaluation, or lack of management of the process. It will be important for the institution to determine the reasons for the problem and how to resolve it so that students are appropriately informed upon their entrance to UWT on how their credits transfer within the general education program and their major program.

On the role of the GEC, it is critical that their purpose be communicated campus-wide so it is less confusing to faculty, staff and students. It is evident that the GEC plays a very critical role on campus as it relates to first year students. Since they advise all first year students and coordinate the first year core curriculum, this center plays a vital role in establishing the composition of the FYE at UWT. The GEC is an area that

should be introduced to prospective students as they consider attending UWT. It is wonderful to have a center that advises all first year students and facilitates their core curriculum through the center. This is a unique opportunity on which you campus should build marketing and recruitment materials. While the campus is learning its role with first year students, you may need to consider how the web site and print communications are developed for providing first year students with information on programs and services and advisement materials that are tailored to their unique needs.

On integration issues related to policies and procedures, you incorporated very well a number of the policies from the CPI. In particular, you asked very critical questions about whether core was required of all first year students. You also noted that the warning probation policy carries with it a hold on registration and that the re-instatement policy requires a student to attend another institution before returning to UWT. It is so very important for UWT to review its academic policies and procedures and determine their utility and effectiveness for first year students as compared to transfer students. Other policies and processes that you may wish to consider include placement policies into basic skills course, deposit to orientation process, orientation to registration process and how core, general education, and major program curriculum are introduced to first year students. You may also consider how the following policies may impact first year students; (1) drop/add courses, (2) course withdrawal, (3) institutional withdrawal (interviewing/tracking), (4) change of major and minor, (5) probation, and (6) transient status, to list a few. I also noted that you reported that there isn't any established procedures for coordinating course scheduling and sharing curriculum planning across programs for first year students. As you grow first year student enrollment, the later will be critical to meet the needs of first year students so that they can be successful in the course work that they are taking. It is critical to their success that they are not place in upper-division course work during the first college year. Faculty and deans across departments needs to share curricular needs to do effective planning. I am wondering whether you are using an electronic degree audit system for individual degree planning. Often these systems have sophisticated reporting structures which can be used for determining aggregate course needs by academic program and class levels of students.

You already have expressed some concerns on scheduling in the first year by noting that the GEC coordinates the scheduling of instructors for the CORE courses, but often the number of instructors needed is not known until the beginning of fall quarter. I am uncertain why this occurs, but it sounds as though admissions needs to communicate with the deans on the numbers of incoming students by program. I am wondering whether you use any type of enrollment reporting tools to communicate to academic departments and college deans on the numbers of incoming students by major program. I share your concern of placing part-time lecturers with first year students who may not be as dedicated to the full investment of knowing about the institution's programs and services.

Later in your report, I noted that you recognized the importance of how extra-curricular activities contribute to student learning. These types of activities not only help students to grow and develop socially and intellectually, but they also serve an enormously important function in assisting students to connect to the campus and build the sense of community that is a goal for UWT. You recognized that UWT has made some wonderful progress in the initial years of accepting first year students, but that is important to continue these efforts by increasing extracurricular offerings to first-year students. You also noted that it is very important to coordinate these efforts with faculty and that little has been done to strengthen this effort. This is a wonderful avenue for building collaborations and partnerships.

I noted that you also conducted interviews with a number of leaders across campus on what types of information were available on first year students. You noted that a number of individuals were not able to get the data they need to make informed judgments on issues related to the first-year student experience. You anticipated that there may be very specific reasons for the lack of data. Timely, accurate, consistent data on first year students will enable you to use the data to inform your decision-making on improvements to services and programs. This is important to strengthening any systemic first year experience. You will need to agree on which data is important for you to collect, who will collect it, analyze it, and report on it to the various constituencies in a timely manner. On our campus, some of the first year assessments are under my supervision and some of them exist in institutional research. The key is

not who is responsible for the assessments, but rather, that we work collaboratively as a partnership to provide the data in a format that is pushed out to others via a portal to inform their decision- making. The later has made a huge impact on our culture. We have been able to improve our programming and services in a timely manner and deliver better services to our students.

You also noted that while professional development for the creating a FYE at UWT was strong at the beginning, current efforts are limited to individual campus units. As a proponent of professional development, I find the richest of environments occur when faculty and staff come together to participate (and more so, present) in an event on or off campus and meet afterwards to process what was learned and share observations. These kinds of sessions do build advocacy for your efforts and create relationships that develop stronger bonds and a team-orientation. As you develop your efforts with first year students, it will continue to be important for your campus to consider the types of professional development activities which can best meet your needs. Expanding internal activities, such as “core camp” can be beneficial to your FYE model.

I also noted your concern that current financial practices support local control of budgeting within units. As your first year student cohort grows, you will need to determine the impact on your environment so that budgeting can be closely aligned to resource needs.

As a committee, it is evident that you have worked hard examining a number of documents, interviewing faculty and staff, and having dialogue as a committee to determine how best to construct your recommendations. Your recommendations are supported by evidence found in the CPI and supported by the survey results, first year assessment results, and interviews from campus constituencies. Finally, as a committee, you each brought forth from your own professional positions and experience at UWT significant and important insights related to these changes. You recognize the need for improved communications, collaborations, and partnerships across departments/divisions to improve your organizational delivery of the FYE to your new first year students. You have provided in your recommendations specific

structures and committees for improving the current organization structure for the FYE. Your recommendations are thoughtful and reflective of the current challenges.

When I prepared that feedback on the philosophy report, I noted to the dimension committee that I do believe that this is a time of opportunity for UWT! As an institution, in many ways you are so very fortunate to be able to have the opportunity to assemble a framework for the first year experience for the very first time in the history of the institution. I do understand that UWT is a young institution which has primarily focused on upper-division students. As such, you have many opportunities on your campus. I believe your campus is at a fascinating crossroads in determining your mission and core values for undergraduate education beginning with the first year. There are very few institutions across the nation who had the opportunity to “commence” a first year experience from the ground up and for the very first time are admitting first year students.

Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on the organization dimension! It is one of the best reports that I have reviewed. Your work is comprehensive and thorough and actually can be used by a number of other dimensions to fuel their efforts. You have considered a number of elements in the development of the report beyond that of the organization. I hope that the following dimensions will use the findings in your report to build on their efforts.

My very best to each of you...Amanda Yale

Learning Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institutional philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

A recommended report structure includes 1) Committee Leader, 2) Committee Members, 3) Current Situation, 4) Opportunities and Challenges, and 5) Sources of Evidence. The report body may be composed in a word processor and pasted over this place-holder-text. The discussion notes below may be copied and pasted into a word processor to assist in composing the report body.

1) Committee Leader:

Phil Heldrich, Associate Professor, IAS

2) Committee Members

Tami Camacho, Admissions Specialist (Withdrawn)
Martine De Cock, Associate Professor, Institute of Technology
Joyce Dinglasan-Panlilio, Assistant Professor, IAS
Laura Feuerborn, Assistant Professor, Education
Divya McMillin, Associate Professor, IAS
Patrick Pow, Director, Information Technologies
Riki Thompson, Assistant Professor, IAS

3) Current Situation

This Dimension Committee assessed "Learning" in the First Year Experience (FYE). The committee analyzed a variety of sources for evidence of how learning is defined and assessed in the FYE, the faculty's role in promoting effective learning, and the institution's role in supporting faculty and students in accomplishing their teaching and learning goals.

Central to defining "Learning" and "Learning Goals" for the FYE are documents formed at the genesis of the FYE some four years ago. The most prominent document among these is "Charting the Future of UWT Interim Report November 15, 2005." This document defines the "Purpose of Undergraduate Education at UWT" in the following manner:

"To produce citizens who have the skills and proclivity to engage in lifelong learning through an integrated curricular experience that challenges students to expand their own capabilities, creativity, and wisdom. Students will gain increased depth of understanding of themselves and their relationship to the social and natural worlds

through exposure to an interdisciplinary curriculum representing the arts, humanities, and sciences (natural, social, and behavioral). Undergraduate education at UWT emphasizes a global perspective, enhancement of critical thinking through exposure to a variety of modes of inquiry, comprehension of the diversity of human experience, civic engagement, and facility with various forms of communication/self-expression."

Additionally, the university's mission of being "a great place to learn" is constructed through recruiting fliers aimed at potential students and strategic planning reports. Recruiting materials construct UWT as "a vibrant community of learners who think critically, communicate effectively, respect diversity of thought and expression, and understand the world through a global lens." Moreover, potential students are told that "UW Tacoma has distinguished itself as a place for innovative, entrepreneurial, and collaborative learning. It continues in that tradition, with its freshman core curriculum," which promises learning through a small interdisciplinary environment that relies upon discussion, lectures, reading, writing, and project assignments that focus on a unifying theme designed to broaden students' perspectives about the topic and the world in which they live.

In the FY 2009 Budget Recommendations report, support for enhancing interdisciplinary learning and interaction throughout the university is defined as an important strategic planning goal. In the report, student affairs requested funds deemed important to refocus on student experiential learning and the Chancellor's Office requested a Campus Arts and Cultural Events Manager to plan and coordinate activities that enhance student learning although learning is not defined more specifically.

For the FYE, the following Learning Goals are:

- Global Perspective
- Inquiry and Critical Thinking
- Diversity
- Civic Engagement
- Communication/Self-Expression

In Core curriculum syllabi, instructional methods most commonly described as modes used to meet learning goals are:

- Writing activities (especially essays)
- Reading
- Class discussion
- Library research
- Group projects

Prior to the commencement of the program, a number of models were examined that led to the modified cohort learning community, which structures the FYE today. This model incorporates:

- 30 credits or two-thirds of the University of Washington general education requirements into a coordinated curriculum that consists of 5 credits of English composition (integrated into the first quarter)
- 25 credits of areas of knowledge (Visual, Literary and Performing Arts [VLPA]; Individuals and Society [I and S]; Natural World [NW])

Two pedagogical models structure the FYE. In the first model, a number of classes would have an interdisciplinary, team-teaching approach, where two instructors together in a common classroom teach a large cohort using a common theme. In the second model, classes use a linked-course structure with a common theme, where two faculty teach a common, half-size cohort in individual classes back to back. Faculty participating are from different disciplines and programs across campus. The theme for the FYE as a whole is "Living in a Globalized World."

The proposed team-teaching model puts a premium on teaching excellence to develop effective and engaging learning communities. Cohort classes were initially scheduled in 3.5-hour time blocks, three days a week to enable frequent contact between instructor, students, and subject matter. After 2 years, the classroom contact hours were changed to 2 hrs and 50 minutes per day, three days a week, to accommodate a campus-wide room re-scheduling need.

Recommendations at the commencement of the program were for a daytime MWF/TTh schedule. Frequent contact was deemed especially important for classes that practiced repetitive learning (i.e., quantitative learning, languages).

Essential faculty positions were recommended to provide such FYE instruction and to meet the needs of the new lower-division general education curriculum:

- Composition and Writing
- Mathematics
- Statistics
- Spanish
- Biology
- Chemistry
- 3 additional faculty in areas of humanities, social sciences, and accounting

To help facilitate student learning, the institution set the goal of creating a Learning Commons. Here students would evaluate and find information, improve research, writing and quantitative skills. This learning would be facilitated by the collaboration of Library; Media Services; Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology; Computer Services; and Student Services.

The institution also sought the goal of creating a Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). At the center, student would receive help with writing, quantitative skills, and learning strategies in a tutorial setting. The TLC would work closely with FYE faculty to help insure that students received the skills necessary to succeed in their classes. Among the goals set were:

- Increase math and writing support

- Add an Intercultural Consultant
- Extend operating hours to include Fridays and Saturday and/or Sunday

After the inaugural year of the FYE, the institution funded a "Summer Bridge" program for incoming freshmen. The program Learning Goals were to provide "tools for success as they [freshman] navigate a new academic environment and face the personal and academic challenges of being a first-year student." In the program, students would receive focused study on writing, critical reading skills, study skills, time management, and social support. Eligible incoming freshman had to have "a high school cumulative GPA from 2.6-3.4. Students must have completed core courses at the high school level, and they must not have any math or English deficiencies as defined by UWT upon entering the bridge program. Students admitted to bridge must also have 400 or better on the Critical Reading section of the S.A.T."

The Summer Bridge Program and the TLC represent significant initial steps in assisting student learning that should also be considered, along with FYE class pedagogy, in relation to the DFWI statistics with regard to future goals. Across DFWI classes for 2007-2008, the DFWI median was 12%. A pattern emerged from this data where the high DFWI percentages (31% or higher) represented by 4 of the top 5 were found in classes that emphasized quantitative skills. DFWI percentages between 16%-20% were classes that primarily emphasized writing.

Student surveys provide further evidence on the Current Situation. The 2008 Autumn Census Day Freshman Report yielded the following applicable results to this committee:

- 96% of freshman were very concerned with the workload and 94% were concerned with getting good grades
- Students overall felt that UWT challenges them to work harder than they expected but "30% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class. 17% spend 5 hours or less."
- Roughly half make frequent presentations in class
- "15% of FY students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year. 60% never took part in such activities."
- "44% of FY students say their faculty are available, helpful and sympathetic."
- " 51% of FY students say they frequently have serious conversations with students who are different themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs."
- "56% of FY students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race."
- "81% of FY students feel that this institution has a substantial commitment to their academic success."

Retention statistics reveal the following: The TCORE retention for 2006 after the first year was (65.2%) similar to overall UW freshman rate of (66.3%). For the 2007-2008 class, the retention rate climbed to 67%.

There was also a retention correlation that suggested that retention rates climbed with a higher UWT cumulative GPA and in those with a higher high school GPA. And, the higher the first quarter GPA for undergraduates, the greater the percentage of retention.

Of those enrolled in the 2007 Summer Bridge, a total of 86.8% of students were retained in Spring 2008.

A recent autumn 2008 retention report noted entering freshmen expectations and goals for study, where 45.4% of entering freshman planned to study 5-10 hours per week, while 24% planned to study 11-15 hours and another 24% planned for 16+ hours of study.

These entering students felt the following about activities that would contribute to their learning: Study Groups (17.6%), Internships (12.8%), Lectures (11.2%), Group Discussion (9.6%), and Group Projects (7.2%)

In addition to the FYE and other academic support missions noted, Learning Goals also figure into the Certification of Enrollment Substitute House Bill 2707. This bill mandates that:

"Branch campuses shall collaborate with the community and technical colleges in their region to develop articulation agreements, dual admissions policies, and other partnerships to ensure that branch campuses serve as innovative models of a two plus two educational system. Other possibilities for collaboration include but are not limited to joint development of curricula and degree programs, co-location of instruction, and arrangements to share faculty.

4) Opportunities and Challenges

In its first few years, the FYE has been able to accomplish many good things but still has many challenges to overcome. The committee commends the interdisciplinary, team teaching model as central to achieving the established learning goals of the FYE: Global Perspective, Inquiry and Critical Thinking, Diversity, Civic Engagement, and Communication/Self-Expression. However, while the team-teaching model is notable in many ways, particularly in accomplishing the goal of an interdisciplinary curriculum, there may be other equally effective pedagogies worth consideration or further exploration.

Team-Taught Cohort vs. Linked-Class Model

The committee found effectively being met the goal to create engaging learning communities. However, FYE instructors provided divided opinions regarding the effectiveness of the large class, team-teaching cohort model versus the linked-class

structure. In the linked class model, instructors noted a greater need for integration of material.

Class size is another matter of importance. The inaugural year of the Cohort Model produced class sizes of 54 students well beyond good pedagogical practice. Class size in autumn 2008 averaged 44 students per large cohort section, which is an improvement. However, a large group of 44 poses significant challenges for effective, intensive, writing instruction for incoming freshman. Linked courses averaged 22 students per section.

After 2.5 years of the Core's existence, mixed opinions about the 3-day/week core schedule exist and contribute to pedagogical frustrations and faculty recruitment issues. There are mixed opinions on the 3-day/week core model for instruction. Philosophically, some argue that the three day model psychologically helps students adapt to college more easily after coming from a 5 day/week schedule, while others argue that it does not give students a true sense of how college works and may disadvantage working students. When recruiting faculty, the 3 day model makes the core a difficult sell for faculty that prefer a two day teaching schedule a campus culture based on UWT scheduling history, slightly longer contact hours in the classroom than a comparable credit load in IAS (the program that contributes most of the faculty to the Core), and additional time for collaboration with teaching partners should be considered. Pedagogically, the 3-day model as it currently exists may not necessarily optimize teaching and learning.

Currently, the team-taught large cohort and small linked courses are taught using the same scheduling matrix, although the courses do not work the same, and faculty in linked courses do not have the flexibility that co-teachers do to adjust lesson scheduling. In the small links, scheduling is often constrained by the teaching schedules of both faculty members, and often does not allow for creative solutions in other words, faculty often can only teach their 1.5 hr block in the given time they are scheduled. However, in the large core, team-teachers can be creative about sharing or breaking up the 3 hour block for best pedagogical approach to the subject at hand. There is only a small amount of data posted to the evidence library that suggests a need for further evaluation of this issue.

This situation provides opportunities for UWT to think about ways to use the blocks of times flexibly to serve the pedagogical needs of the discipline being taught at the moment. If data exists about how faculty utilize the time in large cores compared with the linked cores, this would provide ways to achieve student learning outcomes better, although not necessarily via a one size fits all model of classroom instruction times. Along with faculty surveys and/or focus groups, data on national trends for teaching FYE may shed light on this issue.

In the team-taught model instructors are in the classroom together; in the linked-class model, instructors rarely (or never) observe one another's class. Therefore, these courses offer a very different experience for student learning, and may contribute to confusion about the interdisciplinary connections intended by the Core curriculum. There does not yet seem to be data about how the team-taught model vs.

linked-model contribute (or distract) from student learning, as most evidence assumes one model of instruction (from what we can see).

Faculty Involvement in the FYE

The FYE requires a significant commitment of faculty from across the university to participate in these learning models. Whether for large cohort or small linked classes, the commitment involves a great amount of courage and faith, development-time, course planning, and more. While our lecturers who participate in the Core are of a high quality, our tenure/tenure-line faculty, committed to the long-term vision of the university, must provide the FYE with its anchoring in order to implement the FYE vision of interdisciplinary, team-teaching approach.

At the onset of the FYE, three years ago, faculty were asked to serve 3 years in the Freshman Core with their team-teaching partner. However, many teams faded after their initial year and did not return to core teaching. On the other hand, some faculty repeatedly teach in the core and have been required to participate even after having completed a three-year obligation. And, some returning faculty have also been asked to find new teaching partners (after a year or after several years together), a significant burden in terms of new development, team-chemistry, common interest, and faculty apathy to participate.

Faculty serving in the Core have been given very limited support for class development. In the first 2 years of the Core, instructors were paid a very small stipend for participating in extensive summer workshops, and in the 3rd year, as an incentive to teach in the Core, faculty were promised faculty development funds. Due to the state budget crisis, unused faculty development funds were frozen mid-year despite the fact that work had been completed and compensation promised. Some faculty expended these funds early in the year, while others due to the state freeze may never receive the promised compensation for work already completed. The university in distributing these promised funds unequally may now find itself practicing unfair and discriminatory labor practices by rewarding some faculty but not others for the work completed.

Nevertheless, the commitment to support for Core development might best be described as minimal for the amount of additional work placed on a faculty member. Faculty lack development time, course releases, or other compensation for the additional, heavy load necessary for team-teaching development whether in a large cohort or linked-class situation.

All of these factors contribute greatly to faculty who are unwilling to teach or return to teach in the Core.

Furthermore, such work could be said to take away from those practices typically rewarded at tenure and promotion. This situation poses a significant problem for untenured faculty asked to meet traditional benchmarks for scholarly activity and poses a significant drawback for tenured faculty to attain promotion. Core class development requires significant application of scholarly knowledge and represents a form of significant scholarly activity. Development time also displaces more

traditional scholarly activities typically rewarded for merit pay, tenure and promotion. However, tenure and promotion criteria largely reflect more traditional models of scholarly engagement. Therefore, there exists a need to revise merit pay, tenure, and promotion criteria to reflect the scholarly contributions of Core faculty to FYE class development.

FYE Syllabi

On the whole, the committee found the syllabi at large to be effectively constructed for a class's respective topic. However, as a group, the syllabi lacked a definable uniformity with respect to the Learning Goals, Program Objectives, and Class Assessment measures for the FYE classes:

- While classes emphasize writing, there was a clear lack of assignments for quantitative and problem solving skills development.
- The best syllabi noted assignments, due dates, and assignment weights, and grading scale along with UW Decimal scale. However, inconsistent percentage systems listed on syllabi for classes taken by the same cohort were noted. Different assessment criteria may influence the pass/fail rate and student retention.
- The committee also took note of the lack of retention of Core faculty, which seemed to pose a significant challenge to program consistency toward its Learning Goals. Some faculty seem to be "required" to teach in the Core, while others seem to have the option to withdraw or not participate. Some faculty have even stated an unwillingness to participate at all.
- While out of class learning experience is noted as valuable on campus, syllabi and other evidence lacked clear evidence of how classes and the FYE program provided out of class learning beyond the occasional class field trip of some FYE classes.
- While the theme for the FYE as a whole is "Living in a Globalized World," it isn't apparent from all Core syllabi that this is a shared theme.
- Linked courses and team-taught courses are often conflated, as evidenced by lack of syllabi posted for linked-courses (only one instructor's syllabus for linked-teams was posted, even though these models use individual syllabi).

DFWI Classes

With respect to the written and quantitative skills needs found in those classes with the highest DFWI percentages, the following recommendations were made:

- continued outside class support for writing and math
- more rigorous conversations with high schools to plan for curriculum changes to meet these quantitative and writing needs

- a need to test incoming students for a level of quantitative and/or writing skill or to track incoming SAT scores for students of high DFWI
- to offer preparatory classes on campus for students needing quantitative and writing skills development
- for faculty to discuss common quantitative and writing skills problems to strategize solutions
- for faculty in math and science to review practices and student skill needs with a special focus on DFWI rates
- to not overlook, even in a severe budget crisis, meeting student need for supplemental instruction, which this committee deems a high priority

Other Recommendations

- to encourage and continue to offer classes using the interdisciplinary model, team-teaching model, but to also offer other models of instruction or stand-alone classes.
- to find ways to address equitable work load issues, support, and compensation for those who teach in the Core, as such an obligation to develop classes, teach them over a period of years, and to recruit faculty represent significant challenges for the university
- to develop tenure and promotion models that recognize the scholarly activity necessary for Core class development
- assess the difference between the team-teaching and linked-course model for student learning
- assess the difference for student learning of interdisciplinarity for linked-models
- develop written goals and learning objectives for the FYE that could be applied consistently across FYE classes and noted on the General Education website, which lacks FYE goals and objectives.
- check to be sure that goals and learning objectives are clearly noted for each class and that assignments assess not only information retention but skill acquisition
- check to be sure grading policies and assessment measures are clearly noted for all FYE syllabi
- review and develop a consistent grading scale (percentage system to decimal)
- develop more qualitative and quantitative assessments for learning outcomes

- develop incentives to recruit and retain FYE faculty consistently over a given period of time
- develop greater systematic tracking beyond FYE
- develop more informative tracking beyond retention numbers
- develop student exit interviews or outcomes-based faculty discussions
- collect data about different ways to use classroom time effectively between team-taught and linked-model
- consider creative alternatives to scheduling that improve learning based on discipline specific needs

Placement

The General Education center offers math and Spanish assessment testing but there is nothing in place to assess writing or science courses. See Summer Bridge below for more details related to placement of students within the program. See the Milgard School of Business for possibilities about writing placement.

Summer Bridge

An assessment of the UWT Summer Bridge Program Report 2007 and the “Analysis of the 2007 TCORE Freshman from Autumn `07 to Winter `08” report yielded the following favorable outcomes of a 100% retention rate after their first quarter. The retention report also showed that although the bridge students had a higher retention rate than non bridge students, they had a lower mean GPA after their first quarter. The mean GPA as of Autumn 2007 for Bridge students was 2.50 compared to the mean GPA of 2.59 of non-Bridge students. The bridge class of 2007 had an 86.8% retention rate at the end of their first year at UWT. Those students who were not retained left the university for financial reasons, or they went to other universities offering academic programs not yet available at UWT.

Challenges and opportunities specific to (and useful for FYE) Summer Bridge Program are:

1. Coordination of support services
2. Tracking students after Bridge
3. Conducting match-group comparison of those who participated with those who were eligible but did not participate
4. Tracking 2nd year and 5th and 6th year graduation rates
5. Tracking how often Bridge students meet with TLC staff and advisors

6. Following-up on why students drop out
7. Tracking how many are placed on academic warning or make the Dean's list
8. Charting GPA across demographics
9. Sending letters of commendation to those who excel
10. Linking Study Skills more closely to university course in which students are enrolled in.
11. Shifting up recruitment period to May
12. Beginning program during Term A or B
13. Developing advising and financial aid
14. Ensuring availability of TLC staff.
15. Expanding program if funding is available
16. Offering credit for Study Skills
17. Ensuring diversity of students accepted into program and the faculty and staff involved
18. Conducting follow-up assessments quarterly and annually until students are accepted into their major of choice, and after their 5th or 6th year as determined by UWT of enrollment
19. Using what was learned from the first year of the program to modify (re-invent) the program for future entering bridge cohorts.

Other Evidence and Observations about our FY Students

(A) 30% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class; 53% spend between 5 and 15 hours per week and 17% spend less than 5 hours.

(B) 57% of FY students work 1 to 19 hours, 27% work more than 20 hours and only 16% don't work.

- These results could mean that probably the majority wouldn't have enough time to engage in a learning community (about 24% FY participated) and in active learning, especially on projects they need to collaborate with fellow students.

(C) An Evaluation of FYE yielded the following faculty observations and recommendations:

- new students were unprepared for college level work in attitude and skills

- based on FYE student survey, the cohort model appeared to be effective in easing the transition from high school to college with respect to social interactions and meeting of new people. However, comments made by students with regards to "how much they learned" in their first year is severely lacking.
- students lacked writing skills, ability to synthesize information, and lack understanding of amount of reading required for college level work
- faculty had mixed reviews of the cohort model and if it actually led to retention
- Students need more explicit information about grading expectations and practices
- class activities took longer than expected
- grading took longer than expected
- field trips were successful and broadened cultural experience
- money should be made available to support course and curriculum development
- a class should be created for study and attitude skills

(D) A peer advising program seems to exist but there was a lack of information about the program that could determine its efficacy.

(E) The Writing and Retention Report, collated by Ginger MacDonald 2-17-2009, yielded a number of highly significant observations and suggestions. The committee highly recommends making use of the suggestions found in that document.

(F) The committee also recommends that the Summer Bridge document be used to determine future planning for the Summer Bridge.

(G) Strategic planning documents for programs do not specifically address FYE learning goals or address how planning will support FYE Learning goals in the future. The committee feels these articulations are crucial to long-term planning and program-wide development. FYE should be incorporated into program-specific growth projections.

Certification of Enrollment Substitute House Bill 2707

A careful analysis of the Bill's mandates with current UWT practices revealed the following:

- The lack of an adequate support system in terms of advising, faculty instruction, and recruitment for such dual programs has made it near impossible to implement.

- Clearly articulated goals for branch campuses that have not been adequately communicated to faculty. Probable reason for disconnect between administrative and faculty vision for the university.

Faculty Survey

Results demonstrated involvement with first-year students considered important by: Institution leaders, your department/unit leader, and colleagues. However, less clear was how faculty responsibilities related to first-year students was conveyed to new faculty during the hiring process (from position description to candidate interviews) and in new faculty orientation.

The committee made the following recommendations:

- Advertisements for positions should note if candidate is expected to teach in the FYE and note the interdisciplinary, team-teaching model.
- In hiring, discuss with candidates the FYE, its Learning Goals, and candidate's role in the coming years in terms of contribution and collaboration with colleagues
- Promote FYE among tenure/tenure-line faculty to encourage them in participating
- Faculty across the university should be more familiar with the Learning Goals, Mission, and Objective of the FYE
- Faculty noted a greater need for instructional support services in writing for non-native speakers. The program would benefit from an instructional support professional familiar with these challenges

5) Sources of Evidence.

Documents used in the creation of this report can be found in the Evidence Library

Recommended Grade: C

Recommended Action Items:

- Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development (*High priority*)
- Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models (*High priority*)
- Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units (*High priority*)
- Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development (*High priority*)

- Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs (*High priority*)
- Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models (*High priority*)
- Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty (*High priority*)
- Implement Plans from Summer Bridge Proposal '07 (Evidence Library Doc 17) (*High priority*)

This is an important document that should be used to direct future Summer Bridge Programs.

- Implement Plans in Writing and Retention (Evidence Library Doc 77) (*High priority*)

Along with the ideas already noted in the Learning Dimension Report, see this important document for future CORE class and program planning.

University of Washington Tacoma

Learning Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback: The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.

Learning Dimension Report Feedback:

Phil, Martine, Joyce, Laura, Divya, Patrick and Riki....

Congratulations on completing the 3rd of nine dimension reports!

Whereas each of the dimension reports and current practices inventory that I have reviewed to date have been very thorough, intentional, and useful to the FOE process at UWT, I am again delightfully impressed by the comprehensive nature of the report that you submitted for the learning dimension. From my perspective, I consider the learning dimension one of the most valuable of the nine dimensions because of the emphasis on the delivery of intentional curricular and co-curricula learning experiences that engage our first year students. This is what it is all about and you definitely captured a systemic and holistic assessment of the performance indicators and the dimensional elements in a thoughtful and reflective approach. I am impressed by the care that you have taken in your research and the all-embracing nature of your recommendations. Your analysis of the current situation at UWT is especially constructive and provides a functional usefulness to the campus. I also believe that your use of the sources of evidence is overall thorough and complete. Finally, I thought your development of the opportunities and challenges brought together your findings and your discussions very well. Through your energies and efforts, you set the bar even higher!

In assessing the current situation, you considered evidence from a number of resources. I noted that you used important key documents, including, “Charting the Future of UWT Interim Report” and the “Purpose of Undergraduate Education at UWT,” document which I found both very useful in understanding the philosophy, mission, goals, and structure for the first year experience at UWT. I also noted that you used several strategic planning reports, the budget recommendation report, core curriculum syllabi (this was brilliant), actual program structure information, and the FOE survey to review the current situation of the learning dimension. In reviewing these documents, you were able to pinpoint to specific learning goals for the FYE. I especially liked that you were able to draw upon the core curriculum syllabi for your analysis. This appeared to be very useful to your effort as you developed the recommendations later in the report.

I found your analysis of the two pedagogical models for the FYE core curriculum to be very interesting. I found that the interdisciplinary team-teaching approach is so very different from the linked-course model and your analysis points to the differences very

well. This section was helpful to allow me an inside view of how the Core is structure. Your description should also be useful to others on your campus who may not clearly comprehensive how the core models are organized. It can serve as a means to educate and inform your community.

In the opportunities and challenges section, you noted some important differences between the two models that should help your planning for future FY Core developments. Your comments on content integration, class size, pedagogical styles, and faculty recruitment issues are significant to the future design of the FY Core. You provide some useful recommendations on how the campus might study the pedagogical styles of the two differing core models. These elements are so very important to the future of the Core and are also informing you know on very significant things about the culture of UWT. I do think it would be very useful to do a few focus groups with the faculty to determine how best to develop the core models to meet the needs of your students and continue to be able to engage faculty interest in this effort. It is apparent that it is a critical time for this focus. This will be important to emphasize in your final report.

You pointed out that a number of reasons why faculty interest in the FY core is wavering. You also noted very specific recommendations on essential faculty positions and scheduling challenges that must be attended to be successful in this effort.

Your final report should emphasize some of the recommendations on how you can enhance faculty engagement. This is a very important element for the final report as the FY Core is a significant feature of your FYE at UWT.

Further, the analysis that you conducted on the syllabi was very thorough. You discovered the need for well articulated learning goals across the Core offerings. Since you have a few models for implementing the FY Core, it is apparent that the learning goals ought to be very clear across the different Core offerings.

The concept of the “Learning Commons” (library, media services, TLT, computing services and student services) is also a very innovative conceptual model for improving student learning. The approach appears to be a very pioneering direction to providing academic and learning support services. It wonderfully combines the application of technology with academic resources and support.

You did a very nice job at assessing the DFWI rates. Your discovery on the need to improve quantitative and writing skills is important. Your findings which emphasized quantitative skills should help you to narrow down your focus in the learning domain for your first year students in the final report. I am wondering if you had given any thought to how you might address some of the challenges for improving quantitative skills and writing development as part of the FY Core experience?

You used a number of data points to capture the learning dimension elements from the student survey. Your committee also took into careful review and consideration the results of the FOE surveys. While I noted about eight data points, I am uncertain what you thought about this data in relation to what is the current situation at UWT. For example, 44% of your students say their faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic. How did your committee view these results? A second example is that 30% of the FY student spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class and 17% spend five hours or less.” How did your committee view these results?

You also noted that the core retention results for 2006 was 65.2% and for the UW freshman class it was 66.3% You noted that the retention rate for the class climbed to 67%, but I could not find the rate for the core for 2007. I am wondering if evidence exists on the retention differences between the two core models? I understand that there appears to no evidence on the differences between the two models on student learning. This seems to be important to study considering the challenges that were expressed on the organization, structure, faculty recruitment and continued commitment, content integration, and pedagogical styles between the two core models. While each of these elements are important for deeper analysis, the one area that needs immediate attention is faculty involvement. My suggestion earlier on establishing a few focus groups comprised of faculty and core organizers is important to the future of

the core. You pinpoint a number of current challenges in your report. These need to be addressed because if the faculty culture drifts away from supporting the core, you may have major challenges in the future. If you decide to move in the direction of focus groups, it is important for you to consider how you might include those who come back each year to be involved in the core, those who are unwilling to teach again, and those who have not taught in the core. You might begin with the first two groups to understand more clearly why this may be happening and how the institution can improve this effort.

You recognize clearly the need for establishing a stronger strategic planning efforts to further develop the FY Core. There are many excellent pedagogical models in addition to the larger cohort and linked models that you are currently using. I know that you are aware of the resources (<http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/project.asp?pid=73>). I do think your concerns on possible wavering faculty interest in teaching the FY Core is critical to your future. Challenges in offering equity in course loads can create challenges for recruiting faculty in the future if these are not addressed. The FY Core is a significant component of your FYE and you have developed a wonderful model for the FYE on your campus.

On the Summer Bridge program you provided a number of useful data points extracted from the surveys. You also provide a very detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities that are specific to this program related to student tracking, use of advisement services, use of academic support services, and use of assessments. You should consider using these recommendations as part of the final report. These should help to improve the overall efforts of what appears to be a successful program.

Your recommendations also point out that a number of documents (Writing and Retention Report, Summer Bridge document, Strategic Planning documents, etc.) for many programs exist and stronger efforts need to be directed to the implementation of recommendations that exists in these sources. Please consider how you may integrated this concept into your final report. It will be important for you to consider how you will implement the recommendations from your final report.

The recommendations that you made on raising the value of the institution's work with first year students is critical to the development and improvement of your institution's FYE initiatives. Beginning this process at the time of advertisement of position and through the hiring process are important elements to this process.

While you noted that the budget is a challenge, I do believe that you pinpointed recommendations that can be accomplished without initiating more stress to the budget needs. These are the times in which individuals bring forth some of the most innovative and creative ideas. I believe that the FOE process can be a time to build momentum.

Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on the Learning Dimension! Your work is very comprehensive and thorough.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Faculty Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty. These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans, and department chairs and supported by the institutions' reward systems.

1. Committee Leadership

Sian Davies-Vollum, Associate Professor, IAS (Environmental Science)

2. Committee membership

Erica Cline, Assistant Professor, IAS (Environmental Science)

Judy Colburn, Associate Director of Student Development

Karen Landenburger, Professor, Nursing

Carole Svensson, Assistant Director, UWT Library

3. The current situation

The faculty dimension committee assessed the support and encouragement offered to, expectations of, and rewards for faculty teaching first year students. We included both faculty teaching in the general education core and those who teach classes primarily intended for first year students (e.g. introductory science sequence courses.)

a) Campus-level Encouragement

To what degree do senior academic leaders encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement, understand campus-wide learning goals for the first year, understand the characteristics of first-year students at this campus and understand broad trends and issues in the first year?

According to the FoE faculty staff survey, 64% of faculty thought that faculty involvement with first-year students was considered important by institution leaders. Despite this relatively high figure, it is hard to pinpoint more than one or two specific ways in which senior academic leaders have supported faculty involved in teaching first year (FY) students. The document "Organizing a UWT Gen Ed Program" states that faculty development should include formal workshops, conference participation, support for creating and revising courses, attendance at special events, and group scoring of student work. However, institutional support for teaching FY students has mainly been limited to an annual summer CORE camp supported by Academic Affairs. Support for attending the "camp" was highest in the summer prior to the first FY intake and was limited to those instructors teaching in the CORE, although we do note that for 2009, faculty teaching non-CORE FY courses have been invited to attend.

The camp has continued, but with a lower level of funding (for 2009, a two-day camp with a \$500 stipend for CORE faculty, \$250 stipend for non-CORE faculty). Crucial instructional support from both the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and Library were built in to CORE classes from the start, but resources for both of these have also waned since the first year.

There has been virtually no attempt to help faculty to understand the distinct characteristics and needs of FY students. In focus group discussions it became apparent that FY faculty felt that broad trends and issues specific to first year students had not been adequately communicated to them. In particular, faculty thought that the academic preparedness of students was lower than they had been led to believe. Faculty spent more time accommodating struggling students than they anticipated and some did not feel that they had adequate pedagogical knowledge or experience to teach students of such a wide variety of ability levels. In addition to a lack of communication regarding the academic needs of students, little has been done at the campus level to prepare faculty for the social, emotional and psychological needs of FY students. The exception was a single event, held in 2006, which focused mainly on the social and mental health of youth 17-24 years of age.

An initial campus-wide Curriculum Development Committee of the CORE established the current model for the General Education program and a General Education Advisory Committee existed during the initial year of the General Education program. However, neither committee currently exists with the result that there is no campus-wide forum available for discussion and evaluation of FY courses. This is in contrast to the "close and continued collaboration with faculty and staff and continued communication between staff, faculty, students and campus administrators" that was encouraged by the report from the Curriculum Development Committee of the CORE.

b) Unit-level Encouragement

To what degree do unit-level academic administrators encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement, understand unit-level learning goals for entry-level courses, and understand the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses?

The Report on the Future of the University of Washington, Tacoma (2004) identifies minimal faculty involvement in the development of a four-year institution and entry-level courses. Although this document does not directly relate to unit level encouragement it shows what could be considered a lack of foresight in neglecting to involve representation from multiple academic units in the development of the process and progression to a four year university. This means that much of the current encouragement for faculty involvement with FY students is on a campus level with support at the unit level inferred rather than clearly articulated. In addition, the report states "UWT will continue to hire faculty that are committed both to high quality teaching and to significant and relevant high quality research." Although a thoughtful analysis of need and demand was presented in the report the impact on an already growing institution was not analyzed. It seemed as if it was presumed that units would absorb the workload without consideration for new faculty lines for the first two years.

Although we have "survived" in working in such a manner, it becomes more difficult to address pedagogies of engagement and issues specific to FY courses.

The only academic program that currently specifically mentions the undergraduate CORE in their program strategic plan is Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS). This omission highlights the need to discuss the responsibility of all programs for the success of UWT as a four-year institution and to promote a culture of involvement in the core across campus rather than as the purview of one or two units. In an interview with the Philosophy dimension, Beth Kalikoff spoke about the importance of communication about the core with the entire campus. She stated, "When we do communicate with the rest of the campus in various forums, those who are not directly involved in the first-year experience don't necessarily see the utility of the information. That is, when programs are overworked, lack resources, and are trying to serve their own students, the first-year experience seems like an add-on rather than intrinsic to their work." The lack of unit level involvement in FY issues is also manifest in the results of the FoE faculty-staff survey. The mean of 2.91 [33%] in response to the item 29, "To what degree: Does your department/unit have a voice in decisions about first-year issues" identifies the need for more unit involvement. Only 20.8% of faculty or staff thought they had a voice in decisions about first-year issues [item 28]. It seems that the necessity of involvement of all units on campus in the first year experience was never truly established and this has been perpetuated.

c) Faculty expectations

To what degree are expectations for involvement with first-year students clearly communicated to instructors?

Expectations for involvement with FY students are currently not consistently communicated to faculty and seem to be dependent on which academic unit faculty are based in. This is probably because units have contributed variously to first year teaching. In the first year of the General Education Program (2006-2007), IAS contributed about two thirds faculty required to teach CORE classes, which amounted to more than a quarter of all IAS faculty. The rest of the CORE faculty that year came from Social Work, Urban Studies, Nursing, and the Institute of Technology. This pattern of participation continued in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, with two exceptions: firstly Business contributed one faculty to CORE teaching in years two and three and secondly, Social Work discontinued their involvement in the CORE following the first year. It should be noted that Urban Studies and Nursing are the smallest academic units on campus and contributing a single faculty member to CORE classes place a large burden on their respective units.

A number of the participating instructors were hired specifically to teach in the first year program. However, there is a dearth of communication regarding first year participation in both the CORE and non-CORE first year classes for current faculty. There was no sense of consistent presentation of expectations to existing faculty across departments. As regards incoming faculty, a study of recent job postings for faculty showed that the boiler plate phrase " University of Washington Tacoma faculty engage in teaching, research and service and are expected to participate in the core curriculum" was included but only in some disciplines such as writing or

environmental science was any more detail supplied. The exception to this is for part time instructors who are hired specifically to teach in the CORE. Items 69 and 70 of the FoE faculty survey showed a deficiency in addressing "faculty responsibilities related to first-year students" in position descriptions and during candidate interviews. An overwhelming 73.7% of faculty thought that faculty responsibilities related to first-year students were not adequately covered in faculty orientation.

d) Faculty rewards

To what degree does the institution reward a high level of faculty performance in instruction, out of class interaction, and advising first years?

Faculty comments from the first year focus group executive summary indicate a perceived lack of rewards. In support of this, the faculty/staff survey answers to the question "To what degree is excellence in teaching first-year students acknowledged, recognized, and/or rewarded by " the institution, the department, and fellow colleagues are all in the 2.5 to 2.7 range, well below the UWT goal. In addition, low percentages of faculty colleagues [20%], program directors [33.3], and institution leaders [13.3%] were seen as rewarding or recognizing excellence in teaching first year students.

Available evidence (see Evaluation of First Year Experience at UWT) indicates the perception by the majority of faculty both inside and outside the CORE that faculty teaching predominantly first-year students are required to dedicate additional time and effort. Most feel that this is only partly rewarded by the limited CORE development funds available, and is undertaken with a potentially negative impact on faculty annual review, promotion and tenure and other aspects of career success, due to the increased time demands and potentially lower average course evaluations by first-year students.

Current support and/or rewards for teaching in CORE include the summer CORE camp for faculty slated to teach in the CORE. This has involved paid stipends of varying amounts or professional development funds. Until this year there was little or no support for faculty teaching courses that attract predominantly first-year students, but are not CORE classes. This year, those faculty have been invited to attend CORE camp along with CORE faculty (but are offered \$250 stipends in contrast to the \$500 stipends offered to CORE faculty, for attendance of the two-day camp.) Additional support for faculty development has been provided in various forms but in a somewhat patchy fashion; for example, the Writing Across the Curriculum Fellowship provided pedagogical support for developing writing resources to a few faculty teaching FY courses in 2007/2008. Additional opportunities of this type would do much to encourage faculty development and engagement in CORE and non-CORE FY courses.

CORE courses are currently taught in a variety of different ways. Co-taught and "tight-linked" courses, where faculty designed the course together, met regularly to discuss the course, created joint assignments and graded some assignments together appear to have been more successful than "loose-linked courses". There seems to be a consensus that co-teaching and/or teaching linked courses was a positive experience for faculty that can potentially lead to research and pedagogical collaborations.

However, faculty who co-taught in this type of CORE universally agreed that it was a lot more work than they anticipated.

4. Opportunities and challenges

a) Campus level encouragement for faculty

Campus level support and encouragement for teaching in the CORE diminished following the first year. The challenge is to build on the level of year one support and to extend it to all faculty who teach FY courses. There are plenty of creative ideas as to how to do this. Recent suggestions from senior academic leaders include a summer Bridge program for writers with deficiencies, working with students over breaks, using a "stretch model" to spread one writing course over two quarters, provide faculty training in writing across the curriculum, helping faculty learn to host discussions, and identifying students earlier through placement tests and essays. The FY experiences of faculty will be an important resource. Developing mechanisms for the dissemination of their knowledge will be needed, and can also serve as a mechanism for engaging faculty in teaching FY students. New Student Orientation, the Peer Adviser program, the Career Development Center and the Teaching and Learning Center through the Teaching and Learning Roundtable can all be involved in building connections and communication between first year students and faculty. Re-establishing the CORE advisory committee could be the mechanism to facilitate these collaborations in addition to working to accomplish the integration of the General Education program across all units on campus.

b) Unit-level encouragement for faculty

All units across campus must become invested in the General Education Program and CORE courses. This is a huge challenge. The already imbedded notion that General Education is primarily a concern for the IAS program needs to be addressed. This can be achieved through formalizing a commitment to General Education in unit strategic plans and developing a recruitment procedure for faculty teaching in the CORE. A culture of faculty participation in teaching FY can be encouraged at the unit level by providing pedagogical support and recognizing FY teaching in promotion and tenure. Involvement in the first year courses serves as an opportunity to develop pedagogical strategies that support teaching efforts for promotion and tenure. Units should also recognize and encourage scholarship that focuses on FY teaching and pedagogy.

c) Faculty Expectations

The biggest challenge is to develop a culture where teaching first years is an expectation for all faculty across campus. This is particularly a challenge for existing faculty, who are ensconced in their own department's cultures and not necessarily entreated to participate in the instruction of the first years, or in the process of developing a culture that values that participation. There may be discussion; however, without documentation or consistency, it is difficult to know precisely what communication is taking place.

For incoming faculty, this can be addressed through the hiring process, and faculty development and support at the unit and campus levels. There is an understanding by faculty that administration at all levels think teaching in the FY is important, but the expectations are not clearly articulated during the hiring process unless the faculty member is hired explicitly to teach FY students. This needs to be addressed in all future hires across programs so that teaching FY students becomes an integral part of both job advertisements and interviews. Once here, faculty need to be provided with professional development opportunities that explicitly address teaching FY. This is particularly important during orientation, when new faculty will be learning about the culture of UWT.

d) Faculty rewards

Uniform appreciation has been expressed for the annual CORE summer Camp, especially for syllabus preparation, setting expectations, and guest speakers. Some aspects could be improved including instruction on classroom management, responding to parents (FERPA), ESL student support, skill and content building in curriculum, and designing meaningful assignments. Stipends for attending CORE camp are welcome, but some faculty expressed the desire for money to support development of courses and curriculum. This is particularly appropriate for faculty who have taught and developed FY classes that are outside the CORE. The success of the CORE camp shows the opportunity to further strengthen first-year instruction by providing a stable funding source for the CORE camp that will continue to support CORE and non-CORE faculty participation.

Co-taught CORE classes provide both a challenge and an opportunity; with additional funding, these innovative interdisciplinary connections can be strengthened, but not without additional support, particularly in the form of compensation for faculty time devoted to developing these unique courses. The potential for research and pedagogical collaborations between faculty who co-teach should be stressed as an opportunity when recruiting faculty to teach in the CORE.

Faculty expressed concerns about the institutional value and weighting of teaching in the Core relative to promotion and tenure. Some found that student ratings were lower than they normally receive, which negatively impacts their average teaching evaluations. For those in the large classes, grading, time for student presentations, and time to plan for co- or linked instruction took longer than anticipated. First-year students also often need additional help from faculty and support staff with basic study skills. This challenge could be addressed by clearly articulated support at the unit and campus level, equity in distribution of the first-year teaching load (to insure that faculty are aware of the unique challenges when evaluating teaching portfolios for tenure and promotion), and financial support for the increased time demands.

5. Sources of Evidence (from Evidence Library)

Faculty Dimension Survey Results

Text from UWT faculty job postings

Alternative Structures for Organizing a UWT General Education Program

Faculty-staff development

Report on the future of UWT, 2004

UWT Strategic Plan, 2008

[Contemporary Research and Scholarship: Alternative Models, New Visions of General Education](#)

Framework for Diversity

Faculty staff development

Agenda for professional development of 1st year students

First year focus groups

First year faculty questions

Retention best practice matrix

Analysis of 2007 TCORE Freshmen: Autumn 2007 -Winter 2008

Philosophy interview with Beth Kalikoff

Writing and retention

Analyzing both CORE models and scheduling

First year focus groups

Faculty dimensions interview with Beth Kalikoff

Interim Report fall '05

Agenda for Professional Development of first year students

7. Recommended Action Items

a) Campus-level encouragement

i) Pedagogical support: Provide continued pedagogical support for faculty teaching in the FY at the campus level. This should use current faculty expertise, draw on the existing CORE camp, and may include innovative technologies (such as online learning modules) to assist with access to such support.

ii) Faculty awareness of FY student needs: Provide mechanisms for all FY faculty involvement with New Student Orientation, Student Programs, Peer Advisor Program and CORE peer advisors to promote connections with first year students.

iii) Campus-wide discussion about General Education: Re-establish the CORE/General Education committee with a charge to evaluate and discuss the FY academic experience, and to communicate information about Gen Ed across campus.

b) Unit-level encouragement

i) Formal Infrastructure: Develop a formal infrastructure for supporting and recruiting faculty to teach in the core faculty from programs across campus.

ii) Promotion and Tenure: Start a discussion led by Academic Affairs and Faculty Assembly about how involvement in the CORE impacts promotion and tenure. Program criteria may need to be adjusted to reflect teaching first and second year students.

iii) Strategic Plan: Develop a norm where general education is considered in the strategic plan for each program.

c) Expectations

i) Faculty hiring: Develop consistent articulation of expectations across programs during faculty hiring process.

ii) Professional Development: Offer and support attendance of workshops that clearly define and address issues and challenges associated with teaching FY students in order to clarify expectations of faculty undertaking FY coursework.

iii) Cultural shift: Develop a culture that values FY teaching and consistently includes discussion of FY issues and expectations throughout hiring, new faculty orientations and monthly faculty meetings.

d) Rewards

i) Resources for faculty teaching CORE courses. Provide additional resources for CORE faculty. These could take the form of funding and salary for attending "Core Camp" and for faculty developing a new CORE course.

ii) Resources for non-CORE faculty: Provide resources for faculty teaching predominantly first-year courses that are not part of the CORE. This could take the form of reduced class sizes, supplemental funding for staff or discipline-specific peer tutors.

iii) Articulation of rewards for faculty: Articulate clear guidelines at all levels of organization for rewarding faculty at all levels of their career, to ensure that faculty are not penalized in merit or tenure and promotion decisions, and instead rewarded for dedication to first-year teaching.

iv) Instigate a FY-specific pedagogical award: Instigate an award for "Innovation in FY student learning". This would be an annual award to an individual (not necessarily a faculty member) who had made a significant contribution to FY student learning.

Recommended Grade: D+

University of Washington Tacoma

Faculty Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

Faculty Dimension Report Feedback:

Sian, Erica, Judy, Karen, and Carole,

The faculty dimension is one of the most significant elements of the full FOE process. I believe that this dimension characterizes the culture and traditions of support for first year students from the spirit and center of higher education, the faculty. As such, your insights here are central to the first year experience for your students. Faculty need to be front and center of any effort designed to assist first year student transition to the college environment and this is even more critical for the UWT campus which has historically focused on upper-division students. Your insights through the report provide a heightened focus on the need for faculty engagement and involvement in developing your institution's direction with and spotlight on serving first year students.

You have used a number of sources of evidence in your analyses including the FOE survey results, text from faculty job postings, various institutional planning reports, faculty and staff development opportunities, first year focus groups, Philosophy Dimension interview, analyses of both CORE models and scheduling, to name a few resources.

In assessing the current environment on the value of importance that your institutional leaders placed on faculty involvement with first year students, you noted that the survey results were positive, but you found it a challenge to articulate more than one or two specific ways in which you saw this element progress over time. Your attention to the need for faculty development in the form of formal workshops, conference participation, attendance at special events on campus, and supporting, creating, and revising courses is an important to this factor and has been communicated in a number of other dimension reports. You noted that institutional support for teaching first year students has mainly been limited to an annual summer CORE camp supported by Academic Affairs which was also noted in at least three other dimension reports.

Another important factor that you presented in your report was the notation that the CORE camp has continued, but at a lower level of funding. You also noted that crucial instructional support from both the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and Library were built into CORE classes from the start, but resources for both of these have also lessened since the first year. Both of the later two findings are important elements for your final report.

It is critical for UWT faculty to understand the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of first year students since this is a newer recruitment group for the institution. In order for these students to be successful learners they need to have an environment that can support their needs in and out of the classroom. It is especially important for the faculty who have been working primarily with upper-division students to understand the academic, social, and personal needs of the first year students. Several dimension reports have reflected that faculty did not feel adequately prepared to

address the varying levels of ability now entering their classrooms. This finding should become part of your final report.

Your committee noted a set of important findings as a result of reviewing the Report on the Future of the University of Washington, Tacoma (2004). You noted that this report identifies minimal faculty involvement as the university moved to the development of a four-year institution and consideration of teaching entry-level courses. You noted that little consideration was given to hiring additional faculty to teach first year students and that the workload would be absorbed without consideration for new faculty lines for the first two years. You made a significant point when you noted that the only academic program that currently specifically mentions the undergraduate CORE in their program strategic plan is Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS). If the CORE is of value and significance to all first year students, your direction is appropriate in that this needs to be communicated across all programs to develop a culture of engagement and involvement in Core. The evidence was clear in the FOE survey in the question which addressed whether a department/unit has a voice in decisions about first-year issues and only 21% of the faculty or staff thought they had a voice in decisions about first-year issues.

Additionally, you noted that expectations for involvement with FY students are currently not consistently communicated to faculty and that they seem to be dependent on which academic unit faculty are housed. You are probably correct in your analyses that this may be due to the location of current support for CORE teaching. You noted that only certain units contribute to teaching in CORE and that these areas have remained the same since 2006. It is important for UWT to consider how it is supporting the CORE experience for first year students. Let's consider the planning phases of this undertaking: What was the plan for CORE during the first year of roll out? During the next two years? During the next five years?

Now that you have three years of the program underway, what have you learned? How can you use this information to re-create a better CORE experience for the students and as a tool to inform faculty across the campus about the characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and needs of first year students. You have shown valid evidence throughout your report on the needs for improving faculty communications about first

year students. How would the faculty like to receive this information? What information would they like to receive that they are not receiving? What rewards or recognition might work on the UWT campus?

UWT's future development and longevity of CORE could be in jeopardy if there is any validity to the statement that you included in your report on participation in CORE having a potentially negative impact on faculty annual review, promotion and tenure and other aspects of career success, due to the increased time demands and potentially lower average course evaluations by first-year students. This is a critical element to address in the final report and significant to the future of CORE. You did note that there seems to be a consensus that co-teaching and/or teaching linked courses was a positive experience for faculty that these experiences can potentially lead to research and pedagogical collaborations. These are your faculty advocates. UWT will need to use what they learned to recruit and attract other faculty to this experience. You also noted that faculty who co-taught in this type of CORE universally agreed that it was a lot more work than they anticipated. I am wondering if the work is greater in the first two years, but after the faculty have established themselves in the CORE experience whether the work load levels off to be more reasonable. This is what we found in our FYRST Seminar experience. We have over 60 faculty across all four colleges teaching in our seminar experience (an extended orientation course). Faculty will note that during the first two years they are developing the curriculum and that was more work than some of their discipline courses, but once, they had it developed, they simply made modifications to it as the years progressed. They are now able to communicate this when new faculty come on board to teach the seminar.

It is important for you to understand clearly why campus level support and encouragement for teaching in the CORE diminished following the first year. Developing a culture for teaching first year students is a multiple year process. It will involve the development of advocacy across the campus. You note that some of this is happening in the hiring process. You also noted that professional development opportunities need to be available both to new and continuing faculty. You made excellent recommendations on how to improve the CORE Camp experience for those faculty teaching CORE and the faculty who participate in the experience but who do not teach in CORE. Regular annual assessments on what students and faculty receive

from the CORE experience need to be completed annually and communicated widely across the campus.

This was an excellent report. It focused on the primary needs of faculty engagement and involvement with first year students, with CORE as its primary venue. Faculty play a primary role in this effort and your voices need to be present to enhance and build on the first year experience for your students. Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on this FOE dimension! You have laid the groundwork for developing further and enhancing the CORE experience for your students and your campus.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Transitions Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support, as appropriate.

Foundations of Excellence Transition Dimension Committee Report ***April 23, 2009***

Committee Membership

Co-Chair Darcy Janzen, Instructional Technologist, Academic Technologies Co-Chair Trista M. Huckleberry, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

Member Brian Anderson, Creative Services Manager, Advancement & Communications

Member Jennifer Bautista Llarenas, Student

Member Karin Dalesky, Admissions Specialist

Member Elizabeth Fernandez, Student

Member Rachel Diane Frank, Student

Member Jill Haugen, General Education Advisor

Member Jeannie Jacobson, Instructional Consultant, Teaching and Learning Center

Member Michael Johnson, New Student and Parent and Family Affairs Specialist

Committee Goals and Objectives

The committee reviewed the student transition process and associated policies and practices. Policies and practices were reviewed to determine alignment with institutional mission. The transition process was defined as recruitment, admissions and retention through the first year. Included in the transition process:

- communications of clear curricular and co-curricular expectations
- appropriate support for educational success
- forthright about their responsibilities to students
- forthright about students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution
- creation and maintenance of curricular alignments with secondary schools

- linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support

Current Situation

The university attempts to engage students in both traditional and emerging methods of communication, utilizing a combination of print media, Internet websites, email and face-to-face communications. It is important to note that the University of Washington-Tacoma has a unique freshman program. Freshmen matriculate in "The Core", a close-knit community of students who take their [courses](#) together.

The University of Washington Tacoma employs a stellar group of professionals whose dedication and commitment to the students and university were apparent by their consistent responses to our requests and committee participation.

Communications to Students: To what degree does the institution effectively communicate the lived experience of first year students - institutional website, Admissions print materials, and campus tours for prospective students?

The general consensus is that the UW Tacoma website generally meets the needs for *prospective* first year students. The sites adequately address admission requirements, primary academic support services, tuition and financial aid information and the cohort/core curriculum. Currently there is a link to the General Education website off of the "prospective" first year student page. The primary responsibility for first year transition services falls under the purview of General Education. They oversee and advise all UW-Tacoma pre-majors, including all freshmen CORE students and transfer pre-major students. Within that unit, the advisors stand as the intended first line of communication for prospective, incoming and enrolled students. However, there is a great amount of decentralized effort in this area, with numerous departments handling walk-ins, phone calls, advising and information requests from prospective and freshman students.

A major concern is that the General Education website does not contain any of the reference information that can be found on the freshman tab on the prospective student's page and concentrates exclusively on the process and requirements for students to move from prospect to admit. The "lived experience" for prospective freshman consists of a few videos of current students. The prospective freshman website provides links to seven different Student Affairs departments, with freshman having no idea what services or campus life opportunities they provide. UW-Tacoma websites tend to be structured around the organizational structure of the campus and do not cater to specific audience needs.

Once a first year student moves from prospective student to admitted student, they must begin to seek information under the "current students" tab off the main UW-Tacoma homepage which does not pinpoint specific information that freshman may need and does not contain the same language or links that first year students became accustomed to in the prospective student area. For example, prospective students have a link to "Campus Life" but current students only have links to individual departments and must seek out Student Affairs. They are then faced with an over abundance of pages to sift through to locate information about co-curricular, personal support,

student organizations and campus events. Departmental and program websites are maintained by individual departments posing challenges explained in the opportunities and challenges section below.

A number of direct activities ameliorate campus life. Recruitment tools include billboards and radio ads. Campus tours, monthly open-houses with accompanying campus tours give students a feel for UWT. Campus tours are offered weekly and advertised on the website. Billboards and radio ads are used as recruitment tools. There is also a monthly open-house and campus tours are made available at that time.

Recent and future budget cuts have and will continue to cut the print budget tremendously, such that print media and advertisements are scarce and cannot be deemed a consistent form of communication. In the past, prospective students were sent "interest" postcards. Currently, prospective first year students receive the "Freshman Recruiting Viewbook" and then, once admitted, receive the "Freshman Admit Booklet". Both provide a good introduction on why to choose UW-Tacoma and how to proceed once admitted to the university.

Opportunities and Challenges

Departmental websites are maintained by individual departments with little or no campus-wide strategic plan existing for the integration or use of online communication technologies like Facebook, blogs, YouTube, or MySpace. The committee found that these efforts are independent from any campus-wide strategic plan for the use of such technology and no single reference point has been developed to find out what technology is currently being used and by whom. There are currently no policies or "best practices" guidelines to address how UW-Tacoma is branded in these online environments and there are major concerns among several departments over privacy, FERPA, and general implementation of these types of sites. Discussion and some testing has occurred for the implementation of online advising and admissions assistance, but no further action has happened. The process of developing more online resources is very de-centralized with each department or program deciding and creating their own presence on the internet through these technologies.

As with any web content, monitoring and timely updates on materials is an increasingly time consuming task. With limited resources, there needs to be a streamlined process for every department to handle these online technologies. We need to assess which technologies would best meet the needs of our students.

The committee found the Student Affairs website to be unfriendly in terms of language used and organization of the site. It is very difficult to determine where to find specific information with the website navigation centering on the organizational structure of the department and not the lived experience of the student.

Current budget cuts have and will continue to impact the amount of printed materials available. This is a great opportunity for us to improve the current state of affairs if we actively manage web development, marketing, and communications across the institution. UW-Tacoma's online presence, available resources and online services

need to be holistically planned and expanded to provide an efficient, inclusive and useful website for students and their families.

Communications to Students: To what degree does the institution communicate effectively with first year students about the following-- institutional mission, academic expectations, out of class engagement opportunities, entry requirements for specific academic majors, and college costs and financial aid.

Since the arrival of first year students on campus there have been significant efforts to create a true "first year experience" for our freshman.

UW Tacoma has its institutional Mission, Vision and Values posted on the University website and this is easy to access by going to the "about UW-Tacoma" link off of the UW Tacoma homepage. Students on our committee indicated that the mission was difficult for them to locate. We discovered that searching for "mission statement" off of the UW-Tacoma homepage resulted in mission statements for UW-Tacoma departments and not the University mission. The mission is not included on any of the mailings for freshman.

Events such as Husky Day provide information about major and curriculum, college costs and financial aid, and student life.) Students responded favorably in terms of receiving information on available academic majors prior to enrollment (3.39). The Sneak Peek event, for newly admitted freshman, covers information on majors, student life, housing, financial aid and more. At this event, former cohort participants are now peer advisors and provide insight about out of class engagement opportunities on campus. Major events held throughout the year showcase programs and provide information about admission requirements.)

Summer registration sessions, Bridge Program and New Student Orientation, held prior to fall quarter, provide opportunities for first year students to meet instructors and other students. At these events advisors and faculty discuss the learning communities, expectations and the curriculum. The peer advisors also share information about the organizations that are available for students on campus and lead the freshman through the orientation program. Welcome Week, which occurs at the beginning of fall quarter and gives freshman an opportunity to interact with all UW-Tacoma students and become familiar with opportunities that exist for first year students on campus.

Faculty/staff were surveyed on their perceptions of how well The University of Washington-Tacoma communicates with students regarding academic integrity. The UW-Tacoma demonstrates moderate communication in the area of academic honesty (3.46), and ethical conduct (3.34). Much of the communication to students in this area is left to the individual faculty members, who integrate expectations into their written syllabi.

It was noted that the campus is a commuter campus and efforts are underway to increase student involvement by better integrating the campus and surrounding community. There will be some natural increase in this area as additional student housing is completed, local businesses continue to cater to students and the City of

Tacoma increases transportation and accessibility in the downtown area. Students from our focus group commented that the downtown area shuts down before they are out of their evening classes.

Opportunities and Challenges

Survey results and committee analysis reveal significant deficits in this area. Students report significant difficulty finding and accessing general information about the university, such as the mission statement. The committee also found that it was not printed on materials sent to prospective or newly admitted students. Students are also struggling in accessing information on majors and minors and how to organize themselves to for successful major declarations. They report a lack of opportunity for out-of-class engagement opportunities.

Although there is significant effort to communicate university information to prospective and entering freshmen, there seems to be a decline in communication after enrollment, particularly related to the transition from General Education to majors and departments.

No streamlined process exists for students to get information about majors/minors on campus. There is a lack of printed materials by the academic units that shows course paths/requirements for specific majors and other course sequencing, such as a freshman course checklist - a simple academic plan sheets for any major (two year template) that incorporates their core. Websites are still geared towards transfer students and not first-year UW-Tacoma students. More assistance is needed from the academic programs. No program should turn any student away. Prospective advising should be done and students should be given some direction and support.

There needs to be more communication and interaction with students to find out their needs and options. Alternative solutions (if a first year student doesn't meet the requirements for a specific program) need to be presented and explained by all programs at anytime in the students' educational experience and all UW Tacoma advisors need to be on the same page about what is being told to the first year students.

We have no exit statistics or interview data on those students that do not return. There needs to be an active effort to seek out this information so we can retain students in the future.

Website navigation in some areas can be confusing for students especially in seeking prerequisite information on majors. Prospective students receive information on available majors, but once admitted, become lost as to where to seek advising, what prerequisites are required and the online resource "Declaring a Major" webpage that currently exists (<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/students/declaring.cfm>) adequately explains the process of declaring a major and what major's are available but falls short in supplying students with clear prerequisite information in some programs. Prerequisite courses listed are at times generic and students cannot tell which UW-Tacoma courses would satisfy the requirement. UW-Tacoma courses should be listed. Advisor information for each major is not easily found and no program contact information is found on this page. Students are directed to the program website, each

with its own unique layout and design. There seems to be significant difficulty for students in understanding entry requirements for majors and where to find information and advising

Student involvement in extracurricular activities is lacking. This was one of the lowest scored areas for first year students. UW Tacoma is weak in providing opportunities for involvement in out-of-class activities of interest to first year students (2.87) and in communicating the importance of out of class activities (2.84).

Communication to Others: To what degree does the campus communicate to the following groups their roles in facilitating student success in the first year of college - secondary school personnel, families of first year students, and other support networks?

UW Tacoma regularly recruits from 88 high schools in western Washington and has expanded its territory to include eastern and southern Washington and Portland areas. High schools in these areas are split and assigned to one of four admissions advisors/recruiters in Admission Advising and Outreach (a division of Enrollment Services). Having specific high schools assigned to the admission advisors allows for close relationships with high school career counselors, and advisors. The high school advisor/recruiter position is currently vacant. It is important to note that University of Washington Tacoma has transitioned to a four-year university within the last three years, so the establishment of relations with secondary school personnel is a relatively new task.

Since the arrival of our first freshman class, there have been efforts to develop programs to support the families of first year students. The Office of Parent and Family Affairs (OPFA) began in fall quarter 2008. Targeted programming exists in this area, but much of the programming is new, so successful outcomes are difficult to assess. The goal is to develop strong partnerships between UW-Tacoma and parents. The Office of Parent and Family Affairs expressed the need for obtaining parent contact data and a tracking system. Currently, email is the only communication with parents based off of contact information that is forwarded from students.

Support events include workshops for parents and families. OPFA also publishes a "United We Triumph" newsletter for families. The UW Tacoma Parent Association, which is currently in development, will provide meaningful opportunities for parents to become engaged in university life. Orientation provides a full day agenda for parents and families.

Opportunities and Challenges

Again, the committee found the Student Affairs website to be unfriendly in terms of language used and organization of the site. Families and students sift through pages of departmental sites to find fragments of what makes up a true first year experience for students and their families. Additionally, there is a need for a clear definition of "student affairs" on our campus. For example, does it include anything co-curricular? Clarification on this issue would greatly aid with internal and external communications.

Committee analysis revealed lack of programming and direction in the following areas: childcare, support for military families and student housing.

UW Tacoma does not have a highly visible or evident point or contact for outside organizations who want to contact the campus about partnering with our students.

This is a relatively new area for the University of Washington Tacoma, however ongoing services involve significant programming for parents and families. In addition, follow-up data is limited on the success of the programs. Programming will continue to be updated and monitored as it relates to the success and effective transition of students.

Establishing Connections: To what degree does your campus structure and implement a first year in which students establish connections with the following- faculty, upper level students, other first year students, and academic support services?

Student Affairs has formed The Department of Student Development to increase student involvement and services and improve communication and interaction with first year students. New Student Programs oversees the new student orientation and peer advisors. Both contribute heavily to introducing and supporting student out of class engagement opportunities. The unique cohort experience allows first year students to interact with fellow freshman and also take elective courses outside the core to engage with sophomore, junior and senior level students throughout the quarter. Mandatory group advising (SARFA-student advising and registration freshmen for autumn) also includes interaction with core faculty.

TCORE 100, Introduction to Interdisciplinary Study, is an elective course designed to introduce first-year Core students to university culture, resources, and practices. In TCORE 100, Core students learn the skills they need for academic success, including note-taking, test-taking, writing, revising, researching, reading difficult material, and managing time. A course such as College 101 that introduces majors, career exploration has been discussed around campus but never fully developed or approved by the curriculum committee. TCORE 100 DOES NOT address career exploration. Finally, students emerge from the course knowing how to access university resources (Teaching and Learning Center, Academic Advising, Library, Diversity Resource Center, Counseling Center, Student Life). The Teaching and Learning Center, Library, and Academic Technologies perform classroom visits with first year students. The library has a consultant devoted specifically to the core students and their needs.

Outside the programmed activities listed above, there is limited interaction with other faculty. However, the freshmen are encouraged to participate in extracurricular organizations and events. The organizations and events require the presence of a faculty or staff advisor from each program which provides additional opportunity for interaction with faculty and staff. It will be important to explore and encourage more pathways to faculty/student interaction.

Survey Results

As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution:	Student Mean Response
	1 (not at all) - 5 (very high)
Making Connections - Connected you with academic support outside the classroom (e.g., tutoring, advising)	3.35
Making Connections - Helped your family feel a part of your college experience	2.72
Making Connections - Connected you with sophomores, juniors, and seniors	2.52

Academic Advising: What is the overall quality of academic advising for the following tasks and in the follow time periods - schedule planning, exploring the rationale for selection on courses, exploring life and career goals related to higher education?

Advising on campus is currently de-centralized. General Education is responsible for advising first-year students who have not been directly admitted to their academic programs; this includes all freshmen CORE students and transfer pre-major students. Students are advised by General Education until a major is declared. The two-step admission process for majors is extremely confusing to students. First year students are seeking advising from advisors in all program areas, not just general education. Most programs will not assist a student until he/she is enrolled in their department's major, which puts the burden on the General Education advisors to understand requirements for all majors on campus. There is confusion among students related to process for declaration of major, establishing major, course selection, and paperwork, and students are not aware from whom they should seek for advisement.

First year students attend a mandatory registration and advising session for autumn quarter prior to their first quarter at UW-Tacoma. Although UW Tacoma currently does not mandate continued advising, Core students are invited each subsequent quarter to registration help sessions. During help-sessions advisers assist with course planning and registration for the core curriculum. Pre-majors are also invited to sessions.

Additionally, each first-year Core student is assigned a General Education adviser. Advisers visit Core classes once or twice each quarter primarily to promote one-on-one advising visits and information sessions. Majors Fairs, which include information on academic major participation and are co-facilitated by General Education, are held twice per year, usually centered on freshmen and sophomore registration. Subsequent quarters do not require advising and students are not always sure what courses they should be taking, so many times students take courses that end up not being pertinent to their desired major or career path.

General Education is essentially the Undergraduate Advising Center of UW Tacoma; however, the name confuses new students and current first year students are confused as to where to go for advising. The physical location on campus is out of a main traffic

area, and it seems that many faculty/staff are unaware of the functions of Gen Ed other than CORE.

Students were surveyed on their perceptions of how well The University of Washington Tacoma completes advising tasks. According to student survey respondents, there is a significant dearth in the advisement process when seeking help in selecting what courses to take (3.07), explaining the requirements for specific academic majors (2.9) and discussing future enrollment plans (e.g., stay, drop-out, transfer) (2.67) with UW-Tacoma faculty/staff advisors.

There are early alert warning systems held the first two weeks of the quarter in which faculty are advised to report students who are not attending or performing poorly. Early alert is an internal procedure for Core students. Advisors follow-up regarding faculty alerts, but holds are not placed until low academic scholarship is reflected on the transcript. If a student falls into academic warning (below 2.0 GPA at end of their first UW Tacoma quarter) or academic probation, registration can be placed on hold for any student. At this point, the student must meet with a General Education adviser before hold is removed.

There are also in-class meetings with students providing information on how to contact advisors. In the Institute of Technology and in Environmental Sciences, faculty members are assigned undergraduate student advisees, but no other UW Tacoma academic programs regularly assign students to meet with faculty for advising. Freshmen have a listserv, so email is the main contact to stress the registration deadlines and remind them to visit their advisors.

There is currently a task force (Task Force on Undergraduate Recruitment and Advising) examining the existing organization of undergraduate recruitment and advising at UW Tacoma. They are charged with identifying, assessing, and recommending strategies for how undergraduate recruitment and advising can best be organized to meet the needs of students within the resource constraints the university faces for the next several years.

Opportunities and Challenges

This area demonstrated the most significant level of concern. In this area, pre-enrollment services were considered effective and the students were pleased by the level of university engagement as they ended their high school careers and enrolled at University of Washington Tacoma. However, the students report confusion as they try to manage course selection, major declaration and access campus resources. Students report a lack of knowledge regarding whom they should seek when in need of advisement. This problem is exacerbated by the various departmental structures which vary considerably. As a result, students tend to "self-advise". Although there are several programs to address early advising, such as in-class informational sessions and early-warning systems for faculty, there remains an alarming disconnect between students and advisors.

Advising on the campus is decentralized which makes it more difficult for pre-major students to learn about requirements. On the student survey, only 30.6% indicated that

advisors explain major requirements to a high or very high degree. Thirty-one point six percent (31.6%) reported moderate degree and 37.8% reported slight or not at all. The feedback received from the student focus group indicated that students have difficulty discovering information about degree requirements. Advisors from the major will often not assist a student until he/she is enrolled in the major, which puts the burden on the General Education advisors to understand requirements for all majors on campus. To address these issues, academic advisors from all departments are meeting to discuss issues and develop solutions.

The committee was concerned because the initial Foundation of Excellence survey did not adequately capture the input from the first-year advisors. As noted earlier, the students at the University of Washington Tacoma often self-advise and seek advisement in their desired major departments prior to a major declaration. To assess this process, the committee designed an additional brief survey for distribution among all advisors on campus. Overall, survey results indicate that advisement at the University of Washington-Tacoma is a discrepant process whereby students often "stumble" into both appropriate and inappropriate advisement.

There is not a streamlined process for students to get information about majors/minors on campus. There is a lack of resource materials by the academic units that shows course paths/requirements for specific majors (freshman course checklist) - a simple academic plan sheets for any major (two year template) that incorporates their core. Websites are still geared towards transfer students and not first-year UW TACOMA students. More assistance is needed from the academic programs. No program should turn any student away. Prospective advising should be done and students should be given some direction and support.

There needs to be more communication and interaction with students to find out their needs and options. Alternative solutions (if a first year student does not meet the requirements for a specific program) need to be presented and explained by all programs at anytime in the students' educational experience and all UW TACOMA advisors need to be on the same page about what is being told to the first year students.

UWT have no exit statistics or interview data on those students who do not return. There needs to be an active effort to seek out this information so we can retain students in the future.

Website navigation in some areas can be confusing for students especially in seeking prerequisite information on majors. Prospective students receive information on available majors, but once admitted, become lost as to where to seek advising and what prerequisites are required. The online resource "Declaring a Major" webpage that currently exists (<http://www.Tacoma.washington.edu/students/declaring.cfm>) adequately explains the process of declaring a major and what majors are available but falls short in supplying students with clear prerequisite information in some programs. Prerequisite courses listed are at times generic and students cannot tell which UW-Tacoma courses would satisfy the requirement. UW Tacoma courses should be listed. Advisor information for each major is not easily found and no program contact information is found on the "Declaring a Major" page. Students are directed to the program website, each with its own unique layout and design. There seems to be

significant difficulty for students in understanding entry requirements for majors and where to find information and advising.

Sources of Evidence

Current Practices Inventory

Student and Faculty/Staff Foundations of Excellence Survey

Supplemental Catalyst Survey of UW Tacoma Campus Advisors

Faculty/Staff Interviews

Visual Review and Inspection of Campus Websites

Student Affairs Strategic Plan

Advisory Task Force on Undergraduate Advising Resources

Roles and Purposes Student Focus Group

Teaching and Learning Center Data (student visits to center, classroom visits)

Student Development Strategic Initiatives

Recommended Grade: D

Explanation: The University of Washington Tacoma is in the midst of significant transition and expansion. Despite such insurgent change, the university offers a multi-pronged set of transition services and pathways for ensure student success. However, many of the processes are overburdened with the high staff-to-student ratio, lag in technological savvy, and suffer from uneven management across programs.

The committee discovered the UW Tacoma has a number of valid and effective options for transition services, but this is hampered in three primary domains: university-wide organizational structure, rapidly evolving student needs and technological limitations.

Recommended Action Items:

- Create a full first year advising experience for students. (*High priority*)
 - Maintain a group of advisors that deal exclusively with first year students.
 - Rename General Education and relocate the center to increase visibility and accessibility.
 - Appoint a task force to develop policies for the full first year experience. These policies should target mandatory processes that all first year students must adhere to. Areas should target advising, retention, co-curricular, major's exploration, and academic scholarship probation, and punitive actions.

-Finalize the development of the mandatory 2 credit course "College 101" course for first year students to address university policies and procedures, major's information, college expectations, student behavior and conduct and basic college skills.

-Adopt a mandatory advising for all students with less than 90 credits would help create regular opportunities for contact with students to address their needs.

-Create a uniform set of materials (print and online) that describes majors and minors and that addresses multiple paths of entry (rising UWT students and transfer).

- Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide-level. (*High priority*)

This will provide a single point of contact for communicating new ideas, recommendations and decision making authority.

- Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes. (*High priority*)

-Includes marketing, management and development

-Reallocate current resources to address the need for a Web Marketing and Communications manager to

-Develop a strategic plan for web marketing and communications

-Survey/observe constituencies regarding their online behaviors design sites consistent with university branding

-Administer and maintain campus-wide content management system

-Research emerging technologies, tools, and trends among student populations

-Incorporate the use of external social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter) and develop internal social networking tools (blogs, forums) where appropriate.

-Involve individuals and groups using social networking tools

increase the availability of online academic forms and online form submittal

-Create more targeted web sections to address specific needs and the lived experiences of our student, faculty, staff and support network populations -

Student Affairs, and the main current students pages are priority.

- Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model. (*High priority*)

Updated model will be based on theories of development and/or intrusive advising to better facilitate student success.

Ensure adequate staffing to advise first year students after enrollment, both for pre-major and major advising.

- The committee discovered a number of smaller or technical concerns that are not directly related. (*Medium priority*)

Although not directly tied to transition services, these concerns need to be

addressed in relation to delivery of transition services.

The following issues were noted:

- Student Affairs wishes to streamline the process for issues of academic integrity and the grievance process. Students are often at a loss for such issues.
- Administration will need to address language issues and how diverse populations are included and described.
- The various roles of student support staff are not always clear to staff, faculty or students.
- UWT webpage needs to be brought up to Web2.0 technologies and must cater towards specific audience needs.

- Appoint a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current two-step process. (*Medium priority*)

The current two-step admission process should be analyzed and other alternatives should be considered.

- Align transition services with the strategic goals and objectives of Student Affairs. (*Medium priority*)

- o Develop a division-wide Student Leadership Program

- o Develop a co-curricular transcript program to for recording student involvement

- o Develop a plan for student/faculty engagement programs

- o Develop a marketing plan to increase campus community awareness of administrative units

- Create unified tracking process. (*Low priority*)

Improve tracking process to understand when, where and how students access information regarding their matriculation. Process of tracking should be uniform across departments.

- Create university-wide data catalog. (*Low priority*)

Create data catalog of research related to University of Washington Tacoma programs, procedures and statistics. The committee noted several instances where data has been gathered and research collected on various programs, potential programs and/or improved practices. There is little oversight and open access to such data, thus important information is often overlooked or

redone, suggesting an inefficient use of resources and ineffective use of information.

- Increase linkages with local businesses. (*Low priority*)

This will encourage campus visitation and socialization during off-class times.

University of Washington Tacoma

Transitions Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

Transitions Dimension Scope:

Foundations institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support, as appropriate.

Transitions Dimension Report Feedback:

Darcy Janzen, Trista, Brian, Jennifer, Karin, Elizabeth, Rachel, Jill, Jeannie, and Michael,

Your committee has specifically defined your work within the context of the student transition process and the associated policies and practices within the realm of recruitment, admissions, and retention through the first year. You included in the transition process communications of curricular and co-curricular expectations, appropriate support for educational success, responsibilities to students, and students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution.

Your team used varied resources for your self-study analysis including the sources of evidence library, current practices inventory, the FOE surveys, the supplemental advising survey, faculty and staff interviews, website review, institutional planning documents, advising task force resources, and data from the teaching and learning center (Is the data in the sources of evidence library?).

As part of this process, you have also completed a very comprehensive analysis of your web presence in this regard and have offered important suggestions and specific recommendations for action on improving the web site presence for first year students. You also made very important recommendations for improving the website presence on general education and information on academic programs.

In order to evaluate whether the UWT website meets the needs for prospective first year students, you reviewed whether the site hosted admission requirements, primary academic support services, costs and financial aid information, and the cohort/core curriculum and the GE curriculum. You expressed some concern that the General Education website does not contain reference information on the prospective student's page and the "lived experience" presence on the site was assessed as minimal. Your observation here is critical. You also noted that the website is created around the organizational structure of the campus and is not tailored to the students' experiences. This is a common challenge on many of our campuses. We tend to create website placements for specific offices often tailored after an institution's organization, rather than how prospective and continuing students experience the institution at different phases of their transition. The later is more useful to students and a greater challenge to create and develop, but it does have greater utility benefits for the students we serve.

You also noted another important transition which occurs once a student moves from being classified as a prospective student to the admitted student status at UWT. I am wondering if “admitted student” means offered or deposited/enrolled at UWT. I was a little confused on how the admissions funnel nomenclature was being used here. I know that often our institutions create “current student sites” for the matriculated student who has commenced their college experience as compared to “prospective students” who are somewhere in the admissions funnel process as new first year, transfer, graduate, non-degree, post-bac categories. Both sites should be segmented to the needs of the students attending your institution around the services and programs provided. Your observation here is significant!! If the “current student” site does not pinpoint specific information that first year students may need or if it does not contain the same language that your prospective site introduced to them, it will lead to confusion and uncertainty or misunderstanding on your services, processes, and policies for first year students.

Your report noted a number of marketing and recruitment activities directed to first year students (billboards, radio ads, tours, open-houses, etc.). I am wondering with recent budget cuts whether UWT has a marketing and recruitment plan in place to sustain the new environment created and developed for attracting first year students. It is important to improve upon overall marketing efforts if your institutional value is to grow these segments of UWT’s student body. Using the successes of the current student first year experience and the benefits of your academic programs and connections to faculty are important here. It is also significant for first year student marketing and recruitment efforts to have an established plan for improving departmental websites as these sites are critically important marketing tools for today’s college students. Consistent and clear branding efforts are important elements of your recommendations for attracting first year students to your campus. Web content needs to meet the needs of these students as well. While I know that students on the committee also participated in these discussions which is wonderful, I am wondering whether UWT has done any evaluation of their website from a prospective student perspective (new first year and new transfer) and a continuing student perspective (first year and transfer)? Students can often provide wonderful insight to the challenges and may help to make recommendations that simplify their experience

online. Realizing that budgetary cuts have impact the quantity of print materials (although I am not clear on whether students really value these kinds of pieces these days, they do resonate with our millennial parents), research shows that students are using online sources for inquiry on college search information. Your committee made significant recommendations on managing web development, marketing and communications that are important to your vision and plan for entering first year students.

In response to whether the institution communicates effectively with first year students about the following-- institutional mission, academic expectations, out of class engagement opportunities, entry requirements for specific academic majors, and college costs and financial aid you reviewed the website, print materials, and events or programming. As such, you discovered a number of important factors. While you noted that the institutional mission was not clearly evident to incoming students, you also reported that admissions requirements and academic information on majors and curriculum were clearly apparent and up-to-date. You noted a host of other programs (summer registration sessions, summer bridge program and new student orientation, etc) which did provide opportunities for first year students to meet instructors and other students and at which expectations about learning communities and the curriculum were presented.

You used the FOE survey results and committee analysis to reveal some challenges as well related to exploration of majors for students who are uncertain about a major and opportunities for out-of-class involvement in campus activities.

It is important that you discovered that you did not have any exit data on those students who did not return. Additionally, you noted that there exists a lack of programming and direction in the following areas: childcare, support for military families and student housing.

You emphasized an important direction that your division of student affairs has taken in forming the department of student development which has a goal of increasing student involvement, new student services, and communications with first year

students. Since this area includes orientation and peer advisors, it will serve as a vitally important function for first year student transition. How will you use what you learned in the FOE process and findings with this group?

Your dimension team also discovered a challenge with advising students who are not in a major program and are advised outside of the academic program. Other dimension groups have also provided commentary on this structure and its experience for students. It appears that there may be a disconnect between academic departments and general education in how best to serve the students who are “searching” and “exploring” major options as opposed to those who have make a specific major selection and are receiving advisement in the academic department. Both of these student groups need to receive information on program planning and advised by knowledgeable and caring individuals who understand student transition issues. Academic advising is a very important service for first year students. I tend to believe it is an extension of teaching and serves as one of the most important relationships that students can have with a faculty member outside of the teaching experience in the classroom. Based on your findings and those findings which are found in other dimension reports, it should be an important focus for your recommended actions. Your self-study findings and recommended action items are significant here.

You noted that there is a task force established for examining the existing organization of undergraduate recruitment and advising. It would be useful for the FOE process to inform the taskforce of its findings as they relate to these areas. Your committee’s observations are similar to other dimension group’s findings on the confusion that new students seem to be having as they seek out major program information, make class selections, and access campus resources. This finding creates an opportunity to re-think how the students are experiences these services and how best they can be modified or re-tooled to better serve the students.

Your team has made a number of very specific recommendations for action steps. Since there are a high number of recommendations listed here, I would suggest that it may be important for you to think about how these might be combined under common themes and prioritized to simplify the list for the final report. Also, I am not certain

whether I found evidence in your report which focused on the creation and maintenance of curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support. Is this something that your team reviewed?

Each of you are to be commended for the energy and time that you put forth to work on the transitions dimension! You had a larger group to work with and your task was a very critical one. The transitions dimension is often viewed as the dimension that sets the stage for establishing a supportive and engaging transition for the first year students. It is also the dimension that looks at specific services and programs related to this process and how well our institutions make these available to students. Your recommendations are detailed and reflective of the evidence.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

All Students Dimension Final Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

Group members:

Jerry Finn, Chair
Shaziana Bano
Melody Ferguson
Heather Galloni
Lauren Hildesheim
Adrienne Ione
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Introduction

An essential part of the University of Washington Tacoma's (UWT) mission is to serve all matriculated students by focusing attention on their unique educational, social, and cultural needs. To help assess UWT performance with regards to first-year students, the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) All Students Dimension Committee (ASDC) reviewed several sources of data. In this report, we first describe our committee's assessment process. We next discuss the themes that emerged across data types. Our report ends with a summary of the data for each Need, followed by a list of Recommendations. This review focuses on the entire UWT campus in relation to first-year students and is not an assessment of the Core per se.

The Assessment Process

To help us best understand the first year experience at UWT, the ASCD analyzed several different types of quantitative and qualitative data. Primarily, we gathered student perceptions and satisfaction using the FoE survey and data from a focus group organized by the ASCD. Student members of our committee also provided valuable information about their own experiences as both first-year students and peer advisers to the Core students. We assessed staff and faculty perceptions of the first year experience by means of the staff and faculty FoE survey data, structured interviews with key informants, various campus reports about the first year experience, and through the experiences of staff and faculty on our committee. Considering data from multiple points in time was especially valuable as it helped us gain appreciation for the ways students change in their perception and satisfaction across time.

UWT staff and faculty perceptions were also extremely useful for helping us evaluate the first year experience. Overall, employees are consistently proud of our campus, yet hopeful for continued growth and development. A great strength of UWT is our campus's dedication to assessment and data-informed improvement. Without fail during our interviews and roundtable discussions, staff and faculty were willing to critically evaluate their own departments and creatively think of methods for improvement.

We would like to qualify our findings by noting that only a small group of Core students, faculty, and staff participated in the FoE surveys, our focus groups, and interviews. As such, it is possible that many of our findings could be due to sampling error. We hope that by looking for common themes across multiple sources of data we were able to triangulate results for the purpose of increasing both our reliability and validity of our conclusions.

Common Themes

Three common themes/needs consistently emerged in all collected and analyzed data: greater transparency/communication, increased connection to the campus, and better academic preparation. The theme of transparency and communication repeatedly surfaced in almost every discussion. Not only do students desire more paths of communication, they would benefit from transparency in terms of the goals of the Core Curriculum, procedures on campus, and reasonable expectations when meeting with faculty and staff. The relationship with advisers is strongly correlated with overall satisfaction at UWT. Students are only moderately satisfied with advising and suggestions for improvements in the clarity, accuracy and presentation of information are offered. Some offices and departments on campus are using newer modes of communication. For example, text messaging, Facebook, and live on-line chatting were found to be successful means of communicating with students. We strongly encourage members of the UWT community to continue this trend. Consequently, many of our recommendations below include suggestions for updating and increasing communications with students.

Another theme is that our students desire a stronger feeling of connectedness to UWT. Our first-year students are not just interested in greater social connections to each other; they also would like to experience greater integration into the campus as a whole. They want to belong to a campus community that provides a plethora of activities and social opportunities. In addition to more clubs and activities, students desire additional dedicated study areas and multi-purpose recreational spaces. Further, students would like structured and unstructured opportunities to meet each other and make friends on campus.

The third theme is the need for greater academic preparation. Some first-year students feel that they do not have the academic skills necessary to succeed in their classes. Further, although they are generally aware that there are resources on campus to help them academically, they do not always use such resources in time. As such, several of our recommendations provide suggestions for better communication about campus resources and events.

Conclusion

In many ways, UWT is in its infancy for serving first-year students. Given that our program for lower division students began three years ago, the institution has made great progress. The ASDC commends the administrators, faculty and staff that have led and supported the Core program. This review highlights that first-year students feel very satisfied with teaching in the Core and their relationship with Core faculty. In addition, they feel both physically and psychologically safe on our campus. Areas in which UWT needs improvement include appropriately identifying and addressing individual academic and social needs, as well as increasing opportunities for students to become involved on campus. Further, we hope our recommendations will help UWT increase communications with students about advising, academic preparedness, and social resources. Although UWT's current progress is developmentally appropriate for the age of a first year program, we have assigned a letter grade of C- due to the many facets of this dimension that have much room for growth and improvement as we continue to grow as a campus and community.

The FoE All Students Dimension performance indicators/needs, evidence related to the assessment of these indicators and specific suggestions are presented in the next section. Items with (*) are the committee's highest priority items.

Performance Indicators with Recommendations

6.1 Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs.

The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

In identifying the specific needs of individual students, institutions must go beyond categorizing students by subpopulations assumed to have certain needs.

² Examples of academic needs include basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; and assistance for students with learning disabilities or English language development needs. Needs may also include greater academic challenge for students eligible for honors programs or courses.

³ Social/personal needs include life management and mental health issues and any other personal circumstances that could be barriers to college success (e.g., child care, transportation, work-related issues, money management, drug/alcohol abuse).

1. Need: Preparation and skills appropriate for college level work.

- a. Overall, students feel only somewhat prepared for work in their classes. Cores on their perceptions of preparation for writing, reading, library research and

math all have a mean of about 2.9. Of concern is that approximately 20-25% of students rated these areas as Difficult or Too Difficult (1 or 2).

b. Computer skills are rated higher with a mean of 3.2 and only 8% rating skills as Difficult.

Recommendations:

1. Provide a consistent offering of workshops such as Writing 101, How to Write a Research Paper, and Study Skills, as an addition to the first year out-of-class offerings. Consider developing a survey course of "College Survival Skills" that would be about 16-20 hours, focusing on essential study skills. This course could be offered before classes started (i.e. late August/early September, but students would enroll for the course in the fall, to capture the FTEs associated with the course.
 2. Instructors should help students form study groups. Instructors may choose to incentivize group study time. For example, instructors may require "peer review" as part of writing a paper.
 3. Students should be assessed prior to or at the beginning of their Core experience to determine their level of basic academic skills acquisition and preparation.
 4. Students should be taken on a "field trip" near the beginning of the Core experience. This trip should include the TLC, library, computer labs, and study places. This could be conducted in a fun way (i.e. scavenger hunt, historical perspective (history of building in which service is located), etc.)
 5. The Summer Bridge Program (SBP) appears to be excellent preparation for students entering UWT; however, it is available to only a limited number of students. Marketing of the SBP should be considered in partnership with area high schools.
 6. Expand the Bridge program to an elective course offered in high school.
 7. Students identified as deficient in some academic skills should be linked with upper division mentor/tutors.
 8. Allow students to observe a real class setting in orientation by having faculty members instruct mini mock classes as a demonstration.
 9. Develop a "Prepare for College" manual for all new students that focuses on college expectations and opportunities.
2. **Need: Accurate communication of information prior to attending the campus about academic expectations, majors, tuition, financial aid issues.**

- a. Survey results are generally good with a mean of 3.4 or higher and 40-60% of students reporting that communication is very good (4 or 5). Communication of academic expectations is very high (mean =3.8).
- b. Overall, the majority of students believe that UWT did a good job in helping them make the transition to college (mean=3.5) and only 10% felt we did a poor job in this area.
- c. Of some concern is that 25% of students reported that UWT is doing poorly in communicating about academic majors and 21% report poor communication about financial aid opportunities.
- d. Of concern is that only 20% of students report that their high school did a good job of providing information about UWT and 51% said their high school did a poor job in this area.
- e. Students satisfaction with advising highly correlates with overall satisfaction at UWT, $r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$, with a sense of connectedness, $r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$, and with their satisfaction of the social environment, $r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$.

Recommendations:

1. Academic advisers from the various programs should be an active part (i.e. not just at a table at a Majors Fair) of Freshman Advising & Registration sessions. These advisers should conduct a series of workshops that provide information about various study options.
2. Greater linkages are needed between UWT and high school counselors to provide accurate information to prospective students. The development of a CD, video, and/or web-based materials with UWT information that can be given by counselors to students should be explored.
3. Students should have greater clarity about academic majors.
 - a. Communication can be increased through development of targeted web-based information and development of handout materials during advising.
 - b. Create a 1/2 or 1 day "Majors Fair" where all advisers would staff tables with information about the major. Thus, students could do "one-stop" shopping to obtain information about a variety of majors.
4. Within the first month of the students' first quarter, student leaders that are assigned to specific Cores should present workshops on understanding specific majors, selecting majors, and how to understand Financial Aid. The students will then engage in a round table question and answer session.
5. In addition, advisers should specifically ask: "Do you have any questions about majors at UWT?" during initial advising meetings.

6. The reasons that 25% of students rate communication about academic majors poorly are not clear. Further information is needed to assess the nature of the dissatisfaction in this area.
7. Information about financial aid should be made available in multiple places and formats: web, handouts, podcasts, Facebook, etc.
8. UW Tacoma should review how they provide information and activities at the Freshman Advising & Registrations sessions since that serves as a first impression of a student's college experience. These sessions need to incorporate fun and information and provide an opportunity for students to really learn what it takes to be successful at this university.
9. Students should be able to receive all of their General Education, Core and pre-requisite advising through one adviser.
10. Develop a system so that Core students are able to access the pre-requisites that they need to apply in a timely fashion to their majors.
11. Collect and use data from prospective students to see what majors and programs they are looking for to help guide our growth.
12. Improve information so that Core students are able to access the pre-requisites that they need to apply in a timely fashion to their majors.
13. Be more transparent with students about the purpose of "Core" classes. Explain why students need to take the classes, i.e., what is the value added.

3. Need: Making connections with others.

- a. The campus is doing a good job in helping students make connections with other students (mean =3.5) with 50% of students reporting UWT is doing a very good job (4 or 5).
- b. The campus is doing a good job of connecting students with academic support outside of the classroom with 48% reporting a very good job (mean = 3.35); however 21% of students report that we are doing a poor job in this area.
- c. Students generally reported that the campus did not help their family feel part of the college experience (mean =2.7) with 41% reporting we did a poor job in this area (1 or 2). As stated above, students' feeling of connectedness highly correlates with satisfaction with advising, $r = 0.71, p < 0.01$. In addition, connectedness is highly correlated with overall satisfaction, $r = 0.51, p < 0.01$, and with satisfaction with UWT's social environment, $r = 0.72, p < 0.01$. Taken together with the results in point 2e, above, it appears that students' social connectedness and the structured support they receive from their advisers all play an important role in satisfaction with UWT.

Recommendations:

1. A University 101 class should be developed for 1-2 credits during the student's first quarter to allow for a structured environment to present information about various resources around UW Tacoma. This class could be led by a student/staff member and faculty and would be a CR/NC elective-based class. It would need to have many experiential components getting students out and about both around campus and in the community.
2. An "early warning system" should be developed in the Core to assess students who may be having difficulties and linking them with helping resources. Instructors should have access to empirically validated measurements to help them assess students' social and academic needs.
3. Since 1 in 5 students believe we are not doing a good job in connecting them with academic support outside the classroom, greater efforts need to be made to link students to these supports. While information is presented in orientation, it may be necessary to present it again early in the Core sessions.
 - a. Have subject-oriented game hour in the TLC during orientation, followed by once a month game night.
 - b. Send students regular emails reminding them about campus support systems.
 - c. Increase advertising about the special study workshops by student leaders to improve attendance.
4. The campus should make more efforts to link family members of students to UWT. This might include "Family Day" at UWT, special programs in which parents are specifically invited, and a "Core Commencement" ceremony. In addition, a section of the Website specifically for parents should be developed, as well as a quarterly parent-focused information newsletter.
 - a. "Core Colloquium" is an event that could happen quarterly where projects completed each quarter could be presented.
 - b. Create some "Family Day" opportunities. For example, when UW Seattle has "Parent Day" in association with a football game, then UWT should have "Family Day" at a place where we have the football game on big screen. Also, we might try a "Family Meet/Greet" breakfast/dinner with the Chancellor and selected Core course faculty.

6.2 Addressed Needs: To what degree does your campus address the identified needs of individual first-year students?

Addressing first year student needs includes communication about and delivery of opportunities and services to targeted individuals.

² Examples of academic needs include basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; and assistance for students with learning disabilities or English language development needs. Needs may also include greater academic challenge for students eligible for honors programs or courses.

³ Social/personal needs include life management and mental health issues and any other personal circumstances that could be barriers to college success (e.g., child care, transportation, work-related issues, money management, drug/alcohol abuse).

1. Need: Information about the organization and opportunities of UWT.

a. Students report that they have good understanding of knowing where to go if they need help with administrative questions such as financial aid and academic probation (mean = 3.5) and report that faculty/staff refer them to the right office when they have questions (mean= 3.8). Only about 10% of students believe UWT is not doing a good job in these areas.

2. Need: Opportunities for out of class activities

a. UWT is doing a fair job of communicating in this area (mean = 2.8). Of concern is that 40% report that UWT is doing a poor job in this area.

b. Similarly, there is only a fair job of providing opportunities for out of class activities (mean = 2.9), with 34% reporting a poor job in this area.

Recommendations:

1. As a campus we need to have consistent messaging across all units as well as to staff and faculty that work with first-year students

2. Instructors may promote participation by requiring brief reports of campus activities. For example, students could be required to write 1-page descriptions of activities they attended per quarter.

3. There should be better communication to Core students about out of class activities available to UWT students. Communications should consider those used by the freshmen, i.e., text messaging.

4. During Welcome Week, a student organization fair would provide an opportunity to learn about out-of-class activities that are available for Core students.

5. Core faculty should be encouraged to announce outside activities available to Core students.

6. Additional technology vehicles should be used to communicate about outside activities. For example:

- a. Develop a Text Line that would send text messages to students every Monday telling them about events on campus for the week.
 - b. Create a weekly Core bulletin that will be read by the Core professors to the students about events for the week, and also give a handout that the Core students can physically read.
 - c. Create a weekly Core bulletin that will be taped to the blackboard every week telling students about opportunities for out of class activities.
 - d. Develop a text line that would send text messages to students when campus clubs or boards that are looking for student members or board members, which will be directed primarily at the first year student.
 - e. Develop a "What's going on" twitter system for use by Core students (or the larger campus).
7. Continue to increase the variety of activities at UWT in order to increase participation and awareness of campus life such as team sports competitions using low cost sports such as Frisbee golf, bridge tournaments and debates.
- a. Consider having a work-study or staff position with responsibilities for managing team sports.
8. Create an "Adopt-a-Core" program where juniors and seniors make "dates" with freshman and take them to fun outings near UWT.
9. Work with Tacoma (UWT area) merchants to create partnerships with food and retail establishments that are geared toward students' budget and other needs.

3. Need: Services for assistance with academic challenges.

- a. About 3/4 of students (76%) agree that their study skills are where they need to be in order to be successful in academics. Approximately one 1 in 4 students is not confident in this area; however, only 8% disagree that their skills are not where they need to be.

Recommendations:

- 1. Increase the visibility of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) through signage on the outside and inside of the Keystone Building. Make sure that the signage indicates why students would utilize the TLC as the name of the office isn't always clear to a first year student.
- 2. Provide a consistent offering of workshops such as Writing 101, How to Write a Research Paper, Study Skills, etc as an addition to the first year out-of-class offerings.

3. Monitor the need for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutoring as we increase the number of EFL students.

4. Need: Meet personal and social needs that may be a barrier to college success.

a. 29% of students report that outside stressors interfere with attending and succeeding in college. Of some concern is that UWT is doing only a fair job of helping students know where to go for nonacademic matters (mean = 3.0). Almost 30% of students report that UWT is doing a poor job in this area.

Recommendations:

1. Increase communication about counseling and other supports for Core students. This may need to occur periodically during the first quarter rather than providing the information briefly only once. Multiple sources of information should be developed. Be sure faculty and staff have business cards for counseling points of contact.
2. Increase assessment of student knowledge of resources, (i.e., counseling, TLC). Expand individual mentoring for students with academic difficulties, especially in the areas of math and writing.
3. Students with possible undiagnosed learning disabilities should be helped to find appropriate assessment.
4. There appears to be no formal mechanism to identify and provide programming for gifted students. Examine formal and informal methods to promote gifted student programming.
5. Create a clinic where students can be evaluated for acute minor illness and medication needs. Advertise counseling services in the clinic. Also, if hiring a prescribing nurse practitioner, this person could work with psychologists and offer medications for treating stress/mental health conditions.
6. Increase the visibility of Health and Wellness options and services at UW Tacoma through increased signage both inside and outside the Mattress Factory. Also increase the visibility of the staff through introductions or short presentations in the Core classes or in the University 101 class, if and when it is developed.
7. Provide workshops for faculty to increase awareness of who their students are and what the demands and stressors are for their students.
8. Present a panel discussion at Orientation or the first year that is comprised of juniors and seniors who were not tested for learning disabilities until they reached college.

6.3 Student Experiences: To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience the following?

1. Individualized attention from faculty/staff
2. Academic support outside the classroom
3. Opportunities for campus involvement
4. Inclusive campus environment

1. Need: Individualized attention from faculty/staff.

- a. Overall students believe they are provided with the right amount of attention and support (mean = 3.5), with 42% reporting that UWT does a good job in this area and only 9% reporting a poor job.
- b. Instructors are doing an excellent job at providing individual attention (mean = 3.7), with 62% reporting that this happens often (4 or 5) and only 10% reporting little individualized attention (1 or 2).
- c. Instructors are doing an excellent job of being available outside of class (mean = 4.3) with 80% reporting this occurs frequently and only 3% reporting this seldom happens.

Recommendations:

1. Increase opportunities for undergraduates to do research with a faculty member.
2. Survey faculty about their research projects and then post research opportunities open to Core members on the UWT website.
3. Advisers in General Education should be advising on all pre-professional programs (i.e. pre-med, pre-law, pre-dental) since those are programs that need to be started during the first year.
4. After reviewing the result from the focus group, students are displeased with the available courses at the institution. Students believe there are not enough spaces available for every student to receive the best possible education. Specific space should be left available in elective classes for the first-year students.

2. Need: Academic support outside of the classroom

- a. Students report that they have good understanding of knowing where to go if they need help with course work (mean=3.7). In addition, 57% report that academic support services meet their needs very well and only 10% believe needs are met only a little or not at all.
- b. Academic advising is doing only a fair job in explaining academic requirements and supporting student's academic goals. Only approximately one-

third of students are highly satisfied with the way academic advisers explained requirements for specific majors (mean = 2.9), with 38% of students dissatisfied with this area. In addition, other areas also show about 35% highly satisfied with help in select courses (mean = 3.1), and discussing what it will take to be academically successful (mean = 3.1). Approximately 30% of students rate this area low (1 or 2).

Recommendations:

1. It is not clear why 38% of students rate academic advising low. Further assessment is necessary. One idea is to have a brief consumer satisfaction card filled out after *each* advising session with students. Cards would be reviewed on a monthly basis with feedback given to advisers. This system might be used with Financial Aid advising as well.
2. Advisers of all types (e.g., academic, financial aid, etc.) should be evaluated on a quarterly basis, similar to the way that professors are evaluated per class.
3. Increase communication with students about what they can expect from an advisor at UWT and how best to access and make use of that connection. This could be done through Freshman Advising & Registration, Orientation, Core or various other communication means.
4. Provide more dedicated, quiet study space around campus for both individual and group study sessions.
5. Ensure adequate study spaces and nooks in all new buildings and renovations.

3. Need: Opportunities for campus involvement

a. UWT is doing a fair job in letting students know how to be involved in an institution-sponsored organization/event (mean = 3.0), with only 28% of students rating this area high and 30% rating is low.

Recommendations:

1. Student leaders should create a first year retreat that would bring the Core group together. This way campus tradition is formed, and the need for unified campus environment is stressed at the beginning of their college experience.
2. Consider Core (or campus wide) focus on the "wow" factor. Address what can be done to make UWT an interesting and exciting place to be and action steps toward promoting a better sense of community. Ideas include: (a) free ice cream day; (b) development of campus traditions; (c) development of large outdoor art projects; (d) increase use of Phillip Hall or the Longshoreman's Hall as a gathering place (i.e., viewing UWT football or open-microphone events); (e) development of a "soap box" on campus; (f) expansion of intramural programs and volleyball court; and (g) development of an electronic "community wish list" in which students, faculty and staff write what they wish they could see/have on campus.

3. Better communication is needed about campus organizations and events. First-year students need outreach from organizations. This might include: (a) an organization fair just for first-year students; presentations by various organizations in Core classes; (b) a "twitter" system (and other technology) for announcing campus events and meetings; and (c) an "each one bring one" system for club members to invite a Core student to a meeting or event.

4. Create one or more campus events just for Core students e.g. a dance, film, or bowling night.

5. Make student leaders/peer advisers an active part of any University 101 program/class created at UW Tacoma so they can serve as role models for involvement at UW Tacoma.

6. Increase opportunities for service learning and connecting the academic environment at UW Tacoma to our greater community.

7. Create more options for Campus Housing to encourage involvement and staying on-campus for longer periods of time.

4. Need: Creating an inclusive campus environment

a. The campus is doing a moderately good job of promoting interactions with people of differing background and cultures. 43% report very good opportunities for interacting with diverse students and 36% for interacting with diverse faculty/staff. Of concern is that approximately 1 in 4 students report poor opportunities for interaction in these areas. Most students (61%) do not believe UWT promotes opportunities for interaction with diverse groups outside of campus.

b. The needs of diverse groups appear to be met equally across the areas of investigation. Analysis of questions by race finds no difference between white students and students of color on any survey question. Similarly, there are no differences by gender.

c. Clubs and organizations include many diverse groups. The extent of participation by first-year students is unknown.

Recommendations:

1. Maintain data on the extent of participation by first-year students and diverse groups in campus clubs and organizations.

2. Promote outreach by student organizations representing diverse groups to the Core students.

3. Integrate greater awareness and interaction with diverse groups into the Core curriculum and assignments.

4. Increase advertising in the Cores about campus events that are specifically targeted toward issues on diversity.
5. Provide better signage for the Diversity Resource Center so that first-year students are aware of where this resource is on campus.
6. Hire more faculty from marginalized groups.
7. Track our enrollment of minority students and develop ways to increase enrollment in these groups, to include working with community colleges on their enrollment goals and practices.

6.4 Physical and psychological safety. To what degree does your institution assure a campus environment in which first-year students are Physically and Psychologically safe?

¹Physical safety includes (a) protection of persons and property through appropriate design and monitoring of buildings and grounds, and (b) education of students about their responsibilities to practice safe behaviors in residence halls, on campus, in the community, and in online transactions (e.g., financial, personal).

²Psychological safety is the absence of threat, discrimination, and/or harassment that negatively affect a student's college experience (i.e., discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.).

1. Need: Physical safety

- a. The campus is doing a good job of making students feel physically safe (mean = 3.9) with 65% of students rating this area high and only 8.2% rating it low.
- b. While the difference is not statistically significant, men report feeling safer on campus than women, with 74.4% of men rating this area high compared with only 56.3% of women. Conversely, 9.2% of women rate this area low compared with 5.2% of men.
- c. Campus safety is visible and available.

Recommendations:

1. Once a year, Campus Safety and Facilities should hold a "night walk" around campus with students, faculty and staff to assess areas that need more light, more monitoring, or unsafe areas.
2. Continue adding more blue emergency towers in and around campus.
3. Create a program specifically designed to promote the well-being and protection for female students with activities such as self-defense and safety awareness programs.

4. Encourage everyone to enroll in the text message alerts.
5. Increase signage around campus about escort services.
6. Have campus safety attend new student orientation.
7. During orientation, provide a brief discussion on how to engage with panhandlers and street people to include encounters on The Link.

2. Need: Psychological safety

- a. The campus is doing a good job in creating an atmosphere of psychological safety. Most students feel respected by others (mean = 3.95) with 71.4% of students rating this area high and only 8.2% rating it low.
- b. Most students feel they can express their beliefs without concern over how others will react (mean 4.7) with 66% rating this area high and only 9.4% rating it low.

3. Need: Student education about responsibilities to practice safe behaviors.

- a. The campus is doing a good job of communicating the importance of respecting others with differing opinions (mean= 3.8), with 66.6% of students rating this area high and 13.1% rating it low.
- b. The campus is going a good job of communicating the importance of standards of behavior in the academic community (mean = 3.6) with 63.3% rating this area high and only 14.3% rating it low.
- c. The campus doing a very good job in communicating the importance of academic honesty (mean = 3.9) and only 9.1% rating this area low.
- d. The campus is doing a very good job in communicating the importance of ethical conduct (mean = 3.8) with only 12.1% rating this area low.

Recommendations:

1. Continue doing the good job that is being done in campus climate, expected behavior and safety issues.
2. Continue to promote communication and discussions between diverse campus groups.
3. Develop training about conflict resolution for faculty, staff, and student groups.
4. Provide events and clubs that promote personal safety such as self-defense classes and personal safety awareness workshops.

5. Increase awareness as to specific actions that might be taken when disrespect is encountered.

Recommended Grade: C-

University of Washington Tacoma

All Students Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report.. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

All Students Dimension Report Feedback:

Jerry, Shaziana, Melody, Heather, Lauren, Adrienne, Julie, Shanna, and Ruth,

You have identified a full list of very thoughtful recommendations and action items for supporting all first year students. Your work is very detailed and thorough, and as such, this report should provide your co-liaisons for the FOE process with a focused direction for the final report. Your institution's resulting implementation of services will surface from the intensity of these details and factors. I find that the reports on 'all students' commonly tend to focus-in on specific actual items necessary to support our first year students. The depth and breathe of your recommendations is exceptionally outstanding!

I particularly liked that your dimension committee connected your work directly to the mission of the institution. Too often, our institutional mission statements are overlooked and I do believe that these statements could serve as a vision for direction and focus. Your approached the task using an intentional and purposeful well-thought

out process. As such you really took the time to best understand the first year experience for your students at UWT as you analyzed the varying types of quantitative and qualitative data. I noted that you used the FOE survey results, focus groups, student voices, interviews, sources of evidence from campus reporting, and experiential input from campus constituencies. Your position about analyzing this data and information gathered at varying points of time is important to the full FOE process. I also believe that your point about the small sampling for the survey and smaller focus groups is critical and that is why it is so very important to review the themes that have evolved across each of the dimensions. There is great value in identifying the common threads that have arisen this past year through the FOE process. You noted and carefully elaborated on three very important common themes already when you identified the need for improved communications, improved campus connections, and improving the quality and academic preparedness of the students. Subsequently, you identified very specific directions for each of these themes which are critical to the totality of the FOE process.

Your dimension committee members identified very specific recommendations which should provide UWT with a clear set of actions and paths for preparing your first year students for the UWT educational experience, providing them with the information that they need, and connecting them with others on campus. I anticipate that with the number of specific recommendations it will be important for the ensuing implementation team to consider how to group and prioritize these actions items. I might suggest asking the implementation group to consider which actions might provide some immediate positive results which can be measured so that these efforts can serve the purpose of also motivating the implementation efforts.

Meeting the specific needs of all first year students is critical to the “all students” dimension. You may need to consider evaluating and analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data that is available by factors other than total group and ethnicity. For example, are there differing views on the need for improved communications, improved campus connections, and the academic preparedness for the first year experience in college by the students’ gender, ethnicity, first generation status, financial need, and academic inputs such as lower grade point averages and SAT/ACT

scores? How are students with disabilities served through the first year experience at UWT? More specifically, how are students with learning disabilities served through the first year experience? Are there differences between students who live on campus and those students who commute as they relate to the primary themes reviewed in this dimension? These questions are infused here to target future thought through the implementation process. As such, they can be used to target specific needs and route scarce resources to these specific areas.

In some cases, these data and information may not be available currently and may need further review in how this information may be gathered and analyzed. As such, you may want to consider how this can be a recommendation as well.

Here are a few start-up questions that I would propose. Are there any differences in how well students feel connected to the campus across diverse groups (gender, ethnicity, first generation, socio-economic status, level of academic preparedness as measured by HSGPA and SAT/ACT grouping intervals)? Are there differences in how well students believe they have been informed and communicated with as entering FYE students (gender, ethnicity, first generation, socio-economic status, level of academic preparedness as measured by HSGPA and SAT/ACT grouping intervals)? Are there differences in how well students believe they are academically prepared for the college experience by gender, ethnicity, first generation, socio-economic status, level of academic preparedness as measured by HSGPA and SAT/ACT grouping intervals? Are there differences in how well students believe they are supported by the UWT community by gender, ethnicity, first generation, socio-economic status, level of academic preparedness as measured by HSGPA and SAT/ACT grouping intervals? Are there differences in how well students feel safe on campus by gender, ethnicity, first generation, socio-economic status, level of academic preparedness as measured by HSGPA and SAT/ACT grouping intervals?

These types of analyses can lead to focusing and guiding specific actions for implementation to meet the needs of specific groups of students, perhaps in the form of personal outreach and positive interventions. You may want to consider how

further analyses can be infused into these recommendations so that the needs of all first year students can be addressed.

Each of you are to be commended for the focused energy that you put forth in identifying the detail to the recommendations and actions items that you developed for this dimension. Most significantly, you have created a strong foundation for the final report and consideration of key primary themes for this report.

My very best to each of you...Amanda Yale

Diversity Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

1) Committee Leader:

Suzanne Klinger, Librarian, Library

2) Committee Members:

Gabriella Crosby, Program Assistant, Social Work

Marti Curtis, Program Assistant, General Education

Linda Ishem, Assistant Professor, Urban Studies

Christina Kipelidis, Student

Bernie Liang, Associate Director for Student Involvement

Marcia Monroe, Access Services Supervisor, Library

Lia Wetzstein, Instructional Supervisor, IAS

3) Current Situation

While there are many varying definitions for *diversity*, the Diversity Dimension group, for the purposes of this assessment, considered whether students in the First Year Experience (FYE) are provided with a diversity of experiences and exposure to diverse and differing peoples and ideas. To assess the FYE students' exposure to diversity adequately, we first identified and evaluated existing campus-wide structures, offices, and organizations that focus on diversity and the diversity-focused efforts the campus has undertaken to date.

a) Diversity as a Campus Value

The campus' 2007-2017 Strategic Plan established four essential values, including *diversity*, which should guide the campus during this 10 year phase of development. The campus plan articulates that "the University of Washington Tacoma educates diverse learners and transforms communities by expanding the boundaries of knowledge and discovery." Additional articulation of the diversity value notes that the campus:

- promotes an environment where diverse perspectives and experiences are expected;
- seeks out and supports individuals who may experience barriers in gaining access to college;
- stimulates a vibrant learning community by presenting lectures, events and performances that inspire new views;
- encourages and rewards intercultural competence;
- aligns its values with its actions in support of justice and fairness;
- attract and retains a community of people and ideas representing diverse cultures and experiences.

b) Existing Diversity-Centered Offices & Organizations at UWT

The campus also supports an Office for Equity and Diversity that was "created to help cultivate an institutional vision and commitment to diversity while ensuring an equitable environment for all members of the UW Tacoma community." A unit within this Office, the Diversity Resource Center (DRC) serves as a campus-wide resource to enable "all members of the UWT community to learn through the exploration of human differences." The DRC sponsors a wide variety of campus-wide events and programs throughout the academic year ranging from explorations of Native American history and identity to a hate crimes forum to a multicultural student welcome. Events are open to all students including freshmen throughout the academic year and the DRC reports that approximately 70% of attendees at each event are students and 40% identify as a member of an ethnic minority group. Additionally, DRC estimates that approximately 60% of attendees are frequent or "repeat" attendees.

There are also a variety of diversity-related student organizations available on campus. A February 2009 list of 29 registered student organizations includes an ACLU student chapter, Black Student Union, Campus Crusade for Christ, international, Latino, Korean, and Muslim student associations, Queer /Straight Alliance and Women in Computing Science. Many of these student organizations also sponsor events throughout the year though such events may be perceived as targeted to specific interest groups and constituencies.

c) UWT's current Statement of Commitment to Diversity

The committee would like to highlight the campus-wide effort to bring attention to diversity via the posting (in classrooms and public areas) of the UW Tacoma Statement of Commitment to Diversity signed by the Chancellor. This statement is the second version to be posted on campus in our 19 year history, and represents a revision of the first version, created in the 1990s by a group of faculty and staff committed to embedding concepts of diversity, equity, and fairness in the growing infrastructure of the campus. Other than the strategic posting of this diversity statement, there has been little effort made to create a campus ethos that embraces the various dimensions of diversity. Many sentiments articulated in the formal documents fail to be widely disseminated, known, understood, practiced or implemented in our daily routines.

d) Diversity in the FYE Student Population

One component of diversity for first year students is their exposure to and interactions with peers who reflect a range of identities and backgrounds. Student demographics for the 3 years since the admission of first year students at UW Tacoma indicate that the program has been able to attract a reasonably diverse student population based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity, first generation college student status, and financial need. Less obvious (and currently not evaluated or quantified) is the diversity of the first year student populations based on characteristics such as sexual orientation, learning differences, language proficiency, religion, country of origin, political perspectives, etc. Without accurate data regarding the extent to which our students represent diversity in such unquantified areas of identity, it is difficult to evaluate the full range of diversity represented in the first year student population.

Retention has been the subject of intensive study at UW Tacoma in the last few years. An analysis of the 2007 first year students indicates that African American and Native American/American Indian students are retained into the second quarter at rates significantly lower than those for Caucasian/European American and Asian American students. Also, rates of retention for Latino/Latina students are lower than those for Asian American and Caucasian/European American students, although not as dramatically as is the case for African American and Native American/American Indian students. We think that it is extremely important to monitor and work to correct the lower rates of retention for selected groups of students, and will speak to this issue in our recommendations. There are obviously ways in which retention rates can be strengthened. For example, the report notes that 100% (36% African American or Latino/Latina; 45.5% Asian American; 31.9% Caucasian/European American) of the students who completed the Summer Bridge Program were retained for Winter Quarter 2008. Of those students, 70% are first generation college students.

A few additional demographics of note for first year students:

- African American students comprised 12.3% and 6.6% of the first year classes for 2006 and 2007 classes respectively. Data for 2008 lists African American/Black students as 11% of the student population
- Caucasian/European American students have been 41.2%, 43.1 %, and 45.4% for 2006-2008
- Asian American students constitute the largest ethnic minority group with 28.3 %, 35%, and 27.2%
- 59 % of the students completing the survey noted that they worked for pay
- Majority female students in each of the 3 years reflect the national trend for college attendance based on gender

e) Diversity in the FYE Academic Experience & Curriculum

Within the General Education program itself, the mission statement and learning goals list student exposure to *diversity*, *global perspectives*, or *diverse cultural views* as essential ingredients of a student's education at UW Tacoma. The General Education program materials state that the purpose of this goal of *diversity* is to enable "students [to] gain an understanding of the multiplicity of human experience and the roles that

culture, environment, historical processes, and differential treatment play in shaping the diverse experiences of groups in society." Exposure to *global perspectives* enables "students [to] develop an awareness of the interrelationships among personal, local, and global entities, as well as gain understanding of issues of well-being and sustainability. Students will also learn about the importance of the social, cultural, economic, scientific, and environmental differences that mark world regions."

But have these learning goals been thoroughly implemented in the FYE academic structure and curriculum? From our assessment of syllabi for Core classes and responses from students and faculty/staff to questions pertinent to diversity in the existing FYE courses and programs, it is clear that a thorough integration of diversity into the FYE academic offerings has not yet been achieved. We recognized that clear expectations for the integration of diversity in the FYE curriculum have not yet been developed and codified, and also recognize that the survey of FYE students and faculty/staff thus may not accurately capture the full range of diversity elements currently present in the program. However, even as we will recommend structuring such clear expectations and developing detailed, goal-specific annual assessment tools to evaluate the degree to which those expectations are being reached, we took seriously the existing information we had regarding current student and faculty/staff views on the inclusion of diversity in the FYE. Based on that information, there is much room for improvement on many measures.

Responses from the faculty/staff and student survey show that when the "high" and "very high" responses are aggregated, perceptions of the institution's efforts related to diversity in the FYE are, at best, reaching majorities on a handful of questions, but fall below majorities in many categories. Strong attention to improving these numbers needs to be made (as our recommendations will note), and it would obviously be good to see aggregated "high/very high" responses above 50% for all questions and to work on achieving positive responses coming consistently from at least 2/3rd of the FYE community members. We paid close attention to the data below as we framed our recommendations for future improvements:

- 55.3% of faculty/staff and 67.3% of students rate the degree to which the institution's communicates to students about the importance of respecting others with differing opinions as high or very high
- 31.7% of faculty and staff rate the institution's communication about the importance of standards of behavior in the academic community as high or very high
- 12.9% of faculty/staff and 17.4% of students rate the degree to which the institution provides interactions with people of differing backgrounds outside the institution as high or very high
- 37% of faculty/staff and 36.4% of students rate as high or very high the degree to which the institution offers opportunities for FYE students to interact with faculty and staff who represent diverse identities
- 59.8% of faculty/staff rate attention to world views in the curriculum as high or very high (4 or 5 on a 5 point scale)
- More students rate the degree of institutional exposure to different political perspectives (45.4%) and class/economic status (42.7%) as high or very high than exposure to world cultures (34.4%) or world religions (33%)

One of the highest positive responses above shows that almost 60% of the faculty/staff rate attention to world views in the curriculum favorably. From a review of the syllabi for the CORE classes, it is clear that a number of faculty have fully integrated explorations of difference, diversity, and alternative perspectives into course design. For other classes, however, the syllabi are less clear about the extent to which the faculty are articulating these goals in concrete ways. Fewer than half of the students surveyed rated their exposure to other cultures, religions, perspective, etc. as high or very high. It is not at all clear from the student questions, however, the extent to which they may see differences between attention to diversity within their classes vs. outside the curriculum since the questions did not ask them to delineate this difference (and future assessment of the program should distinguish such elements).

Our evaluation of the range and frequency of diversity-related learning events offered outside the classroom showed that UWT provides a good number of such opportunities. However, these events scheduled outside the classroom may not be reaching FYE students as regularly and effectively as they could if the events were more clearly linked to the FYE academic program and to the FYE curriculum. While there appear to be regularly offered events pertinent to diversity issues or topics and students in a focus group on the FYE praised the variety of events on offer from the DRC, the same students raised concerns that student activities seem to be attended by the "same group of highly involved students." In informal conversations with former first year students and in the student focus groups organized by the Roles and Purposes Dimension (which the chair of the Diversity Dimension attended) students frequently cited a "lack of time" or scheduling conflicts as the main reasons that they were unable to attend campus events such as those offered by the DRC. In some cases, students noted that they were unaware of the events on campus. Indeed, while faculty members teaching within the CORE praise the DRC for the variety of events it sponsors during the academic year, they also expressed frustration that they frequently do not know about these events when planning their class schedules and developing their syllabi thereby ensuring that students would be able to attend. We will address ways to create more effective links between diversity-related events and the first year curriculum and learning opportunities in our recommendations.

Lastly, respondents in focus groups and the FYE survey identified a number of specific aspects of diversity-related support and opportunities that need to be strengthened. Faculty teaching CORE classes and comments on the faculty/staff survey identified the lack of institutional support for ESL/ELL students as a weakness of the first year program. One respondent on the survey added that "I am not at all sure that the campus has a comprehensive design for how we address or identify the needs of special population such as first generation, low income, or students with disabilities...." Also, and very clearly, both faculty/staff, and students perceive that the institution is not providing opportunities for students to interact with diverse people in the communities outside the institution (we will address this further).

In summary, we believe that while campus and academic goals at UW Tacoma clearly place a high priority on communicating the importance of understanding and respecting others with differing opinions, identities, and experiences, the degree to which this priority has resulted in systematic, well-structured integration of diversity-related learning and experiences in the FYE is much lower than it could be. We want

to emphasize the fact that our data were limited and thus it is possible that greater or lesser awareness and appreciation of diversity exists in the FYE program than the data indicate; however, the lack of detailed, focused efforts to quantify or qualify diversity-related learning and widespread respect for people of diverse identities at UWT is, itself, a problem. We took seriously the data that we had, but also will recommend that a much more systematic collection and evaluation of diversity-related data become a standard part of improving diversity-related learning and experiences in the FYE.

4. Opportunities and Challenges

We believe that the existing strongly stated commitments to diversity and diverse learning experiences at UWT represent an opportunity for strengthening attention to and embracing of diversity in the FYE program. As noted above in Section 3 (e), many staff and faculty connected with the first year program have obviously already worked to develop and implement classroom activities and assignments that explicitly address issues of diversity and an inclusion of global perspectives. Additionally, the campus has made enormous strides in its 19 year history to build an infrastructure that includes units such as an Office of Equity and Diversity and the Diversity Resource Center to ensure that the growing campus will continue to pay attention to issues of diversity and fairness.

That said, the committee believes we now need to rise to the challenge to coordinate, evaluate, and expand the breadth and depth of diversity-related activities and education on campus and develop further assessment of diversity-related experiences, inside and outside the classroom, on our campus. The committee also believes it is in the best interests of the campus to develop expectations that all faculty, staff, and students share these responsibilities and not expect that only a few programs on campus, such as the Office of Equity and Diversity and the DRC, be responsible for rising to this challenge. If diversity and diversity-related experiences and learning in the FYE are to become widespread and transformative for our students, all faculty and staff at UWT will need to work collaboratively in structured ways to achieve this goal.

One significant challenge that we face with students who are busy (e.g. 59% of first year students reported working for pay during fall quarter 2008; 70% of that group reported working 16 or more hours per week) is creating strong, effective incentives for them to focus on diversity-related learning activities. Faculty and staff connected with the first year program and student activities noted that while there are numerous opportunities for students to be exposed to diversity on campus, there are often few incentives for students to use these opportunities. If an event or activity is not part of a class requirement or a personal interest of that student, it is highly unlikely (under present conditions) that the students will develop a deeper understanding and/or appreciation of diversity through such activities. The DRC and student organizations offer many opportunities to learn more, experience more, and get involved but the incentives for students to do so are not always identified and communicated in clear, widely recognized ways.

Another significant challenge, mentioned above, is that while many faculty, staff, and students are work on diversity related issues on campus, these efforts seem rarely to be

connected or systematized. For example, faculty who teach in the CORE appreciate the many events sponsored by the DRC and student groups on campus, but for faculty to include such events as part of a class or even ask that the events be scheduled during a specific class meeting time to guarantee student attendance, faculty must know about these activities when planning their syllabi (meaning, in effect, that such events must be scheduled in the quarter preceding that in which faculty will teach a related class). Having specific classes able to attend specific events not only guarantees an audience for that event, but also provides instructors with many "teachable moments" that clearly enhance the learning in the given class. With more structured ways of coordinating diversity-related events and learning opportunities, faculty could use their curricular materials and goals to suggest valuable diversity-related programs or activities that link to their classes; these might include bringing diversity-related speakers to the campus in a quarter when FYE students are reading work by those speakers, scheduling diversity-themed films in a particular class and widely publicizing the film to the campus community, coordinating and publicizing diversity-themed dialogues or panel discussions scheduled within an FYE class, etc.

There are additional opportunities within class/syllabus design to enhance the articulation of diversity-related learning goals. Service-based assignments could help bridge the existing gap that students experience between their academic experiences and their understanding of diversity in the surrounding communities and region.

Situated as we are in a diverse urban area and as a campus that defines itself as an urban institution that seeks opportunities for civic engagement and community involvement and has enthusiasm and pride for the "increased diversity that an urban location brings," the campus and the CORE need to seek out opportunities for off campus service learning, volunteer activities, or other community connections within the context of specific classes. At least one CORE class to date has incorporated service learning and the faculty member concluded that she saw significant learning and growth among the students in their awareness of others. Additionally, students noted in informal conversations with committee members that they had never heard about off campus opportunities to attend events such as the Students of Color Conference or the local annual Diversity Institute of which UW Tacoma is a founding member.

The challenges involved in expanding such service-related diversity experiences pertain to the time and effort that faculty must devote, on their own, to developing the many details and arrangements related to service learning. Clearly, this challenge could be met by designating knowledgeable faculty or staff as service-learning coordinators (with commensurate training and incentives to enable them to fill these roles).

Since only two members of the Diversity Dimension committee were aware of the history of the campus' Statement of Commitment to Diversity and many students, staff, and faculty on campus have never even noticed the signs, now is an appropriate time to revisit and review the statement and its message about how we broadly define and conceptualize diversity. The committee strongly believes that it is important to be certain that there is a shared understanding of what our campus norms are relative to diversity, what expectations we have for diversity-enhancing student learning, and that both the campus and first year program have a clarity of purpose and understanding of

how that translates into pragmatic action inside and outside the classroom. The opportunity to discuss the Statement of Commitment to Diversity, carefully structured, might result in revisions to the Statement but at minimum should create a more widespread understanding of its content and importance to learning at UWT and generate more attention to the importance of implementing the "commitment" fully across the campus.

We believe that the recommendations that follow should, if embraced, lead to effective utilization of the many opportunities that we have at UWT for expanding and enhancing diversity-related learning in the FYE. The recommendations are linked closely to meeting the challenges outlined above.

5. Sources of Evidence

- UWT Strategic Plan 2008
- Diversity Resource Center Events 2008/2009
- UWT Summer Bridge Program 2007
- Analysis of the 2007 TCORE Freshman: Autumn 07 to Winter 08
- UWT Undergraduate Student Learning Goals
- Chancellor's Annual Campus Address 2007
- Student and Faculty/Staff Foundations of Excellence Surveys
- 07-08 Syllabi for TCORE 110 and Teams A, B, C, D, & E

Recommended Grade: C-

Recommended Action Items:

- Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity (*High priority*)

Ensure that the Statement is clearly understood, embedded in campus culture, and provides a strong and all-encompassing description and definition of "diversity"

- Develop a mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi (*High priority*)

This might take the form of a committee, a coordinating group, etc. and would enable faculty and staff to develop, recommend, or learn about diversity-related events at least a quarter in advance of a given class.

- Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events (*High priority*)

Additional student incentives might include recognition of student involvement in diversity-related organizations or activities [noting that such events or activities must be coordinated with faculty input to insure their relationship to academic learning]

- Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of instructional support (*High priority*)
- Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support (*High priority*)
- Develop structured program for first year students to contribute recommendations (*High priority*)

This would include contributions about diversity-related issues and learning opportunities that they wish to see in the CORE and might be accomplished through focus groups, interviews, etc.

- Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students (*High priority*)

Such events would be available to the entire campus and would serve to highlight the importance of first year students' learning for the entire campus community

- Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness (*High priority*)
- Develop mechanisms to increase timely awareness on campus of community diversity events (*High priority*)

These events might be at other institutions in the Tacoma/Pierce County regions [such mechanisms could involved direct, repeated, and personalized invitations to FYE students to participate].

- Develop mechanisms to increase timely awareness about special off-campus events (*High priority*)

Examples of such events are the Students of Color Conference and the Diversity Institute. Such mechanisms could involve direct, repeated, and personalized invitations to FYE students to participate

- Enhance Summer Bridge Program (*High priority*)

Develop this and other such mentoring programs with specific attention to closing the retention gap identified for some current student populations.

- Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning (*High priority*)

Such goals should be detailed and specific to improve learning in the CORE from both faculty and student perspectives

- Develop mechanisms to alert students as soon as possible to off campus learning programs (*Medium priority*)

Such programs might include study abroad opportunities and other cross cultural learning experiences such as exchange programs with the United Negro College Fund or Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- Develop classroom best practices for engaging in difficult conversations about diversity issues (*Medium priority*)
- Develop pre-orientation session or support and mentorship program for diverse students (*Low priority*)

Such a program would support retention and help create a sense of community for diverse students

University of Washington Tacoma

Diversity Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. *Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.*

Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback: The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions within this feedback report are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.

Diversity Dimension Report Feedback:

Dear Suzanne, Gabriella, Marti, Linda, Christina, Bernie, Marcia, and Lia:

You have prepared a very inclusive and comprehensive report on the diversity dimension as part of the FOE process. It is clearly apparent that your group approached the self-study task for this dimension in a brilliantly systemic manner. You approached your task in a very organized effort by first identifying and noting that while there are many varying definitions for *diversity*, your group focused on whether “students in the First Year Experience (FYE) were provided with a diversity of experiences and exposure to diverse and differing peoples and ideas.” You first considered the value of diversity on your campus. As such, you studied specifically whether your first year students were exposed to issues of diversity through existing campus-wide structures, offices, and organizations that focus on diversity. You considered how “all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities.” Throughout this process you used multiple resources for the self-study analysis including the institutional strategic plan, campus events listing, summer bridge program information, CORE analysis, undergraduate student learning goals, FOE Surveys, and the TCORE syllabi. I was impressed that you also referenced the “chancellor's annual campus address.” Presidents and Chancellors often use their public addresses to highlight key values for the institution reflect of the current state of the university and environment. And these addresses often reflect important directions that may arise to environment changes that are not often found in multiple year planning documents. Given the data available, you were thorough in your analysis and reflection, and you were thoughtful in the development of the recommendations for action which is particularly important to this dimension.

In your analysis, you noted that the institution’s strategic plan identified diversity as one of four essential values and that a 10 year plan was documented to guide these efforts. In regard to diversity, your institutional plan establishes that a value for diversity through the following statement: “The University of Washington Tacoma educates diverse learners and transforms communities by expanding the boundaries of

knowledge and discovery." You noted that the plan established five specific diversity values.

Additionally, you noted that the campus also supports diversity through the work carried out in several offices [Office for Equity and Diversity and the Diversity Resource Center (DRC)]. While you noted excellent event participation data on the DRC's programs and a host of other programs, I am left wondering how many of these students represent first year students. The committee also believes it is in the best interests of the campus to develop expectations that all faculty, staff, and students share these responsibilities and not expect that only a few programs on campus, such as the Office of Equity and Diversity and the DRC, be responsible for rising to this challenge. This is something we see happen on so many of our campuses and concur with your analyses that these responsibilities to be successful must be integrated across campus departments and divisions.

Additionally, I noted your attention to the specific action that your campus had undertaken to bring attention to diversity via the campus posting (in classrooms and public areas) of the UW Tacoma Statement of Commitment to Diversity signed by the Chancellor. Notably, you recognized that there has been little effort made to create a campus culture that embraces the various dimensions of diversity. You made a significant statement when you articulated in your report, that many sentiments expressed in formal documents fail to be widely disseminated, known, understood, practiced or implemented in daily routines. I would add that even when these documents are disseminated, we need to have stimulating dialogue around them and focus on how we incorporate the values into actions daily.

Your analysis also reflected an important building block for diversity when you reported that new student demographics showed that the institution has been able to attract a reasonably diverse student population based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity, first generation college student status, and financial need. This is also significant to your efforts. You also expanded your analysis on diversity by noting that it is more difficult to assess the diversity of the first year student populations based on characteristics such as sexual orientation, learning differences, language proficiency,

religion, country of origin, political perspectives, etc. This is true for each of our institutions as it is information that would be very challenging to collect for obvious reasons.

On issues of retaining students, your self-study analysis showed that African American and Native American/American Indian students are retained into the second quarter at rates significantly lower than those for Caucasian/European American and Asian American students. You also noted that rates of retention for Latino/Latina students are lower than those for Asian American and Caucasian/European American students, although not as dramatically as is the case for African American and Native American/American Indian students. While it is important to monitor these rates, it is more critical to determine whether a number of input differences exist among these groups of students. It is also critical to determine how to best infuse early interventions and transitional experiences tailored to meet these student's needs initially in their first year experience. You may wish to ask further questions about these entering groups of students. Among these student groups, what is the mean standardized test score, mean high school grade point average, curriculum preparation differences, mean class rank, economic status, financial aid and scholarship awards, first generation status? Does UWT do any entering student surveys that measure your student's perceptions of their attitudes, aspirations, behaviors, and needs as they transition to your institution? Is this information prepared in a breakout format by ethnicity, gender, first generation status, economic status? How are early intervention activities developed to meet the needs of these different student groups?

Your dimension team also noted another significant factor in that while the general education program does list as a value student exposure to *diversity, global perspectives, or diverse cultural views* as essential ingredients of a student's education, you asked whether these learning goals have been thoroughly implemented in the FYE academic structure and curriculum. Your assessment of the syllabi and interviews with students, faculty, and staff revealed that the integration of diversity into the FYE academic offerings has not yet been achieved. Your recommendations on establishing clear expectations and developing detailed, goal-specific annual assessment tools to evaluate the degree to which those expectations are being reached are reasonable based

on the data that you used from the survey results. It appears that some of the syllabi are well developed in this regard, while other syllabi do not state these expectations as clear.

Your dimension team conducted a thorough analysis on the range and frequency of diversity-related learning events offered outside the classroom and you made an excellent observation when you noted that these events scheduled outside the classroom may not be reaching FYE students as regularly and or as effectively as they could if the events were more clearly linked to the FYE academic program and to the FYE curriculum. The same challenge you noted of the same group of highly involved students attending these events is one which is evident on many of our campuses. You also addressed a critical factor when you noted that Core faculty need to know of these types of events early in the process so that they can embed it into their syllabi. And, later in your report, you created an action that faculty ought to be encourage to give credit or similar, clear incentives to students for attendance at diversity-related events or involvement in diversity-related organizations or activities.

Additionally, another significant element that you discovered was that your institution has a need for improving the knowledge base of diversity-related data and that this research should become part of improving diversity-related learning and experiences in the FYE. One significant challenge that you face is that your students who are busy with nearly 60% reporting that they are working for pay and that 70% of this group reported working 16 or more hours per week. These factors tell us a number of important things. It would appear that there would be a need for creating strong, effective incentives for students to choose to attend diversity-related learning activities. Faculty and staff connected with the first year program and student activities noted that while there are numerous opportunities for students to be exposed to diversity on campus, there are often few incentives for students to use these opportunities. Since a large proportion of your students are working so many hours, if an event or activity is not part of a class requirement, it may be a major challenge to attract students to these types of activities. I would also study closer if this percentage of students working exists for your total student body and total first year student cohort. Before wide sweeping actions are taken, you may want to look closer at the

sample for this survey and determine if this information also exists in other formats through other resources on campus which produce a higher sample of the population under study.

Another significant challenge, mentioned above, is that while many faculty, staff, and students are working on diversity related issues on campus, these efforts seem rarely to be connected or systematized. I do believe that this is a challenge that so many of our institutions face today. Sometimes there are multiple areas on campus dealing with differing elements of a similar or related institutional need or value and rarely do these areas communicate in an intentional and purposeful way. Better communications across departments and divisions can improve these efforts.

Diversity Dimension Committee Members,

Your recommendations for action are thoughtful and sound. Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on this FOE dimension! Your work is all-encompassing and very thorough.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Roles & Purposes Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e., the major).

Committee Leader

Christine Stevens, Assistant Professor, Nursing

Committee Members

Nicole Blair, Lecturer, IAS

Erica Coe, Librarian, Head Instruction Services

Sara Contreras, Education, Program Operations

Linda Dawson, Senior Lecturer, IAS

Elise Nicholl, Student

Scott Pinkston, Alumni Relations and Annual Fund Manager

Current Situation

The "Roles and Purposes" Dimension committee was charged with analyzing how the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) promotes "students' understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society".

The committee organized the analysis from two different approaches. The first approach was to follow the contacts that first year students would encounter: recruitment, admission, advising, and first year core courses. This approach allowed us to discover how the messages about the roles and purposes of higher education were delivered to the students. The second approach was to analyze the data from surveys, interviews, focus groups, previous UWT dimension reports, and the evidence library.

PI 8.1 Purposes To what degree does the campus effectively communicate to first-year students its vision for the following purposes of higher education? Knowledge

acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning for engaged citizenship, learning for serving the public good.

The recruiting materials were reviewed as the first exposure potential first year students had to the roles and purposes of higher education at UWT. When interviewed, the recruiters felt that a personal relationship with the high school counselors helped to start the conversation about UWT's vision for higher education. Recruitment materials reinforce the importance of personal growth. The Freshman Recruiting View book explains that *"college is a place where you prepare not only for what you will do but who you will be. Imagine exploring life's biggest questions. You see things in a new way. You're building a foundation not only for a successful academic career but also for a quality of life."* Over half of the students responding to the student survey indicated that UWT increased their knowledge for personal growth to a high or very high degree.

The General Education Director and the General Education advisors were interviewed to gather evidence on how they reinforce the vision of higher education during their interactions with students. During drop-in hours with the advisors, students not only talk about their classes and academic progress, but also explore options for their future. The advisors also keep students connected to activities and organizations on the larger campus. According to the student survey, 30.6% reported that advisors discuss how college helps achieve life goals to a high or very high degree, while 39% reported a moderate degree. Over half of the students indicated that UWT increased their knowledge for future employment to a high or very high degree.

The areas that need improvement are learning for engaged citizenship and learning for serving the public good. The student and faculty surveys indicate that under half of both students and faculty think that UWT prepares students for either of these tasks to a high or very high degree.

	1-2		3		4 or 5	
	S	F	S	F	S	F
Active engagement in the community	20.6%	26.8%	39.2%	39%	40.2%	34.1%
Contributions to betterment of society	16.5%	25.9%	41.2%	37%	42.3%	37%

Although the recruitment materials refer to the freshman core as a learning community, data collected from the Spring 2008 NSSE reports that only 24% of freshman students acknowledged that they were part of a learning community. The NSSE report also indicates that only 15% of first year students frequently participate in service-learning or community-based projects during a given year and 2.60% never took part in such activities.

PI 8.2 Motivation To what degree does the institution intentionally provide opportunities for first-year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education?

Based on the Foundations of Excellence student and faculty surveys, there is definitely room for improvement in this category. In response to the question about the degree which faculty/staff have helped them examine their personal reasons for getting a college education, only 24.7% responded with high or very high. 38.1% responded that faculty/staff have not or only slightly helped them, while 37.1% reported moderate help. During interviews and focus groups with students, they indicated that they attended college because their parents expected them to do so. The faculty survey is even more startling as only 25% responded with high or very high, while 52.8% reported moderate help.

PI 8.3 Rationale To what degree does the campus effectively communicate its rationale for the following? Required courses, required competencies, requirements for entry into majors.

Recruiting materials address how the Freshman Core curriculum fulfills required courses:

During your first year, you'll take interdisciplinary core courses that are built around a global theme and meets general education requirements. A different faculty team will teach the course from a different academic perspective each quarter. Throughout the core experience, you meet a full range of requirements while remaining focused on the same global theme. You may earn credit in English and economics one quarter, history and sociology the next.

This Core curriculum is also discussed during Husky Day, a Freshman preview event featuring sessions on financial aid, curriculum, and student life. This event also includes panels of current UW Tacoma students, faculty and staff to share experiences and answer questions. Once admitted, freshmen are invited to a special Sneak Peek event where they can sit in on a sample freshman class and get answers to questions about majors, curriculum, student life, housing, parking, financial aid and more. During this event, the mission and structure of the Core curriculum and the learning communities is discussed (Jill Haugen, 2009 interview). The sample courses are taught by faculty who work with the Core and provide students and their parents with an introduction to the curriculum. Peer advisors who were themselves enrolled in previous Core cohorts are also available to discuss Core classes and provide insight about the opportunities on campus. During the Autumn New Student Orientation, Freshman has the opportunity to meet instructors and other students. Advisors and faculty discuss the learning communities and the curriculum. Peer advisors are also available to reinforce the vision of the purpose of the core classes and why they will be learning as a learning community. The peer advisors also share information about the organizations that are available for students on campus.

General Education learning outcomes are available on the university web site and include communication and self-expression, civic engagement, critical inquiry, global perspectives, diverse cultural views, and the ability to solve problems. Specific competencies are outlined in two documents, "Four-Year UWT Writing Sequence" and "Information Literacy Competencies for Freshman Core at UW Tacoma." The Writing Sequence document includes learning outcome goals for close reading, research, critical thinking, writing, and writing process skills. This has mainly been

disseminated among the composition instructors. The Information Literacy document is still in draft form and has been disseminated among librarians and Core faculty for feedback.

Advising on the campus is decentralized which makes it more difficult for pre-major students to learn about requirements. On the student survey, only 30.6% indicated that advisors explain major requirements to a high or very high degree. 31.6% reported moderate degree and 37.8% reported slight or not at all. The feedback received from the student focus group indicated that students have difficulty discovering information about degree requirements. Advisors from the major will often not assist a student until he/she is enrolled in the major, which puts the burden on the General Education advisors to understand requirement for all majors on campus. To address these issues, academic advisors from all departments are meeting to discuss these issues and develop solutions.

4) Opportunities and Challenges

The first indicator asks how well the campus communicates to first year students its vision for the following purpose of higher education:

- knowledge acquisition for personal growth,
- learning to prepare for future employment,
- learning to become engaged citizens (defined as participation in civic, community and political life)
- learning to serve the public good (working for the betterment of society)

The General Education program has done an amazing job in expanding UWT to a four year institution. What they lack in resources, staff, and time is compensated by the enthusiasm of the General Education staff and faculty for the first year students' success. Because the General Education program is still new, the campus as a whole still needs to be educated about the program's roles and purposes. The challenge is finding a forum to provide a consistent message across campus regarding the rationale for the structure of the core curriculum and the learning community. In the faculty survey, only a third reported high or very high for the degree to which the General Education philosophy had been communicated to them. The upcoming hiring of a new General Education Director and the results of the Foundation of Excellence report will both provide opportunities to elevate the profile of General Education.

Unlike other Academic Programs, the General Education program does not have its own faculty. Instead, faculty are recruited from departments across campus. There is currently no mechanism to ensure that all courses address the roles and purposes of the program. It remains up to the individual faculty to cover the program's learning outcomes and share the University's vision of higher education in their courses. In the student focus group, several students indicated that some faculty members did encourage them to seek out other opportunities and experiences to help them explore personal goals. When encouraged to think about how they have learned to become engaged citizens and serve the public good, focus group members were able to make connections with classroom activities and assignments. Students shared that materials in some of their classes linked them to society and a wider view of the role in the

world (presidential elections, awareness of diversity, etc). This indicates that higher education purposes are being covered, but there is still room for improvement. For instance, students noted that they did not take part in any career discovery opportunities on campus because they did not think that these events were "for them." The student survey indicates that only 25.3% (high/very high) thought that the University communicated the importance of out-of-class activities, while only 30.3% (high/very high) thought that the University provided these opportunities.

Faculty need to make links between learning outcomes and campus activities more explicit in the classroom in order to encourage personal growth, employment preparation, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. While faculty and staff have an inherent knowledge of the components and expectations of higher education, it can not be assumed that students understand how to be successful in college or how to connect the learning in the classroom to their personal goals for their careers, lives and communities.

While the faculty and staff play a large role in the education of a student, it is also beneficial for the student to receive support from family especially since a large percentage of our freshman still live at home (student surveys). Most of the students in our focus groups came to college due to expectations from their high school and their families: "It seemed like the next thing to do at this moment of my life." For these families, the expectations are to set and reach professional goals and attain a certain quality of life. Students who are first-generation college students and their parents see college as the opportunity for careers. The parents need to share in the vision for purposes of college that expand beyond that career and understand that exploration of knowledge helps students to develop collaborative learning and critical thinking skills, solve real-life problems and make connections that lead to a broader understanding of their world.

The second performance indicator is "What does the institution do to intentionally provide opportunities for first year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education".

Based on the responses from the student and faculty surveys and student focus groups, there definitely needs to be more explicit opportunities available to students to explore their personal motivations for attending college.

The third performance indicator is "what degree does the campus effectively communicate its rationale for the following: required courses, required competencies, requirements for entry into majors".

The biggest challenge in this area is the newness of the General Education program. Faculty and departments were asked to make a two or three year commitment to teaching in the Core. While this was beneficial in many ways, it also meant that there were fewer faculty working directly with the Core. As the program matures, there will be additional faculty with first-hand experience to help spread the word about the General Education curriculum. There are also many faculty and staff on Foundations of Excellence committees who did not have previous experience with the Core. Their involvement in this process indicates that the campus does support the program and

wishes to have an impact on its future. They will also be able to serve as promoters of the program.

5) **Sources of Evidence for all performance indicators**

- Interviews with General Education Director
- Interviews with General Education Advisors
- Interviews with staff from Office of Recruitment and Admissions
- Focus groups with students who started as a Freshman
- Interviews with Faculty who teach in the Core
- Student and faculty/staff surveys
- All documents in evidence library
- Recruitment materials
- Information on the UWT website
- Previous dimension reports
- 2008 UW Tacoma Freshman Autumn Census Day Report
- 2008 UW Tacoma Entering Freshman Student Survey

Recommended Grade: D+

Recommended Action Items:

- Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices (*High priority*)

The Core faculty must have consistent support throughout the year to help them develop the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with freshman and keep the students engaged in the classroom. In focus groups, Core faculty reported that the summer Core Camp is useful for syllabus preparation and setting expectations, but additional support could be used regarding classroom management, skill and content building in curriculum, and designing meaningful assignments. Developing a common set of best practices would also ensure consistent communication of the University's learning outcomes: communication and self-expression, civic engagement, critical inquiry, global perspectives, diverse cultural views, and the ability to solve problems. These best practices may involve including common statements on syllabi explicitly stating the purpose of the interdisciplinary curriculum as a

means to encourage personal growth, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. A common assignment exploring these topics would also be beneficial.

- Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum (*High priority*)

Peer advisors are instrumental in addressing student questions about the structure of the core classes, ways to contribute in the college classroom, and how to participate in student activities. Currently the peer advisors are underutilized and only have a few minutes in the classroom to publicize events and opportunities. The committee recommends that peer advisors be tapped to work in the Summer Bridge program and TCORE 100 classes. Their interaction with the learning communities during the first year could also be expanded so they are more useful in the classroom. In addition, there need to be more support and training for the advisors to ensure that they are better able to address the vision of the University.

- Explore the development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year (*High priority*)

Service learning provides students the opportunity to link concepts and theories learned in the classroom to the community. This also supports the goals of personal growth, serving the public good and engaged citizenship. The Center would develop the opportunities in the community and provide training and consultation to faculty regarding ways to incorporate service learning into the Core classes.

- Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshman (*High priority*)

TCORE 100 is currently an elective course designed to introduce new students to university culture, resources, and practices. In TCORE 100, undergraduates learn the skills they need for academic success, including note-taking, test-taking, writing, revising, researching, reading difficult material, and managing time. The course also helps students with academic planning and career paths. Finally, students emerge from the course knowing how to access university resources (Teaching and Learning Center, Academic Advising, Library, Diversity Resource Center, Counseling Center, Student Life). Data from the Summer Bridge program, which provides the same introduction to the University, indicates that students enrolled had a 100% retention rate. This indicates that a required course covering university culture, resources, and practices could impact both retention rates and fulfill the goals of knowledge acquisition for personal growth and preparation for future employment.

- Incorporate career discovery opportunities into Core curriculum (*Medium priority*)

There currently are several career discovery opportunities available to students that can greatly contribute to knowledge acquisition for personal growth, employment preparation, engaged citizenship and societal contributions. Career Discovery Week,

coordinated by the UW Alumni Association in partnership with academic advisers, is a career education and exploration event held in early winter for UWT students and alumni with sessions on a variety of career topics, including alumni panels. In the Spring, the Career and Internship Fair allows students to explore future career options and network with employers and recruiters. The Husky Career Network is an online community of alumni volunteers who make themselves available to students curious about their major, their career options and how the two interact. Alumni can impart to students tips to succeeding in their particular trades and make them aware of position openings, internships and/or job shadowing opportunities in their respective places of business. The Department of Student Development also provides numerous resources to assist students in developing, evaluating, and implementing career and educational decisions. By incorporating these events and resources into the Core curriculum, students would be encouraged to explore career opportunities and majors early in their academic career.

University of Washington Tacoma

Roles and Purpose Dimension Feedback

2009

Amanda Yale, Policy Center Advisor

Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback: The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.

Roles and Purpose Dimension Report Feedback:

Christine, Nicole, Erica, Sara, Linda, Elise, and Scott...

Congratulations on completing the 4th of nine dimension reports!

I am delighted to read another dimension report produced by the team at UWT. This report can also be considered very thorough and intentionally useful to the FOE process at UWT. The essence of the "Roles and Purpose Dimension" is to capture how UWT communicates its values for growing personally, learning to prepare for

future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good to its students, in particular, the first year students. This dimension focuses on how institutions respond to the need for encouraging the first year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education, in general as well to UWT. Further, this dimension focuses on how students are exposed to the value of general education, as well as the value of their selected field of study.

You have prepared a constructive and useful analysis of the performance indicators. I believe that your use of the sources of evidence is overall thorough and complete. You employed the use of interviews very well by interviewing the general education director, general education advisors, recruitment and admissions staff, and several faculty who teach in the core. You also used a few focus groups comprised of first year students. This was a wonderful addition to your analysis. Additionally, I noted that you also used the information in the FOE surveys and a few of the national surveys. You were very thorough in your review of documents in the evidence library, recruitment materials, previous dimension reports, and website information. You also used in your analysis your institution's census day reporting and first year student survey results. Finally, I thought your development of the recommendations brought together your findings and your discussions very well.

As a committee you were charged with analyzing how UWT promotes "students' understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society". I found your approach to this effort very appealing in that you contacted first year students encountering recruitment, admission, advising, and first year core courses and that you used the data from the surveys, interviews, focus groups, previous UWT dimension reports (excellent direction!), and the evidence library thereby providing a comprehensive view of this charge.

In response to how the campus effectively communicates to first-year students its vision for the following purposes of higher education (personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning for engaged citizenship, learning for serving the public good), you found that the recruiters felt that a personal relationship with the

high school counselors helped to start the conversation about UWT's vision for higher education. From my enrollment management experience at SRU and in my consultations with other institutions, you are “spot on.” Guidance counselors’ view of an institution can easily influence either way student’s decisions. This is why I think it is critically important to develop strong relationships with the guidance counselors by inviting them to campus for events and visiting their high schools beyond the typical high school visit. This is even more important when an institution is trying to change a direction which is what is happening at UWT with a stronger focus on first year students. Guidance counselors need to be well informed on these changes and how their students can benefit from these changes. I noted that you also discovered that the recruitment materials seemed to reinforce the importance of personal growth which is a measure of this dimension. Finally, the evidence was clear in that the survey data also showed that these materials and interactions increased the students’ knowledge for personal growth to a high or very high degree, a great affirmation.

I noted that you interviewed the General Education Director and the General Education advisors to determine how the vision of higher education was enhanced through their interactions with students. You learned that during drop-in hours with the advisors, students not only talk about their classes and academic progress, but also explore options for their future. You discovered that the advisors also help to keep students connected to activities and organizations on the campus. However, you noted conflicting data in the student survey results which showed that only 30.6% reported that advisors discuss how college helps achieve life goals to a high or very high degree and about 39% reported this to a moderate degree. You also noted that over half of the students indicated that UWT increased their knowledge for future employment to a high or very high degree. Further, you noted that the areas that need improvement are learning for engaged citizenship and learning for serving the public good. The student and faculty surveys indicate that under half of both students and faculty believe that UWT prepares students for either of these tasks to a high or very high degree.

While you noted these factors above, you also noted that the data from NSSE reports a differing opinion from the students. You may want to carefully look at both surveys

and determine the differences in population surveyed, response rates, demographic factors, and other survey factors that could influence these findings.

You also discovered through your analysis that the results of the surveys showed that there is a need to improve how the institution intentionally provides opportunities for first-year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education. You learned from the focus groups that a major reason why your students may attend college is that their parents expected them to do so. I am wondering how much of this may be reflective of the culture of the focus group. Can you validate what you found here in other sources? You may want to review other institutional data to validate what you found in the focus group session. The CIRP Freshman Survey does have a question that relates to this factor. If most of your first year students feel this way, this could impact their motivation to stay in college. You can also think how you might include this as a recommendation to considering asking this type of question this coming year in a survey that you are already doing. Later in your report, when you examined performance indicator two, you noted that there needs to be additional opportunities available to students to explore their personal motivations for attending college

Later in the report you noted that UWT does effectively communicate which courses are required in the curriculum, required competencies, requirements for entry into majors and that recruiting materials address how the Freshman Core curriculum fulfills required courses. You also noted that the Core curriculum is also discussed during freshman preview program and the orientation program. You also noted a number of other places that this content is covered throughout the admitting and orienting processes. Staff, faculty, and peer advisors appear to be all involved in this process. I really thought that UWT places a strong influence in this direction and it shows from the evidence in the programming. I especially enjoyed reading about the use of the peer advisors, and the research shows that peers can have a major impact on assisting our first year students in a successful transition to our campuses.

You also pinpoint how the General Education learning outcomes are available on the university web site and include communication civic engagement, critical inquiry,

global perspectives, diverse cultural views, and the ability to solve problems, all values of UWT. You noted two specific documents which outline Freshman Core competencies including, the "Four-Year UWT Writing Sequence" and the "Information Literacy Competencies for Freshman Core at UW Tacoma."

While you noted these very useful factors, you also noted that academic advising on the campus does make it more difficult for pre-major students to learn about requirements. I am wondering how you may use the institution's website to disseminate this information and whether you have a technology tool such as an e-learning management system that may be useful to facilitate this. On the student survey, you noted that only 30.6% indicated that advisors explain major requirements to a high or very high degree. and 31.6% reported moderate degree, and 37.8% reported slight or not at all. You also noted that feedback received from the student focus group indicated that students have difficulty discovering information about degree requirements and academic advisors from the major will often not assist a student until he/she is enrolled in the major. This is a very important area to resolve as you move forward in your recommendations.

You noted in your report that the General Education program has done an amazing job in expanding UWT to a four-year institution despite concerns about resources and staffing. You made some excellent recommendations on how your campus needs to be educated about the program's goals and purposes. This is critical as you continue to develop and enrich these efforts. I know that you are concerned about a forum for doing this type of education. I am wondering whether you may wish to consider an "educational website" for the General Education and Core. I am wondering whether you may use multiple resources such as senate sessions, dean's meetings with chairs, department meetings, and campus news pieces. An e-brochure with e-news updates on what's happening in the program may be useful to your effort. I believe the hiring of a General Education Director will make a huge impact for your campus. A director can also help to resolve issues that you are having with maintaining consistent learning outcomes, recruiting faculty, and making connections with out of class activities. I also believe that this position will help you to resolve some of the issues that you brought forth as you responded to the third performance indicator on how well your

campus effectively communicates its rationale for communicating required courses, competencies, and entry into majors for students. You made a very meaningful recommendation on what it means to keep the same faculty in the core for multiple years. While this builds strong advocacy if their experience is a positive one, it also does not allow others to share and grow with this experience. Perhaps as you move forward you can think about two year timeframes and have some new faculty serve in core with those who are experienced with the General Education program.

Your recommendation on improving the use of peer advisors in core is significant. They can be also used to communicate positively about their past core experience as a recruitment tool and an educational tool for faculty and staff. Peers can be used in the class to discuss important advisement information and explain the Core to other students. There is so much good research on the use of peers in first year courses (FYE Monograph No. 32 – Peer Leadership: A Primer on Program Essentials).

Additionally, your recommendation on incorporating service learning into the Core is meaningful to your goals and purpose of your first year curriculum. You also made a number of excellent observations on how to incorporate career development into the Core experience. This emphasis will help you to link your academic community with activities and services outside of the classroom experience.

Christine, Nicole, Erica, Sara, Linda, Elise, and Scott...I applaud each of you for taking the time to do the focus groups and the interviews. These initiatives enriched your report and helped you to create meaningful recommendations which are significant to the development of the General Education program and Core. You made use of all the primary resources, including previous dimension reports, but you went above and beyond to address some of the performance indicators by outreaching in the personal ways that you had undertaken with the use of the focus group and interview strategies.

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Improvement Dimension Report

University of Washington Tacoma

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement. This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institutions overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way to achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on the first college year.

* This is a summary of a longer report submitted by the Improvement Dimension committee.

1. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jeri Carter, Jo Enscoe, Diane Kinder, Rachel May, Amos Nascimento, Valli Revsamen, Kara Watts, and Angela Zurcher.

2. COMMITTEE PROCESSES

2.1. Framework

The committee is the last of nine committees involved in the Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year. Thus, it has attempted to assess and discuss the findings of other committees.

2.2. Tasks

1. Focus on 1 specific Dimension
2. Determine performance indicators (our ideal/aspirational goals)
3. Evaluate current state of first year on specific Dimension
4. Use multiple sources of evidence
 - a. Currently collected by UWT
 - b. Collected by surveys through the FoE system (modified for UWT)
5. Provide initial recommendations for action
6. Synthesize into a final report, which will be used for liaisons to write institutional report.

2.3. Methods

Based on the orientation of the FoE, the committee started its work according to the following methodology:

1. Introduction of committee members to the Foundations of Excellence Project and the specific "improvement" dimension.
2. Access the online FoE Tec system, where committee members can find relevant data (i.e. CPI, Faculty and Staff Survey, and Student Survey) which will be used for the dimension committee reports.
3. Definition of the types of information and evidence the committee members will need to answer the specific questions for the "improvement" dimension.

2.4. Schedule of Meetings (from November 2008 to May 2009)

- ORDINARY MEETINGS: every second Wednesday of the month, 12:20-1:20pm
- EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS: every fourth Tuesday, if necessary*
- FINAL MEETINGS: meetings twice a week during the first two weeks of May
- INTERIM DISCUSSIONS: discussions per e-mail or informal meetings.

2.5. Initial reflections

As a first exercise, members reflected on their own views and expectations about the committee work, before delving into available data and perceptions. This gave members the opportunity to express their views and an ideal goal to be pursued by the committee as a whole. The individual reflections of the committee members are register in a longer version of this report.

2.6. Committee Goals and Objectives

2.6.1. Definition of 5 Initiatives related to the First-Year Experience at UWT:

- Recruitment and Admissions -
- Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) -
- Students -
- Faculty and Staff -
- Retention -

2.6.2. Initial hypotheses guiding the evaluation

Based on preliminary data, practices, units, information available on these items, and analysis of the first reports made available by the other committees, the *Improvement Committee* arrived to a hypothesis to guide its investigation:

- As indicated by the Philosophy Dimension, due to the lack of a general foundation that orients the Mission, Vision and the First-Year Experience at UWT, the existing practices are somewhat disconnected;

- There seems to be no clear campus-wide *policy* guiding some of these initiatives above mentioned (such as the criteria for admission, guidelines for curriculum development, etc);

- Due to the lack of a clear vision and visible policies, the process of *gathering of data* seems to be disconnected from certain needs and practices occurring on campus on an everyday basis;

- As a result, there is a mismatch between ideas (Mission and Vision) and practices (the work of several Units), as well as between existing policies (including the Strategic Planning) and available data (surveys, assessment, etc). Thus, it is not clear, for example, if we have enough demographic data to orient recruitment or if this data is orienting our admission process as well as the development of units and services to accompany and support students during their first year at UWT.

- The committee needs to collect and review data not limited to 2007 and 2008, focusing on first-year focus groups and surveys, NSSE, Campus quarterly student surveys, Campus Life Facilities Study, and Student Affairs surveys, and others that could provide more information on the 5 Initiatives described above.

Based on these premises, the committee divided its work into five Task Forces addressing each one of the initiatives mentioned above:

- Recruitment and Admissions (RA) -
- Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) (ACAD) -
- Students (STUD) -
- Faculty and Staff (FACST) -
- Retention (RET)

3. CURRENT SITUATION

The internal reports of each Task Force and the collective discussion of these reports constitute the committee's overall assessment of the five initiatives and evaluation on the current situation regarding assessment and improvement of the first year experience at UWT.

3.1. Overall Assessment

The improvement committee (FoE09) performed three general tasks:

- First, it focused its attention on **the first year experience as a complex set of activities and services oriented to not only *freshman students*, but also to *transfer students***. We considered it necessary to clarify, consistently apply, and then assess this broader understanding of the first year experience in order to better evaluate the institution's fulfillment of its mission and then propose forms of improvement that shall lead to the provision of better serve its students and the community as a whole.
- Secondly, the committee defined **systematic assessment as an institution-wide process that coherently and consistently guides, articulates, and**

integrates the planning, implementation, and evaluation of different activities and services oriented towards the first year experience.

- Third, **the committee selected five initiatives to be studied in more detail: recruitment and admission, academic, students, faculty and staff, and retention.**

Based on the above premises the committee researched existing information at UWT. The committee findings and analysis regarding first-year assessment reveal an **institutional overall lack of systematic assessment**. UWT as a whole has many initiatives in place, but they provide solely a partial assessment of specific unities and initiatives **without systematic integrating or following through** its findings. Further, it became evident that the data gathering process by many programs has **no clear objectives, no alignment, or interaction with other programs or policies** and **no strategies to follow-up on the results of data obtained**. Much information is being collected without previous plan on how to use this information to improve the first year experience at the institution. Although the institution does collect much data and generate a massive load of information on various aspects, it is necessary to have process that includes the planning, collection, development, articulation, implementation, and assessment of this data on a continual basis. This process leads to ongoing first year improvement].

Student surveys show a somewhat positive perspective about the institution, as shown in the overall evaluation of academic gains (Fig. 1 below). However, this may be the result of a "statistical luck." As the results below indicate, in terms of connections, advising, and interactions there is still much to be achieved. According to the improvement committee findings, despite the overall positive indicator, **there is no evidence of a systematic approach to recruitment and admissions, academic, student life and culture, faculty and staff involvement, and retention efforts.**

Faculty and staff surveys yield a different picture, as overall results show that UWT falls below the level of expected goals. This can be seen in the tables below (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3), which show not only the low internal ratings regarding assessment and improvement in the area of professional development (below the established goal), but also negative results in comparison with similar institutions. As the committee investigated these and other indicators of the current situation at UWT, it arrived to the conclusion that **there seems to be no overall policy or standards regarding the first year experience** and, consequently, **no guidelines on how students, staff, faculty and their respective units may better contribute to the first year experience**. Moreover, **there is no "tracking" of ongoing programs, no clear measurement of their success, and no evidence of clear intentional improvement**. One example can be seen in the area of admissions, where the current practices seem contingent and arbitrary because there is no clear policy for recruitment admissions. Another example can be seen in terms of retention, as the same goals are repeated year after year, but there is no data indicating that any assessment was done which resulted in improving first-year students' retention.

Finally, the committee discussed that maybe individuals or even units have gathered information regarding what other institutions are doing and assessed this information

in order to propose improvements in specific areas. However, to this point, **no systematic process has been shared with the campus as a whole**. An example of this problem is the difficulty in accessing documents that reflect how UWT is familiar with current research and practices regarding the first year experience at other institutions and having these documents available in an organized fashion. **Difficulties in communication and access to information affect not only person-to-person but also unit-to-unit and campus-wide as well as contacts with other institutions**, although there are resources and available technology to improve this process.

Based on this overall evaluation of the institutional performance regarding the systematic assessment of the first year experience in five initiatives, the committee arrived to the following general ratings of UWT performances:

3.2. Improvement Dimension Performance Indicator Responses

PI 9.1 Assessment To what degree does each initiative include systematic¹ assessment?

List initiatives	Very Low/None 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5	N/A
Recruitment and Admissions	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic (emphasis CORE curriculum and GEN-ED, with distinctions)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty/Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retention	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PI 9.2 Use of Assessment To what degree have assessment results been used to improve existing practices across the following initiatives?

List initiatives	Very Low/None 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5	N/A
Recruitment and Admissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic (emphasis CORE curriculum and GEN-ED, with distinctions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty/Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PI 9.3 Understanding To what degree have recent assessment activities improved campus understanding of the following elements of student success?

Evaluate Each	Very	Low	Medium	High	Very	N/A
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	Low/None 1	2	3	4	High 5	
Student allocation of their time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student/student connections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student/faculty connections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student use of campus services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student class attendance patterns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patterns of student involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PI 9.4 Strategies To what degree have the following strategies been used by your campus to improve the first year?

Evaluate Each	Very Low/None 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5	N/A
Attendance at higher education meetings ¹ (e.g., conferences, institutes, workshops)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in multi-campus initiatives ² focused on the first year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broad campus exposure ³ to external experts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broad exposure to campus-based knowledge/expertise about the first year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3. Current situation of initiatives researched by the committee

In a longer version of this document, we present the detailed analysis of the issues above, based on the reports of each of the following Task Forces:

3.3.1. Recruitment and Admission

3.3.2. Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education)

3.3.3. Students

3.3.4. Faculty and Staff

3.3.5. Retention

3.4. Relation to findings by other committees

The findings of the Improvement Committee (FoE09) are consistent with the findings of other committees.

4. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The committee as a whole discussed the findings of each task force and came to general recommendations, which are stated below. For the detailed analysis of each Initiative by the corresponding Task Forces, we refer to the longer version of this document.

4.1. Improvement committee findings

See detailed report of Task Forces in longer report.

4.2. Findings of other committees

We refer to the reports of each committee. In our longer report, we highlight their findings.

5. SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

5.1. Sources retrieved from the FoETec "Evidence Library"

The table in Appendix I provides an overview on how the committee used the Evidence Library. To facilitate the analysis, we use the following color code:

- Recruitment and Admissions (RA)
- Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) (ACAD)
- Students (STUD)
- Faculty and Staff (FACST)
- Retention (RET)

We then proceeded to indicate the evidence used and assessed by each Task Force in relation to the specific initiative under consideration.

5.2. Other sources

Other sources were found and copied in order to be uploaded on the "Evidence Library."

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon discussions of the above-mentioned documents and the analysis of the Task Forces' findings, the committee met several times at the beginning of May 2009 to deliberate about the results of this research. The committee recommendations are divided into general recommendations discussed by the committee at large, specific recommendations made by the task forces, and recommendations made by other committees.

6.1 General Recommendations from the Improvement Dimension

As we discussed some possible recommendations for improvement of the first year experience at UWT, we reflected on the goals established for the improvement dimension, stated at the beginning of this document:

We also reviewed our overall analysis of the current situation, which was then supported by the materials available in the "Evidence Library," the research performed by the committee task forces, and the reports submitted by the other committees. Based on these considerations, the committee proposes the following general recommendations:

6.1.1. High Priority

- Plan a public event at the beginning of the academic year to connect all the committees, acknowledge their work, and have a campus-wide campaign informing about the results of the FoE process and its implementation
- Promote a better understanding of systematic assessment institution-wide, including close consideration to the full cycle of necessary tasks pertaining to assessment (goal setting, data collection, analysis of results, and making changes based on the results, and then repeating this cycle with new goals aiming at improving the given situation).
- Continue monitoring of systematic assessment, so that initiatives may "evolve" instead of repeating the same goals over and over again/year after year.
- Improve institution-wide assessment by integrating different units and activities at the conceptual and practical level. More specifically the units dealing with the first year experience need to develop and improve their specific assessment tool in tandem with a systematic assessment defined by an institutional policy. This has been identified by other committees as an area to be improved. We support this recurrent recommendation.
- Create of a campus-wide Task Force including faculty, staff, and students, using the resources of the Institutional Research Office, to oversee the coordination of campus-wide assessment systems and results.
- Develop a communication system among units involved in the first-year experience and campus-wide communication using available technologies, easily accessible and comprehensible guides, and clear references. There should be a one-stop shop where all the information and resources are integrated. This applies to both (a) a technological hub or website dedicated to the first year experience and (b) a physical place/facility where we have all the units and services integrated, so students can not only know where to find but also utilize available services.

6.1.1. Priority

This point was not discussed by the committee.

6.2 Specific recommendations concerning the five Initiatives (Task Forces)

See the specific reports posted to FoETec and the longer version of this final report, which includes the recommendations of the following Task Forces:

6.2.1. Recruitment and Admission

6.2.2. Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education)

6.2.3. Students

6.2.4. Faculty and Staff

6.2.5. Retention

6.3. Recommendations from the Faculty Staff Survey

The recommendations of the Improvement Committee are consistent with other findings.

6.3. Recommendations from other committees

(Focused only on those related to ASSESSMENT)

The recommendations of the Improvement Committee are consistent with the findings and recommendations of other FoE committees. Below are the points highlighted by other committees in their reports. For more information, we refer to the individual reports of each dimension.

6.3.1. High priority (university-wide)

The numbers below indicate the respective FoE committees and the corresponding topics under each dimension are those recommendations that have a more university-wide scope.

1. Philosophy:

- Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy (*High priority*)

- Disseminate and practice the campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy: (*High priority*)

2. Organization

- Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication

- Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from FoE (*High priority*)
- Support coordination of First Year oversight through reallocation of existing resources. (*High priority*)
- Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures (*High priority*)
- Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve. (*High priority*)

3. Learning

- Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs (*High priority*)

4. Faculty

- Work to accomplish the integration of the General Education program across all units on campus
- Formalizing a commitment to General Education in unit strategic plans and developing a recruitment procedure for faculty teaching in the CORE.

5. Transitions

- Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model. (*High priority*)

6. All students

7. Diversity

- Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity (*High priority*)
- Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning (*High priority*)

8. Roles & Purposes

6.3.2. According to specific Units

In addition, here, we use the following color code in order to classify how specific recommendations of other FoE committees address the five initiatives defined by the Improvement Dimension:

- Recruitment and Admissions (RA)
- Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) (ACAD)

- Students (STUD)

- Faculty and Staff (FACST)

- Retention (RET)

1. Philosophy:

2. Organization

- Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs. (*High priority*)

- Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising. (*High priority*)

- Reclassify the General Education unit as an Academic Program rather than an Academic Support Unit. (*Medium priority*)

- Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization (*High priority*)

- Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff and communicate them. (*High priority*)

3. Learning

- Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units (*High priority*)

- Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development (*High priority*)

- Implement Plans from Summer Bridge Proposal '07 (Evidence Library Doc 17) (*High priority*)

- Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development (*High priority*)

- Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models (*High priority*)

- Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models (*High priority*)

- Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty (*High priority*)

- Implement Plans in Writing and Retention (Evidence Library Doc 77) (*High priority*)

4. Faculty

- Clearly articulate expectations for faculty member hired to teach FY students.

- Provide additional funding and support for innovative interdisciplinary connections
- Provide articulated support at the unit and campus level, equity in distribution of the first-year teaching load (to insure that faculty are aware of the unique challenges when evaluating teaching portfolios for tenure and promotion)

5. Transitions

- Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes. (*High priority*)
Appoint a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current two step process. (*Medium priority*)
- Create unified tracking process. (*Low priority*)
- Create a full first year advising experience for students. (*High priority*)
- Create university-wide data catalog. (*Low priority*)
- Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide-level. (*High priority*)
- Align transition services with the strategic goals and objectives of Student Affairs. (*Medium priority*)

6. All students

- Accurate communication of information prior to attending the campus about academic expectations, majors, tuition, financial aid issues.
- Preparation and skills appropriate for college level work.
- Making connections with others (students and faculty).
- Information about the organization and opportunities of UWT.
- Opportunities for out of class activities
- Services for assistance with academic challenges.
- Meet personal and social needs that may be a barrier to college success.
- Opportunities for campus involvement
- Inclusive campus environment
- Provide Physical safety (to/of students)
- Provide Psychological safety (to/of students)

- Offer student education about responsibilities to practice safe behaviors
- Individualized attention from faculty/staff
- Academic support outside the classroom

7. Diversity

- Enhance Summer Bridge Program (*High priority*)
- Develop classroom best practices for engaging in difficult conversations about diversity issues (*Medium priority*)
- Develop pre-orientation session or support and mentorship program for diverse students (*Low priority*)
- Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of instructional support (*High priority*)
- Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support (*High priority*)
- Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students (*High priority*)
- Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness (*High priority*)
- Develop a mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi (*High priority*)
- Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events (*High priority*)

8. Roles & Purposes

- Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum (*High priority*)
- Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshmen (*High priority*)
- Incorporate career discovery opportunities into Core curriculum (*Medium priority*)
- Explore the development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year (*High priority*)
- Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices (*High priority*)

6.3.3. Other Actions

It is our recommendation that FoE and UWT further develop systematic assessment of these practical recommendations presented by the committees and articulates them with the general recommendations of the Improvement Dimension.

Recommended Grade: D

Recommended Action Items:

Final Recommendations of the Improvement Committee (Part 6 of Final Report) (*High priority*)

General Recommendations from the Improvement Dimension

- Plan a public event at the beginning of the academic year to connect all the committees, acknowledge their work, and have a campus-wide campaign informing about the results of the FoE process and its implementation
- Promote a better understanding of systematic assessment institution-wide, including close consideration to the full cycle of necessary tasks pertaining to assessment (goal setting, data collection, analysis of results, and making changes based on the results, and then repeating this cycle with new goals aiming at improving the given situation).
- Continue to monitoring of systematic assessment, so that initiatives may "evolve" instead of repeating the same goals over and over again/year after year.
- Improve institution-wide assessment by integrating different units and activities at the conceptual and practical level. More specifically the units dealing with the first year experience need to develop and improve their specific assessment tool in tandem with a systematic assessment defined by an institutional policy. This has been identified by other committees as an area to be improved. We support this recurrent recommendation.
- Create of a campus-wide Task Force including faculty, staff, and students, using the resources of the Institutional Research Office, to oversee the coordination of campus-wide assessment systems and results.
- Develop a communication system among units involved in the first-year experience and campus-wide communication using available technologies, easily accessible and comprehensible guides, and clear references. There should be a one-stop shop where all the information and resources are integrated. This applies to both (a) a technological hub or website dedicated to

the first year experience and (b) a physical place/facility where we have all the units and services integrated, so students can not only know where to find but also utilize available services.

- **6.2 Specific recommendations concerning the five Initiatives (Task Forces)**

See full report.

- **6.3. Recommendations from other committees**

(Summary, focused only on those related to ASSESSMENT)

The recommendations of the Improvement Committee are consistent with the findings and recommendations of other FoE committees. Below are the points highlighted by other committees in their reports. For more information, we refer to the individual reports of each dimension.

- **6.3.1. High priority (university-wide)**

1. Philosophy:

- Develop campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma first-year philosophy (High priority)
- Disseminate and practice the campus-wide statement of UW Tacoma's first-year philosophy: (High priority)

2. Organization

- Create a unified oversight system to manage the first Year and formalize regular communication
- Align the search for a Director of General Education with the recommendations from FoE (High priority)
- Support coordination of First Year oversight through reallocation of existing resources. (High priority)
- Convene a working group to review the appropriateness of all FY policies and procedures (High priority)
- Improve evaluation processes and increase accountability for using evaluation results to improve. (High priority)

3. Learning

- Need for Strategic Planning across All Programs for Core Needs (High priority)

4. Faculty

- Work to accomplish the integration of the General Education program across all units on campus
- Formalizing a commitment to General Education in unit strategic plans and developing a recruitment procedure for faculty teaching in the CORE.

5. Transitions

- Use current taskforce and FOE findings to develop an updated advising model. (High priority)

6. All Students

7. Diversity

- Revisit the campus Statement of Commitment to Diversity (High priority)
- Develop goals and ongoing assessment tools for monitoring and improving diversity-related learning (High priority)

8. Roles & Purposes

6.3.2. According to specific Units

In addition, here, we use the following color code in order to classify how specific recommendations of other FoE committees address the five initiatives defined by the Improvement Dimension:

- Recruitment and Admissions (RA)
 - Academic (Curriculum, Core, General Education) (ACAD)
 - Students (STUD)
 - Faculty and Staff (FACST)
 - Retention (RET)

1. Philosophy:

2. Organization

- Establish a curriculum planning group across Academic Programs. (High priority)
- Evaluate policies, practices, and resources associated with Advising. (High priority)
- Reclassify the General Education unit as an Academic Program rather than an Academic Support Unit. (Medium priority)
- Improve connections between academic and co-curricular activities and enhance academic socialization (High priority)
- Provide consistent, ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff and

communicate them. (High priority)

3. Learning

- Better Articulate FYE Learning Goals across Classes and Units (High priority)
- Address DFWI Challenges for More Quantitative and Writing Skills Development (High priority)
- Implement Plans from Summer Bridge Proposal '07 (Evidence Library Doc 17) (High priority)
- Core Faculty Compensation for Class Development (High priority)
- Revise Tenure and Promotion Guidelines to Account for Scholarly Activity beyond Traditional Models (High priority)
- Explore Other Pedagogical Models in addition to the Large Cohort and Linked-Class Models (High priority)
- Address Load Equity for Core Faculty and Core Recruitment of Faculty (High priority)
- Implement Plans in Writing and Retention (Evidence Library Doc 77) (High priority)

4. Faculty

- Clearly articulate expectations for faculty member hired to teach FY students.
- Provide additional funding and support for innovative interdisciplinary connections
- Provide articulated support at the unit and campus level, equity in distribution of the first-year teaching load (to insure that faculty are aware of the unique challenges when evaluating teaching portfolios for tenure and promotion)

5. Transitions

- Improve the current state of affairs by actively managing web processes. (High priority)
- Appoint a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the current two step process. (Medium priority)
- Create unified tracking process. (Low priority)
- Create a full first year advising experience for students. (High priority)
- Create university-wide data catalog. (Low priority)

- Develop an undergraduate council to address new policies and procedures at a campus wide-level. (High priority)

- Align transition services with the strategic goals and objectives of Student Affairs. (Medium priority)

6. All Students

- Accurate communication of information prior to attending the campus about academic expectations, majors, tuition, financial aid issues.

- Preparation and skills appropriate for college level work.

- Making connections with others (students and faculty).

- Information about the organization and opportunities of UWT.

- Opportunities for out of class activities

- Services for assistance with academic challenges.

- Meet personal and social needs that may be a barrier to college success.

- Opportunities for campus involvement

- Inclusive campus environment

- Provide Physical safety (to/of students)

- Provide Psychological safety (to/of students)

- Offer student education about responsibilities to practice safe behaviors

- Individualized attention from faculty/staff

- Academic support outside the classroom

7. Diversity

- Enhance Summer Bridge Program (High priority)

- Develop classroom best practices for engaging in difficult conversations about diversity issues (Medium priority)

- Develop pre-orientation session or support and mentorship program for diverse students (Low priority)

- Establish a Service Learning/Volunteer Coordinator or Coordinators as part of

instructional support (High priority)

- Increase support for ESL/ ELL students and faculty awareness of such support (High priority)
- Develop diversity events and lecture series specifically targeted at first year students (High priority)
- Partner with other institutions/community organizations to sponsor events/share awareness (High priority)
- Develop a mechanism to enable faculty to integrate diversity events directly into their syllabi (High priority)
- Encourage faculty to give credit or similar incentives for attendance at diversity events (High priority)

8. Roles & Purposes

- Increase peer advisors role in Core curriculum (High priority)
- Require enrollment in TCORE 100 for all Freshman (High priority)
- Incorporate career discovery opportunities into Core curriculum (Medium priority)
- Explore the development of a Service Learning Center to incorporate service learning into first year (High priority)
- Increase faculty development opportunities and establish best practices (High priority)

6.3.3. Other Actions

It is our recommendation that FoE and UWT further develop systematic assessment of these practical recommendations presented by the committees and articulates them with the general recommendations of the Improvement Dimension.

1. Admissions (*High priority*)

- a) The Admission process needs to be reviewed and evaluated annually by an interdisciplinary committee with faculty, staff, and students
- b) There is a need to measure the revised admission standards against the "mission, vision, and values" of UW Tacoma.
- c) UW Tacoma needs to evaluate and track outcomes for students admitted under all the various standards.
- d) UW Tacoma needs to evaluate both the academic and overall success of those

admitted under the "Alternative Review" standards and be prepared to academically support these students as needed.

2. Academic (*High priority*)

- a) AFW's suggested two-three year review date is too far out; especially in light of the FOE and current Academic Advising Task Force (AATF) processes. Overlap within these two "task force" bodies is evident in the concern for the role of the General Education Center/cohort curriculum.
- b) Overall assessment process for evaluating lower division offering needs as well as implementation needs improvement. There is a varied clarity in the way in which new courses are offered. Findings appear assessment heavy.
- c) More strongly define who is responsible for lower division/pre-requisite coursework that are essential to first-year students as they move toward the majors.
- d) UW Bothell offers a curriculum model that includes CUSP (similar to UWT's General Education Center) having comparatively, more authority over lower division offerings. For example, CUSP schedules the following courses under the heading "University Studies" examples include: Math, Bus. Law, Psych, Art, and a variety of Foreign Languages.

4. Faculty/Staff (*High priority*)

- a) Incorporate systematic assessment tools that documents the extent of staff contribution to the first year experience.
- b) Create framework and procedures to analyze and improve staff participation.
- c) Use already existing faculty assessment to improve the first year experience.
- d) Create more specific tools to complement and expand already existing procedures in order to better evaluate faculty impact on first year experience.

5. Retention (*High priority*)

- a) Expand assessment activities of Retention Subcommittee to include tracking data related to each goal and objective, analyzing those data, reviewing and reporting accomplishments and repeating the cycle.
- b) Use assessment activities to increasing understanding of retention and to improve practices.

1. Admissions (*High priority*)

UW Tacoma needs to create assessment tools to evaluate both the academic and overall success of those admitted under the "Alternative Review" standards and be prepared to academically support these students as needed.

2. Academic (*High priority*)

AFW's suggested two-three year review date is too far out; especially in light of the FOE and current Academic Advising Task Force (AATF) processes. Overlap

within these two "task force" bodies is evident in the concern for the role of the General Education Center/cohort curriculum.

3. Students (*High priority*)

4. Faculty/Staff (*High priority*)

There is a need to incorporate systematic assessment to document staff contribution to the first year experience. The already existing assessment methods and procedures for faculty should be expanded in order to more directly assess faculty impact on first year experience.

5. Retention (*High priority*)

The subcommittee of the Enrollment Committee needs to implement the goals and intentions it has defined, making use of the recommendations that have been made.

1. Admissions (*High priority*)

Very little, UW Tacoma is still trying to figure out its identity.

2. Academic (*High priority*)

Overall assessment process for evaluating lower division offering needs as well as implementation needs improvement. The above mentioned AFW may be a step in an improved direction. There is varied clarity in the way in which new courses are offered at UWT. There appears to be semi-regular assessment of need, however the implementation of goals remains unclear (perhaps due to budget constraints/ limited faculty/ lack of communication between academic programs). Additional balance between the degree of assessment and implementation is needed.

3. Students (*High priority*)

4. Faculty/Staff (*High priority*)

Based on the items described in PI 9.1. we can differentiate the following points:

a) Revision of the Faculty Code and the UWT Faculty By-Laws: These documents were assessed and revised in order to include the particularities of the Tacoma campus into UW official language and documents, to motivate more faculty participation in shared governance, and provide opportunities for faculty involvement in activities that impact the first year experience. Indirectly, these revisions contribute to curriculum development, budgetary decisions, planning and assessment, but these elements have not been integrated and assessed in a systematic way.

b) The Climate Report indicates the extent of faculty and staff involvement in UWT.

c) Faculty Assembly committees' reports. These documents indicate that committees work rather closely, so that there is neither a campus-wide exposure to and discussion of curriculum issues nor a campus-wide discussion of student issues.

d) Teaching assessments: Student issues are not addressed in this assessment.

e) Other materials: There is little evidence of systematic assessment. Consequently, there is limited study and little observable impact on student success.

5. Retention (*High priority*)

Since there has been little systematic assessment including all aspects of the assessment cycle it is difficult to credit assessment activities for understanding; however, the documents available to the Task Force verify the Retention Subcommittee's sponsorship of the Campus Retention Retreat in May 2008 designed in part to increase campus understanding of retention.

1. Admissions (*High priority*)

Very little, there is a lack of understanding throughout the entire campus surrounding the first-year experience.

2. Academic (*High priority*)

Very low. we need to review similar institutions and exchange information. For instance, UW Bothell offers a curriculum model that includes CUSP.

3. Students (*High priority*)

4. Faculty/Staff (*High priority*)

Low. This is consistent with the Faculty/Staff Survey findings.

5. Retention (*High priority*)

In general, low. This degree is even lower regarding the exposure to external staff and exchange with other experts.

***Introductory Statement on the Purpose of Dimension Feedback:** The feedback provided on the dimension report is representative of an observer's reaction as a policy center advisor, and therefore, provides reflective commentary on the particular dimension report. At times, an institutional context may be present for which I am unaware. The commentary and questions are for the purpose of promoting thought and discussion as your FOE Taskforce progresses forward toward the final report.. The questions do not need a response, they represent reflective query for thought.*

Improvement Dimension Report Feedback:

Jeri, Jo, Diane, Rachel, Amos, Valli, Kara, and Angela....

CONGRATULATIONS on completing the FINAL DIMENSION report—The 9th Dimension!

The Improvement Dimensions committee made excellent use of the faculty/staff survey questions. While the surveys do not include questions directly related to the dimension, the committee reviewed the responses related to the overall student evaluation which was an excellent direction. Additionally, the committee used several relevant documents in the Evidence Library and the CPI (Academic Foundations Workshop Report, Focus Group Evaluation of First-Year Experience, Report on the Future of UWT, Charting the Future of UWT, Interim Report Mission of General Education, Strategic Plans from different divisions, 2008 Campus Life Facilities Survey Results, and Orientation evaluations). The committee also made use of interviews with students, faculty, and staff.

The information that you gained on the admissions processing is important for considering how students are admitted to the university. You made some very significant statements in this area and the recommendations you offered should be useful to the development of the final report.

You noted some overlap between two “task force” bodies which may cause some concern for the role of the General Education Center/cohort curriculum. I am wondering whether you might be able to identify the actual overlap areas which may be useful to the FOE liaisons as they develop the final report. You also noted that appears to be a need for clarity on who is responsible for lower division/pre-requisite

coursework that are essential elements for successful scheduling for first-year students. You offered some excellent recommendations in this area and have completed some exploratory research in this area as well.

You made some excellent observational points as you compared survey results on the student experience, engagement, and satisfaction. Your observations are consistent with the results found and presented in several other dimensions (faculty, all students, learning, and transitions), especially as these recommendations related to students goals, access to resources, co-curricular experiences, and campus connections. You made another significant statement when you noted that “while there is a wealth of data available, improvements need to be made in helping the University community understand how best to access and utilize such data.” This is a common challenge for each of our institutions. Oftentimes, surveys are completed, valuable data and information are found, and little is done to communicate the information across campus so that discussions may occur around the results.

I was very pleased to see that you included results from a campus life facilities study. Too often, I find that institutions do not consider this type of information valuable when indeed major national surveys point to the critical importance of this data. The recommendations that you made in this area are important and should be considered valuable to the final reporting function.

Later in your report you also noted that in the initial planning for UWT’s transition to a four-year institution, staff played a critical role. However, you noted that it is less clear that they continue to be included alongside faculty in first-year planning and assessment activities today. You made some excellent recommendations on how you can easily remedy this challenge.

You noted some excellent work that has been completed by several retention-related groups on campus, but that little “follow-up” on the recommendations from this group has been completed. It seems that the final report for FOE might be able to focus on a recommendation which reviews these recommendations and considers which have been acted upon and which have not.

The following statement is important: “The University appears to engage in a lot of discussion and there are systematic surveys, but there is little evidence across the

initiatives that these efforts are coordinated and/or communicated across units, that they are consistent and complete, with regard to setting and measuring goals, analyzing data, and using data to inform service improvement.” This statement should be used in the final report to drive action on using assessment results for improvements.

While budget is a challenge for your institution, as well as so many others today, I believe that you made a number of significant recommendations that do not require resources. As a matter of fact, I found that follow on several of the recommendations may actually help UWT to avoid duplication of efforts and improve efficiency in your processes.

Each of you are to be commended for the energy and effort that you put forth to work on the Improvement Dimension! Your work is reflective and thoughtful on where UWT is today on admitting first year students to campus. You have reviewed so many sources of evidence, including a host of survey data. Thank you for your excellent work!

My very best to you...Amanda Yale

Foundations of Excellence Schedule

Summer 2008

UW Tacoma chosen to participate in Foundations of Excellence

Autumn 2008

Call for volunteers to join committees, committee chairs selected

Winter 2009

Philosophy and Organization dimension reports completed

Spring 2009

Learning, Diversity, Transitions, Roles and Purposes, Faculty, All Students and Improvement dimensions continue work and reports are completed

Autumn 2009

Final report due

Autumn 2009 and beyond

Campus implementation of recommendations

About Foundations of Excellence

Foundations of Excellence is a comprehensive, externally guided self-study and improvement process for the first year. The centerpiece of Foundations of Excellence is a model comprised of a set of principles that are termed Foundational Dimensions. These Dimensions, developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and vetted by over 300 four- and two-year institutions, guide measurement of institutional efforts and provide an aspirational model for the entirety of the beginning college experience (initial contact with students through admissions, orientation, and all curricular and co-curricular experiences). These Dimensions also provide an intellectual foundation for the entirety of the undergraduate experience.

The engine of The Foundations of Excellence process is a campus-based task force_ a group with broad representation from across the campus. The work of the task force begins with a campus audit of the first year for new and transfer students (the "Current Practices Inventory") and continues with a nine- to twelve-month process of evaluation using the Foundational Dimensions and related performance indicators (P.I.'s), and culminates in the development of a strategic action plan for campus improvement. Institutions that participate in the Foundations of Excellence process have access to a wide array of services and support.

The Foundations of Excellence process is the signature work of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. The Center, founded in October 1999, has enjoyed the support of the following philanthropies for the development of its work: The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Lumina Foundation for Education, USA Funds, and Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

Glossary to the UWT Foundations of Excellence Report

Core	The Core Program is a component of UWT’s general education program designed for incoming first year students. It is a three quarter, cohort-based model that introduces students to the university's three areas of knowledge (I&S, NW, VLPA) and composition through 20-25 credits, some of which are team-taught (or linked) and interdisciplinary in nature. Students generally take 10 credits team-taught in the fall (writing and a discipline), and at least 5 credits each in winter and spring. (Students also take non-Core courses at the 100 and 200 level.)
Dimension	The centerpiece of Foundations of Excellence is a model comprised of a set of principles that are termed Foundational Dimensions ® . These Dimensions, developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and vetted by over 300 four- and two-year institutions, guide measurement of institutional efforts and provide an aspirational model for the entirety of the beginning college experience (initial contact with students through admissions, orientation, and all curricular and co-curricular experiences). These Dimensions also provide an intellectual foundation for the entirety of the undergraduate experience.
Dimension Committee	Committee to analyze UWT on one Dimension. Nine Dimension Committees were created at UWT for this work.
DFWI Course	Courses in which a high number of students earn Drop, Fail, Withdraw, or Incomplete—identified for purposes of increasing retention as part of Early Warning System
Early Warning (Early Alert) System	The Early Alert Referral identifies Core and pre-major students who may be at risk of academic difficulty or failure. Faculty and staff are reminded to alert the General Education advisers of any student who is not making satisfactory progress or is exhibiting behaviors that may lead to academic difficulty. Once a student is identified through Early Alert, the academic advisers or other appropriate staff will work with the student to improve his or her academic opportunity for success.
FY	A First Year Student (Freshman) is one who enters UWT or who has earned less than 45 credits.
FoE	Foundations of Excellence is the comprehensive, externally guided self-study and improvement process we used to assess our first year program.
General Education	General Education houses the Core program and general academic advising for pre-majors at UWT. General Education advisors work with all pre-majors to develop academic plans, to better use student support resources, and to prepare them to apply for admission into majors. Gen Ed also oversees lower division education - working with faculty from other programs to develop courses specific to the needs of first-year learners.

General Education Center	The General Education Center serves as the curricular and academic advising "base camp" for pre-majors, undecided, and first-year undergraduates. The General Education Center (a) coordinates the core curriculum and other lower-division courses; (b) advises students on course and major selection; and (c) helps students access campus resources such as the Library, Teaching and Learning Center, Career Services, Counseling Center and Student Life.
John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education	Formerly called the "Policy Center on the First Year Experience". This is the research center that houses FoE, and which provided guidance to our process.
Learning Community	A learning community is the pedagogical design of UWT's first year Core experience. It provides a cohort-based, interdisciplinary approach to the first year of higher education.
Linked Course	A 5-credit introductory disciplinary course linked to a 5-credit writing course. Two faculty members create joint assignments. Each course has approximately 25 students.
Lower division student	Undergraduate students who have earned fewer than 95 credits.
Peer Advisor	Students act as peer advisors, and are assigned to work with specific Core classes as both social and academic support. They work on creating a first year student culture and a social network for our Core students.
Summer Bridge	The Summer Bridge to Success Program occurs in the month prior to the academic year, and bridges the gap between first year students and their ability to navigate a new academic environment. It offers first year students an opportunity to gain a first-hand glimpse of college life, to take their first university course, and learn important skills for college success.
Task Force	The leadership group consisting of Dimension chairs and UWT administration who acted as navigators for the FoE process.
Team taught course	A 10-credit course, in which there are 2 faculty members and approximately 50 students. Faculty come from 2 disciplines and provide an interdisciplinary course.
Undergraduate	Any UWT student working toward the Baccalaureate degree.