



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON Office of Undergraduate Education
 2002»2003 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In recent years, the University of Washington has embarked upon a major re-invention of undergraduate education—from education centered on the delivery of knowledge to education centered on acquiring knowledge. The Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) is committed to providing exceptional, student-centered academic experiences. Our educational responsibilities extend beyond registration and student progress through the University to ensuring that the knowledge and experiences students acquire here build upon one another. We recognize that the work students accomplish here does not consist of a series of endings occurring every ten weeks. Rather, curricula and departmental programs are scaffoldings that support students' opportunities to imagine, initiate, and create an educational experience that's intentional, connected, and rigorous, preparing them for a changing world. The undergraduate experience is a transition to a beginning.

Last winter, I taught Sociology 271, "Introduction to Deviant Behavior." My students—all 500 of them—and I examined theories of social context and norms. Who establishes norms? Who violates them? I offered a community-based component in which students applied classroom knowledge to social contexts. I was delighted that half the class—250 undergraduates—volunteered for these projects. (Were my students deviating from established undergraduate behavioral norms?) Students actively served in many organizations including health clinics, shelters, elementary schools, and housing services. From class evaluations, I learned how much students value these experiences; many continued their volunteer work long after I turned in grades.

These types of community-based opportunities not only encourage students to shape their own education, they create partnerships that educate the whole student. OUE's framework for "whole student" education is substantial. Community-based programs inspire students to develop their own philosophies of community, civic responsibility, and social justice. Research opportunities connect renowned faculty with motivated students and animate new questions and possible solutions to complicated issues. International perspectives and insight are fostered through study abroad and interaction with UW students from other countries. Teaching programs engage faculty in methods for excellent instruction.

The UW offers many opportunities for student involvement, but individual circumstances often preclude a student's full participation in campus life. OUE is determined to ensure a rich academic experience for all undergraduates. This includes cultivating a diverse student body, increasing access to the University, and ensuring that all students who choose are availed of the opportunity to engage in leadership and research opportunities at the UW. To this end, we continue to pursue support that will enable students to be full, active participants in their education.

In the coming year, we're creating, upgrading, and analyzing programs and operations with goals of increased student and faculty involvement, increased educational enrichment opportunities, and new ideas and technology to better meet student and faculty needs. Undergraduate education is best achieved through strong relationships among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. I look forward to new and continued partnerships of learning and discovery.

Welcome to Undergraduate Education,

George S. Bridges

Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education



UW SOUL: Learning About Student Learning

The individual student learner is the Office of Undergraduate Education's (OUE) primary focus. The educational needs of UW students drive OUE program offerings and departmental decisions. Because we value research-based decisions, another key factor is educational assessment. With individual students in mind—and 304 of them participating when the project began in 1999—OUE's Office of Educational Assessment recently completed the four-year UW Study of Undergraduate Learning (UW SOUL). This study set out to learn about UW undergraduates. Students' accounts of their academic and personal goals, academic experiences, backgrounds, and viewpoints underscore the reality that learning is complex and dynamic, rarely linear, and often messy and ambiguous.

Researchers focused the study on learning in six areas



UW SOUL researchers embraced the complexity of the learning process and designed the first longitudinal examination of UW undergraduates' learning. The ways in which students are changed by the UW experience has commonly been analyzed through surveys and interviews conducted when students are freshmen and seniors. In other words, longitudinal conclusions were sometimes drawn from cross-sectional data. UW SOUL set out to describe the undergraduate learning experience, its process and complexity, with a goal of understanding and improving the delivery of education at the University. In this story, we present findings from this study.

Project Director Catharine Beyer, Office of Educational Assessment Director Emeritus Jerry Gillmore, Research Assistant Andrew Fisher, and a team of nine undergraduate researchers focused the study on learning in six areas identified by undergraduates, graduates, and the state legislature as key to student success in college and in the working world. These areas are writing, problem solving/critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, understanding and appreciating diversity, information literacy, and general growth as learners.

The study was designed to capture rich information about individual student's learning experiences. Therefore, many questions were open-ended, and researchers looked for categories emerging from student answers, instead of offering students pre-determined categories via multiple-choice questions. All UW SOUL students anonymously reported on their UW experience through web-based surveys and email questions, and about half of the participants took part in interviews and focus groups. This sub-set of students also created portfolios containing work samples and essays reflecting on that work. »



WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

What do students hope to gain from the UW experience? What are their aspirations? What experiences do they bring to college life and learning? In order to accurately gauge how the UW changes students, the ways we meet student needs, and how we could better help students achieve their goals, Office of Educational Assessment researchers set out to learn what students' priorities were as they entered the UW.

With those considerations in mind, one of the first questions UW SOUL students answered in fall 1999 interviews was, "What are the most important things you want to learn while you are at the UW?" Researchers analyzed the responses and isolated eight frequently mentioned goals. Students most often articulated the three goals below.

"What do you want to learn at the UW?"

1 Knowledge in a specific field (34% of the total number of students responding)

"I honest-to-God want to study artificial intelligence...I want to learn biology, archaic languages, the whole gamut. Anything that can be remotely connected with AI that will benefit my goal."

2 Broad-based knowledge—"Everything!" (21%)

"I want to learn about life in the city, about science. I want to pick a field and become knowledgeable about it. I want to learn about the community, how it works. I want to learn about living with a person. The roommate experience is totally new to me. I want to learn how to compromise, how to work together, how to be a better leader, how to ride the Metro bus system, where all the cool places to hang out in Seattle are, what it feels like to live somewhere where it rains more than nine inches a year, how it feels to work with a professor who is on the cutting edge of knowledge and is passionate about what he is doing."

3 Work skills—what I need to get a job after college (20%)

"Whatever I decide to major in, I want to do that well, so I can go out and get a semi-decent job."

Students also aspired to find a direction, identify a major, learn more about people, improve writing skills, increase understanding of diverse people/cultures, and gain independence and self-understanding.

In addition to academic goals, students also reported that they came to the UW hoping to expand their personal horizons. Students most often cited the following areas as the personal skills they wished to develop at the UW:

- Make friends, be more outgoing
- Improve communication skills
- Improve time management, self discipline
- Learn diverse viewpoints
- Become well-rounded
- Learn a language

UW SOUL students' goals demonstrate that their definition of learning is broad. They bring hopes for academic, social, and personal learning to the UW, as well as a desire to find a place to which they can contribute.

"I hope to be a more well-rounded person," said one student. "And to gather every experience that I possibly can and to use it to my fullest. I basically want options in the world as a person. That is something I can't get back home. I just want the option to be the person I want to be without having to conform to everyone else's standards. And being around such diversity, I am allowed to do exactly that—explore and express who I want to be."

"A student's move to independence is reinforced by the way we do things here," says Beyer. "Often, new students find themselves in large classes, where it is up to them to seek help if they need it, and it is up to them to do the reading and the homework we've assigned. They also have to decide what they think about new issues they're learning about—what they support and what they don't, what they think makes for a moral life and what they don't. At the same time, many new students are getting themselves up in the mornings, taking care of their own laundry, and figuring out their meals for the first time. While this whole set of responsibilities can be challenging, they seem to pick up that challenge fairly quickly. And they seem to enjoy the choices and responsibilities."

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

In spring 2000, at the end of their first year at the UW, UW SOUL students were asked to describe classroom experiences that required critical thinking and problem solving. Students' descriptions of challenging critical thinking and problem-solving tasks showed that they engage in critical thinking across all disciplines and that what students do when they are thinking critically is discipline-specific, rather than a generic skill. Some examples:

"The class was biological calculus...One problem had to do with going to Africa and taking a random sampling of the population, and we

found out what part of them would have a disease. Then we figured out how many people had the disease and how accurate the test results were."

"[Professors] would give you half a [computer] code and then they would tell you to finish it. And they would tell you what it did. But between half a code and what it does, 'finish it' is a long way...Programming is like learning another language. It is like translating. You have to figure out how to translate a ball bouncing across the screen into a language."

"In the American Politics class we had to do things like discuss ways to increase voting among youth. We had to take an active problem that actually exists and write a paper about how we would fix it."

"In Economics 201, you analyze graphs and charts and try to figure out which way you think the economy is going to go, and so on. Are stock prices going up?"



FIRST QUARTER IMMERSION

“Were you changed in any way by your first quarter at the UW?”

In the first week of winter quarter 2000, researchers asked UW SOUL students, “Were you changed in any way by your first quarter at the UW?” Ninety-two percent of the participants said yes. Furthermore, the areas in which students reported significant changes at the end of their first quarter are areas they hoped to develop at the UW.

Almost half of the students mentioned that they learned to be independent and manage their time. One student commented, “I have become a bit more resourceful and self-dependent...I learned how to coordinate trips to the grocery store with a big backpack and umbrella in hand. The large and academically intimidating Odegaard and Suzzallo libraries were soon conquerable as well...Overall, I can say that I became more self-reliant, self-trusting, forward, and resourceful, and in those ways, I grew up a little bit over the course of my first quarter at the U.”

Students also reported learning how to study (24%); learning how to deal with people in new situations (20%); learning about the UW and college in general—how to “do” college (18%); making new friends (13%); and learning from UW student diversity (12.5%).

According to UW SOUL researchers, the correlation between student goals and changes “suggests that students take steps early to achieve the goals they have...and that the process of education in the first year at the UW fosters those goals.” »

Yes!

EXPECTATIONS AND SURPRISES

In the spring of 2000, UW SOUL researchers emailed all participants the question, “Thinking about what you expected when you came to the UW last fall, what, if anything, has surprised you the most?” About 295 students responded.

Some of the most common student responses are provided below, followed by a student quotation that illustrates that category of response.

“What surprised you the most?”

UW feels smaller than students expected

“The thing that has surprised me the most...is how small the campus can really seem. Once you have a group of friends and schedule classes with people you know, the whole experience becomes more personal.”

UW is harder than students expected

“I was surprised by the expectations of my professors. In high school, we were able to get away with more, miss more classes, study less. When I came to college...I was forced to try my very best in every class.”

No surprises—the UW is what students expected

“Not much has surprised me. It’s pretty much what I expected. I love it!”

Faculty members are more accessible, helpful, intelligent, and caring than students expected

“For me, I was surprised at how much the TAs and professors are interested in your learning.”

Interestingly, the negative responses given by more than one student were exact opposites of some of the positive responses. The most common criticisms by students, for example, are that the UW is easier than expected, feels larger than expected, and that faculty members are less accessible than expected. However, in each case the number of positive responses out-numbered the number of negative responses.

UW SOUL completed its four years of data collection in spring 2003. Researchers are analyzing the latest information, which eventually will appear in a book. Beyer also shares the study’s findings with faculty, program directors, and campus groups who want added perspective on UW undergraduates.

Learning about students’ goals, challenges, perceptions, and values has already had a direct effect on OUE programs. Freshman orientation was redesigned to help new students build community among their peers and to introduce interaction with faculty. CLUE, a lively, multi-disciplinary study center in Mary Gates Hall, begins this fall. Enhance-

ments to Classroom Support Services will help faculty provide technologically advanced, academically rigorous experiences for undergraduate students.

We want these and other OUE programs to galvanize innovative and exciting partnerships among undergraduates, faculty, and community members. The University of Washington, after all, plays a role in preparing students for their entry into the greater world. The paths they take through the UW help students recognize and meet the changing needs of their immediate and larger communities.

To read an overview of the entire study, its methodology, and initial reports, visit <http://www.washington.edu/oeal/soul.htm>.

How does writing at the UW differ from students' previous writing experience?

About three out of every four freshmen and three out of every five transfer students experience a difference between the writing they are required to do at the UW and the writing they were required to do at their previous institutions.

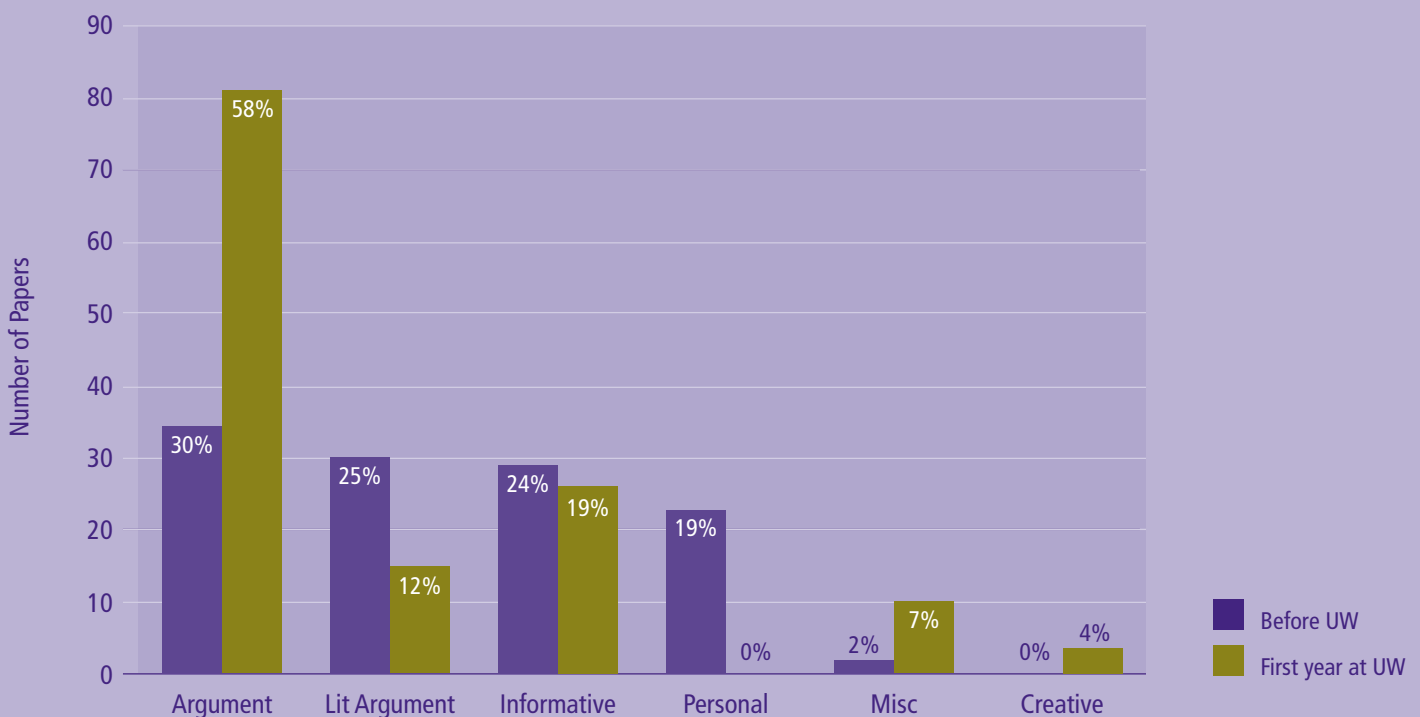
One difference centers on the types of papers students are asked to write. Thirty-six percent of the papers students wrote in high school were

based on a literary argument; 27% of student papers were issue-based arguments. Students experience a dramatic shift during their first year at the UW, where 20% of student papers are literary-based and 50% are issue arguments.

A second difference is that the writing students do at the UW is assigned in classes across the curriculum, and different disciplines have different practices, purposes, and conventions for

writing. For many students—particularly for freshmen, but also for those transfer students who have not done much writing within disciplines—the lesson that what constitutes “good writing” varies from discipline to discipline can be a surprise. The graph below demonstrates this difficulty and shows the types of papers students identify as challenging.

Types of papers students considered most challenging before coming to the UW and in their first year at the UW.



Students Tell Us How Professors Show They Care About Student Learning

1. They interact with students in class, engaging them in substantive ways.
2. They design lectures/courses that anticipate and reduce barriers to students' learning.
3. They are accessible in a variety of ways.
4. They demonstrate a passion for the subject; they are enthusiastic about teaching it.
5. They get to know something about the students' personal experiences or interests and know at least some students in the class by name.
6. They have high expectations and standards for students' learning; they challenge and stretch students' thinking.
7. They provide critical feedback that guides students' learning on assignments.
8. They are experts in their fields of study.
9. They help students do well on tests.
10. They treat students with respect and understanding.
11. They connect course material to real-world applications and events.



Local and International Service Learning

A significant part of the Office of Undergraduate Education's mission is to "advance the integration of undergraduate learning with university research and public service." Highlighted here are a few examples of these undergraduate opportunities; to learn more about research and service learning opportunities in general, please visit www.washington.edu/oue/.

THE CARLSON CENTER AND THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

"We talk all the time about service to the state and service to the region, but not all the time about service to the city."

The Edward E. Carlson Leadership and Public Service Center partners with community organizations to create service-learning opportunities for students across disciplines. The focal point for last year's UW projects was the vibrant and complex University District. Historically, service-learning opportunities happen across the region, which makes the U-District focus for year-long volunteer projects unique.

"We talk all the time about service to the state and service to the region, but not all the time about service to the city," explains Carlson Center Director Michaelann Jundt. "These projects deepen learning for the student and have a positive impact on our immediate community."

Student projects and participating disciplines are varied. For example, Community and Environmental Planning (CEP) students worked with businesses and service organizations to preserve the District's identity and history; renovate a historic building façade; provide a public art expression for homeless youth; and coordinate communication between U-District community groups. Participation in these projects with U-District partners helps CEP students develop a philosophy of community while providing useful service to the neighborhood.



For more information on The Carlson Center, please visit www.depts.washington.edu/leader/ or call 206-616-2885.

PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

OUE's Program on the Environment formally began its international field work and study-abroad initiatives during winter and spring quarters, 2003. The new international curriculum is designed to approach environmental trends and problems from many perspectives and to recognize that these issues cross borders.

During winter quarter 2003, students studied problems of development and sustainability in Auroville, an intentional community on India's Bay of Bengal. Students completed service learning projects focusing on topics such as plant and water conservation, organic farming, and environmental education.

The Program on the Environment partnered with Global Classrooms and the Program on Africa to connect undergraduates to the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), South Africa. UW and UPE students collaborated on year-long research projects. Projects focused on concerns local to South Africa, and students were guided by global themes from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg as well as the Earth Charter presented for discussion at the Summit.

For more information on the Program on the Environment, please visit www.depts.washington.edu/poeweb or call 206-616-3310.

Announcements

ROBINSON CENTER HONORED WITH BROTMAN AWARD

Congratulations to the Transition School and Early Entrance Program in the Robinson Center for Young Scholars for receiving a 2003 Brotman Award for Instructional Excellence!

For more than 25 years, these Robinson Center programs have provided some of the most ambitious young students in Washington avenues to enter the UW after seventh or eighth grade. These programs encourage and develop young, talented, and motivated scholars while ensuring that they have a well-rounded childhood and college experience.

"We're educating the brightest and best minds in an academically rigorous way so these students can achieve their best," says Robinson Center Director Dr. Kathleen Noble. "It's like taking an elite athlete and putting them into training."

The \$17,500 Brotman Award will be used to upgrade classroom technology and support other instructional needs. Excited about the possibilities the funding brings, Noble also views the award as priceless recognition of faculty and student commitment.

The Brotman Award for Instructional Excellence "recognizes the accomplishments of programs and departments in advancing excellence in teaching and learning among undergraduates." Motivated by Jeffrey Brotman's relationship with a UW history professor, the award is made possible by a generous gift from Jeffrey and Susan Brotman.



RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Dean George Bridges made the following Office of Undergraduate Education appointments during 2002-03. Welcome and congratulations!

Stan Chernicoff New Assistant Dean of Academic Support

Geology Senior Lecturer Stan Chernicoff joins OUE as Assistant Dean of Academic Support. A UW Distinguished Teaching Award recipient in 2000, Chernicoff also directs the UW Student Athlete Academic Services. This combination of experience leaves him well-suited to create innovative ways for undergraduates to realize academic success.

This fall, Chernicoff will launch Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (CLUE), which will transform Mary Gates Hall into a multi-disciplinary evening study center.

For more information about CLUE, email Stan Chernicoff at sechern@u.washington.edu.

Christine Ingebritsen Appointed Acting Associate Dean

Associate Professor Christine Ingebritsen is OUE's Acting Associate Dean for the 2003-04 academic year.

Ingebritsen teaches in the Scandinavian Studies and Political Science departments. She has served as chair of the European Studies Program in The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and was recently elected president of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies.

As Acting Associate Dean, Ingebritsen will examine issues surrounding student retention, TA assignments, faculty training, and international education.

For more information, visit www.depts.washington.edu/scand/ingie.html.

Shawn Wong Named Director of Honors Program

Shawn Wong brings extensive teaching and administrative experience to his new role as director of the UW Honors Program. Wong has taught in the English, American Ethnic Studies, and Urban Design and Planning departments. He's also chaired the Department of English, served as director of the Creative Writing Program and director of the Asian American Studies Program.

As Honors Program director, Wong hopes to add more study abroad opportunities for Honors students as well as develop new classes that will involve more UW faculty and experts from the private sector.

For more information about the Honors Program, visit www.depts.washington.edu/uwhonors/.

Supporters of Undergraduate Education

The Office of Undergraduate Education gratefully acknowledges Bill and Melinda Gates and the Foundation for the creation of the Mary Gates Endowment, which has provided direct support to more than 1,275 students since 1996. We thank the following individuals, corporations, organizations, and foundations for their gifts, grants, and other support (July 2002 through June 2003):

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Martin Family Foundation
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OUE 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 2002-2003, totaling \$2,604,544.



Resources for Students

\$1,567,108

Mary Gates Endowment \$1,314,147
Other scholarships and awards \$252,961
(Includes Bonderman, Bordeaux, Carlson, Gerberding, IGERT, Martin, Pinkham, and others)

Resources for Faculty

\$394,488

Teaching Academy Programs \$249,041
Global Classrooms \$145,447

Resources for Departments

\$642,948

Teaching Assistant Fund \$509,482
Writing Centers \$60,480
Brotman Awards \$35,000
Other \$37,986

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Mission Statement

The Office of Undergraduate Education at the University of Washington focuses and upholds the University's commitment to excellence in undergraduate learning by developing transformative educational experiences for all undergraduate students within and beyond the classroom.

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