

**Office of Undergraduate Studies
Strategic Plan 2008-09**

Priority 1. Launch the newly approved Achievement Centered Education (ACE) General Education Program in time for implementation with the Fall 2009 entering cohort.

Description of and rationale for this priority.

The ACE program serves as the foundation for UNL students' breadth and depth of educational experience. Undergraduate years are a time of great change and sometimes uncertainty for students and emphasizing our goals for their learning will promote UNL's priority to "engage students who have the widest range of choice in choosing where to pursue college careers". The new ACE program is a step in that direction. ACE fosters coursework and experiences that are based on thoughtful, assessable student learning outcomes. UNL is traversing new paths in General Education reform. Our reputation for innovation and our visibility are increasing nationally.

This priority supports the UNL strategy of success for offering a competitive and broad mix of undergraduate programs designed to attract highly talented students from Nebraska, the region, nationally and internationally and has the potential to become a *spire of excellence*. This institution wide initiative relates to each of the Core Values: Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity, Engagement, Research and Creative Activity and Stewardship.

Specific goals for 2008-09 are:

1. Have a menu of ACE certified courses approved by January 2009 for implementation during the 2009-10 academic year to serve the incoming cohort of first year and transfer students.

Under the leadership of Interim ACE Director, the next 10 months will be dedicated to working with the I-ACE Committee members representing each of the undergraduate colleges and the ten Course Facilitators toward submission and certification of courses for the ACE program that meet one or more of the ACE student learning outcomes. Specific objectives for meeting this goal are:

- Educate and develop a team spirit among the I-ACE Committee Members. This group will meet weekly. This group must give unanimous approval to certification of ACE courses; thus, there is need for understanding and respect for each discipline's contribution to the ACE program. The I-ACE team will also develop a protocol for authentication and documentation of co-curricular activities that might meet the ACE outcome(s) (Mitchell, Kean, I-ACE).
- Educate the Course Facilitators as to how best to work with college faculty on retooling or developing courses to be submitted to the I-ACE team for ACE certification. This group will meet bi-monthly (Mitchell, I-ACE Committee).

- Collaborate with the Director of Institutional Assessment in developing and implementing a process for assessing the ACE SLOs (Mitchell, Jonson, University Assessment Committee).

2. Work with internal and external constituencies to educate them and obtain their support of the ACE Program.

- Work with the Division of Student Affairs, primarily the Offices of Admissions on recruitment materials, and Registration and Records on the integration of ACE certification with its systems (Mitchell, Kean).
- Educate academic advisors as to the purpose of the ACE program. Work with the Admissions, Advising and Retention Group on developing a set of best practices for ACE advising (Mitchell).
- Meet with appropriate academic officials from UNO, UNK, UNMC, Nebraska State College System, Nebraska Community Colleges and private Nebraska colleges to present the UNL ACE program, discuss transfer Issues and solutions (Mitchell, Moseman, Kean).
- Continue on-going communication with internal and external constituencies. A website, <http://ace.unl.edu> has been established. Materials will be developed for specific audiences: administration, UCC, Faculty Senate, administrators, faculty & staff, prospective students, ASUN, current students, parents, college and high school guidance counselors, general public (Mitchell, Schadwinkel, Kean, Hachiya).
- Work closely with IT personnel to incorporate approval for ACE certification into the current C-REQ on-line curriculum approval system (Mitchell, Jensen, Hackwith).

Budget comments: none

Timeline for Completion of Priority.

- Initial Course Certification will be completed by January 2009.
- Planning and initial implementation of a process for assessing ACE SLOs will be completed in May 2009.
- Meetings with academic officials at other Nebraska institutions will be completed by August 2008.
- Communications will be an ongoing process.

What metrics will be used for success?

- Approval of initial set of ACE courses for implementation during AY 2009-10.
- The new ACE Program will integrate easily into UNL systems for registration and records, on-line approval.
- The initial implementation of the assessment process will be completed by May 2009 with review and feedback by the University Assessment Committee no later than October 2009.

What has been your progress toward achieving this priority to date? What benchmarks have you met?

The ACE General Education Program received final faculty approval in January 2008. The Interim ACE Director was named in January 2008 and support staff was hired in March 2008. In February 2008, visits were made with

- each college dean, their associate deans or designees about the ACE program and expectations of the I-ACE college representative and the college Course Facilitator(s) (Mitchell, Kean, Wilson).
- members of the Faculty Senate, Executive Committee, Enrollment Management Council, Admissions, Advising, Retention Committee (Mitchell)
- IT to determine best way to implement on-line course approval process (Mitchell, Jensen, Hackwith, Kean) and, in March 2008
- ACE Kickoff hosted by the ACE Director, Chancellor and Sr. Vice Chancellor to welcome and charge I-ACE Committee, Course Facilitators, members of UCC and the former GEAC (Mitchell).
- Information visits made to APC, ASUN, CSAD (Mitchell)
- I-ACE Committee meets regularly. Course Facilitators meet bi-monthly (I-ACE: Mitchell, I-ACE, Walkin (UCC Chair), Jonson, Kean, Wilson; Course Facilitators (Mitchell, Jonson, Kean, Wilson).
- Meetings with other Nebraska colleges and universities completed August 1.

**Office of Undergraduate Studies
Strategic Plan 2008-09**

Priority 2. (last year's Priority #1). **Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: from Compliance to Campus Commitment.** OUS will continue to a) coordinate and support implementation of the ACE program by developing assessment processes to make ACE a dynamic program that can change and evolve, b) sustain momentum and encourage campus units to develop meaningful measures of assessment, and c) develop and refine assessment outcomes for OUS programs.

Description of and rationale for this priority.

Assessment of student learning outcomes (SLO) is an integral component of academic program planning for the undergraduate experience at UNL. Outcomes assessment allows us to clearly document not only for ourselves what we want student to learn and how we know if they achieve those outcomes but also provides information that can be shared with students so they see their educational experiences as intentional and coherent. Beyond that, including outcomes assessment as an integral component of academic program planning

- contributes to creation of educational programs that are intentionally structured to assist students in achieving learning outcomes faculty and the institution value,
- assists units with strategic planning by defining goals and objectives that address outcomes for students and pointing to critical issues or problems or issues that need to be resolved to help students reach those outcomes
- helps units to make more informed decisions about resource allocation that will ultimately benefit undergraduate education
- involves students as stronger partners in their educational process, clearly communicating what we intend students to learn so they are better able to chart and assess their own progress.
- supports the UNL strategy of success through emphasizing our goals for their learning, which in turn, will promote UNL's priority to "engage students who have the widest range of choice in choosing where to pursue college careers". We can also improve retention of students who are already here by making them engaged partners in their own learning because they clearly understand what outcomes we want them to attain, how they can attain them, and what measures will help them determine for themselves if they have attained those outcomes.

Related UNL Core Values: Learning, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity, Engagement, and Stewardship.

We have identified four main objectives to pursue the next 18 months in support of the Assessment priority.

1. Implement the assessment component of the ACE program

- Work closely with the new Interim ACE Director to establish a coherent system for ACE where curriculum and assessment processes are interlaced, setting the expectations that

developing curriculum involves articulation of how learning will be assessed and how assessment contributes to informed improvement of the ACE program and its curriculum (Jonson, Mitchell, Penn).

- Convene and engage the University-Wide Assessment Committee in determining implementation details of assessment as outlined in ACE Proposal 4 – Assessment and Governance (Jonson, UWAC members).
- Adapt the PEARL on-line management assessment system to provide a structure that facilitates the reporting of assessment information for ACE at all levels (course, department, college, institution) (Jonson, Penn).

2. Continue development and implementation of the PEARL on-line management assessment system project (Jonson, Penn, IT, PEARL Steering Committee).

- Work with UNL Information Services and Colorado State University to reprogram the PEARL system into a language that can be easily be sustained while preserving the key benefits of the system.
- Adapt PEARL software to support and facilitate the ACE assessment process.
- Continue to involve undergraduate programs and graduate programs in CEHS, CASNR, JMC, and FPA in using PEARL to participate in a continuous process of assessing student learning outcomes of their programs.
- Lead the Division of Student Affairs in their initial implementation of PEARL.
- Continue to build awareness and understanding of PEARL at institutional and collegiate levels.

3. Analyze and share 2007 NSSE results and develop the content needed for UNL's participation in NASULGC's Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) (Jonson).

- Create narrative and web links that share how UNL gathers evidence about student perceptions experiences and about student learning for NASULGC's College Portrait (Timeline: Spring & Summer 2008).
- Conduct focused analysis of NSSE results exploring why student are working (Is financial need a significant factor?) and what impact working has on their engagement. (Timeline: Spring 2008) (Jonson, OUS Staff).
- Provide detailed analyses of NSSE results to colleges and OUS units and facilitate discussions with those groups to consider the application of those results to the undergraduate educational outcomes they value. (Timeline: Spring 2008).

4. Continue progress in establishing processes for formally assessing OUS programs

(Jonson, OUS Faculty and Staff). All OUS units have an assessment program in place and corresponding methodology. Assessment of OUS units will be an ongoing process with the goal of continuous improvement.

Budget comments:

Timeline for Completion of Priority

Implementation of the ACE program: Spring 2008 through 2009-10 academic year

PEARL: Spring 2008 through 2009-10 academic year

NSSE and VSA measures: Spring 2008 through Fall 2008.

Formal Assessment of OUS programs: Cycle - Spring 2008- Spring 2009.

What metrics will be used for success?

ACE Assessment Proposal

1. Draft with the Interim Director of ACE and the University-Wide Assessment Committee the forms, processes, and guidelines for facilitating the assessment of ACE.
2. Develop infrastructure within PEARL to organize and store evidence gathered from ACE assessment process.

PEARL

1. Raise quality and sophistication of how programs assess student learning and the application of what they have learned to academic programs through increase in the numbers of:
 - programs across campus participating in PEARL
 - participating units that report on time
 - use of direct measures,
 - sophistication and complexity of outcomes selected by programs for assessment
 - use of results for identifying issues and implementing program improvements
 - number of programs recognized for at least 1 best practice
 - references to PEARL in APR, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning
2. Maintain contact with and engagement of faculty serving in key PEARL roles
 - Increase visibility of program progress in PEARL with Dean and Chairs
3. Continue record of success in national recognition of PEARL through presentation at national conference and publications

NSSE/ VSA

1. Provide effective web presentation of UNL assessment activities and results for NASULGC's College Portrait
2. Use NSSE and Parsing student results to identify potential elements for a profile of evidence the institution might be interested in as it assesses its undergraduate education experience.
3. Obtain statistical results that could inform discussions about impact of financial need and working off-campus on engagement.
4. Document and demonstrate an increase in the consideration and use of NSSE results by colleges and programs.

OUS Programs

Results from each of the OUS programs will provide documentation regarding the quality of the student experience. Appropriate changes will be made to strengthen each program.

What has been your progress toward achieving this priority to date? What benchmarks have you met?

ACE

- Final ACE proposal including a structure for assessing the ACE program was approved.

PEARL

- National recognition of PEARL system and the development of faculty in assessment was recognized by HLC visiting team during accreditation visit, by national experts (Peggy Maki & Virginia Lee), and contributed to acceptance of presentation proposals for national conferences including AAC&U, Reinvention Center, HLC, IUPUI Assessment Conference, Association for Institutional Researchers, and North Carolina State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium.
- Number of academic programs participating in PEARL has increased 60% since its inception and inclusion of Division of Student Affairs in the next cycle will double number programs involved since its inception.
- 70% of programs completed the PEARL cycle on time.
- 85% identified outcomes are assessed by program using direct measures (student demonstration of learning instead of student perceptions of learning).
- 90% participating programs that completed PEARL cycle used assessment results to identify issues or implement program improvements.
- 40% participating programs recognized for best practice.

NSSE/VSA

- 2007 NSSE results shared institutionally with SVCAA, VCSA, Dean's Council, University-Wide Assessment Committee, Council of Student Affairs Directors, Enrollment Management Council, and Admission and Advising Retention Group.
- A breakdown of college results from 2007 NSSE was provided to each college
- Requests for information and presentations were provided to College of Arts & Science Chairs and Directors, College of Arts & Sciences college assessment committee, College of Engineering Associate Dean and staff, and Associate Dean College of Education and Human Sciences. Each discussion resulted in request by departments for department-level information or requests for future presentation to additional college groups.

OUS Programs

Each program has consulted with the Director of Institutional Assessment and identified its desired student learning outcomes. Programs are either preparing to develop its instrument or are in the process of developing the instrument.

**Office of Undergraduate Studies
Strategic Plan 2008-09**

Priority 3. Continue to invest and develop the Honors Program, and Undergraduate Research Program, both which serve as institutional spires of excellence. In addition, formalize protocol for the Undergraduate Fellowships & Awards Program.

Description of and rationale for this priority.

Both the Honors Program and UCARE are propelling the University of Nebraska's commitment to undergraduate education into the national limelight. The first to second year retention rate for the Honors Program is 96%. Eighty percent of students admitted into the Honors Program finish their Bachelor's degrees within six years. Thirty percent of students participate in a study abroad program. Currently, 55% of honors students eligible for graduation from the Program (meeting all course requirements and maintaining a 3.5 GPA) fulfill the research requirement. Most honors programs in our peer group graduate *fewer* than 25% of their students who complete a research experience.

UCARE was originally conceived as a program that would serve 200 students, The addition of Program of Excellence funds has allowed UCARE to flourish. The demand for UCARE continues to increase each year as more applications are received (AY 2008-09 n= 445).. Over 2400 undergraduates have gone through the program; over 500 faculty have participated in the program. Because the first year of UCARE serves as a training ground for undergraduates in their chosen discipline, UCARE students have a better understanding of their field of study, with 75% of the students who have been in UCARE going on to graduate or professional school. 95% of the students who apply for Fulbright, Rhodes, Marshall, Javits, Gates-Cambridge, Truman, and especially Goldwater applications are actively engaged in research through the UCARE program. Students going to Law or medical school regularly participate in UCARE. UCARE applications come from all over campus; there is a "healthy" mix of diverse disciplines, equally split between laboratory and non-laboratory disciplines.

Related UNL Core Values: Learning, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity, Engagement, and Stewardship.

We have identified three objectives for each of three programs to pursue in support of the priority.

1. Honors Program. The objectives for the Honors Program are targeted to enhance UNL's national and international reputation, thereby attracting a highly talented and diverse student population (Berger, Lyons, Koopmann). More specifically,

- Increase first to second year retention rate by 1% and over all six year graduation rate by 3% by fall 2009. Increase the percentage of Honors Program students completing all requirements for graduation in the Honors Program by 10%.

- Honors thesis preparation workshops will be taught. Honors students will be encouraged to participate in UCARE to expand their projects into academic presentations consistent with the discipline's "thesis" expectation.
- To maintain the interest in and the quality of the Honors Program course offerings, provide increased stipends and instructional resources to maintain 189H and 395H course. The stipend awarded faculty who teach honors courses will increase from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per course offering.
- Increase percentage of Honors students studying abroad by 5% through providing more timely information the Honors newsletter as well as with college advisors about study abroad opportunities and scholarships/ funding sources.
- Develop interdisciplinary courses in association with Dean Jack Oliva's University Academy Initiative.
- Continue to develop alumni network through communication with and promotion of Honors Activities. Create at least two off-campus events for our Honors Program alumni.
- Continue to seek permanent endowment for the Honors Program

2. Undergraduate Research (Damuth, UNL faculty). We will continue to invest in UNL's signature undergraduate research program, UCARE, with specific attention to

- Increasing the stipends for UCARE students from \$2,000 to \$2500 for first year and \$3,000 for second year students as of AY 2009-20.
- Implementation of additional UCARE assessment initiatives and align UCARE learning outcomes with the ACE General Education Program. The Director of Undergraduate Research will work with the ACE Program Director, I-ACE Committee and Director of Institutional Assessment towards developing a protocol for certifying UCARE experiences as meeting ACE SLO 10. Integrative Learning.
- Expansion of UCARE to include support for community-based research, which would incorporate all of the university's three missions. Community-based research takes place in community settings and involves community members in the design and implementation of research projects. We have initiated this in one class through the School of Natural Resources We would like to expand this model into other areas, potentially the Center for Science Math and Computer Education or the Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools. We will be looking into finding external funding for such collaborations.
- Continue to seek permanent endowment for the UCARE Program. An endowed UCARE program would be best in place by 2010-11. Renegotiation of the PEPSI contract is scheduled within the next year. There is no guarantee funding will continue.

3. Undergraduate Fellowships & Awards Program (Damuth)

As more and more students apply for competitive national awards, the Fellowship Advisor requires more assistance in the early identification of students, in the review of applications, and in the make-up of mock interview committees. A standing committee of faculty from a variety of different disciplines and colleges, who are already familiar with the scholarship process and who are willing to help at critical times during the year, is necessary. Because the students who apply

for national scholarships are some of UNL's best and brightest, there is no question that their dedication to the process of applying speaks to the university's investment in excellence.

A standing Faculty Board for Nationally Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships has been appointed and will convene in Fall 2008. The scholarship advisor met with the College Deans in Spring 2008 to identify key faculty to serve on the committee. Faculty will serve a three-year term.

Budget comments:

Timeline for Completion of Priority

Honors Program. The timeline for increases in Honors Program retention and 6-year graduation rates, and increases in the numbers of students completing Honors Program requirements and studying abroad is spring 2009. The first Honors thesis preparation workshop and the first University Academy course will be offered in fall 2008.

UCARE. Implementation of new stipend will be for AY 2009-10. Endowed or continued funding for UCARE program in place by AY 2010-11.

Undergraduate Fellowships & Awards Program. Faculty Advisory Board will be established by Fall 2008.

What metrics will be used for success?

Honors Program.

1. The Honors Program will increase the
 - First to second year retention rate by 1%
 - Six year graduation rate by 3%
 - Percentage of Honors Program students completing all requirements for graduation in the Honors Program by 10%
 - Percentage of Honors students studying abroad by 5%
2. The Honors Program courses and thesis requirements will be fully certified by the I-ACE Committee, thus contributing to the increased completion rate of Honors Program graduates.
3. The launch of the University Academy through collaboration with the Honors Program will result in the development of additional UA courses.
4. The Honors Program will be endowed!

UCARE

- Portfolio of UCARE experiences will expand to include Community Based Research.
- I-ACE will approve a plan for certification of UCARE experiences.
- The UCARE program will be permanently endowed.

Undergraduate Fellowships & Awards Program. Increase the number of UNL students applying for and receiving prestigious national awards.

What has been your progress toward achieving this priority to date? What benchmarks have you met?

Honors Program

- The Honors Program advisor has been contacting each Honors Student and meeting with students on a regular basis so students are reminded of the expectations for completing the Honors Program requirements and supported in their efforts.
- In consultation with participating faculty, the Honors Program Director has begun to develop a plan for 1) aligning Honors Program Course levels with the ACE Student Learning Outcomes and developing a request to the UCC for a dedicated Honors Thesis course designation and number.
- Honors thesis preparation workshops are currently under development will be offered beginning in fall 2008.
- The Director of the Honors Program has been involved in the planning process for the first course to be delivered via the University Academy in fall 2008.
- The first Honors Alumni Celebration was held in April 2007. The yearly Honors Alumni Magazine was inaugurated and well received by Honors alumni.

UCARE. Students who participated in the Spring 2007 Honors course, Water, Society, and the Future, learned from community agencies about research needs. During summer 2007, students UCARE funds supported these same students who worked with those agencies and tackled specific research questions.

Undergraduate Fellowships & Awards Program. Currently, there are two preparatory courses taught for interested students through the Honors Program by Dr. Laura Damuth, Fellowship Advisor. The Fellowship Advisor met with Deans and Associate Deans from various colleges to ask for nominations to the Faculty Board for Nationally Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships. The group will convene in Fall 2008.

**Office of Undergraduate Studies
Strategic Plan 2008-09**

Priority 4. (last year's Priority 4). **Enhance Academic Support and Opportunities for students and in turn, improve retention and graduation rates.**

Description of and rationale for this priority. OUS will continue to fund and support for programs that improve the learning environment for our students, thus contributing to their academic success and timely graduation.

Core Values: Diversity; Excellence.

We will pursue the following objectives over the next two years in support of this priority.

1. Establish OASIS as the cornerstone program for multicultural student development and retention at UNL by February 2010 (Alvarez (Interim Director), Ramirez, Waters, Duncan-Wagner, Bergman, Adams) . The Fall 2007 NU Connections average cumulative GPA was above 3.0. The 2006 cohort retention rates were slightly higher than the overall campus at 87% respectfully. The goal is to increase student participation in annual OASIS cultural, educational and personal development programs. OASIS and OUS staff are planning for the move to the new Multi-Cultural Center in 2010; therefore, we are in the process of formally assessing the impact and needs of our academic support programs to take full advantage of the space dedicated to student success.

- As enrollment increases among our multicultural community OASIS will provide focused programming in an effort to increase retention rates. Currently traditional minority students represent 9.8% of our total student population.
- Academic Program Coordinators will meet personally with 50% of the first-year multicultural student population by May 2008.
- OASIS Staff will contact 100% of in-coming multicultural students including transfer students by the end of 2008 fall semester. Regular contact between OASIS staff and first-year multicultural student population will be maintained via email, telephone and/or Blackboard.
- Offer academic and mentoring programs directly linked to the transition and retention of multicultural student development.
- Collaborate with the Division of General Studies to develop and implement an academic plan for 100% of the NU Connections DGS first-year students by fall 2008.
- Develop and implement a communications strategic plan, using effective marketing strategies, to inform UNL students of all OASIS programming.

2. Learning/ Scholars Communities. In the past seven years these programs have grown into 15 unique learning/scholars communities that serve close to 400 first year students.

- **Conduct focus groups with past learning/scholars community students to assess the long term impact of the learning community experience** (Williams, Jonson). Many first year learning/scholars community students have expressed interest in continuing their association with their learning/scholars community beyond the first year. We would like to know advanced student's thoughts on the importance of maintaining that

connection and if there are specific learning outcomes that might be associated with maintaining the formal connection beyond the first year. For example, the EN Thompson Scholars Learning Community alumni have formed a RSO, as they are eager to continue their association and involvement in international affairs and current events, one of the university's stated academic priorities.

- **Launch the William H. Thompson (WHT) Scholars Learning Community** (Kean, Griffin, Ramirez, Williams, Adams, Schadwinkel, UNL faculty). This new, fully funded scholars/learning community offers UNL the opportunity to provide focused academic and co-curricular support for recipients of the Susan T. Buffett Foundation Scholarship.
 - The Faculty Liaison, Academic Coordinator, Graduate assistants and Student Peer Mentors have been hired. The website has been established <http://www.unl.edu/ous/wht/> and is linked to the Buffett Foundation website. WHT Scholars will be co-enrolled in two courses per semester, participate in NU CONNECTIONS and if on campus residents will live together on the same floor in Abel residence Hall.
 - The Faculty Liaison, Academic Coordinator and Academic Learning Communities Coordinator will work in concert to plan the inaugural WHT Scholars year.

3. EN Thompson Forum and Scholars/ Learning Communities. The goal is to strengthen the connection of the Thompson Forum to academic offerings on campus and continue to expand outreach in the community and across Nebraska. (White, Major, Berger, Thompson Working Group).

- Promote the use of the Forum in undergraduate courses. Proactively identify departments whose teaching mission is closely related to the theme and explore opportunities for inclusion of the Forum, the Nebraska Colloquium and related activities into existing curriculum or as the foundation for new curriculum offerings.
- In collaboration with the Cooper Foundation, Nebraska Humanities Council and NET, continue and enhance the statewide lecture simulcasts and accompanying discussions.
- Continue to improve communication and promotion of Forum lectures and related events. Incorporate the Forum content more integrally into the E.N. Thompson International Scholars curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Building on the example of St. Paul's United Methodist Church and their partnership with OLLI, expand the number of community-based, lecture related events. Explore engaging the Thompson International Scholars and "Alumni" in community-based activities as facilitators or event hosts.
- Budget was established for the 2008-09 season by March 1, 2008 and for the 2009-10 season by January 15, 2009. Document procedures during 2008-09 season and create procedures manual by July 1, 2009. Begin exploration of additional funding sources by September 1, 2008.

4. OUS Investments in Program/ Initiatives (Kean, Gregory, Div of Housing). We will continue to invest in academic support programs that benefit UNL students. OUS funds the MATH EXCEL program, Undergraduate Teaching Assistance Corps (formerly Supplemental Instruction), The STAR Advising Center in Abel-Sandoz Residence Hall, NU

CONNECTIONS, academic unit initiatives the benefit most UNL students, such as the collaboration between the Departments of English and Biology for the initiative, *Writing Across the Disciplines*, \$500 in support for each Learning/ Scholars Community.

5. Nebraska Colloquium (Berger, Kean, White, Schadwinkel, UNL faculty/staff. The Nebraska Colloquium was launched during the AY 2007-08 Academic Year with the theme of the *Environment*. The purpose of the Colloquium is to serve as an organizing framework for the campus community to share ideas and information and to raise the level of intellectual engagement. The annual theme is that set by the EN Thompson Forum Committee. Campus units responded positively and many provided information for OUS to post on its website (Schadwinkel, Kean, Berger).

- OUS will continue to take the lead on organizing information for the Nebraska Colloquium website. The theme for AY 2008-09 is *Democracy*. The Honors Program has established the Nebraska Colloquium Forum, featuring symposia offered by UNL faculty on the theme of Democracy.
- OUS will work with University Communications to more effectively promote and bring the Colloquium to the attention of the university community.

Budget comments:

- William H. Thompson Scholars/Learning Community is funded through the Susan K. Buffett Foundation. No state funds are used for support of this scholars community.
- The Nebraska Colloquium is funded through POE funds.
- Each Learning/Scholars Community is eligible for support of up to \$500 per year for academically related activities. Funding is through POE funds.

Timeline for Completion of Priority

Learning Scholars Communities.

- The Academic Learning Communities Coordinator will assess the long term impact of program participation past the freshman year by conducting focus groups with participants from the following classes, AY 2003-2004 through 2006-2007.
- The first cohort of William H. Thompson Scholars will enter UNL in fall 2008.

What metrics will be used for success?

OASIS. Increase the retention of African American, Latino, Native American and Multiracial students by 1% by fall census 2009.

Learning/ Scholars Communities. Participation in UNL Learning/Scholars Communities will increase. The scope of the Scholar/ Learning Community experience will broaden to include more interdisciplinary participation from academic units across campus. Students in the William H. Thompson Scholars and the EN Thompson Scholars Learning Communities will be followed and tracked as they proceed through their undergraduate programs.

EN Thompson Forum. There will be more university-community engagement as a result of improved communications and the increased availability of the EN Thompson lectures that are broadcast across the state.

Nebraska Colloquium. The addition of the Honors Forum to the Nebraska Colloquium schedule should result in great faculty and student participation in Colloquium events.

What has been your progress toward achieving this priority to date? What benchmarks have you met?

OASIS. The Director of Oasis and his staff have been actively involved in planning the academic space for the Multi-cultural Center. The numbers of students participating in NU Connections has increased each year.

Scholars/Learning Communities.

- Focus groups with former members of UNL Scholars/Learning Communities will begin in Spring 2008.
- William H Thompson Scholars Learning Community plans are in place for AY 2008-09.
- The EN Thompson Scholars Learning Community has formed an RSO. The EN Thompson Scholars were instrumental in helping to plan and implement the January 2007 Focus on the Nation, a national symposium on the global environment.

OUS/ Investments in Program/ Initiatives.

- Course grades for students participating in the Math EXCEL programs have been significantly higher than for those students who did not participate. Students in the UTAC program have consistently scored one grade point higher than those students enrolled in the same class who did not participate in the UTAC program.
- The number of students using the STAR Advising Center has increased from 50 students in Fall 2003 to over 400 students per semester in AY 2006-2007.
- The retention rate of NU Connections students the past four years has ranged from 84%-90%, representing a steady increase in retention among participating students. The overall retention rate is higher than the university average of 82.9%.

Nebraska Colloquium

- This past academic year the Nebraska Colloquium website, featuring all UNL events related to the theme of the Environment, received over 1900 hits.
- Building on the theme selected for the *E. N. Thompson Forum on World Issues*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty members will complement those lectures in the *Honors Forum*. Colleges and departments and campus units will also contribute to the Colloquium schedule. Students are invited to register for 1 academic credit by registering for UHON 198H, sect 002 – “The Honors Forum: Nebraska Colloquium.”

**Office of Undergraduate Studies
Strategic Plan 2008-09**

Priority #5 (last year Priority #3)

Enrollment Management. Increase institutional understanding of Enrollment Management, its importance and scope, and in turn, increase recruitment yield rates, retention and graduation rates of undergraduates.

Core Values: Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity, Engagement, and Stewardship
Specific goals for 2008-09 are:

1. Continue to work closely with Admissions, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and other UNL units on formulating and evaluating benchmarks and strategies for recruitment, retention and graduation rates of undergraduate students (Kean, Cervený, McBride, UNL and OUS staff).

- **Retention.** Increase the institutional first-to -second year retention rate to exceed 85% by AY 2010, and the second-to-third year retention rate to exceed 80%.
- **Use institutional data to increase understanding of student retention.** The Director of Institutional Assessment is leading an in- depth analyses of students who leave UNL after their first or second year. For example, OUS has contracted with a faculty member to assist us with a schematic analysis of the NSSE and other institutional data that will provide insights into the impact of financial need on student retention, satisfaction and completion rates.
- **Mid Semester Check.** Increase the retention rate of those attending the 2008 Fall Mid Semester check to 90%. Dedicate one evening to students who are undeclared and assist them in exploring possible majors through targeted programming.
- **On-Line Bulletin** (Kean, Lauerman, Task Force). Work with Director of University Communications and an appointed task force to simplify the Undergraduate Bulletin and move from the printed version to an on-line, interactive version by AY 2009-10.
- **ACE & CREQ On-Line Approval Systems.** (Mitchell, Hackwith, Jensen, Kean). Continue to work with IT to continuously improve the current **C-REQ** on line curriculum approval system and implement **ACE** course certification into the same system.

2. Continue to participate in the NU systems P-16 Initiative (Higher Education Pathways group) with Nebraska's state colleges and community colleges to ease the path for students transferring to UNL. The goal is to establish seamless transfer of courses to among Nebraska institutions of higher education.

Timeline for Completion of Priority.

Retention. Increase the institutional retention rates by AY 2010.

Use institutional data to increase understanding of student retention. Initial results of analysis should be available in summer 2008.

Mid Semester Check. Follow up with 2007 cohort completed by fall 2008. Assessment of 2008 event will begin immediately following MSC, with a completion date of fall 2009.

On-Line Bulletin. This project should be completed by fall 2009.

ACE & CREQ. The integrated on-line approval system should be in place by Fall 2008.

What metrics will be used for success?

Retention. Increase the institutional first-to -second year retention rate to exceed 85% by AY 2010, and the second-to-third year retention rate to exceed 80%.

Use institutional data to increase understanding of student retention. Initial results of analysis should be available in summer 2008. This should provide information for a discussion of the impact of students financial needs on their university experience.

Mid Semester Check. First to second year retention check will be conducted with students who attended Fall 2007 Mid-semester Check. For the fall 2008 MSC, student's N-Cards will be scanned for attendance.

On-Line Bulletin. A simplified, interactive on-line bulletin should be ready by Fall 2009.

ACE & CREQ. Colleges and UCC will find the on-line approval system is reliable and adaptable to their particular needs as they prepare the course approval information and begin its routing from the department to the UCC.

What has been your progress toward achieving this priority to date? What benchmarks have you met?

First to second year retention rates dropped by 3% for the fall 2006 entering cohort, which was a disappointment. Data show that giving more attention to undeclared majors is imperative and we have begun to focus on ways to assist students explore and declare a major. The Mid-Semester Check has proven a useful tool for guiding entering students during their first semester, as witnessed by increased attendance and a 90% retention rate of attendees.

The approval and implementation of the ACE General Education program offers UNL opportunities to change the institutional culture. Consultation with the SVCAA, Director of University Communications and Academic Deans has resulted in support for development and implementation of an on-line, interactive undergraduate bulletin, and eventually, a 24/7 schedule of classes.

As a result of input from the colleges, the C-REQ system has been modified to meet each college's specific needs and routing system before curriculum requests enter the institutional routing system. The ACE course certification will be adapted for on-line approval process through the UCC and/ or I-ACE Committee.