



**An Academic Plan to
Lead UW-Parkside
Toward 2020**

*Aiming High and Making
Excellence Inclusive*



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PREFACE

I am pleased to present the University of Wisconsin-Parkside academic plan, *An Academic Plan to Lead UW-Parkside Toward 2020: Aiming High and Making Excellence Inclusive*, which was unanimously approved by the Faculty Senate in April 2012.

Aiming High and Making Excellence Inclusive is the result of over two years of work led by the Committee on Academic Planning. This faculty-led process involved individuals from departments and units across campus in discussions, brown bags, and presentations about the academic and demographic profile of our students, our academic program array and pedagogical practices that have a high impact on student success. The Committee on Academic Planning approached their work in a scholarly way—collecting the best evidence and data with an understanding of current and future contexts and trends, that affect our academic planning. You will notice that there are helpful charts and tables as well as references to further reading throughout the plan. I encourage you to explore these informative readings and resources.

The title of our academic plan, *Aiming High and Making Excellence Inclusive*, reflects our commitment to set a high bar for academic achievement for our students while ensuring that all students who are committed to succeed are retained and graduate. The title of our plan is borrowed from the Association of American Colleges & Universities work to support campuses in creating learning supportive environments that challenge and support students to do their best work and achieve their academic goals.

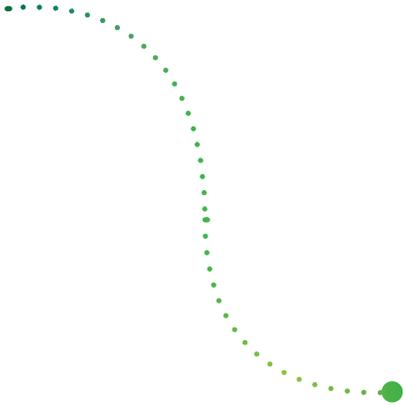
The purpose of the academic plan is to move us all forward toward the single goal of achieving academic excellence and distinction among our peers, drawing students from across the State of Wisconsin and across the state border to have a rich experience in our classrooms and well beyond and helping them cross the finish line at graduation. The publication of the plan coincides with the creation of four distinctive colleges—the College of Arts and Humanities, the College of Business, Economics, and Computing, the College of Natural and Health Sciences, and the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies. The full implementation of our academic plan will be realized through the work of the colleges as well as the efforts of all offices and units across campus in student affairs and administrative services. We must work together to achieve the goals that we have set for our students and ourselves.

Terry Brown
Provost
September 2012



Executive Summary





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This academic plan defines campus-wide goals for the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. The plan is intended to provide guidance as we move toward 2020 and beyond, so that we can continue to build on our strengths as we accommodate a changing student landscape, new routes to college degrees, and new technologies that will soon be an accepted standard in higher education. The goals have been arrived at through a process that included extensive input from faculty and the campus community. They are summarized here; a thorough discussion of each is available in the full document.

The plan is a living document that will be reviewed and revised periodically. It is a guide, but it is also useful as a tool for faculty and staff to think through many of the goals, consider any unintended consequences or create new proposals that become clear as a result of the goals laid out here. In most cases, it is by design more general than specific, in order to allow individual departments the latitude to determine the best way to approach particular goals, as they work within their colleges to implement the plan.

Section 1. Student Profile

The plan is comprised of three sections. In the first section, we describe our current student body in terms of demographics and academics, we set goals for addressing challenges, particularly the challenge of improving our retention and graduation rates, and we describe expected changes that will take place among students by the year 2020. The section lays out four goals:

Goal 1.1

Increase retention and graduation rates to surpass the average of our peer institutions, and move toward equity of outcomes across demographic groups, by addressing the challenges faced by UW-Parkside students as they strive to learn and graduate.

Goal 1.2

Increase our enrollment to the target set through strategic enrollment planning to meet the growing needs of Southeast Wisconsin.

Goal 1.3

Improve our ability to serve adults returning to college, active members of the military and their families, veterans, international students and graduate students by designing new programs, in areas of growing opportunity, that include clear paths to degree completion, a high level of flexibility, and appropriate use of technology.

Goal 1.4

Anticipate and prepare for changes in the student population that reflect changes in society as we move toward 2020.



Section 2. Academic Programs

The second section of our plan responds to our understanding of our students' diverse needs with a set of learning goals and strategies. Our academic programs emphasize areas of study that form a foundation for a lifetime of learning in a fast changing world. Education at UW-Parkside occurs at two levels: General Education, in a selected set of well-assessed 100- and 200-level classes; and Specialized Education in undergraduate majors, minors, certificate programs, and graduate programs. Three broad learning goals form the basis for integrating our undergraduate academic programs – Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility.

Goal 2.1

Provide students with learning experiences that will promote continuous improvement in their development of Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility across all of our programs, and to provide them with the ability and motivation to pursue lifelong learning.

Goal 2.1a

Develop a program to integrate into our curriculum a significant and meaningful amount of writing or communication across the curriculum.

Goal 2.1b

Determine a set of specific, concrete competencies that define what ICT (Information and Communication Technology) proficiency means within each academic program, and revise curricula, if needed, to ensure that the competencies are met by all majors.

Goal 2.1c

Strive to increase significantly inclusivity and diversity in the faculty, staff, and administration sufficient to promote diverse and inclusive academic perspectives and better mentoring of all students.

Goal 2.1d

Expand the inclusivity and diversity of both the curriculum and pedagogical approaches.

Goal 2.1e

Internationalize the curriculum by incorporating global perspectives into all disciplines. Increase the percentage of our students who participate in academic courses that include international travel at least to the level of the UW System average.

Goal 2.2

Build opportunities for career knowledge and planning into the curricula of every major, forging closer connections between classroom and professional practice.

Goal 2.3

Identify and respond to the current and future demands for professions and occupations in the region.

Goal 2.4

Increase the career relevance of programs by providing a variety of certificate programs, which link students' academic knowledge with concrete applications, and academic minors which provide options for small structured programs and can be combined with another major.

Goal 2.5

Add new master's level programs to provide our surrounding communities with both trained professionals and post-graduate opportunities.

Goal 2.6

Provide support for strengthening the teacher/scholar model for faculty, a model that enriches our academic programs and contributes to a vibrant intellectual climate.

Goal 2.7

Identify and implement strategies to strengthen the campus community, including the classified staff, academic staff, faculty, and administration, in order to provide a rich environment and infrastructure for successful academic programs.

Goal 2.8

Establish a program of integrated assessment throughout the curriculum.

Section 3. Pedagogy

Our goals for this section seek to build on the commitment we have to our students, to enable and encourage experiential learning, including undergraduate research and other high impact practices, and to challenge us to become even better at meeting the intellectual needs of our students. Pedagogical goals include:

Goal 3.1

Increase student success through strengthening high impact pedagogical practices with the goal of attaining recognition as a leader in experiential learning.

Goal 3.2

Provide support for teaching improvement through professional development and opportunities for research and creative activity.

Goal 3.3

Provide support for improved course design and appropriate class sizes to meet the needs of our students while assuring high quality educational experiences and support for teaching effectiveness.

Goal 3.4

Provide increased flexibility in scheduling and delivery of classes to accommodate the lifestyles and learning preferences of the students of 2020.

Goal 3.5

Broaden and intensify the use of innovative teaching and learning technologies and delivery systems, such as increasing online instruction and mobile learning.

Goal 3.6

Provide a variety of physical learning environments with sufficient infrastructure and professional support.

Goal 3.7

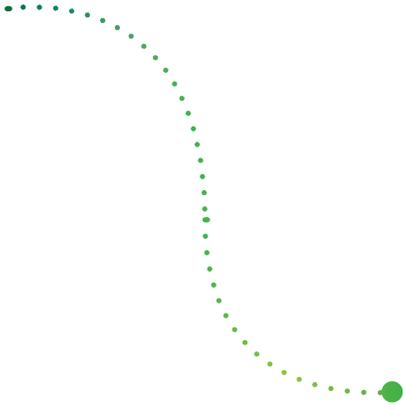
Provide continuous improvement of pedagogical practices and technologies through assessment processes.

In this academic plan, we focus on a united view of a set of goals that will support the development of the competent, effective, and responsible citizens of the future. Although our programs are specialized, they are united by a common vision of a UW-Parkside graduate. As we move toward 2020, these goals are intended to guide us and focus our work so that UW-Parkside students and the southeastern Wisconsin region can receive the maximum benefit. This academic plan will change our work to keep our programs relevant and effective as we adapt to an ever-changing environment. UW-Parkside will continue to contribute competent, innovative, and productive citizens to the region, the nation, and the world.





Introduction



The academic plan defines the path that the campus, working together, follows to achieve the UW-Parkside mission. Our goal is to provide guidance as we move toward 2020. Our plan is to prepare for changes in both our student profile and the increasingly complex human environment by sharpening our educational goals, strengthening our pedagogies, adding new flexibilities in routes to a college degree, and quickly implementing proven technologies. We are well-prepared to set off on this road because we are already educating the projected multi-culturally diverse student population, serving adult learners, and creating opportunities for combining work with education. Still, we have work to do to get to where we want to be. With this document in hand, we are ready to move ahead.

*Aim high – and make
excellence inclusive.*

*– AAC&U, The Quality
Imperative.*

Aiming high and making excellence inclusive are the principles running through each section of this plan. We are a university with a proud history of academic excellence and faculty scholarship, and this plan is intended to keep us on track as we navigate the challenges and opportunities in the coming years. As we do so, we will continue to value high standards for students, faculty, and academic staff, and to affirm our commitment to making a college education available to a broad range of students. While maintaining these standards depends upon a faculty participating in the growth of their disciplines through research and creative activity, this plan focuses on students, the curriculum and pedagogy. The changing needs of faculty in their roles as researchers, scholars and artists will be addressed elsewhere.

UW-Parkside is grounded in the community, and we appreciate and understand it. Most of our students come from and remain here. UW-Parkside contributes locally in many ways, but perhaps the most important contribution is the large number of graduates who go on to productive careers in southeastern Wisconsin. As of November, 2011 there were more than 18,000 UW-Parkside alumni

with contact information on file, and 75% of these graduates resided in southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois (UW-Parkside Institutional Advancement 2011). Our region and its communities are in need of well-prepared college graduates. Our graduates provide a boost to the local labor market and economy.

This plan sets forth goals for UW-Parkside’s curriculum and pedagogy, but it does not lay out the details of implementation. Separate implementation plans will follow. The responsibility for implementation will be widely shared across the campus by colleges, departments, and administrative units. Many members of the campus community contributed to this plan in their areas of expertise, and all of us will be called upon to contribute to transforming the University of Wisconsin-Parkside’s academic program by carrying out this ambitious plan.

Our History and Mission

UW-Parkside is a comprehensive university offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business, and technology. UW-Parkside was founded in 1968; it is now one of thirteen four-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System. The campus is located in the town of Somers between the two southeastern Wisconsin cities of Kenosha and Racine - just a few miles from each - and just two miles from the Lake Michigan shoreline. During the past five decades, the university has created numerous partnerships in both communities as well as in cities and towns in the western portion of Racine and Kenosha counties. This campus gives students from southeastern Wisconsin the opportunity to earn a University of Wisconsin bachelor’s or master’s degree without incurring the cost of attending college in another part of the state. It also gives students from the region the option of attending a small UW campus, one without large lecture halls, where faculty and instructional academic staff get to know their students. UW-Parkside is committed to high-quality educational programs, creative and scholarly activities, and services responsive to its diverse student population and its local, national and global communities. To fulfill this mission, we:

- Offer high-quality academic programs rooted in the tradition of a liberal education in the arts, sciences and professions and responsive to the occupational, civic and cultural needs of the region; we actively seek the continued input of all stakeholders.
- Generate, disseminate and apply knowledge through research, and through professional and creative activity that benefits communities throughout the region and the world.



- Attract and retain a diverse and multicultural population of students, faculty, and staff.
- Foster a teaching and learning community that provides opportunities for collaborative faculty, student, and staff interaction in support of excellence.
- Utilize technology creatively and effectively in courses, programs, and services.
- Prepare students to be successful in their professional, civic, and personal lives.
- Provide programs that meet the intellectual and cultural needs of people throughout their lives.
- Provide and share in cultural and intellectual activities in partnership with local and regional communities.

Key to our identity is a diverse, multi-cultural student body. Among University of Wisconsin campuses, we enroll the highest percentage of students of color, first generation students, and students with financial need. This gives us a distinct mission, to which we are committed and of which we are proud. We have a deep and lasting impact on our students, who might not otherwise have the opportunity to achieve a college degree. UW-Parkside students bring a wealth of life and work experience to campus and add this real world perspective to their classes, enriching pedagogy in the process.

An Overview of the Plan

The academic plan is a living document that will be reviewed and revised periodically. It is a guide, but it is also useful as a tool to help faculty and staff think through many of the goals, consider any unintended consequences or create new proposals that become clear as a result of the implementation of the plan. In most cases, it is by design not specific, in order to allow individual departments the latitude to determine their own approaches to particular goals.

The plan is comprised of three sections.

1. Student Profile

In the first section, we describe the current student body in terms of demographics and academics; we set goals for addressing challenges, particularly the challenge of improving retention and graduation rates; and we provide an overview of future demographic trends shaping the student profile of 2020. Some of the key goals from this section include:

- Review data on low retention and graduation rates.
- Identify and implement strategies to increase retention and graduation rates and produce equitable outcomes across demographic groups.
- Improve our ability to serve adults returning to college, veterans, graduate students and international students by designing new programs in areas of growing opportunity that include: clear paths to degree completion, a high level of flexibility, and appropriate use of technology.

2. Academic Programs

The second section focuses on learning goals and strategies. Key goals from this section include:

- Integrate three broad learning goals – *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility* – into all academic programs, and provide students with the ability and motivation to continue their development through lifelong learning.
- Take advantage of our diverse student population to produce graduates who excel in their ability to work effectively with multicultural professional populations and global markets.
- Plan and implement a program for integrating writing across the curriculum.

- Establish proficiency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a graduation requirement.
- Create mechanisms for easing the transition from graduation to professional life.
- Internationalize the campus so that students are able to meet the challenges of working on a global stage when they graduate.
- Create an outstanding Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Program.
- Integrate assessment activities throughout the academic program.
- Increase the number of graduate programs.
- Strengthen our teacher/scholar model.



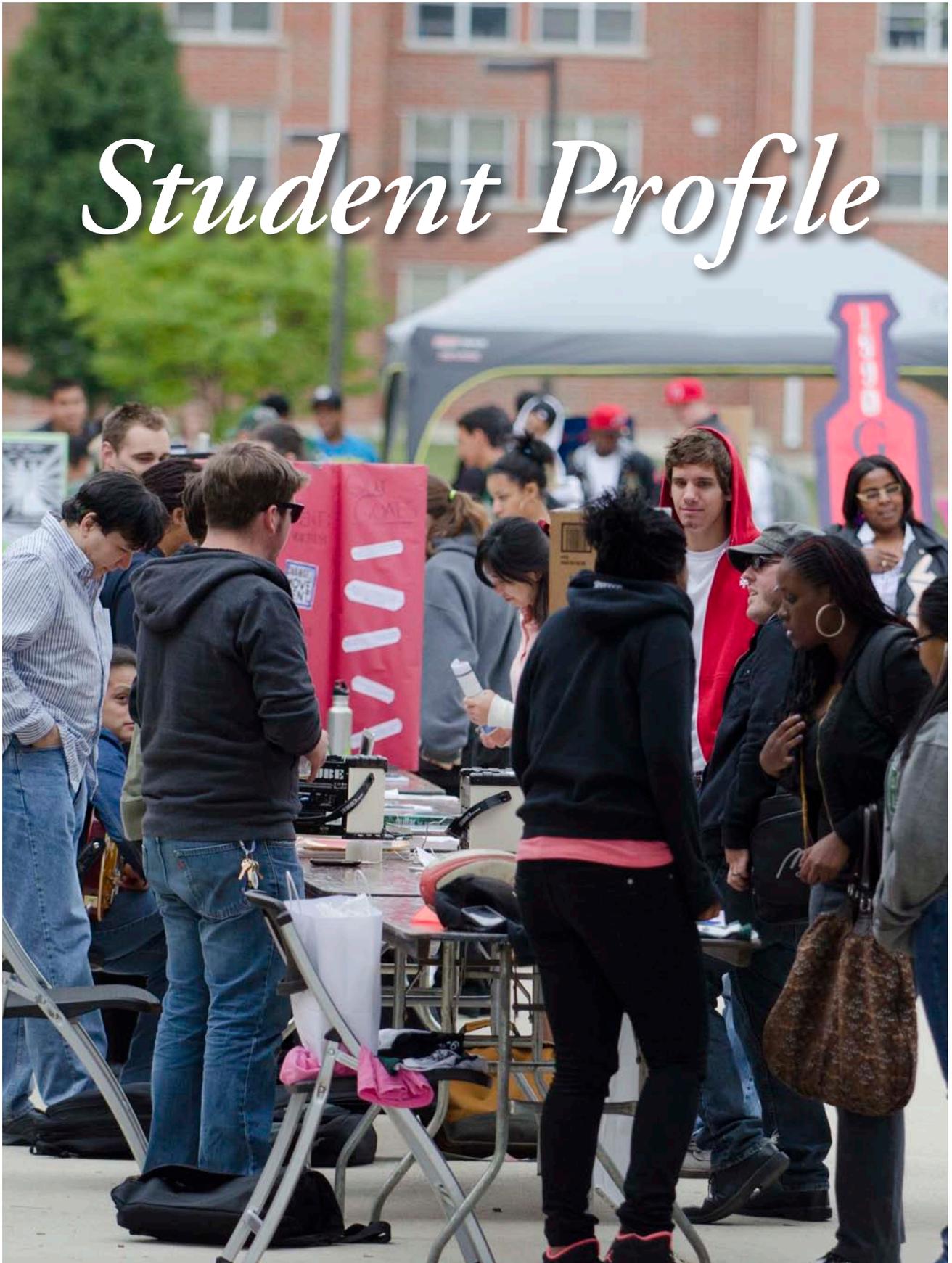
3. Pedagogy

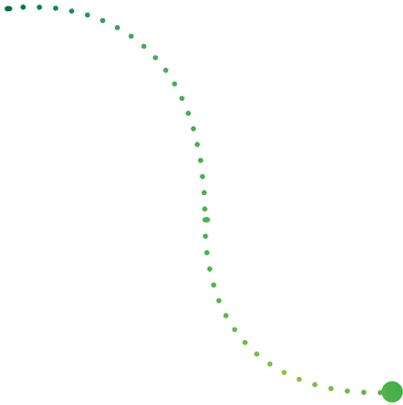
Section three describes our pedagogy. It encourages the expanded use of high impact practices, and discusses the need to provide the infrastructure to support new and developing technologies into our teaching. In addition, it addresses specific pedagogical needs of first-year students. Some highlights from this section:

- A review of our High Impact Practices and goals for expanding their use.
- A particular focus on experiential learning, including community-based learning and undergraduate research.
- Planning for the implementation of new technologies, including expanded online and hybrid courses and programs.
- A commitment to approaches specifically intended to enhance the experience of first-year students, such as ensuring that general education courses are set at the appropriate sizes for their content and pedagogy.

As stated above, the plan is a living document, meaning that it is expected to change to reflect inevitable changes in priorities and programs over time.

Student Profile





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tudents are central to everything we do at UW-Parkside and obtaining a better understanding of their strengths and needs is the first step in identifying strategies for our future as a university.

UW-Parkside students have a varied range of skill levels and needs at entry. Acknowledging the unique and complex paradigm this creates, we both embrace it as an asset and seize it as a challenge. Part of our identity is our enthusiastic support of all of our students. While our strategies might differ depending on a student's starting point, the goal does not. For students who come to UW-Parkside with clear goals and strong skills, our challenge is to provide the support and opportunities to stimulate the momentum to excel. For students who arrive with gaps in their college preparation and with a need for academic support, our goal is exactly the same, but the path is different. They might need early coursework to improve general academic skills and to provide a platform on which to learn. They might also struggle to have the option of college at all and need support to keep barriers from preventing their retention and graduation.

As UW-Parkside moves forward, we will need to both assess our current students, and prepare for the students of 2020. This section includes: an analysis of current data on our students; a delineation of goals related to this analysis; and a description of the changes that are expected over the decade. Taking stock of the current student body will allow us to move forward in implementing the academic plan with a clear and uniform understanding of our students, and to best align our academic program and pedagogy to student needs.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to study the information contained here and to incorporate it into teaching, program development, and support services. Each of us has a particular experience with students

that shapes our understanding of the student body, but looking at students more rigorously and broadly allows for a thoughtful and uniform approach to serving their learning needs. As noted earlier, this academic plan is a living document. We will continue to assess and refine our understanding of an ever-evolving student demographic and integrate the findings through updates and revisions.

Student Facts and Figures

The following are some key characteristics of UW-Parkside students that provide the basis for the assessment of our student body.

1. Racial and Ethnic Diversity

We are proud of our consistent success in attracting the most racially and ethnically diverse student body in the University of Wisconsin system. UW-Parkside’s diverse student population mirrors its location in the most racially diverse region of Wisconsin and reinforces the university’s responsibility and mission to educate its local communities while also welcoming students from distant regions. This diversity helps to define UW-Parkside. It not only provides us with a depth of experience and culture from which to continually benefit, but it also provides the state with an example of a university campus that has succeeded at achieving goals for racial and ethnic diversity.

As seen in Chart 1, more than a quarter of the students in the Fall 2010 freshman class at UW-Parkside identified as underrepresented students of color. Underrepresented students of color include those who indicated African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino (a), or Southeast Asian alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity. For the UW System as a whole, just over 11% identified as underrepresented students of color. Our African American and Hispanic/Latino(a) population of students is more than triple the UW System average (23.3% at UW-Parkside compared to 6.9% for the UW System).

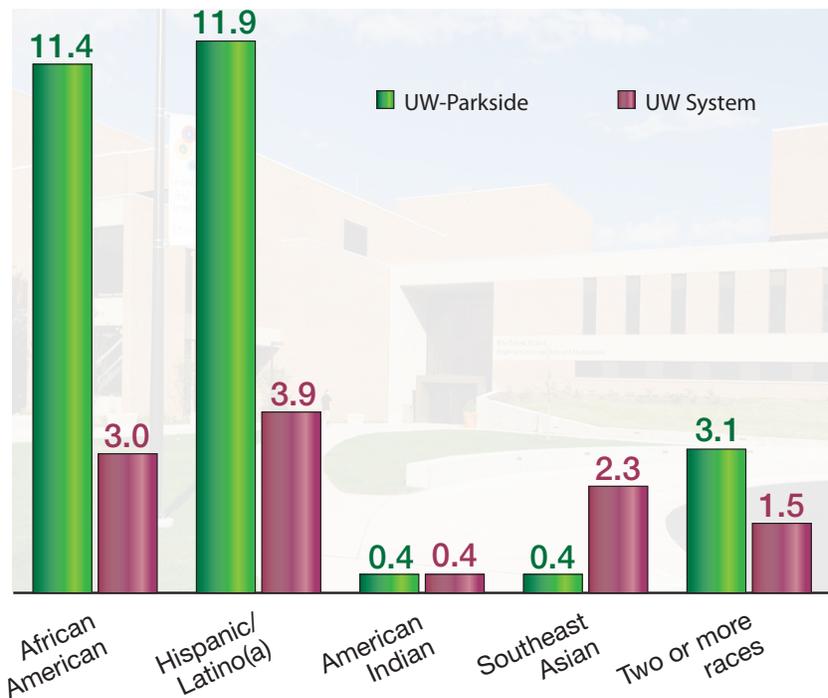
Our student body has also become more diverse in recent years. According to the *2011 UW System Growth Agenda Accountability Report*, the percentage of students enrolled in the Fall who identified as students of color had grown at UW-Parkside from 18.6% in 2004 to 25.2% in 2010, and has been consistently more than double the average percentage of students of color across UW System institutions.



At some point, probably just after 2020, minority students will outnumber whites on college campuses for the first time.

– The College of 2020: Students.

Chart 1. Percentage of New Freshman of Various Races and Ethnicities: Fall 2010



Source: The University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research. 2011c.

2. First-Generation to Attend College

First-generation students are defined by the UW System as students whose parents did not earn a four-year college degree. This indicator is important to understanding the needs of our student body because, in general, first-generation students have a lower level of preparation for college, are lower income, and have a lower rate of retention and graduation than their counterparts whose parents completed college (Chen and Carroll 2005).

A third of first generation students entered college without an intended major, compared to only 13% of students whose parents had a bachelor’s degree (Chen and Carroll 2005). In selecting their majors, first generation students were more likely than other students to pick business or vocational fields, and were less likely to major in the sciences or the humanities (Chen and Carroll 2005).

In Fall 2010, 55.5% of UW-Parkside’s entering students were first generation, compared to 43.5% of students in the UW System. UW-Parkside consistently has the highest percentage of entering students in the UW System who are first generation

college students (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c). In May 2010, 62% of UW-Parkside bachelor's degree graduates did not have a parent who graduated from college (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011a).

3. Financial Challenges: Need Based Funding

The percentage of students who are Pell grant recipients (students who receive federal grants based on financial need) at UW-Parkside is consistently high and has increased over the last several years. In 2002-2003, 24% were Pell recipients, increasing each year to 2009-2010 (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011a). In 2009-10, 39% of UW-Parkside students were Pell recipients, the second-highest rate of Pell Grant recipients among UW System institutions, surpassed only by UW-Superior (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011a). In addition, UW-Parkside students took out loans averaging \$3,824 per student in 2009-2010; 43% received need-based grants or scholarships, and 47% received need-based work-study and/or loans (Voluntary System of Accountability 2011).

The Pell grant rate and the average loan amounts are a clear indication that students who attend UW-Parkside do so by making difficult financial sacrifices, that they are vulnerable to downturns in the economy that can make continuing in college untenable, and that they need to see that there will be a return for their investment of limited resources in order to remain at UW-Parkside.

4. Financial Challenges: Need for Employment

A typical UW-Parkside student commutes to class, works at least part-time, has significant financial needs, and is a first generation college student. Many of these students arrive at UW-Parkside with additional needs that must be met beginning in their first year if they are to be ready to complete college-level work successfully. These students may not be able to follow a traditional pathway to a degree, but require additional academic support as well as planning for the cost of college in order to be successful. Meeting their needs for support is critical to their success and has broad implications for the local community and for the economic health of the entire Southeastern Wisconsin region.

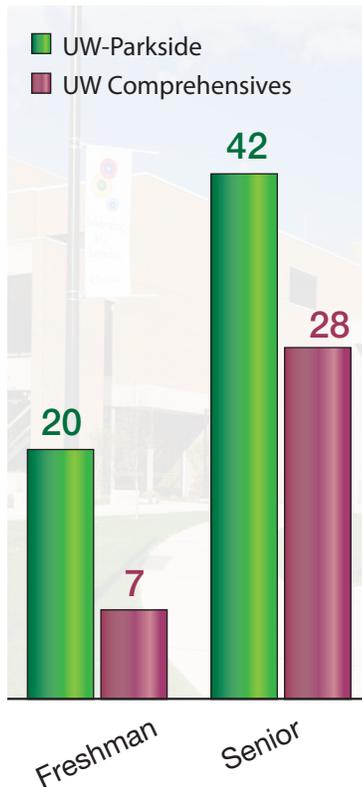
Within the UW System, UW-Parkside has the highest percentage of entering students who are studying part-time (22% vs. 6% for the UW System). In addition, self-reported student data



Colleges...can expect to compete for students based on price, convenience, and the perceived strengths of the institutions. They will need to constantly ask themselves, "What is college?" and be constantly rethinking the answer if they want students to attend.

– The College of 2020: Students.

Chart 2. Percentage of students who work more than 20 hours per week



Source: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). 2011.

from the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and *ETS Proficiency Profile*, show that UW-Parkside’s entering students are working significant hours in conjunction with their studies (See Chart 2). According to NSSE data from 2011, 60% of UW-Parkside’s entering students reported they were working off-campus. Sixty eight percent of the seniors who responded to the NSSE survey indicated they were working off-campus during their senior year. The need to manage competing responsibilities is a consistent characteristic of the UW-Parkside student.

The fact that a large proportion of UW-Parkside students work more than 20 hours per week means that, compared to most UW System students, UW-Parkside students have an increased level of responsibility to manage their time and priorities. Research provides strong evidence that college students’ work hours are negatively correlated with academic achievement and graduation (Callender 2008; Eppler & Harju 1997; Tannock & Flocks 2003). In other words, heavy participation in the workforce may put students’ academic performance and graduation at risk. Some working students gain valuable skills in their jobs, but most work in low skilled jobs with low pay and no benefits, taking valuable time and energy from their academic work. In some cases, students who work are able to bring their experiences in the “real” world to class and enhance the level of discourse in meaningful ways. In general, however, the high percentage of working students translates into a large segment of our student population who are at risk of not completing their academic program because of an extra burden on their time and finances.

Chart 3. Freshmen ACT scores and high school rank: 2010

		UW-Parkside	UW System
Average ACT Composite Score		20.8	23.5
(National Average)		21.0	21
High School Rank	Top Quartile	29.6%	44.1%
	2nd Quartile	36.1%	33.2%
	3rd Quartile	26.5%	17.9%
	Bottom Quartile	7.8%	4.8%

Source: The University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research. 2011c.

5. Academic Profile

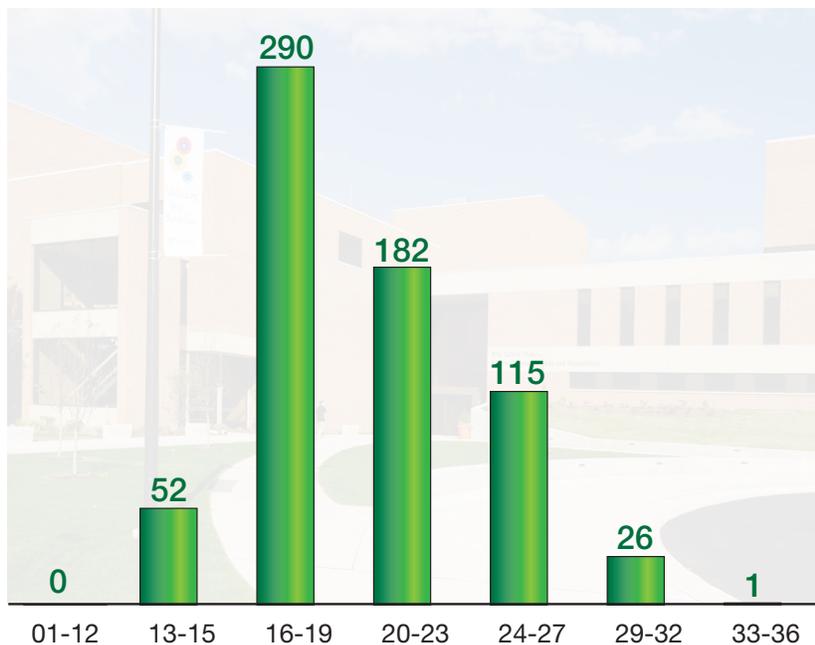
ACT Scores. As a whole, UW-Parkside students have lower ACT scores and a greater need for remediation than is true for other UW System institutions, as shown in Chart 3. Students are particularly weak in mathematics, as measured by their ACT scores and shown in Chart 4.

While it is important to acknowledge that the average ACT scores are low at UW-Parkside, there are some indications that our academic profile is rising. From 2006 to 2011, average composite scores for freshmen increased from 19.9 to 20.8. (See Chart 5.)

As is true at other campuses, the characteristics of the freshman class are the result of student self selection and admission screening. The admission rate of freshman applicants at UW-Parkside is 83%, which is lower than admission rates at seven of the thirteen UW System four-year universities, and the 53% enrollment rate of accepted applicants is higher than ten of the other UW System universities (UW System Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c).

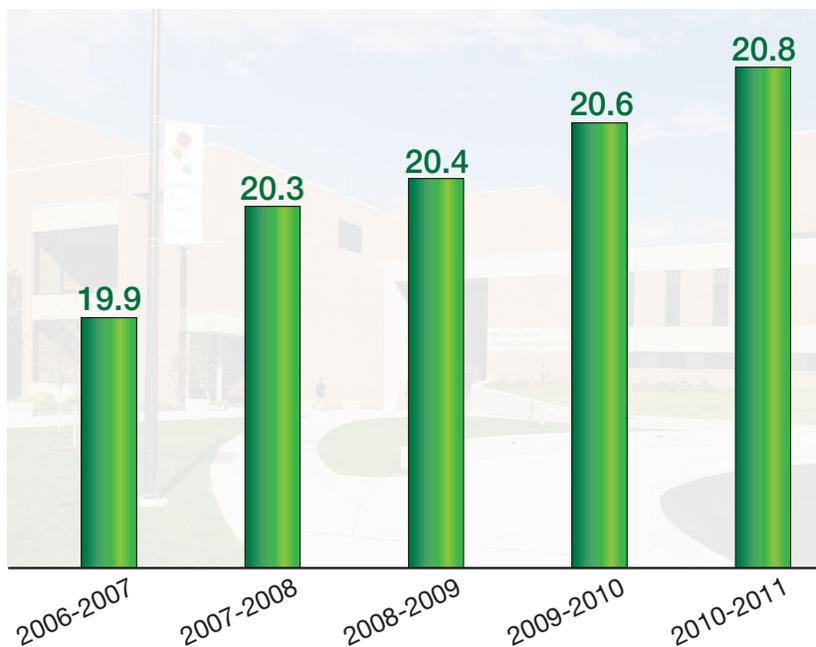
Need for Developmental Coursework. Nearly 55% of the 2010 entering class were required to enroll in developmental math, classes which do not earn college credit. Nearly 33% placed into developmental English courses in Fall 2010. This compares to

Chart 4. Math ACT Scores: Number of Students in Each Range



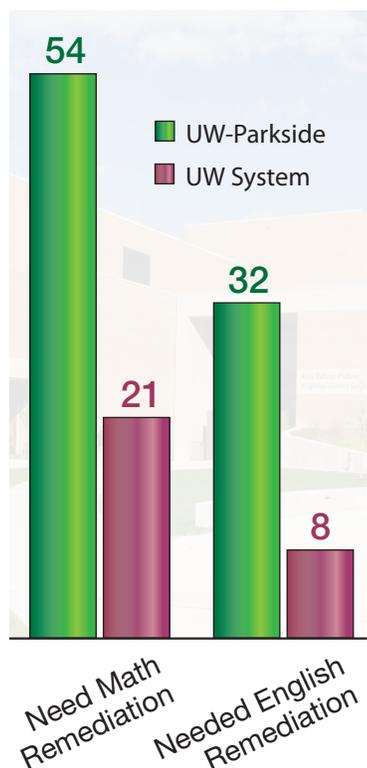
Source: National Student Clearinghouse. 2011.

Chart 5. UW-Parkside Freshmen Composite ACT Over Time



Source: National Student Clearinghouse. 2011.

Chart 6. Entering Freshmen: Percentage Who Needed Remediation in Math and English



Source: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). 2011.

21% of UW System students placed into pre-college math and 8% in pre-college English. (See Chart 6.) UW-Parkside has the highest rate in the UW System of students who are placed in developmental coursework.

Because a significant portion of our student population come to us without the level of math and English proficiency expected for college level work, our curriculum must include effective programs to address these gaps.

6. Career Readiness and Relevance

UW-Parkside students obtain a solid foundation in the liberal arts from both the General Education Program and their majors, providing a level of competence which is relevant to all career paths. Students' motivations are highly career-oriented. They often major in degree programs in which they see the opportunity to obtain a credential that is marketable and that will lead both to educational and work opportunities upon graduation. The 10 most popular majors leading to a bachelor's degree at UW-Parkside in calendar year 2010 are shown in the Chart 7.

Further evidence that UW-Parkside students are seeking a college education that will allow them to find employment upon completion of the bachelor's degree is found in a Future Plans

Survey completed at UW-Parkside. In the survey, 72.2% of participating students were found to be planning to work full-time in paid employment upon completion of their degree, and 14.4% were planning to attend graduate or professional school full-time (University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Institutional Research 2010a). (The remaining students were planning part-time school, part-time work, military service, volunteer work, starting a family, or “other”.) It will be important for the campus to better understand the goals our students have for their education in order to address them more specifically.

Chart 7. Ten Majors with the Largest Number of Bachelor’s Degrees Awarded in 2010

Majors	2010 Major Degrees
Business	153
Criminal Justice	77
Health, Exercise Science & Sport Management	45
Psychology	42
Sociology-Anthropology	41
Communication	39
Art	36
Biology/Molecular Biology & Bioinformatics	34
English	32
History	20

Source: University of Wisconsin Parkside, Office of Institutional Research, Institutional Data, March 2012

Other indicators

Residential vs. Commuter

In Fall 2010, 82% of undergraduate UW-Parkside students were commuters. Our current on-campus housing has the capacity to house 20% of the student body; in Fall 2010, 18% of undergraduates lived on campus (University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Institutional Research 2010b). Since students usually spend the majority of their time off campus, special efforts are needed to help students build a strong connection with the campus.

Chart 8. The Number of Adult Learners Enrolled at UW-Parkside

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Adult Learners	1,237	1,318	1,452	1,424	1,326
Total Enrollment	5,010	5,167	5,303	5,160	4,887
Percent Enrollment	24.7%	25.5%	27.4%	27.6%	27.1%

Source: University of Wisconsin Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2011

Age

The average age of Fall 2010 full-time students in the UW System was 18 for first-time freshmen, and 21 for all undergraduates (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c). At UW-Parkside, both full and part-time undergraduate students were slightly older on average than undergraduates in the UW System as a whole, with an average age of 19 for first-year freshmen, and 23 for all undergraduates (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c). Twenty-seven percent of undergraduates at UW-Parkside were age 25 or older in Fall 2011 (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c).

Adult Learners

Adult learners, students who are over 24 years of age, make up slightly more than 25% of enrolled students. (see Chart 8).

Current available information on our adult learner population (University of Wisconsin-Parkside Office of Institutional Effectiveness 2011) includes the following:

- Adult learners made up 27% of the entire student body in Fall 2011. Nationally, students over 24 make up 39% of college and university students (NCES 2007).
- In Fall 2011, 89% of adult learners were degree seeking. Of degree-seeking adult learners, 8% were graduate students and 91% were undergraduates.
- The average age of adult learners was 34.6 years, with a range of 25 to 83 years of age.
- Of adult learners enrolled in Fall 2011, 12.1% were veterans.
- Of adult learners enrolled in Fall 2010, 44.5% received Pell grant assistance, compared to 40.8% for all UW-Parkside students.

The average age of students will keep trending higher as expectations shift in favor of people going back to college again and again to get additional credentials to advance their careers to new ones.

– The College of 2020:

Students.

Research suggests that, compared to traditional students, students over the age of 24 often have different reasons for attending college, such as death of a spouse, divorce, unemployment, an empty nest, industry-wide downsizing, technological change, and outdated skill sets. Hagedorn (2005) found several differing reasons for attendance which adult students ranked as more important than did traditionally aged students: (a) could not find a job, (b) employer encouraged attendance, and (c) degree/certificate was needed for work.

Graduation and Retention Rates

The top priority of the Academic Plan is to increase student success – including learning, retention, and graduation rates. As shown in Chart 9, students leave at a higher rate than is true for the UW System as a whole. Certain demographic groups – including students whose parents did not graduate from college, students from low income backgrounds, and students who are African American or Latina/o – average lower graduation rates on average than members of other demographic groups. Our first goal (see goals section, below) addresses this issue directly, but we see all of the goals to be connected to student success. The high level of diversity among the student body challenges us to assess students’ needs and to provide all students with the supports and structures they need to succeed. The Academic Program goals discussed in Section 2 address improving core knowledge and ability as well as addressing students’ transitions to their professional lives after graduation. The Pedagogy goals discussed in Section 3, particularly the increased attention to high impact practices, also should increase student success.

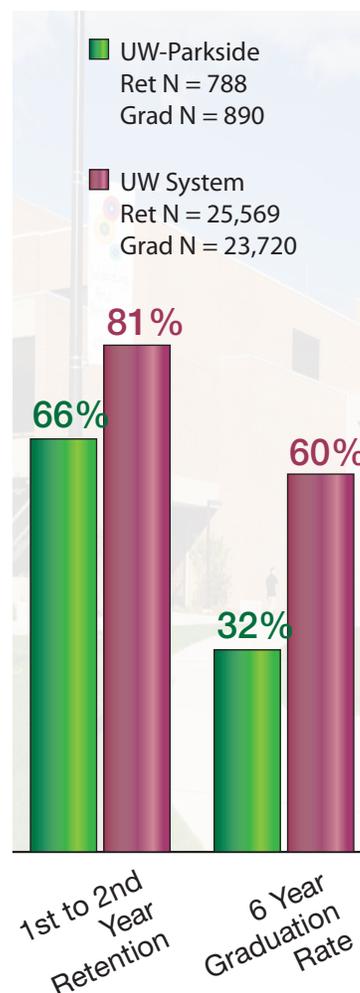
International Students

Compared to the UW System as a whole, a lower percentage of UW-Parkside students are international students. In Fall 2010, .9% of new UW-Parkside freshmen identified as International Students, compared to 2.1% for the UW System (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2011c).

Gender

The composition of our freshman class for Fall 2010 was 51.4% female and 48.6% male, which is close to the UW System average of 52.5% female and 47.5% male (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research, 2011c). Men and women were admitted at the same rate: 83%.

Chart 9. Retention and Graduation Rates, 2010-11



Source: The University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research. 2011b.

Chart 10. Profile of International Students: Fall 2010

Total Number of Students		Fall 2010
		68
Gender	Male	51.5%
	Female	48.5%
Graduate Type	Degree Seeking	100.0%
	Non-Degree Seeking	0.0%
Academic Level	Freshman	20.6%
	Sophomore	10.3%
	Junior	13.2%
	Senior	29.4%
	Graduate	26.5%
Ethnicity	Southeast Asian	4.4%
	All Other Asian	48.5%
	Black/African Descent	11.8%
	Hispanic/Latino	5.9%
	Not Specified	7.4%
	White	22.1%
Average GPA		3.13

Source: University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, March 19, 2012

Chart 11. Top Declared Majors of International Students: Fall 2010

Total Number of Students		Fall 2010
		68
Declared Major	Business Administration	22.1%
	Business Management	10.3%
	Mathematics	7.4%
	Biological Sciences	5.9%
	Economics	5.9%
	Other Majors	20.4%
	Undeclared / Unknown Major	28.0%
Average GPA		3.13

Source: University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, March 19, 2012

Transfer Population

In 2009-2010, 686 students transferred to UW-Parkside. Of these, 85% were new transfers, and 15% were re-entry transfers (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2010). Twenty-seven percent of the entering transfer students were students of color, the highest percentage in the UW System (University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2010). Of those students transferring to UW-Parkside in Fall of 2009 who could be identified within the UW System, the mean first year GPA at their sending institution was 2.9.

Chart 12. Profile of Transfer Students: Fall 2010

Total Number of Students		Fall 2010
		414
Gender	Male	49.8%
	Female	50.2%
Enrollment Status	Part-time	32.0%
	Full-time	68.0%
Transfer Type	New	86.0%
	Re-entry	14.0%
Residency	Non-Resident	26.8%
	Resident	73.2%
Academic Level	Freshman	28.5%
	Sophomore	34.1%
	Junior	24.9%
	Senior	12.6%
Ethnicity	African American/Black	10.4%
	Hispanic/Latino	8.0%
	International	3.1%
	Southeast Asian	0.7%
	Other Asian	1.7%
	Two or More Race Ethnicities Without Hispanic	3.1%
	White/European American	72.9%
Average GPA		2.81
Average Age		24.8

Source: University of Wisconsin Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, March 19, 2012



The aging of students will force colleges to fundamentally rethink how they approach adult students.

– The College of 2020: Students.

Chart 13. Top Majors of Transfer Students at Time of Entry: Fall 2010

Total Number of Students		Fall 2010
		414
Declared Major	Business Management	12.8%
	Criminal Justice	5.8%
	Biological Sciences	3.9%
	Psychology	2.9%
	Applied Health Sciences	2.4%
	MIS	2.4%
	Other Majors	13%
	Undeclared / Unknown Major	56.8%
Average GPA		2.81

Source: University of Wisconsin Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, March 19, 2012

The second-year retention rate (Fall 2008) for transfer students was 67%, broken down by year as follows:

- First-Year Students – 58%
- Second-Year Students – 68%
- Upper-Class Students – 75%

(University of Wisconsin System, Office of Policy Analysis & Research 2010)

Profile of Graduate Students

UW-Parkside has three graduate programs and 125 graduate students as of October 2011 (UW-Parkside Office of Institutional Research). About 90% of the graduate students are in the MBA program.

Chart 14. Profile of Graduate Students: Fall 2010

Total Number of Students		Fall 2010
		145
Gender	Male	57.2%
	Female	42.8%
Enrollment Status	Part-time	76.9%
	Full-time	23.1%
Transfer Type	Degree Seeking	86.9%
	Non-Degree Seeking	13.1%
Residency	Non-Resident	17.2%
	Resident	82.8%
Ethnicity	African American/Black	2.1%
	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1.4%
	Hispanic/Latino	2.8%
	International	13.1%
	Asian	3.4%
	Unknown	2.1%
	White/European American	75.2%
Average GPA		3.52
Average Age		31

Source: University of Wisconsin Parkside, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, March 19, 2012

Student Profile Goals

Understanding the UW-Parkside student population is an essential step in planning a curriculum that fits students’ academic ambitions, designing classes that best fit their needs, and preparing them for success in their future lives. Our students wish to prepare themselves for career paths that support a middle class or higher lifestyle and allow them to make a meaningful contribution to society. Our students are diverse in many dimensions: academic ability, socioeconomic status, demographic characteristics, and out-of-school responsibilities. In this, UW-Parkside’s first academic plan, we are making a commitment to provide programs and use pedagogies that will support our students in their academic endeavors. The Academic Plan is just the beginning of the process. We define our goals here. Plans for implementation, which are equally important, will follow.

We begin with four goals that, when successfully implemented, will change our student profile.

Goal 1.1

Increase retention and graduation rates to surpass the average of our peer institutions, and move towards equity of outcomes across demographic groups, by addressing the challenges faced by UW-Parkside students as they strive to learn and graduate.

We must complete a thorough review of the data we have on our student population in an effort to understand the reasons for our low retention rate. The student profile above provides a basis from which to delve more deeply into understanding what drives an unfortunate number of our students to attend but not complete their degrees at UW-Parkside. If we are to address their challenges to completing a degree here, we must first understand who leaves and why. Some of the information we need to gather and fully understand will be directed at the following questions:

- What are the reasons students leave?
- What has the academic experience been like for students who leave UW-Parkside?
- How do we address retention issues for students who leave to transfer to other four-year universities vs. students who leave because of financial hardship or because of poor academic performance?
- How does the level of student indebtedness at UW-Parkside compare to student indebtedness at other UW System schools, and how does it affect retention?
- What is the average household income for students who complete their degree at UW-Parkside compared to the income for students who leave? How does the retention rate of Pell grant recipients compare to students at UW-Parkside overall, and to a national average?

We will also address challenges faced by our students through a focus on our high impact practices and general education program, described in other sections of this plan. These practices address a need to provide developmental education opportunities while engaging first year students and improving retention rates. In addition, alternative instructional formats, such as online programs and courses and a wide variety of class scheduling options are likely to provide the flexibility needed by some students. Given the substantial need among our students, identified in the profile above, for programs that can alleviate barriers to success, every initiative should be considered



in light of its impact on easing the challenges our students face and on increasing college readiness and student success.

A starting point to achieving the goals laid out in this section, and important to all of our work at UW-Parkside, is to have a clear definition of both “college readiness” and “student success.” At this writing, our Compass Project Team has proposed the following definition of college readiness: *possessing academic skills; motivation, or having the will, determination and persistence to be successful; understanding the purpose of college; and a willingness to aspire.* Student success at UW-Parkside is to both (1) attain the expected learning outcomes in the three areas of *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Personal and Social Responsibility*, as defined in Part 2 of the Academic Plan, and (2) graduate. A major task in implementing the Academic Plan will be to define standards and measurements of these outcomes.

It is also important that we bear in mind the high number of students who work at least part-time while attending UW-Parkside, so that any changes to scheduling or programs will seek to reduce the stress on working students as much as possible.

Goal 1.2

Increase our enrollment to the target set through strategic enrollment planning led by the Provost to meet the growing needs of Southeast Wisconsin.

The economy and other outside factors will continue to play an important role in the number of students who enroll at UW-Parkside. While there will always be fluctuations in enrollment

The location of a college, and the geographic spread of its influence and recruiting area, will be the most significant factor in determining its flow of enrollees in the next decade.

– The College of 2020: Students.

that are spurred by the current economy and marketplace, our enrollments can grow if we are deliberate in our efforts to recruit and retain students, provide programs of study that adapt to changes, and seek to serve our existing students well.

In addition, we will investigate and act on strategies to identify future UW-Parkside students while they are students at K-12 schools, to introduce them to the opportunities that are available here, and to encourage a course of study that provides appropriate preparation for college. We will also seek the resources to assess and add to our existing pre-college programs in a way that will support this goal.

Goal 1.3

Improve our ability to serve adults returning to college, active members of the military and their families, veterans, international students, and graduate students by designing new programs, in areas of growing opportunity, that include: clear paths to degree completion, a high level of flexibility, and appropriate use of technology.

- 1. Adults Returning to College.** UW-Parkside currently offers a few degree programs specifically designed to assist students to complete their degree once they have completed credits at a community or technical college. We will continue to identify new avenues to attract, retain, and graduate students in Southeastern Wisconsin who are seeking to return to college to improve their career path.
- 2. Graduate Students.** UW-Parkside currently has a limited number of master’s-level programs and a small number of graduate students (125). Going forward, we plan to increase our graduate-level programming. This is in line with predictions of a growing number of bachelor’s level students seeking graduate-level programs including degrees, certificates, and professional development programs. In fact, by 2020-2021, the number of individuals attaining a master’s degree is expected to increase by 32%; the number of doctorates awarded is expected to increase by 57% (Hussar and Bailey 2011). This demand for graduate-level programming is important to meet. See *Section 2. Academic Program* for a discussion of graduate programs.
- 3. Military.** UW-Parkside is situated close to the Great Lakes Naval Base, and so it is natural to attempt to increase the number of members of military families who attend. A new bill, the *Post-9/11 GI Bill*, provides financial support for education and housing to individuals who have received an honorable discharge and who have at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September

11, 2001, or who have been discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. The bill provides for full tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a stipend for books and services. While active duty military personnel would be more likely to enroll in educational institutions on the base, these benefits are transferable to the family members of those eligible, who would be more likely to choose UW-Parkside. More information is available at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2011).

- 4. International Students.** In order to develop global learners, we must provide our students with opportunities for global learning experiences. The Academic Program section will discuss ways in which to internationalize our curriculum and our goals related to study abroad. Combined with our goals for attracting more international students to the campus, this will provide an important dimension to enrich the global learning experience at UW-Parkside. We value the emphasis on global perspectives in our General Education program, as well as the many international courses within various academic disciplines which support our interdisciplinary academic programs in international studies, global skills, and Asian studies. We recognize the significance of our international articulation programs and value the international students who study at UW-Parkside as a result of these partnerships. Their enrollment at UW-Parkside provides an excellent opportunity to enrich the academic and social experiences of all students. We seek to expand the number of international students on campus, increasing our overall enrollments to reach parity with the UW System in the process.

Goal 1.4

Anticipate and prepare for changes in the student population that reflect changes in society as we move toward 2020.

The next decade will see a changing model of college. Traditional methods of teaching will need to adapt to these changes or be left behind. As we look to this future, we must find ways to be able to respond quickly and still be careful in our choices so that the quality of education we now offer can be maintained or increased while the methods of teaching change. According to a report from the Chronicle of Higher Education (Van Der Werf and Sabatier 2009):

- The traditional four-year college experience is becoming less and less the norm as students seek the convenience of online courses and certificate programs. While the four-year residential college experience will still be important, the shift will be toward online learning, part-time enrollment, and an expectation of access to classes from mobile devices.

- Colleges will need to be able to combine traditional classroom instruction with new methods made available by new technology and to be flexible enough to adapt to quickly changing technology.
- Regional public universities should expect to compete for students based on price and convenience as well as academic strength.
- As we approach 2020, students of color will outnumber white students on college campuses for the first time.
- Students will expect more freedom to design their own course of study and will want personalized learning.
- Student ages will trend higher, with the population of students ages 25 to 34 increasing by almost 27%, compared to an 11% increase in students ages 18 to 24.

Another report provides additional predictions about the students of 2020 (Hussar and Bailey 2011).

- Wisconsin is among 16 states that are projected to have a decrease of 5% or more in public high school graduates by 2020.
- Overall total enrollment in postsecondary degree granting institutions rose by 43% between 1995 and 2009 and is expected to increase another 13% by 2020.
- Enrollment of women is expected to continue to outpace male enrollment, rising by 16% for women and 8% for men between 2009 and 2020.
- Part-time student enrollment is expected to rise by 16%, compared to an 11% increase in full-time students.
- Enrollment of graduate students will grow by 18%, compared to 12% growth in undergraduate students.
- Dramatic changes to enrollment growth by ethnicity are expected, as described in Chart 15.

In many dimensions, UW-Parkside already has the “student of 2020” described in these reports. However, we would like to expand the opportunities we provide these students. For example, although we have a diverse student body, we need to increase the diversity of the student populations in science, technology, and math. As we learn to serve this population more effectively, with flexibility in terms of the time frames, places, and modes of teaching, we will, perhaps, see increases in our retention and graduation rates. We must be deliberate in our choices as a university so that our programs and academic services match the most current assessment of the needs

Educators are increasingly finding that students want to design their own curricula and find ways to learn in their own style.

– Van Der Werfand Sabatier
2009: 7.

Chart 15. Students of 2020: Projected Changes in Race/Ethnicity of College / University Student (2009-2020)

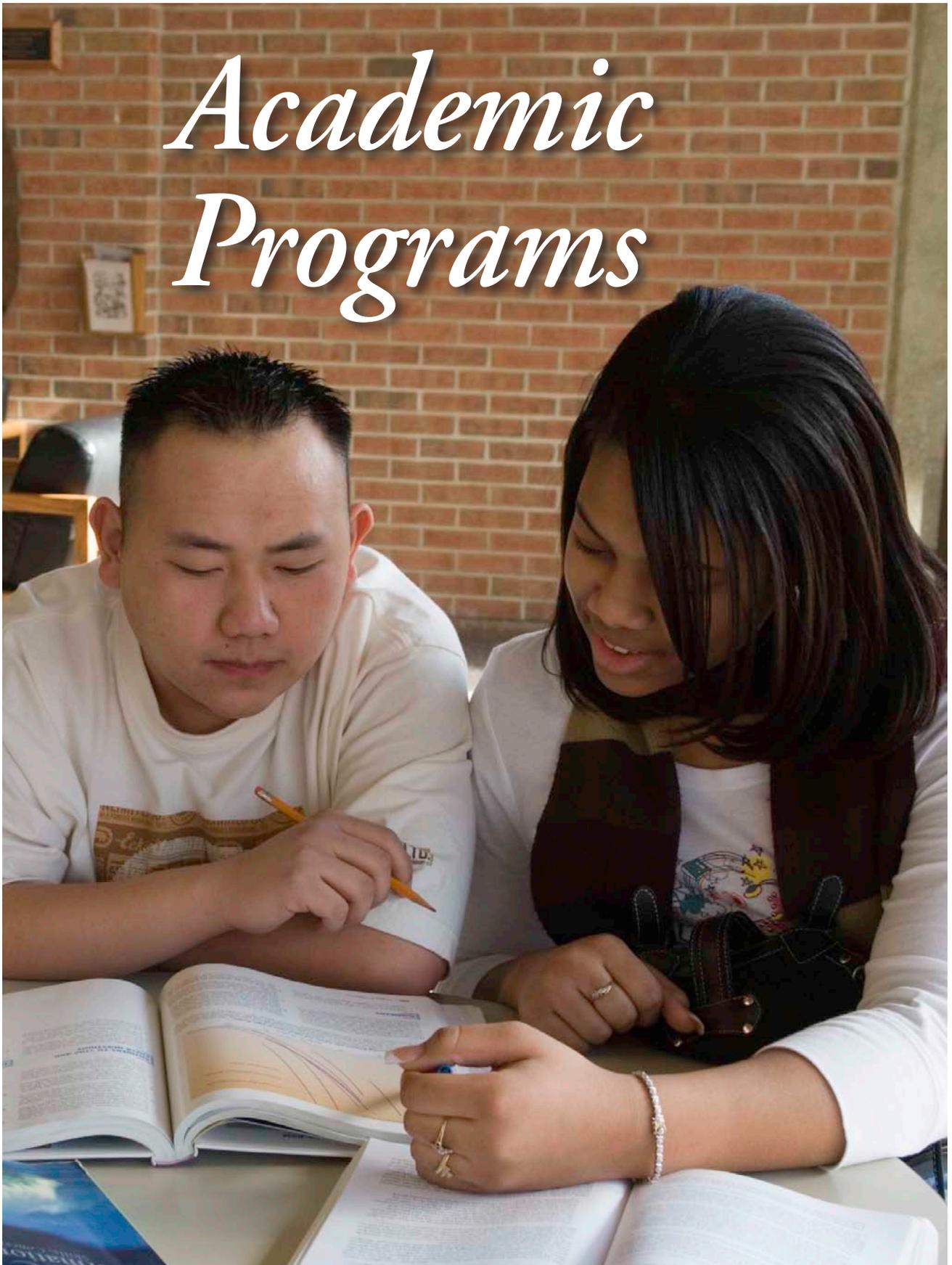
Race/Ethnicity	% Change
White	+ 1%
African American	+25%
Hispanic	+46%
Asian/Pacific Islander	+25%
American Indian/Alaska Native	- 1%

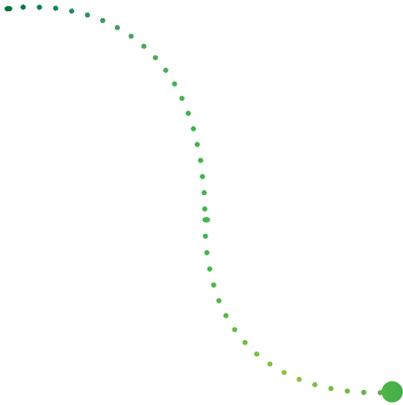
Source: Hussar & Bailey 2011

and plans of the students we enroll. We will continue to refine our understanding of current students to help guide these decisions. The student profile available to us today provides a valuable basis for making choices that will work.

As we consider our academic programs and embark on any new initiatives, our first priority will be to determine if programs will contribute to the engagement, retention and success of our students. A discussion of any change to our offerings will first address its impact on students.

Academic Programs





To prosper in today's knowledge economy, in sum, all Americans will need a contemporary blend of liberal and applied learning.

– *The Quality Imperative.*



The educational philosophy of UW-Parkside demands that we provide students with rigorous academic experiences marked by high quality teaching, and preparation to become responsible and engaged local and global citizens. Our students are highly motivated for personal achievement and they bring rich and diverse backgrounds to our campus community. The UW-Parkside academic program is connected to everything we do, and its success is our highest priority. In this Academic Plan, we focus on a united view of a set of goals that will support the development of the competent, effective, and responsible educated citizen of the future. Although our programs are specialized, they are united by a common vision of a UW-Parkside graduate.

Our academic programs emphasize areas of study that form a foundation for a lifetime of learning in a fast changing world. Education at UW-Parkside occurs at two levels: General Education, in a selected set of well-tested 100- and 200-level classes; and Specialized Education, in undergraduate majors, minors, certificate programs, and graduate programs. Three broad learning goals form the basis for our undergraduate academic programs – *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility.*

Communication includes a broad array of interactive abilities, including:

- Literacy - reading for understanding and writing for effective communication.
- Oral communication - listening, speaking and presenting effectively.
- Competence in information technology - using modern information technology to retrieve and transmit information.
- Creative expression - communicating through artistic statement.

- Intercultural knowledge – the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, and other dimensions of human communities.

Reasoned Judgment includes the following competencies:

- Critical thinking - applying logic and reasoning to problem solving.
- Ethical thinking - recognizing and analyzing ethical issues and actions.
- Scientific thinking - understanding and applying the scientific method.
- Analytical skills - understanding how to produce and interpret quantitative and qualitative information.
- Aesthetic skills - critiquing and appreciating the fine arts (literary, visual, and performing).

Within the goal of promoting *Social* and *Personal Responsibility*, we include the following:

- Individual accountability - understanding what a responsible choice is and that one's present education and life-long learning is a personal responsibility.
- Social equality - understanding and questioning the social, political, economic and historical conditions that construct diversity and inequality.
- Civic engagement - the partnership between student and community that promotes students' use of knowledge and skills developed in the classroom that is meaningful and supportive to community agencies.
- Global perspective - acquiring the knowledge and skills that provide an understanding of international/global issues and processes.
- Teamwork - working effectively with others for a common goal.



General Education Program

The purpose of the General Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside is to establish in students a baseline competence in *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility* which will provide a basis for both specialized, in-depth study in a discipline or interdisciplinary major and an openness and readiness for effective learning that will last a lifetime. The strategy to provide this to students is twofold: 1) to give students a knowledge and skill set used across all academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields of study; and 2) to build the awareness that knowledge is diverse and is composed of multiple sets of principles and methodologies. The General Education Program is built into a set of distribution categories of well-tested courses for which there is strong evidence that the knowledge outcomes prescribed are achieved. In addition to baseline competence in *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility*, students are expected to attain literacy in civic, cultural, aesthetic, international, scientific, and technical subjects.

The categories and courses as well as the rubrics and outcome measures undergo periodic reevaluation. Proposals currently under discussion include a realignment corresponding to the reorganization of disciplines and programs into four colleges. Conversations are needed to determine if a category should be created to address business, computer science and economics, and if requirements should be modified to include a lab component for the natural sciences, an integrated (interdisciplinary) studies requirement or possibly an upper-level or capstone requirement. Assessment has indicated a need to improve consistency in the program with respect to how the general education goals and outcomes are emphasized (nature and number of activities) and the feedback provided to the students. The General Education Committee found inconsistencies in course goals and outcomes even among courses that served majors.

As the Institution renews its effort to systematically assess majors at the degree level, an opportunity exists to align aspects of General Education assessment and program assessment for majors. This alignment would result in closer integration and coordination between General Education goals and the goals of the majors. All of these possible changes, along with revisions which will result from the implementation of the Academic Plan, will likely result in a revised structure for the General Education Program.

Specialized Programs: Majors, Minors, Certificate Programs, and Graduate Programs

Each academic program defines its own specific learning goals, many of which fit under the umbrella of *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility*. In fact, the complexities and depth of these broad goals are best achieved within multi-level learning paths designed by a specialized program to build real student achievement. Our academic programs are both responsible for designing and maintaining these, and accountable for their success. The specific competencies which each program wishes to impart to its students are the responsibility of the programs to define and measure. Faculty governance and the UW-Parkside administration are responsible for certifying the integrity of these programs.

UW-Parkside is in the process of designing, from the ground up, a new teacher preparation program. The planning for this new program is endorsed by this Academic Plan, and the campus looks forward to receiving a completed program design to review.

Academic Program Goals

This section on the UW-Parkside Academic Program includes eight major goals, along with several sub-goals, meant to support this process.

Goal 2.1

Provide students with learning experiences that will promote continuous improvement in our students' development of Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility within all of our programs, and to provide them with the ability and motivation to pursue lifelong learning.

The major learning goals are woven throughout the curriculum and embedded in the General Education Program and the Majors. The Academic Plan provides us with an opportunity to strengthen them. *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility* also have campus-wide, interdisciplinary implications. In addition to the overall commitment to our three broad learning goals, this plan also includes four more focused sub goals.

All students are required to attain a minimum level of writing competency and many majors include more advanced development of writing ability. Some faculty and instructional academic staff, in a variety of programs, incorporate intensive writing into their classes. A formal program of Writing or Communication Across the Curriculum has never been a part of the UW-Parkside curriculum.

Increasing the amount of critiqued writing throughout a student's college career results in both better writing and better thinking (Johnstone, Ashbaugh, and Warfield 2002; Klein 1999). Therefore, we recommend Goal 2.1a.

Goal 2.1a

Develop a program to integrate into our curriculum a significant and meaningful amount of writing or communication, such as a program of communication or writing across the curriculum.

Writing across the curriculum or a similar strategy, could be an option for students who wish to graduate with an added credential, a requirement of certain programs, or it could be a requirement for all students. Although this plan advocates increasing writing and other forms of communication in order to improve communication ability and reasoning, the characteristics of the program need to be developed in the future. More about the development of writing intensive courses is discussed in the Pedagogy Section, Section 3.

Goal 2.1b bridges both *Communication* and *Reasoned Judgment* and focuses on an intellectual practice and habit of thinking that is particularly significant in the 21st Century: competence in *Information and Communication Technology* (ICT). ICT proficiency is: “the ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks appropriately to solve information problems in order to function in an information society. This includes the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information and the possession of a fundamental understanding of the ethical / legal issues surrounding the access and use of information” (National Higher Education Information and Communication Technology Initiative 2003). *ICT* is three dimensional, focusing on cognitive and technical proficiency, evaluation, and social and ethical issues. The Internet is a central tool of the 21st Century. According to the 2011 *Horizon Report* (Johnson et al. 2011: 3), “Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession” (our emphasis). Competence in using it as both a source of knowledge and information and a means of communication is a key ability needed by UW-Parkside graduates.

Goal 2.1b

Determine a set of specific, concrete competencies that define what ICT (Information and Communication Technology) proficiency means within each academic program, and revise curricula, if needed, to ensure that the competencies are met by all majors.

Courses that provide instruction in ICT proficiency might be existing courses – such as existing courses within a department’s research methods or creative production sequence, revised to incorporate a substantial ICT component, for example.

Social justice and diversity issues need to be embedded in the curriculum, pedagogy, and representation of faculty and staff. This learning outcome points to the need to critically examine systems of inequality (an intersection of racism, sexism, classism, and other categories of difference), the historical and political contexts from which they are produced and reproduced, and the impact on individual lives. Equally important to studying systemic injustice is to educate students toward personal agency and a transformative future.

In the context of UW-Parkside, why are many Latino and African American male students not returning after their first year? Why are the retention and graduation rates of students of color, particularly male students, the lowest among all racial groups? What changes can we make in our curricular and pedagogical approaches to increase the retention and graduation rates of students of color?

Since students’ primary point of contact is the classroom with professors and classmates, curricular and pedagogical approaches are central to student success. Faculty and teaching staff must engage in ongoing professional development to ensure effective teaching and learning relationships with a diverse range of students.

The abundance of resources and relationships made easily accessible via the Internet is increasingly challenging us to revisit our roles as educators. Institutions must consider the unique value that each adds to a world in which information is everywhere. In such a world, sense-making and the ability to assess the credibility of information are paramount.

– Johnson, Adams & Cummins 2012: 4.



Currently the departments that graduate the largest percentage of students of color are Communication, Criminal Justice, Sociology/Anthropology, and Business. Interestingly all of these departments have faculty of color, and, aside from Business, offer several courses that fulfill the diversity requirement for graduation, suggesting a correlation between course offerings and students, faculty/staff and students.

Goals 2.1c and 2.1d fall under the learning goal *Social and Personal Responsibility*, which includes diversity, concern for equity, globalism, and teamwork. As the most ethnically diverse campus in the UW System, UW-Parkside has the opportunity to take education in diversity to a new level. We can create the opportunity for our graduates to be the most cosmopolitan and sophisticated in understanding and working with those who are very different from themselves.

Through the years, the campus has worked to infuse learning about diversity into our curriculum, with a number of projects, from “*Women of Color in the Curriculum*” in the 1990’s to “*Summer Institute*” in the mid-2000’s. Our one-credit “*Diversity Circles*” have incorporated intensive discussion among students as a way of fostering understanding. Some of our majors include aspects of understanding and promoting equity and diversity in the list of competencies expected of graduates. On the other hand, the only diversity requirement that applies to all students is one three-credit course focusing on underrepresented U.S. racial and ethnic groups. Our assessment of the campus climate indicated that we have more work to do before our students, faculty, and staff treat one another with the respect that each member of our campus community deserves (Rankin & Associates Consulting 2010).

UW-Parkside is committed to the cultivation of all aspects of inclusivity and diversity. Therefore, we recommend Goals 2.1c and 2.1d.

Goal 2.1c

Strive to increase significantly inclusivity and diversity in the faculty, staff, and administration sufficient to promote diverse and inclusive academic perspectives and better mentoring of all students.

Goal 2.1d

Expand the inclusivity and diversity of both the curriculum and pedagogical approaches.

Fulfilling Goal 2.1d will include: Increasing the number of course offerings that fulfill the diversity requirement for graduation; increasing the inclusion of diversity in courses throughout the curriculum, including fields that traditionally have not addressed diversity issues;

One of the major conclusions from the last decade of research on college impact is that, on balance, racial diversity enriches the postsecondary academic and social experience and enhances the intellectual and personal impact of college.

- Pascarella 2006: *How College Affects Students.*

expanding programs that provide multicultural experiences and education; and providing professional development in diversity, curricular and pedagogical approaches for faculty and staff.

Within the learning goal of *Social and Personal Responsibility* is the Global Perspective, acquiring the knowledge and skills that provide an understanding of international/global issues and processes. UW-Parkside students have few international experiences compared to students across the UW System. While all of our academic programs should put students in contact with global knowledge, courses that include international travel are uniquely rich, often life changing, in the knowledge and understanding students gain.

Goal 2.1e

Internationalize the curriculum by incorporating global perspectives into all disciplines. Increase the percentage of our students who participate in academic courses that include international travel at least to the level of the UW System average.

An increase in the number of students who study abroad will have an impact on our students, not only those who themselves participate in international educational experiences, but also other students who learn about it second hand. Because most students will not travel abroad, internationalizing the curriculum and the campus (through international students, faculty, and events/resources) is of foremost importance. Another method for bringing students in contact with international communities would be to increase international contact through online collaborative programs.

Goal 2.2

Build opportunities for career knowledge and planning into the curricula of every major, forging closer connections between classroom and professional practice.

Our student population is motivated by seeing clear options and practical outcomes of their education. We will make this change not by weakening our commitment to the three broad learning goals, but by strengthening teaching by including problems and applications that challenge students to apply their growing knowledge and ability.

To support student success, we offer students majors that delve deeply into traditional academic subjects, such as History, Biology, Chemistry, and Art, interdisciplinary majors, such as International Studies, Humanities, and Interdisciplinary Studies, and also majors that provide specialized training for particular professional fields, such as Accounting, Criminal Justice, and Pre-Health Professions. Some programs, such as Computer Science and Graphic Arts, do both.



There is nascent evidence to indicate that classroom and nonclassroom experiences that introduce students to issues of diversity other than those based just on race or ethnicity (e.g., diversity of political or religious views, diversity focused on social class or sex, value diversity, background diversity of friendships, and the like) also enrich and enhance the impact of college.

- Pascarella 2006: How College Affects Students.

Our students tend to gravitate towards majors that appear closely linked to a particular job, and they don't readily recognize the opportunities of liberal arts and science programs, such as Political Science and Law and Physics. As a part of our commitment to student success, we will strengthen our support of students' career development as well as their intellectual development, and make the link between programs and a future professional life more visible. Toward that goal, we support the increase in community based learning classes that have specific ties to programs and projects that can enhance mastery of disciplinary applications and technical skills, as well as leadership and interpersonal skills that will enhance the likelihood of students getting jobs in desired professional fields. The greatest asset UW-Parkside graduates have to offer employers is a firm grounding in *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility*.

Planning for the future of specialized programs also need to take into account regional and national projections of the demand for various fields of study and the career experiences of recent alumni. The bachelor degree-level occupations that are projected to be most in demand in Southeastern Wisconsin and the Milwaukee area during the next few years are: registered nurses, teachers, accountants, computer systems analysts, human resources specialists, business operations specialists; network systems and data communications analysts; and computer software engineers (Falk 2011). Occupations in demand in Northeastern Illinois are similar (Falk 2011).

Goal 2.3

Identify and respond to the current and future demands for professions and occupations in the region.

While we expect our students to have multiple careers and occupations over the course of their professional lives, we want them to hit the ground running after graduation, knowing where opportunities can be found. We will identify programs that could be expanded, based on regional need, and others whose graduates will face difficult job markets – their majors don't clearly lead to attractive job opportunities in the region. We will establish more visible career advising within academic programs to help every student develop a realistic set of career options. This may involve encouraging students to add a second major, a minor, or a certificate program to increase their chances of success in the job market. Programs whose graduates will face a difficult job market will be encouraged to broaden their mission or limit their enrollments. Although the goal of a UW-Parkside education goes much further than a set of careers, a professional career is not only a major goal of our students but also a major need of our graduates, and we will make more explicit

connections between students' academic work and their economic lives after they graduate. Ideally, each student who wishes to work full-time after graduation will graduate with an accepted job offer in a field related to their professional aspirations. Programs will take more responsibility than they have in the past with providing the support to help make this happen.

Certificate Programs and Minors

Departments in traditional disciplines often offer students the option of adding certificate programs which provide concrete and focused education in a career-relevant specialty, such as Professional Writing, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, or Project Management. Another option is the minor, which gives students a credential in a field they are not majoring in. The focus is on developing not only academic skills, which help students develop an educated mind and heart, but also the ability to see the connections with practical applications important for a future professional life. Certificate programs are also open to graduates and other members of the community, who may wish to complete a relatively short series of courses in order to add a new credential to their resume.

Goal 2.4

Increase the career relevance of programs by providing a wide variety of certificate programs, which link students' academic knowledge with concrete applications, and academic minors, which provide options for small structured programs and can be combined with another major.



Graduate Programs

UW-Parkside currently has three graduate programs, a Master of Science in Applied Molecular Biology, a Masters of Business Administration, and a Master of Science in Computer and Information Systems. Additional graduate programs are needed to serve the needs of our region, both the need for a more educated workforce and the need of graduates at the bachelor's level for additional education.

A Master of Science in Sustainable Management degree is in the final stages of planning and approval. This degree is a collaborative program in partnership with UW-Extension, UW-Green Bay, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Parkside, UW-Stout, and UW-Superior that is delivered completely online. This interdisciplinary degree is designed to meet the rapidly changing needs of the 21st century economy and student. The collaborative nature of this program allows UW-Parkside to expand its degree array by capitalizing on shared resources within the UW System. This is particularly important at a time when state support for the university is in decline. UW-Parkside will continue to seek collaborative opportunities to expand the graduate studies degree program array building on this model.

Other areas of emerging need for graduate studies include: teacher preparation, healthcare and exercise science, global leadership, energy and climate change, and Social Gerontology to name a few. Continued review of the Graduate Studies program array in the context of community needs will ensure that new degrees will be developed to best serve UW-Parkside's mission.

Goal 2.5

Add new master's level programs, to provide our surrounding communities with both trained professionals and post-graduate opportunities.

Faculty, Academic Staff, Classified Staff

UW-Parkside benefits from a large number of dedicated, hardworking, and expert members of our faculty, staff, and administration. The faculty and staff are the engine of the university. Faculty provide academic leadership for the campus. Our faculty and academic staff possess an in-depth understanding of the course material they teach, a passion for their subject matter and for teaching, and an attitude of respect for all students. The classified staff is vital for the support of academic programs; without the contributions of every group, the campus cannot succeed.

Students at UW-Parkside benefit from the time and attention of our faculty and staff in small classes and one-on-one advising sessions which support student development and learning. Instructors know their students as individuals and students work with faculty and lecturers in a broad range of academic settings to fit a variety of learning styles. Faculty are active contributors to their disciplines, promoting advances in knowledge and pedagogy and providing state of the art academic programs.

Yet it is also true that we are in a challenging moment because of uncertain political support, budget cuts and a prolonged economic downturn. At a time when attracting and retaining our caliber of faculty is critical for achieving the goals of the university, doing so is increasingly difficult. Despite these challenges, the university must work diligently to attract, retain and reward instructors who possess these qualities, and to adequately compensate its employees at all levels.

Recognizing that “faculty working conditions are student learning conditions,” we will work to increase faculty satisfaction in five key areas—tenure expectations; work-life integration; support for research and teaching; culture, climate and collegiality; and engaging leadership across campus, using data from The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE 2012) survey. The commitment of UW-Parkside to a teacher scholar model for faculty is evident in our hiring choices. As we vet faculty applicants, we seek to ensure that faculty are motivated as both scholars and teachers, and that they are prepared to engage all of our students at the same level. Every faculty member hired shares the core values of UW-Parkside, and even the highest-level scholars are often attracted to UW-Parkside for its reputation of working closely with underrepresented students to ensure their success.

Under the teacher-scholar model, faculty are cognizant of the ways in which their research and intellectual activities can not only make contributions to an expanding global knowledge base, but they also have a positive influence on students. Teacher-scholars find multiple ways to apply their research to the community and thereby involve students beyond the classroom. Teaching is continually evaluated in a teacher-scholar model to seek ways to improve its impact on students, and to prioritize the opportunities to engage students in the intellectual pursuits of faculty. Faculty members are recognized as scholars not just for publications, but also for a wide range of activities that constitute meaningful contributions to their fields. These activities can include, but are not limited to, creative work, performance, traditional scholarship, web-based scholarship, community-based research, scholarship that involves students, and scholarship rooted in pedagogy. UW-Parkside has adopted this

Teacher-scholars are committed to high-quality undergraduate education, pursue an active program of research and scholarship, and are presumed to enliven and enrich their teaching and the student experience by incorporating insights from their own research into their instructional activities, student advising, and related work.

– Kuh, et al., Why Teach-Scholars Matter.

model because it fits our core values, and because the model allows for an environment in which faculty can be supported to thrive as excellent teachers and scholars.

In addition to the high impact practices described in Section 3, we encourage the following practices that allow faculty members to maximize their active participation in the teacher-scholar model:

- A concentrated effort to deepen the incorporation of this model as an explicit part of our university.
- Identifying a faculty committee to promote this model as an explicit component of teaching and research at UW-Parkside.
- Incorporating the ability of faculty to engage students as scholars as a factor in peer evaluations.
- Raising the profile of faculty research on campus, to peers and to students.

Goal 2.6

Provide a high level of support for strengthening the teacher/scholar model for faculty, a model that enriches our academic programs and contributes to a vibrant intellectual climate.

Goal 2.7

Identify and implement strategies to strengthen the campus community, including the classified staff, academic staff, faculty, and administration, in order to provide a rich environment and infrastructure for successful academic programs.

The implementation of the learning goals is supported by UW-Parkside’s hallmarks of student success; academic excellence; diversity and inclusiveness; and community engagement. These are the bases for academic decisions regarding programs and prioritization.

Academic excellence is assured by the high quality of the faculty, a united and disciplined focus on the priorities of the academic plan, and an emphasis on assessment and evaluation. Our programs are broadly applicable and won’t become out of date, providing students with the big picture and the freedom to adjust to change. Our commitments to student success and academic excellence are not vague promises, but are assured by a firm program of assessment. We therefore commit to the following goal.

If you care about enhancing quality in college, then you should also care about enhancing the working conditions of the professoriate. . . Caring about educational quality means investing in the human infrastructure and capacity to provide a first-rate education.

– Rhoades, *The Incomplete Completion Agenda*.

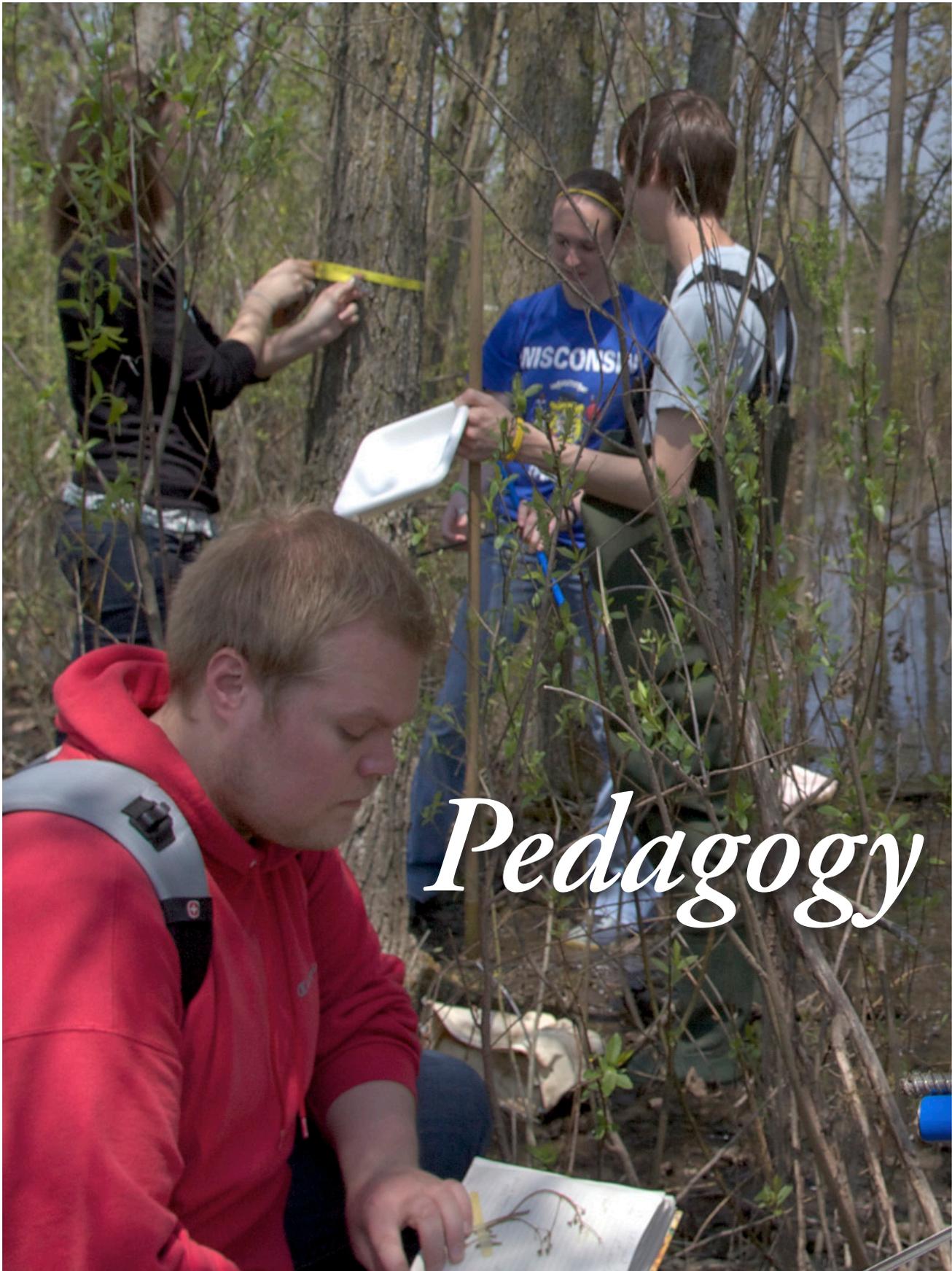
Goal 2.8

Establish a program of integrated assessment throughout the curriculum.

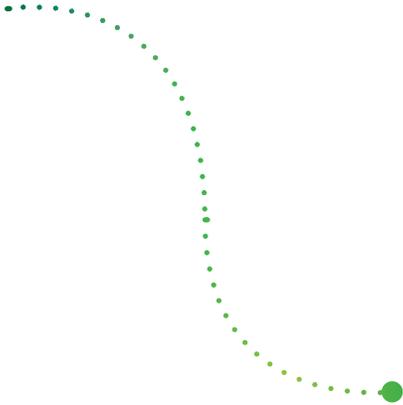
The overall philosophy of assessment that we wish to adopt is one of an ‘upward spiral’ in relation to our assessment process in which the institution and its programs continually pose questions about student learning, collect and analyze data in response to those questions, decide upon and implement changes that act upon that data, and then continue the cycle of questioning, collecting, analyzing, and acting. Assessment will be coordinated by the Academic Achievement Assessment Committee, and the overall plan will be a major component of the Implementation of the Academic Plan.

The AAC&U (2010, 4) recommends that the assessment of ultimate student integrative and applied learning should be demonstrated “through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.” As the portfolio of evidence of the value of a UW-Parkside education builds, our long experience of observing our students’ academic development can be more publicly applauded, and the areas that challenge us can be isolated, problematized, analyzed, strategized, and conquered. This process of continuous improvement will ensure the honesty of our academic plan.





Pedagogy



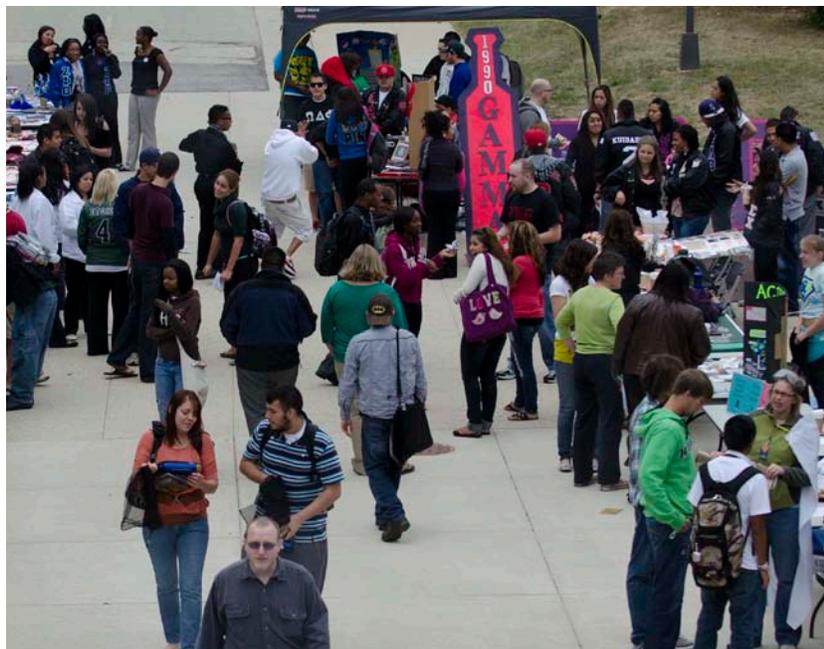
Research has demonstrated that *how* we teach is as important in a student's learning as *what* we teach. Our pedagogical strategies should reflect who our students are and how they learn. The challenge for educators is that the gap between the ways our students learn and the ways their professors learned when they were in school has never been wider. We must adapt and adjust to new ways of learning through new strategies and tools.

Our goals for this section are to enable and encourage effective practices and pedagogies, and to challenge us to become even better at meeting the intellectual needs of our students. We believe that the more we refine our pedagogy to fit the learning styles of current and future students, the greater our success in meeting our goals of increasing learning and improving retention and graduation rates. UW-Parkside is in a good position to launch or expand some of the practices described here, because we have the benefit of a small size, a low teacher-student ratio, and committed faculty and staff. Our faculty are particularly key to our pedagogy. It is a distinction of UW-Parkside faculty that they are committed to our core values, active and productive as scholars, and at the same time devoted to teaching. Enhancing a teacher-scholar model should flow easily out of our existing framework. UW-Parkside is not a research university, or a university devoted exclusively to the students in a course who are majors in the discipline. Our faculty are here because they recognize the value of enabling the success of all students in every course. Our search and screen criteria have made this a priority. We are able to attract top-level faculty who come to UW-Parkside because they value working closely with students. They value the freedom they are given through small classes and flexible class settings.

Goal 3.1

Increase student success through strengthening high impact pedagogical practices with the goal of attaining recognition as a leader in experiential learning.

Our students come from all walks of life, with varying degrees of preparation for college, but the goal upon enrollment is to ensure that all students have experiences that broaden them intellectually. One of the most effective means of enhancing the learning experience and improving engagement, retention and success is to ensure that we are maximizing the use of high impact practices (HIPs) across campus. Research has demonstrated that HIPs improve the engagement of students and increase the prospects for positive learning outcomes. They are designed to heighten the learning experience for students who are at risk of dropping out, to engage students who might otherwise transfer before completing their degree at UW-Parkside, and to provide opportunities for students not only to discover what they love but also to begin embarking on a pathway to reaching their goals. High Impact Practices are positively associated with persistence in school and GPA; deep approaches to learning; higher rates of student-faculty interaction; increases in critical thinking and writing skills; a greater appreciation for diversity, and higher student engagement overall (Swaner and Brownell 2010; Kuh 2008). High impact pedagogies also support the development of the three learning goals at UW-Parkside: *Communication, Reasoned Judgment, and Social and Personal Responsibility.*



Learning is the outcome of long, hard work on meaningful tasks, often in concert with other students. . . The effective teacher plans what students will be doing back in the dorm, in the library, with a group of classmates, or in the lab or field. In the classroom the teacher can connect, explain, demonstrate, stimulate, question, evaluate, and occasionally inspire, but cannot do the student's learning.

Henderson, Teaching at the People's University.

Build on and Improve Existing High Impact Practices

Recent research at UW-Parkside demonstrates that faculty and instructional academic staff are actively engaged in several of the high impact practices described here. Highlights from seniors' responses during the 2008 and 2011 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) include:

- Increasing participation in community service or volunteer work, research projects with faculty, study abroad, and capstone courses and projects;
- Exceeding both UW comprehensive and national averages for research projects with faculty in 2011; and
- Closing gaps between UW-Parkside and UW comprehensive and national averages for participation in internships, community service or volunteer work, study abroad, capstone courses and projects.

While this is evidence of progress, considerable gaps with UW comprehensive and national averages still exist that, in concert with other data, can provide guidance on areas of opportunity and inform institutional practice regarding high impact practices. UW-Parkside is well positioned to raise the level of these high impact pedagogies. Part of that, as noted above, is a function of our size, and part is a function of our core values. Community-based learning and service learning are now well developed, with broad support. Opportunities in undergraduate research and creative activity are provided by our faculty, many of whom are highly accomplished as scholars and artists, and are of particular interest as a campus-wide priority. Capstone courses are now required components of several programs, as are internships and externship courses. We are determined to continue to expand our use of high impact practices as a major component of our strategy to fulfill many of the other goals of the Academic Plan, such as increasing student learning, retention and graduation rates.

We also must acknowledge the challenge of closing a gap in retention and graduation rates between our students of color and our white students, as discussed in Section 2. High impact practices aid in the success of all students, but particularly affect the retention and graduation rates of students of color. It is thus particularly important to increase the rate of participation in high impact practices among students of color.

In order to provide targeted support for our most effective high impact practices, it is important to assess student interest and participation, to determine the current availability of our current practices, and to assess student interest and participation. This will allow the campus to: plan for the most efficient use of resources and

efforts; identify practices that need additional promotion or to be targeted to particular groups; and identify the practices that should be expanded based on student interest.

High Impact Practices and First-Year Students

First-Year Experiences

A primary goal that spans our three sections of this Academic Plan is to find the best way to engage, serve and retain first-year students. High impact practices can improve the experience of students in their first year and later by increasing student engagement and confidence.

Our current programming for first-year students is tailored to the student. In general, students can be engaged in their first year with programming that responds to the initial endowments present when the students enter UW-Parkside.

1. One of the first contacts first-year students have with college-level work is the summer Ranger Read program. All new incoming first-year students are invited to read a book selected, each year, to begin discussing it online, and then participate in a small group discussion of the book, led by a member of the faculty or academic staff, during the *Ranger Welcome* programming during the two days before fall semester classes begin.
2. For highly prepared new students, we provide opportunities for honors courses in the form of academic honors and civic honors programs. These students have selected UW-Parkside as a first choice, often because of a special program that fits their interests or the ability to work with particular faculty. While our honors programs are currently small, they are a priority area for growth.
3. For students who are conventionally prepared for college at entry, we have a strong academic program that allows for choices that suit the student's interest and can engage them in this way. We can tailor the first year to allow for increasing skills where this might be needed while challenging the student in areas where they are prepared to succeed. A priority area for these students is retention, and high impact practice goals are associated with student persistence (Swaner and Brownell 2010; Kuh 2008). We also encourage a concerted effort to enroll these students in our smaller courses where possible to allow for early engagement with faculty and coursework.
4. For students who arrive with the need for developmental coursework in order to be college-ready, we are particularly focused on seeing that they engage in the first year, complete the



In the short term, making high-impact activities more widely experienced should have a demonstrable impact in terms of student persistence and satisfaction as well as desired learning outcomes.

- Kuh 2008: High Impact Educational Practices.

necessary academic skills (ACSK) coursework, and are set on a pathway to attain academic success. Our ACSK courses include courses to improve reading, writing, math, computer literacy, test preparation, study skills, and can be tailored to students' needs so that as soon as they are able to enroll in our mainline courses, in any particular discipline, they can do so. These course offerings allow students the chance to achieve academic success in their first year, and reduce the number of students who fail and lose out on the chance to achieve a college education.

Many of the practices described in this section should be seen as critical to achieving the goal of increasing our retention and graduation rates. This goal is identified and described in the Student Profile section of this plan.

Regardless of the incoming attributes of first-year students, some practices should be initiated or expanded in order to provide an important experience that can have longstanding impact for our students. These may include:

- Freshman seminars.
- Reserving certain sections of courses for freshmen.
- Improvements in the advising process.
- Increasing the number of first-year students who live on campus.

In order to best determine any additional practices to put into place for first-year students, we need to obtain more data on how first-year students are doing and what we are currently doing that works well for them. Data should also be collected to track the paths of first-year students.

General Education Initiatives

The General Education Program is engaged in two initiatives pertaining to student success in the first-year. In brief:

1. LINK Program: Learning Integrated for New Knowledge
2. GNED 190: Introduction to the Disciplines

The LINK Program lasts for two semesters and is designed for students who have concurrently placed into ACSK A083, *College Reading and Learning Strategies*, and ACSK A090, *Composition Preparation*. For the first semester, students enroll in ACSK A083, ACSK A090, ACSK A120, *Introduction to Critical Thinking*, and a general education course. For the LINK participants, some of the assignments in the general education course are supported by the reading (A083) and



writing courses (A090). Within the general education course, the LINK participants are not identified and participate as any other student. In the second semester, LINK participants enroll in at least one general education course that is supported with supplemental instruction (SI) through Learning Assistance.

GNED 190 is an introductory course designed to allow students to explore disciplines within a distribution category. A pilot will be offered in Fall 2012 involving the humanities and the fine arts. In reviewing the course proposal and outcomes, the General Education Committee felt that this could serve as a starting point for reintroducing an academic seminar for first-year students. A strong and well supported Teaching-Learning Center will be a key component of our changing pedagogy, providing professional development opportunities to faculty and academic staff as they work to incorporate higher levels of experiential learning and other high impact practices in their teaching. For UW-Parkside students, the separate yet collaborative roles that exist between the First-Year Initiative, the Learning Assistance Center, the Teaching-Learning Center and General Education are crucial to achieving student success.

Learning Communities

UW-Parkside provides the opportunity for some first-year students enrolled in developmental courses to build a sense of community through the practice of registering for two or three courses with a group of other first-year students, thereby becoming a part of a learning community. The creation of more of these opportunities

across the campus is encouraged. The communities allow students to have a stronger connection to faculty, staff and the campus, and to find other students with similar interests with whom they can have a common intellectual experience. Learning communities are particularly important during a student's first year as a positive first intellectual experience and a means to greater engagement.

Research also suggests that learning communities have a positive effect on outcomes for underserved students. For these students, participation in a learning community can improve both grades and persistence, and can facilitate the transition to college by helping to build identification as a college student and to gain confidence in expressing themselves in the classroom (Swaner and Brownell 2010).

Writing-Intensive Courses

Writing-intensive courses throughout the curriculum provide a means to reinforce writing skills, and prevent their erosion, a detrimental process that can occur after a freshman composition class if subsequent courses instead focus on exams and assignments for evaluation. Students who engage in writing in a range of disciplines develop better writing skills, one of the most important academic skills to take to a work environment. As discussed in Section 2, Academic Program, the establishment of a writing intensive program is an important goal of this academic plan.

Capstone Courses

The ability of students to demonstrate their knowledge of material as they complete their degree at UW-Parkside is provided for in capstone courses. These are encouraged. Models exist on campus for capstone courses, and it is our goal to increase their number and representation across disciplines and among diverse groups of students.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is a recursive process in which “immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn” (Kolb & Kolb 2005:194). Experiential learning is currently practiced in a number of ways at UW-Parkside, including: Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, Service and Community Based Learning, and Internships, as described below. However, instructors, generally, have not had the opportunity for comprehensive training in the design of experiential educational modules, which an institutional commitment to the promotion of effective experiential education would require. The current practice of experiential education, as described below, is a good starting point to build upon.

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

UW-Parkside has focused considerable effort on creating experiential learning and research/creative activity in every discipline. Because we have a small graduate program, the research being conducted by faculty across disciplines is much more available to undergraduate students than is the case at universities with large graduate programs. We currently demonstrate our commitment to undergraduate research in several ways: undergraduate research is promoted throughout the campus; During 2010-11 and 2011-12 UW-Parkside hosted the *UW System Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference*, a system-wide conference in which students present their research or artistic work through paper and poster presentations and artistic performances; stipends were available from the Dean of Arts and Sciences for students participating in research and creative activity on campus, and courses on undergraduate research have been developed in disciplines such as chemistry, sociology/anthropology, biology, and psychology. We must, though, meet the challenge and opportunity of implementing a stronger and more consistent program campus-wide. Faculty members have already started this process, having attended workshops on undergraduate research and proposed a comprehensive effort to advance it within every department.

In order to strengthen student-faculty relationships and maximize student success, UW-Parkside strives to integrate undergraduate research and promote original scholarship and creative activity across all disciplines and levels of the university. Undergraduate Research,



Known outcomes of undergraduate research include: improvement in writing and communication skills, increased frequency and quality of interaction with faculty and peers, gains in problem solving and critical thinking, higher levels of satisfaction with the educational experience, and greater chance of enrollment in graduate school.

- Brownell & Swaner: Five High Impact Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion, and Quality.

Scholarship and Creative Activity (URSCA) can be defined broadly or according to a specific discipline. At the heart of URSCA are student-centered learning experiences that improve student motivation for learning, understanding of their discipline, and retention.

UW-Parkside sees the practice of undergraduate research as much more than assigning a paper to a student or adding material to a course for a particular student. The goal is to engage any student, regardless of their level and based only on their interest in participating, in the research being carried out by faculty. This will require some effort to promote the opportunities so that they are not viewed as strictly for advanced students, and so that underrepresented students get the benefit of participation as much as possible.

It will be important to assess the number of students participating in undergraduate research in order to determine areas where we can involve more students, and to ascertain the reasons why some disciplines may have more students participating than others. We also seek to assess the impact of undergraduate research on faculty workload.

Community-Based Learning and Service Learning

Community Engagement is a nationally recognized hallmark of distinction for UW-Parkside rooted in an institutional commitment to fostering civic minded students, alumni, staff and faculty who provide scholarship, leadership, resources and services to the local and global community. Community-based learning has been a growing component of UW-Parkside's activities over the last fifteen years. The campus has a half-time Director of Community-Based Learning, an office, and a support system.

Direct service learning can include activities such as tutoring or mentoring other students, conflict resolution, or teaching material from a course in a community setting. Indirect service learning can include working on broader issues for a community or cause. Research-based service learning involves gathering information on areas of need and interest, and advocacy service learning is the education of others about topics of public interest.

Our Academic Program section of this Academic Plan describes UW-Parkside's intent to bolster our presence in the community and our connection between academic programming and community service and engagement. This service learning and community engagement goal, as an effective form of experiential learning, is also critical in terms of pedagogy, and will require some reflection and action on the part of departments and faculty. Although service learning is built into some academic programs at UW-Parkside, much of the



focus has been disconnected from academic programs. We intend to ensure the success of service learning and community-based learning by encouraging the following:

- Faculty development programming that will train faculty to integrate meaningful community service with course material, and to allow for feedback and reflection in class.
- Designing community engagement in courses to reflect the needs of specific populations of students, such as the needs of nontraditional students for community based learning (Rosenberg, et al. 2012).
- Rewarding faculty for their efforts to engage students in meaningful experiential learning activities.
- Identifying real community needs and representatives.
- Identifying the goals for the student and the community.
- Enabling collaboration with as many interested parties as is necessary.
- Establishing the connections between the student's service and the academic curriculum.
- Establish a system for the measurement of progress.

Internships

Internships provide not just an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned in the real world and to test their compatibility with a field, but are also a practical means for students to gain experience and entry into their chosen profession. Expanding the number of internships for students is another important goal.

Goal 3.2

Provide support for teaching improvement through professional development and opportunities for research and creative activity.

UW-Parkside strives to provide as many opportunities as possible for faculty and staff support and development. Our university asks a lot from all of our staff, but especially the faculty. They are teachers first but just as importantly they are scholars, creative artists, and committee members. They are active in the community and continually taking on more work in order to ensure the success of our students and campus. We support the following actions to provide opportunities for professional development:

- Enhancement of our *Teaching and Learning Center*, which provides centralized services for faculty and instructional academic staff professional development. The center will establish services or, where they exist, seek to improve them. Services include: a forum for ongoing discussion on pedagogy and ways to improve, enhance and strengthen teaching, learning, and retention within or across disciplines; a repository for information on pedagogy and on new methods and technology for teaching and learning; a central location for the systematic evaluation of the presence of and effectiveness of pedagogical practices at UW-Parkside.
- Participation in professional development opportunities provided by colleagues across the UW System and the Office of Professional Instructional Development.
- The acquisition of grants and internal funding for research, to support best teaching practices and dissemination, and for travel to professional conferences or events that will provide opportunities for professional development.
- Multi-year support of new faculty cohorts to share experiences and receive customized professional development opportunities.

Goal 3.3

Provide support for improved course design and appropriate class sizes to meet the needs of our students while assuring high quality educational experiences, and support for teaching effectiveness.

Learning is enhanced when we evaluate and improve our course design, setting and size. Thoughtful planning for improvements should include an assessment of:

- Appropriate classroom formats for a given set of learning goals. Rather than assume the current format for a class, other formats should be considered where appropriate. Some course material might be best conveyed through alternative formats such as labs, lectures, group work, student research, seminars, or independent study. A combination of formats might be ideal. Faculty and instructional academic staff should consult within their department to determine the best format for any given course.
- Class sizes (enrollment caps) and department staffing that support quality learning. Departments are encouraged to gradually reduce the size of large general education classes to achieve a pedagogically optimal size. Courses taught to first-year students should be kept as small as possible. These classes should be taught by regular members of the department, rather than by part-time staff who are less familiar with the department. In order to encourage familiarity, part-time staff should be integrated into the department as much as possible.

It has become a practice in some departments to offer large lecture classes to general education students while offering very small classes to upper level majors. Classes that are too large can contribute to high drop-out rates. Students who are transitioning into college expectations often do better when instructors get to know them enough to understand and respond to their particular needs. High impact practices and experiential learning are often more effective in smaller settings. Departments and programs need to evaluate the class sizes of their general education classes to ensure that they are an optimal size for student success.

- Supports for students outside of the classroom, including student health support and co-curricular activities that could help engage students and improve performance in class should be evaluated and implemented.
- UW-Parkside is expanding the number of online courses offered. As we move into this new pedagogy, we should be willing to embrace the opportunities it provides for reaching more students, and aware of the care that should be taken to bring these new students into the UW-Parkside community. Online coursework can allow students to continue taking courses when personal circumstances would otherwise create a barrier to retention, but they can also reduce engagement with the university if taken

without good planning and a sufficient infrastructure. We should evaluate the benefit of online courses for new vs. existing UW-Parkside students, the percentage of courses that is ideal to offer online, the impact of increasing online programming on facilities and student services.

Goal 3.4

Provide increased flexibility in scheduling and delivery of classes to accommodate the lifestyles and learning preferences of the students of 2020.

Departments, administrators, and governance committees should be as open as possible to alternative scheduling, while maintaining standards. Perhaps some classes could be divided into 1-credit modules taught during intensive weekends. Perhaps some instructors would like to experiment with self-paced components of courses, sometimes combined with group meetings. Internships, research projects, and community based projects could be offered in a variety of formats. The governance of these formats to ensure high quality and sufficient content would be a challenge, and fitting these within an outcome assessment plan would be one place to begin.

Goal 3.5

Broaden and intensify the use of innovative teaching and learning technologies and delivery systems, such as increasing online instruction and mobile learning.

The *Horizon Report* (Johnson et al. 2011), predicts that mobile devices, such as tablets and smart phones, are increasingly becoming the medium used for internet access. Recent developments, such as linking mobile devices to desktop computers electronically can potentially enable students and faculty and staff to use a broad range of desktop applications – not only Excel, PowerPoint and Microsoft Word, but also any Windows program, such as SPSS – from mobile devices. These will broaden the options for class delivery and student/instructor interaction. As technology changes rapidly, those who wish to experiment with new methods should be encouraged to do so. This might be most effectively accomplished by teams of instructors, and, in some cases, whole programs. Departments and governance committees need to maintain quality while recognizing that a legitimate class may look different in the coming years than it does today.

In order to support the expansion of the online curriculum, a number of supports will be needed, as recommended in the *Online Teaching and Learning Taskforce Report* (Mullen and Robinson 2010) including:

If free to do so, about one-half of middle- and high-school students would use mobile devices to communicate with classmates, work with classmates on projects, conduct Internet research, and receive alerts about upcoming homework and tests.

– Van Der Werfand Sabatier 2009: 8.



- An administrative unit responsible for overseeing and coordinating online teaching and learning initiatives across the campus;
- A campus-wide governance-approved policy on online teaching and learning;
- An adequate technical infrastructure and staffing;
- Consistent and ongoing support for online instructors, such that an online instructor has access to virtually all services that are available for classroom teaching.

Goal 3.6

Provide a variety of physical learning environments with sufficient infrastructure and professional support.

The physical resources and facilities required to best meet the goals laid out in this Academic Plan must be assessed in light of the priorities for programming, and in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center, the Learning Technologies Center, and the Provost. A process for upgrading instructional facilities and equipment should be put into place that is consistent with UW-Parkside priorities and resources.

Any changes to programming that result from implementing the goals of this plan should take into account the physical space requirements created by the change, such as: the ability of campus classroom resources to accommodate the change (e.g. smaller class sizes that require a greater number of classrooms for instruction,

additional needs for disciplinary and/or computer labs, performance space); technology needs created by programs (e.g., network/bandwidth, technical support, media services, upgrades necessary to keep technical and computer equipment up to date), and types of furnishings necessary to meet various instructional needs.

As part of the planning for these physical space requirements, a system for departments to bring forward issues they have with their equipment, and for prioritizing upgrades, should be established. A consistent approach to allocating resources for new equipment will prevent departments and campus services, including library services, from losing out on opportunities to meet urgent needs to stay current technologically.

When students can engage with faculty and staff, they are more likely to persist in college, to build a life-long appreciation for intellectual inquiry, and to find a field that they love. By setting optimal class sizes, by encouraging a teacher-scholar model, and by developing high impact practices that bring students closer to faculty, UW-Parkside is setting a goal to improve on an existing strength and to increase the number of members of the campus community who serve as mentors to our students.

Goal 3.7
Provide continuous improvement of pedagogical practices and technologies through assessment processes.

This goal links with Goal 2.8, in the Academic Program section. We must put in place systems to assess student participation and progress in our programs. Without a careful analysis of our current programming and student participation and progress, it will be difficult to achieve the goals of this Academic Plan. The following are starting points for assessing initiatives and programs outlined in this plan.

Measures in the classroom. Within classrooms, assessment of student performance and student evaluations of courses and/or programs should be consistently implemented in order to inform our practice. The type of assessment might vary by course or department, but should be overseen by a committee in order to ensure an optimal level of consistency. The committee could decide on approaches, including the possibility of setting aside a campus-wide assessment day. Types of measures could include formative and summative evaluations, measures of student learning gains, and summative course evaluations. We also propose that questions be added to course evaluation to regularly gather student feedback in relation to institutional learning goals.

Program prevalence on campus. While the potential benefit of a program is often clear, the extent to which an assessment program is currently being implemented within programs is often less clear. This is where our assessment of programs needs to start. A survey of departments for each of the programs and initiatives defined in this plan should be created and conducted in order to establish the prevalence of programs within departments. A plan for the analysis and use of the information obtained from the survey should be put into place.

In addition, an assessment of the demographics of students who participate in our programs is critical. This should be completed and evaluated by department, to determine where we might need to address differences in participation by student skill level, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics. It should also evaluate the participation in programs by first-year students and the impact on retention.

Measures external to the classroom. The following measures should provide useful data, and should be considered and implemented as needed by the committee described above: BCSSE/NSSE survey data, Campus Climate data, Equity Scorecard, and ETS Proficiency Profile.

Conclusion

The Academic Plan is meant to answer basic questions: Who are we? Where do we fit within the academic landscape? Where are we going? These are basic questions about any university, but without consensus on a common academic plan, people in different parts of the institution will answer these questions very differently, and the institution will suffer from a general disorientation as different groups try to pull the institution in different directions. It is hard to move ahead if we haven't taken the time to agree on a destination. As the U.S. University was taking form during the 18th and 19th centuries, by such leaders as Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Rainey Harper, and others, a major thread was pragmatism – experimenting, testing, and reporting what works. That is our approach here. We will “trust but verify.” Assessment is an important part of every part of this plan.

This Academic Plan grew during two years of study and discussion by the Committee on Academic Planning (CAP) and the campus as a whole. CAP began working on this academic plan in September 2010. During the two-year process, we met with the campus for 7 hour-long discussions and in two faculty summits; we presented periodic updates to the University Committee and the Faculty Senate; and we met with many other campus groups and committees as well, including: The General Education Committee, The Academic Achievement Assessment Committee, The Teaching and Learning

Center, The Community Based Learning Center, Ethnic Studies, and others. As members of the campus community discussed our visions for this plan, we discovered that we are more united than we realized. We share the strong belief that we want to continue to become more effective in helping our students to succeed. The faculty is dedicated to the teacher/scholar model and the opportunity this provides to energize faculty and to give our students experiences in research and creative production. We appreciate our students in all their diversity, and we are thrilled to see them walk across the stage at graduation knowing how much they have grown since they began their studies here.

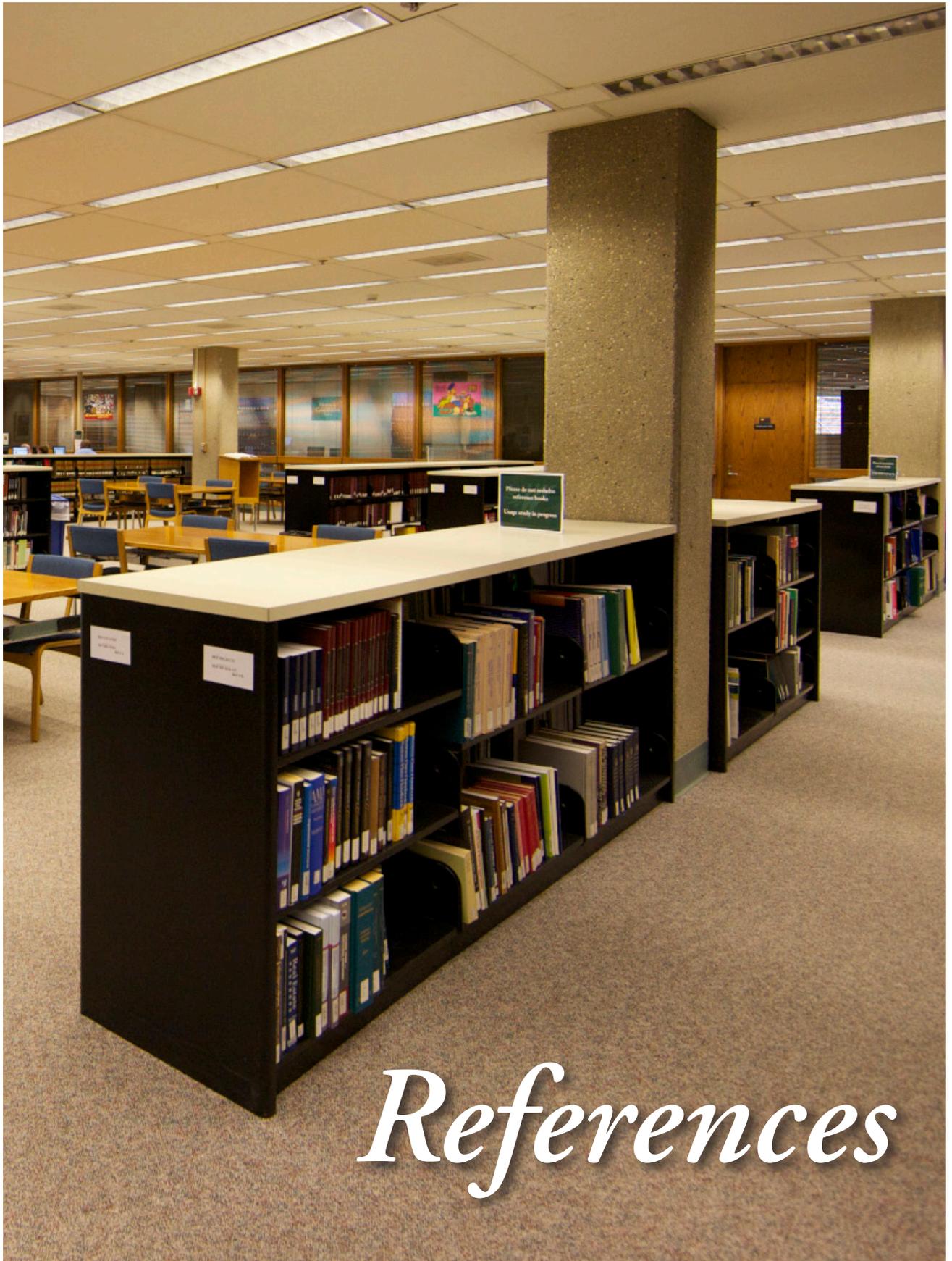
When we started, we looked at a variety of academic plans, and we saw that there was no one template to follow. Provost Terry Brown suggested a broad outline in which we would focus on who are our students, what we teach them, and how we serve their learning needs. This is basically the outline we have now. However, in the “What We Teach” section, we do not discuss specific programs, but instead we focus on the common goals of all programs. The plan does not name star programs or programs to be discarded. We believe that if all programs become focused on promoting the relevance of their disciplines for fulfilling students’ goals, and if they teach effectively using experiential learning and other high impact practices, they will grow. Although we are acutely aware of the changing needs of the region for various areas of expertise, and we plan to ensure that students are very aware of these facts, we also know that employers are often looking for thoughtful, clear- thinking team players, sophisticated in inclusivity and diversity, with strong communication and analytic abilities, college level basic skills and efficient work habits. These can come out of almost any discipline, but it is up to the department or interdisciplinary program to develop students’ abilities and confidence and help them communicate the value of their education to potential employers or communities they wish to serve.

In this Academic Plan, we gathered research on what works, and we studied many other academic plans, but we did not identify other colleges and universities with our unique mission. UW-Parkside is not replicating what universities have done in the past. Instead, we start with who our diverse and talented students are, and then move forward to what we want to give our students and community in terms of knowledge, wisdom, and character, and how to best attain those desired outcomes. Our direction comes from our growing understanding of the major challenges we face in the classroom, the major joy of seeing students develop, and the satisfaction of meeting our former students, who are contributing members of their communities.

Since we did not have an academic plan in the past, we can say that before this we did not join together in a united effort to reach a commonly understood set of academic goals. This Academic Plan does define common goals: to increase students' success in our three major learning goals of communication, reasoned judgment, and personal and social responsibility; and to increase students' retention and graduation rates through a focus on high impact practices, linking students more successfully to their professional goals, and changing our structure and methods to meet the needs of the changing student population.

UW-Parkside has many strengths: close connections between the faculty and staff and our students; a strong and dedicated faculty and teaching academic staff; students who, in general, are highly motivated to succeed; a location in one of the most productive urban areas in the world; and ever-deepening links to our communities. We believe that we are doing good work here. We are providing a higher education to many students who would have limited access to a college degree if we were not here for them, and for all students, we are providing an outstanding education which provides them with opportunities to excel.

The next step for the Academic Plan is its implementation. Planning and carrying out the implementation will be a highly collaborative process engaging the entire campus community. We will work together to increase retention and graduation rates, lower the achievement gap, increase student learning, particularly in writing, international studies, and Information and Communication Technology, and design clear and flexible paths to degree completion. This will be difficult, but nothing will change unless we change. As we view the road ahead, we look forward to greater and greater success as we aim high and make excellence inclusive.



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