

College of Education and Human Services

Lessons Learned from the All-University Strategic Planning Retreat on August 17, 2004

The College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) has been actively engaged in strategic planning since 1995 when the College adopted its conceptual framework: The Educator as a Caring Intellectual. This conceptual framework has been the driving force in establishing the College's vision, mission, values, and strategic directions. In 2000, the College identified five strategic directions: (1) quality programs, (2) expanded vision, (3) collaboration, (4) enhanced image, and (5) diversity. Since 2000, the College has conducted an annual review of progress toward achieving its identified strategic goals. The 2003-04 academic year was highlighted by extensive department and college-wide discussions on what is most distinctive about the COEHS. The overwhelming response to this question was the College's commitment to the Caring Intellectual conceptual framework.

Summary of Small Group Feedback on COEHS Strategic Goals and Initiatives

Lessons learned from the small group discussions on the COEHS strategic planning process, goals, and initiatives are organized according to the four questions each group addressed.

- 1. Among the College's recommended objectives and strategies for pursuing vertical distinctiveness, which ideas comport best with the University's "Governing Ideas" and horizontal distinctiveness?**

Participants felt that several COEHS initiatives were compatible with University values. For instance, COEHS diversity initiatives such as Project Adelante and the collaborative activities with the College of Menominee Nation foster the University's value for diversity and inclusivity. Further, the COEHS performance-based portfolio assessment process was viewed as compatible with the University's value of knowledge and continuous learning. Another University value, student engagement, is fostered by the College's integration of course work with various field experiences and by the extensive incorporation of instructional technology in numerous COEHS courses. In addition to compatibility with several University values, participants identified a number of University strategic directions that were being promoted by COEHS strategic initiatives. The COEHS is expanding community outreach and partnerships through its alternative teacher licensure programs with CESA 6, through offering an expanded number of teacher professional development workshops and short courses, and through the above-mentioned collaborative initiatives such as Project Adelante and with the College of Menominee Nation. Several participants did recommend that the COEHS continue to expand and enhance collaborative activities with the College of Letters and Science (COLS).

2. Which of the College’s ideas offer the greatest promise for achieving significant vertical distinctiveness?

The COEHS conceptual framework: The Educator as Caring Intellectual was often cited as a unique brand for the College and as having promise for establishing vertical distinctiveness. Alternative licensure programs for teachers were also frequently mentioned. Other COEHS activities that were identified in response to this question included various diversity initiatives, the performance-based portfolio assessment process, and the focus on life long learning. The COEHS was encouraged to increase its incorporation of instructional technology throughout the curriculum.

3. How might the academic community and external stakeholders assist the College in achieving vertical distinctiveness?

The most common responses were assisting with marketing efforts, increasing alumni contacts, telling the “college’s story,” and enhancing collaboration between COEHS and COLS. Several participants encouraged the COEHS to increase its use of an advisory board, seek more involvement and input from a broader community (not exclusively the education community), engage in more grant writing to support faculty research, and to continue expanding community partnerships. Finally, it was recommended that the COEHS continue its partnership with the APPLE pre-college program to increase the diversity of teacher education candidates.

4. What additional recommendations or suggestions do you have regarding this effort?

The participants offered a variety of additional recommendations.

- Increase public relations efforts to promote COEHS initiatives.
- Develop a simpler message to describe the COEHS conceptual framework.
- Increase the offering of more flexible courses, including distance education, to accommodate the needs of nontraditional adults.
- Include community members on the advisory board who are outside of the educational community.
- Develop earlier and more intensive field experiences for students.
- Seek external funding to support technology initiatives.
- Increase the visibility of the Human Services program.
- Increase involvement with Milwaukee public schools.
- Enhance the change agent component of the conceptual model.

Future COEHS Actions

This feedback will be shared with the COEHS Administrative Council, the faculty, and academic staff of the college. The strategic planning participants affirmed many of the

current COEHS goals and initiatives. It is also apparent that the COEHS should focus more energy on the following activities:

- The College will continue to refine its performance-based portfolio assessment process and has initiated a pilot e-portfolio project.
- Discussions will commence this year in an effort to establish a joint Teacher Education Council involving administrators and faculty from the COEHS and COLS.
- The College is engaged in discussions with UW Colleges representatives in an effort to develop a post-baccalaureate teacher licensure program in secondary math and science.
- The College is working on reinstating its advisory board and planning on one meeting each semester with this external constituent body.
- The College has funded a half-time grants specialist the past two years to increase external grant funding.
- The College is trying to tell “its story” more effectively by developing a newsletter and updating and enhancing the website.
- A UW System Teacher Quality Initiative grant has generated some distance education course development.