University of Washington

Office of Undergraduate Education

2001 » 2002

Annual Report Learning in the world » Undergraduate research » Teaching excellence » Honors Program » Mary Gates Endowment » Program on the Environment » UW SOUL » State of the art classrooms »
Friends and Colleagues,

This report highlights the role the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) plays in transforming undergraduate learning at the University of Washington. By bringing the distinctive strength of our leading research university to bear on educating our students, we advance the University’s mission in teaching and learning. Learning in the World profiles the power of connecting students with communities near and far: through both research and service students extend what they learn in the classroom and respond to the heightened possibility they find in themselves. Turning Points highlights critical moments when opportunity and challenge can make a big difference in our educational journeys. We trace the role existing OUE programs and new initiatives play in supporting learners-both faculty and students-at these key junctures. This report also tells of our efforts to support faculty innovation with new computer workstations in UW classrooms and to gain deeper understandings of our students’ experiences at UW through the longitudinal study, UW SOUL.

Important milestones mark this past year. The Mary Gates Endowment for Students, which has played a key role in transforming undergraduate education, saw the naming of the 1,000th Mary Gates Scholar. With the Simpson Center for the Humanities, Office of Research, and Educational Outreach we offered the first summer undergraduate research program in the arts and humanities in the country. 384 students presented their work at the 5th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium-100 more than in 2001.

Still, we have much to do: we are just over halfway to our goal of providing intensive public service and research experiences with faculty mentors for half of all UW undergraduates. The Honors Program is nearing its goal of enrolling 250 new students each year, creating even greater demand for specialized classes and other program offerings. In the coming year OUE will concentrate on developing the ability to further expand support for student involvement in challenging forms of research and public service, building a world class Honors program, and securing ongoing support for teaching excellence through instructional programs for faculty. The beneficiaries will be our future leaders and our future. We look forward to your partnership in this effort.

George S. Bridges
Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, University of Washington

Highlights for 2001 » 2002

2001-2002 AT A GLANCE
• 48 classrooms were equipped with computing stations for instructors » Goal: 132 classrooms
• 162 Freshman Interest Groups enrolled 3,250 students » Goal: 200 FIGs to serve 80% of the class
• 70 courses engaged 1,136 students in service learning
• the 5th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium showcased 384 students
• the 1,000th Mary Gates Scholar was named

NEW INITIATIVES
• Summer Bridge-academic success for under-prepared students
• New design for orientation programs
• Martin Achievement Scholarships-AA through BA for community college transfers
• Global Classrooms-internationalizes learning through technology
• Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities-undergraduate research immersion
• Write Across Washington-Alternative Spring Break literacy project with rural schools
Opportunities to learn in the world that are well connected to the curriculum expose students to diverse sources of knowledge that complement their classroom study. The Carlson Center and Pipeline Project collaborate with community-based organizations and schools to provide students meaningful experiences as they prepare for life as active citizens in a changing world. Last year, the Carlson Center worked with 64 faculty and instructors, a 30% increase over the previous year, to provide service learning experiences for 1,136 students in 70 courses, helping them see how the ideas and issues they study in the classroom are manifest in the world. Through the Pipeline Project 761 undergraduates worked with 1,804 students in local schools. Of these UW volunteers, 224 explored their interest in becoming teachers in Inner Pipeline seminars on literacy, the arts in education, refugee women and children, science, and other topics.

Two new initiatives have added further opportunities for students to learn in the world. Write Across Washington, an alternative spring break initiative of the Pipeline Project launched in 2000, saw 46 students traveling in teams to six rural Washington communities in March 2002 to help 600 school-aged children create their own books. During the one-week project UW students helped third, fourth, and fifth graders brainstorm, write, and print their stories using publishing software for young authors. Then they illustrated and bound their books.

“When I helped them to put their ideas into words and pictures, they came up with visions for stories such as a dragon with a thorn in his foot,” says Mary Gates Scholar Solmaz Mohadjer, a geology and international studies double major. Once the Harrah Elementary students’ books were finished, Mohadjer notes, “every one of them came to me and said, ‘I did this all by myself!’” This coming year, Write Across Washington will see undergraduates helping young authors in ten communities around the state. The goal for the project is to send up to 100 UW students to work with young writers across the state. Partial funding for the project comes from Verizon and SCALE, a national literacy organization.

“every one of them came to me and said, ‘I did this all by myself!’”
The second initiative, Global Classrooms, was launched this past year with a $150,000 grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The goal of Global Classrooms is to help faculty prepare students for life as international citizens by using technology to create challenging international learning experiences for students at UW. Making imaginative uses of videoconferencing, email, online discussion and other educational and communication technologies, faculty enabled students in political science, art, and the Program on Africa to interact with students in Argentina, China, and Eritrea on shared topics and questions.

"Just the reading alone wouldn’t be comprehensive," commented a student in Political Science Professor Margaret Levi’s course partnership with San Andreas University in Buenos Aires, Argentina where the unfolding debt crisis gave immediacy to students’ work on comparative labor issues. "We’re talking to people and getting real perspective.”

Classroom Support Services connects classrooms to the world by equipping faculty and students with state-of-the-art educational technologies. To help students achieve information fluency and extend their learning in the world, and to help faculty develop new kinds of teaching and curricula, the University needs connected classrooms.

Last year Classroom Support Services (CSS) completed the installation of 41 classroom computer workstations, giving faculty ready access to a plethora of state-of-the-art educational technologies.

"Technology offers a powerful way to help students see complex methods and ideas," observes one faculty member. As an example, notes another, "I use the computer for demonstrating spreadsheet analysis.” Faculty incorporate Powerpoint presentations into their lectures, demonstrate mathematical analysis and other forms of problem solving, model dynamic systems, and teach revising and editing techniques using technology. “In these classrooms we can connect to a world of information and to the world,” says a faculty member who uses the workstation to bring data being collected from international field research into the classroom.

In addition to the 78 classrooms with permanently installed data projectors, CSS launched a laptop computer/portable data projector loan program to support innovative teaching in rooms that have not been outfitted. This initiative means faculty can deliver lectures via computer even if the classroom they are assigned isn’t equipped. And with support from the Student Technology Fee, CSS began a laptop and data projector loan program for students to ensure access for more students to current learning tools.

Technological challenges posed in each course exposed students to the economic, cultural, and political factors that create disparities in information access and fluency between developed and developing countries. And learning about other parts of the world through online discussion and shared projects motivated students to travel abroad, many for the first time. School of Art funds enabled thirteen students who participated in an international design project to travel to China at the end of spring quarter. “The trip was a great opportunity to actually take design into the context and see how it works,” noted one student.

This coming year faculty in landscape architecture, geography, social work, and the Program on the Environment will connect students with their peers in classrooms in Japan, Australia, Eritrea, and South Africa. Students will do comparative studies of historic neighborhood restoration, economic globalization, social service practice, and sustainability. “This kind of interaction between students provides learning that you can’t get from books,” observes one faculty member. “Speaking to each other from within their cultural context makes abstract concepts come to life.”

"We’re talking to people and getting real perspective.”
Faculty also see benefits to their research. The relations faculty build with international colleagues support their research interests, and the online tools and action research methods faculty use in teaching readily apply to their research. Global Classrooms is a collaboration with UW Worldwide.

Many students make use of these and other opportunities to extend their classroom learning into the world and use their knowledge to serve the common good. This past year brought outstanding rewards for students who combined impressive records in public service and leadership with academic excellence to compete for prestigious national scholarships.

Environmental science major Allison Van used her Munro Public Service Fellowship and Mary Gates Leadership grant to explore environmental issues and their impact on communities while working with Hispanic, Native American, and other residents of Wapato. “My experience in Wapato led me to add a degree in Community and Environmental Planning,” notes Van, “and later, I realized that I could best help communities decide natural resource questions if I had a strong scientific background.” So Van began a third degree in biology with a focus on mathematical modeling and landscape ecology.

Van’s investment in learning and her commitment to public service paid off when she was named a Truman Scholar last winter. Addressing the 2002 entering class at Convocation Van said of her UW experience, “I have found my passion and am beginning a life I never dreamed I could have.” A master’s degree in environmental science followed by law school where she will focus on conservation law are Van’s next steps in that life dedicated to serving disadvantaged people as she works to solve environmental problems.

How is innovation recognized and valued in ancient and contemporary cultures? What kinds of relationships are possible between technological and artistic innovation? How have visual, aural, and textual representations and technologies altered conceptions of human identity and played into the construction of histories?

These questions framed the first annual Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities, an introduction to scholarly research for undergraduates—the only summer research immersion program in these fields in the country. Developed by OUE’s Undergraduate Research Program in partnership with the Simpson Center, Office of Research, Educational Outreach, and four creative faculty from as many disciplines, the eight-week institute was organized around an interdisciplinary theme, “Innovations: Text, Technologies and New Media in Ancient Worlds and Contemporary Cultures.” Nineteen undergraduates competitively selected from a field of sixty applicants participated in intensive plenary, seminar, and tutorial-style sessions with faculty members Patricia Failing, Art History, Richard Karpen, Music and Digital Arts, Scott Noegel, Near Eastern Languages and Literature, and Sarah Culpepper Stroup, Classics. Each student was named a Mary Gates Scholar with a $2,500 scholarship to support fulltime participation in the institute. At the institute’s concluding symposium on August 22, each student presented an original, individual research project developed in the program. Students and faculty alike valued working in an interdisciplinary group.

“Some of the most helpful criticism came in the beginning brainstorming phase,” comments sophomore Ari Okano of interacting with all four faculty. Noegel agrees. “Very seldom do some of these disciplines come into contact, much less dialogue with one another. One of the great experiences has been to hear how different disciplines approach a subject. It’s really been kind of eye-opening at some times.” Planning is already underway for next summer’s institute, which will build on feedback from this year’s participants.
Honors student Elizabeth Angell learned last fall she was one of only 32 Rhodes Scholars selected from across the US. She achieved that honor with a stellar academic record, sustained commitment to social activism and leadership, and the moxy to undertake challenging independent travel, all in pursuit of her passion for global issues.

A double major in history and international studies, Angell began her UW studies at 15 as an Early Entrance Program student. She won history’s top student award and for her leadership role in the Jackson School’s task force capstone project she was invited to participate in the UW Center for Women and Democracy’s 2001 summer institute. As a member of several local advocacy groups, Angell campaigned for debt relief, human rights for women and children, and environmental and fair labor standards in international trade.

Angell broke scholarly ground as a study abroad student when she received awards at the University of Edinburgh for outstanding performance in Celtic and British history. She also got involved in a local campaign to persuade major industrial countries to cancel the debt burden crippling the developing world.

This past year, a Bonderman Honors Travel Fellowship took Angell to the Middle East to explore questions of cultural identity. “One of the few advantages of traveling as a woman alone in this part of the world,” she wrote from Damascus, “are opportunities to meet local women, opportunities that are closed to single men or groups. The simplest one derives from the fact that single women are always seated next to other women on public transport.”

The June 2001 magna cum laude graduate sees her leadership role as that of a teacher, “shaping peoples’ awareness of the past and providing them with a platform on which to act in the future.”

Mary Gates Endowment Achieves Milestone

Like the hope and inspiration a thousand cranes symbolize, a thousand Mary Gates Scholars represent the promise of future intellectual and civic leadership. In August 2002 the Mary Gates Endowment passed the thousandth scholar mark. In fact, 1,036 UW undergraduates have been named Mary Gates Scholars since 1996 when the Endowment’s programs were inaugurated.

As of June 30, 2002, scholarships totaling $3.89 million have enabled students engaged in scholarly and creative work with faculty and imaginative public service or leadership activities to make the most of this research university’s gifts for becoming educated. An immeasurable resource that helps students use their scholarships to the fullest comes in the dedication and energy of the more than 800 faculty and 300 UW staff and community leaders who have mentored Mary Gates Scholars over the lifetime of the Endowment.

“Becoming a Mary Gates Scholar,” writes Matt Alexander, a 2001 UW graduate, “helped me find my life. During a time when I was uncertain of not only my own role in society, but of the role of my entire generation, I was given an opportunity to pursue my dreams as a student.” Last fall, Alexander received a Mitchell Scholarship to study for a master’s degree in peace and conflict studies in Northern Ireland.
Transformation sparked by intense exploration of new ideas, people, and places, is a hallmark of the undergraduate years. Key turning points mark this educational journey. To help students enter the University, make the most of a research university's extraordinary opportunities to contribute to pushing out the boundaries of what is known, use new knowledge to serve the common good, and realize their post-graduate dreams, Undergraduate Education has created a suite of programs and services. New Student Orientation and pre-major advising serve all new students, helping them to learn about the University and get off to a promising start. Last year, 4,873 freshmen, 1,591 transfer students, and 1,716 members of their families participated in Orientation programs. Academic counselors in the Gateway Center helped students with academic planning in more than 15,000 scheduled and drop-in appointments.

The Freshman Interest Group Program plays a crucial role in bringing students into full membership in the University community. In groups of twenty, students enroll in a cluster of courses that provides them a common learning experience during their first quarter. Last year 162 FIGs provided learning community experiences for 3,250 students, or a little more than 60% of the entering class. The goal for the program is to expand to serve 4,000 students or 80% of the entering class.

“The most difficult writing I’ve done is probably the history papers I’m writing now, just because I don’t know how to write a history paper,” says a student participant in the UW Study of Undergraduate Learning (UW SOUL), a project of the Office of Educational Assessment. “I know how to analyze books and novels, but I don’t know how to include the historical context and other people’s opinions.” Commenting on the challenges of learning to think within a disciplinary context, another UW SOUL participant explains, “I just don’t walk around thinking in Darwinian logic. It is a mode you have to get into in class or when you are doing your work.” Together with perspectives gained in interviews with more than 130 students, these students’ comments point to the study’s findings that although the nature of thinking and writing varies greatly from one discipline to another, students do not know that when they enter the University. This is especially true for freshmen who typically bring with them general notions of critical thinking and what counts as good writing, the latter typically based on their high school English classes. Recent reports on writing and critical thinking from the UW SOUL also highlight the fact that students usually must figure out by trial and error what a discipline’s approaches to thinking and problem solving are and what counts as good writing in that field.

The report on critical thinking reveals good news for both students and the University: students are challenged to think critically throughout the disciplines and the number of “most challenging” opportunities they report increased from their first year to their second year. The report on writing finds that students believe that in their first year they improve in the argumentative writing demanded of them at the University but with which they have had little experience in high school. Both reports encourage faculty to be explicit about what constitutes critical thinking and problem solving and what counts as good writing in their disciplines. The full reports can be found on the OEA website.

A growing number of students enter UW through the Honors Program. Last year, 243 freshmen enrolled in the Honors Program, compared with 180 students in 1999. This growth brings the Honors Program close to its target of providing expanded educational opportunity to 250 new students per year with enrollment of under-represented minorities proportional to their representation in the undergraduate student body as a whole. Demand outstrips expansion with 2,564 prospective students, 25% more than in 2001, applying to the Honors Program for 2002. New Honors programs in Business, Nursing, and Ocean and Fishery Sciences were initiated last year, providing enhanced, personalized educational opportunities for students majoring in those fields.

As evidenced by the dramatic increase in participation in the 5th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, a growing number of students are taking advantage of transformative opportunities to work closely on research with faculty across the disciplines. Three hundred eighty-four students presented their work compared with 258 in 2001.

OUE launched three new initiatives in 2001-2002 to help students at key educational turning points make the most of their potential.
Summer Bridge, a joint venture between OUE and the Office of Minority Affairs, was created to help entering first year students whose grades and test scores are lower than the average for the entering class. For five weeks 85 Summer Bridge students began their days early with lectures in biology and classics followed by intensive workshops on computing and library research skills. Their afternoons were filled with lectures in political science, seminars in math, writing, and oral presentation, with a break for dinner and guided study until 10 in the evening. Weekends were devoted to field trips, team-building, goal setting, diversity awareness, and homework, with free time to build friendships.

“It's very hard for me to express myself to somebody I don't know, but I learned to step out of my comfort zone and express my feelings towards others,” says one student of her Summer Bridge experience. Eighty-four of the 85 students completed Summer Bridge and enrolled fall quarter in seven Freshman Interest Groups tailored to meet their needs along with a two-credit course to mentor their progress. How the year goes for these students will be the measure of the program. One student already has found that, “the readings I had to do for Summer Bridge, have made it easier for me to do the readings that I have to do for fall quarter and the many quarters to come.”

During winter and spring quarters Summer Bridge students will participate in a one-credit mentoring course and receive specialized assistance in course selection and academic planning. Professor Robin Wright, the instructor for that early morning biology class and a Distinguished Teaching Award recipient who has taught thousands of students, found working with Summer Bridge students inspiring. “They have more spirit and energy than any of the other groups I have taught at UW and their eagerness to learn and to excel was evident in their hard-work and dedication.”

Transfer Café was initiated last spring by Undergraduate Advising to provide transfer students a regular forum for building community as they learn about the University. Because their time at UW is short, often only two years, transfer students must learn quickly how to make the most of their UW education. Students attending the first Transfer Café met as a focus group to suggest useful activities for Transfer Café. That discussion led to a series of invited speakers who met with the students in informal, small group settings and acquainted them with scholarship opportunities, the Ethnic Cultural Center’s programs and activities, and Center for Career Services resources. Making connections was what students valued most. “The conversations with enthusiastic faculty and advisers...
encouraged me,” commented one student, while another “loved meeting and seeing other transfer students.” Four Transfer Cafés are planned for each quarter this year. Although most students who participated last spring had already transferred to the University, staff will encourage prospective transfers to join in this year, giving them a jumpstart on all that UW has to offer. Transfer Café also will develop peer outreach, mentoring, and other leadership roles for students.

Since 1994, the Martin Family Foundation Honors Scholarship Program, administered by the Undergraduate Scholarship Office, has provided scholarships to honors students transferring to UW from community colleges in Washington. In 2001 a second scholarship, the Martin Achievement Scholarship, was created to eliminate barriers to UW with scholarship awards to students for their second year of community college and completion of their baccalaureate degree at UW. Fifteen scholarships were awarded this first year. When fully implemented, the program will fund 6-7 students a year at each of the Seattle community colleges-North, Central, and South. With more than 27% of Martin Scholars coming from under-represented minorities in the last two years, this program has helped improve the diversity of the UW student body as it has enriched its intellectual capacity.

Martin Family Honors Scholar Max Hunter grew up in San Diego in a world of gangs and drugs. He enrolled at San Diego State in 1982, but dropped out after two years for the quick money selling drugs on the street promised. Then in 1998, Hunter decided to turn his life around. The key as he saw it: earning a college degree. Hunter returned to school, for a brief period living out of his twenty year-old Volkswagen to make ends meet.

Mr. and Mrs. Ted Miholovich
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard W. Miner, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Dave C. Mitchell
Mr. Andrew Avery Norton
Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Orlando
Burton M. Orme, M.D.
Ms. Jennifer Miller Paci
Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Paup
Ms. Marguerite L. Peers
Dr. Robert Rosenberg and Ms. Jane Fein
Ms. Katrina Rotter
Ms. Jean M. Schultz
Dr. J. H. Shepherd & Prof. C. D. Laird
Mr. and Mrs. Calvin L. Simonton
Mr. Robert Connell & Ms. Barbara Skotte
Mr. James R. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. E. Barry Solomon
Mr. Mark D. Tada
Mr. Van Weigel and Ms. Linda Thomasson
Dr. and Mrs. Tod F. Tolan
Dr. and Mrs. William L. Topp
Mr. Steven Tostveit
Dr. and Mrs. James W. Tupper
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Van Vors
Dr. and Mrs. J. Daniel Warwиг
Dr. Douglas W. Weiff
Ms. Harriet W. Weyrick
Mr. and Mrs. James D. Whalan
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Wheeler
Mr. Jay W. Whitney
Ms. Ina C. Willner
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wolf
Prof. Craig ZumBrunnen

Resources

OU&E resources help students become independent learners, foster the development of outstanding teachers, and support the ability of departments to serve student demand for courses. Here we summarize funding allocations for 2001-2002 totaling $2,167,153.

Resources for students $1,138,609
Mary Gates Endowment $939,359
Bonderman Honors Travel Fellowship $50,000
Other scholarships and awards $149,250
(includes Bordeaux, Carlson, Dillman, Gerberding, Martin, Munro and others)

Resources for faculty $306,234
Teaching Academy programs $208,874
Global Classrooms $80,020
Other $17,340

Resources for departments $722,310
Teaching Assistant Fund $581,622
Writing Centers $56,880
Other $83,808
Hunter’s discipline and determination paid off. His performance earned him an Office of Minority Affairs McNair scholarship to support his involvement in research with a faculty mentor and a Martin Family Honors scholarship gave him time to devote himself fully to his double degree studies in the comparative history of ideas and the history of science. In his 2001 Freshman Convocation remarks Hunter declared, “your gift will make room for you,” urging students to make the most of their talents and gifts in small as well as large tasks “because you never know how distinguishing yourself in small things may affect your future.” Hunter’s intellectual gifts made room for him to gain additional undergraduate research experiences at Harvard and MIT and his gift for helping others turn their lives around earned him a Mary Gates leadership scholarship to start a support group for men from the prison ministry.

Just as gifts generate opportunity, so do turning points. With his June diploma in hand Hunter moved to Cambridge in August to pursue master’s degrees in divinity and public policy at Harvard University.

Teaching is first and last a learning profession. And that means faculty—both new and seasoned—encounter major turning points in their professional journeys. The Teaching Academy is a forum for Distinguished Teaching Award recipients to share their insights and instructional expertise with colleagues. Programs help new faculty begin their careers, provide more experienced faculty opportunities to experiment and deepen their craft, and honor the University’s most distinguished teachers. Since 1998 more than 600 faculty have taken part in Teaching Academy programs.

2002 Distinguished Teaching Award recipient David Domke has reaped the benefit of nearly every opportunity afforded by the Teaching Academy. When he joined the Communication faculty in 1998 as an assistant professor, Domke spent his first days on campus in the Faculty Fellows Program with 88 other newly appointed UW faculty. “A week set aside to help incoming faculty sent a powerful message,” says the former reporter. “I have many colleagues at other universities, and none experienced anything like that.” Domke felt challenged to do his very best and also valued as a new member of the University community. The result? A desire to give back.

Taking part in the spring 2000 Large Class Collegium, a program that focuses on the specialized art of teaching large enrollment courses, struck home to Domke’s passion.
for teaching. "I met faculty who see large classes as a great opportunity, rather than an unfortunate thing. I have always seen large classes as opportunities, so it was like coming home." With a small grant from the Teaching Academy aimed at helping a faculty member improve a large course, Domke incorporated service learning into his course on the American press and politics. Of the 100 students who take the course, about half opt for the community experience. "The grant helped me create a way for the course to intersect with the kinds of politics and communication that students care deeply about. I was stunned by how students see the things they learn in a course play out in society in ways that are beyond what I had in mind when I taught the concept. And that has broadened my thinking about teaching."

Students are enthusiastic about the connections Domke helps them make between ideas and their application. "I have never had a professor put this much effort into applying topics to events that surround us each day," observes one student. Of the impact of that effort another student says, "He has an amazing ability to draw his students in and allow them to feel connected to the information."

This past year, the Provost's Workshops brought Domke an opportunity to give back as a facilitator, creating another turning point in his career. "I had to fully think through and articulate my philosophy of teaching," notes Domke of preparing for the workshops. He found that sharing his teaching philosophy invited critique, motivated his colleagues, and moved him toward a different way of thinking about teaching. "Just as I recognize that students feel as much as they think, I now see that the same is true for me—teaching and talking about teaching are powerful cognitive and affective moments that change us." Earning tenure in just four years, Domke begins this fall as an associate professor.

Where is the next bend in the road? Colleague Jerry Baldasty, chair of Communication, and Domke are planning a center on race, gender, and communication that will integrate research and teaching. And that just may be one of the next major turning points for undergraduate education as a whole at this major research university.
“teaching and talking about teaching are powerful cognitive and affective moments that change us.”