Welcome back to the spring semester. We are marking this occasion with the provost’s office inaugural newsletter. Our goal is to provide better communication and to update the campus on recent or upcoming events. My column will focus on the recent accomplishments, provide a brief budget update and mention a few upcoming opportunities.

First, I thank you for your participation last semester in the Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation visit. HLC team visit meetings were held with faculty, staff, students and administrators. As you know, we received a positive recommendation during the exit meeting. The University of Northern Iowa will receive a preliminary report sometime this spring. In addition, the self-study will be highlighted at the annual HLC Conference in April. Our collective success contributes to the University of Northern Iowa’s continuing quest for excellence. I wholeheartedly agree with President Allen’s statement, “We owe this excellent news to everyone’s hard work for delivering the outstanding educational experience that merits accreditation.”

The fall semester also brought the approval of UNI’s strategic plan by the Board of Regents. The strategic planning committee and all campus participants are to be commended for their participation. The university plan will provide the campus with strategic direction by increasing intentionality and focusing resources in alignment with stated goals and objectives. The implementation stage is now beginning, with each Vice President developing divisional plans guided by the university plan. The Academic Affairs Council will have a draft of our division’s plan ready for review later this spring. We have much to accomplish, including: assigning responsibility for goal areas, establishing metrics and deadlines, and assessing financial cost.

To assist the campus in reaching its technology goals, the Office of the Executive Vice-President and Provost welcomed Dr. Shashi Kaparthi as the Chief Information Officer last fall. Technological advances in higher education appear almost daily. Moreover, expansion of technology is generally coupled with many important questions. Do we have the proper infrastructure; how do we ensure quality for on-line classes; what’s the best way to incorporate technology within the classroom, labs and studios? Shashi and the IT staff, along with Continuing and Distance Education, will continue to provide professional development, to keep up with technological advances and to guide the university on making the best decisions on the use of technology.
In regard to budget, there’s good news and not so good news. As you may know, UNI experienced a permanent budget deficit for FY11 of $1,225,274. Academic Affairs’ share was initially $891,387 (72.7% of total UNI budget). President Allen lowered our share to $875,000 (71.4%). This, along with the permanent FY11 budget cut in our Iowa Public Radio contribution further lowered Academic Affairs’ share of the deficit to $776,426. Discussions with the Academic Affairs Council and other groups have resulted in the decision to mitigate most of the budget cuts with reductions in summer school and Continuing Education allocations. The provost’s office will partially offset the reduction this year with one-time funding.

The Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost has been working with campus groups to provide opportunities for faculty development. One-time funds have been allocated to Sponsored Programs for seed funding for research and related projects in the following categories: small scale seed funding, large scale seed funding and preK-12 education innovation. Applications are in and selection committees will meet soon. A professional development opportunity related to the new Liberal Arts Core cornerstone course was recently announced. Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty who are selected will receive a $6,000 stipend for participating in a summer workshop focused on course development and pedagogy. Details of additional faculty opportunities for support of the scholarly and creative work of pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty and for curriculum development related to diversity and sustainability and will be forthcoming soon. See the box below for a full list of opportunities.

Finally, a reminder that for a second year funding is being made available to the American Democracy Project Committee for a Service Learning Fellowship Program for UNI faculty. A select number of Fellowships, in the amount of $2,500 each, will be awarded for the May 2011 term. The deadline for applications is January 21. Fellows will devote full time to the development (or major revision) of a course involving a significant component of service learning. This service-learning course must be offered in the fall or the spring semester of the 2011-2012 academic year. See the American Democracy Project website for more information and applications.

Over the next five years, the provost’s office will work diligently to achieve our mission as stated in our strategic plan: to provide transformative learning experiences that inspire students to embrace challenge, engage in critical inquiry and creative thought, and contribute to society. We look forward to working with the entire campus to transform UNI’s vision, mission, goals and objectives from concepts to reality.

We invite you to join the dialogue. If you have ideas for articles or would like to contribute to the newsletter, please send an e-mail to provostnewsletter@uni.edu.

Gloria J. Gibson
Executive Vice President and Provost

Watch for details on the Provost’s website for multiple exciting Faculty Development Opportunities:
• Cornerstone Course Teaching
• Continuing Education eLearning Initiative
• Diversity Curriculum Infusion
• Pre-Tenure Fellowship
• Service Learning Initiative
• Sustainability Opportunity

http://www.uni.edu/provost/resources
By Michael Licari

During the visit of the Higher Learning Commission review team (HLC) November 8-10, 2010 all aspects of the university were examined as the 10-person review team met with dozens of different groups from every division on campus.

Happily, the visiting team’s recommendation is for the Commission to reaffirm UNI’s accreditation, without stipulation, follow-up reporting, or focus visit. This is the best recommendation an institution can receive.

Preparing for our institutional reaccreditation took a lot of time and effort by many faculty, staff and students. Those efforts culminated in the publication of our accreditation report. This self-study report, has allowed us to assess the quality and effectiveness of UNI and to make improvements in our operations. Although the review was successful, we do have work to do as the result of what we learned while writing the report and from feedback from the review team.

To that end, UNI has joined the HLC Assessment Academy. You can read more about those efforts on page 4 of this newsletter. Our proposal is timed with the current review of the existing Liberal Arts Core (LAC), and is designed so that we construct our plans to evaluate student learning while we redesign the LAC. This way, the student learning goals that we have for the new LAC can be stated more effectively and clearly, which should help students understand why their LAC courses are important. I am convinced that the entire process demonstrates UNI’s commitment to our students.

I would like to thank my co-chair Barbara Cutter, those who served on the HLC Accreditation Steering Committee, the Foundations of Excellence Committees, and everyone else on campus for all of their hard work over the past three years. I am incredibly proud to serve such a fine institution and it is a privilege to work with so many dedicated faculty, staff, and students. In fact, one of the review team members, after meeting with students, told us that our students “absolutely love” us. That, I think is a mark of an excellent institution.

Left is Kate Martin, member of the UNI HLC Steering Committee. Kate is Head of Rod Library Collection Management & Special Services. She is accompanying HLC reviewer/visitor, Robert Guell, Professor of Economics at Indiana State University.

– Michael Licari is Associate Provost for Academic Affairs & Dean of the Graduate College
UNI Participation in the HLC Assessment Academy

Creating a plan for assessment of student learning in the Liberal Arts Core

By Donna Vinton

Creating a strong plan for assessment of student learning in the revised Liberal Arts Core (LAC), currently being developed, began on November 17-19, 2010 with a team from UNI attending the Higher Learning Commission Roundtable for participants in the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. UNI was accepted into the Academy in September. The Academy provides support to colleges and universities wishing to focus on creating sustainable assessment plans and improving the culture of assessment on campus.

Participation in the Academy is a four-year commitment. In the first year, teams from institutions develop action portfolios to guide their efforts. In the second and third years, teams implement their action portfolios, submit annual progress analyses, and receive mentoring, critiques, and validation from Academy mentors—faculty from other institutions—and from other Academy participants. In the fourth year, teams submit a results report documenting their accomplishments and a sustainability plan that will guide future activity related to the assessment plans developed. Overall, the Academy offers participating institutions a structured process for assessment planning and a variety of resources for support along the way.

The UNI leadership team for the Assessment Academy includes Mike Licari, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs; Ginny Arthur, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and co-chair of the Liberal Arts Core Review Steering Committee; Deirdre Heistad, newly named LAC Director and Associate Professor of Modern Language; Melissa Payne, Student Assistance/Outreach Coordinator for the Division of Student Affairs and member of the First Year Council; April Chatham-Carpenter, co-chair of the Foundations of Excellence study for the first-year experience at UNI, co-chair of the First Year Council, and Associate Professor of Communication Studies; and Donna Vinton, Director of Academic Assessment and Chair of the Assessment Academy Leadership Team. The team will be responsible for representing UNI in Assessment Academy activities and for identifying and carrying out activities that will lead to the creation and implementation of a plan for assessing learning in the Liberal Arts Core.

Creating the plan will require a number of steps, and the UNI Assessment Academy leadership team plans to incorporate faculty involvement in the process by soliciting faculty feedback and participation in potential subcommittees as the plan is developed. Some directions for action include viewing models of “best practice” general education assessment from other institutions, identifying and examining assessment tools and strategies, determining settings and student populations to target for specific assessment strategies, setting timing and timelines for administration of assessments, exploring methods for sharing assessment information with those inside and outside of the university, and establishing structures for archiving and making use of assessment data for continued strengthening of the Core and the learning experiences it provides to our students.

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In addition to providing support and structure for planning and implementing assessment strategies, participation in the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning also takes the place of a mandated focused visit following the accreditation visit of a Higher Learning Commission peer review team. The review team that visited UNI on November 8-10 applauded UNI’s decision to participate in the Academy and will look for our accomplishments through the Academy over the next four years.

– Donna Vinton is Director of Academic Assessment

First Year Council

Making progress in improving the first year

By Jon Buse and April Chatham-Carpenter

A part of what the Higher Learning Commission representatives reviewed during their recent visit to the UNI campus was the progress made in planning for a First Year Experience. A First Year Council was formed at UNI in Nov. 2009 based on recommendations made by a campus-wide task force, which had participated in the Foundations of Excellence® (FOE), a guided, self-study aimed at improving student learning and engagement in the first year that is sponsored by the Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. The First Year Council has made significant progress on each of the FOE key recommendations. A summary of accomplishments follows:

• Developed a first-year philosophy statement, first-year learning outcomes, and assessment plan.
• Created an online library of key first year resources, relevant research on first year students, list of first year initiatives, best practices in teaching first year students, and more.
• Created a first-year cornerstone course, to be piloted in the fall of 2011, rooted in academic inquiry and taught by tenure and tenure-track faculty aimed at engaging students in learning, while providing a supportive environment that fosters student success.
• Implemented an early warning system called MAP-Works that identifies students who are at risk of leaving the university and pairs those students with faculty and staff who can provide support and advice.
• Formed a retention council led by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs to improve four-year and six-year graduation rates and the graduation rates of students of color.
• Better assured the needs of first year students are being addressed through other institutional improvement efforts, including the strategic planning process, Diversity Council, the Liberal Arts Core Steering Committee, and Academic Advising Council.
• Participated in the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaffirmation process.

The Council is currently planning a session on the first year for new faculty orientation in the fall of 2011.

The Council reports jointly to the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs. It is co-chaired by April Chatham-Carpenter, Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Jon Buse, Dean of Students. For more information visit the website: www.uni.edu/foe.
Labor-Management Group Reviewing Student Assessment Instruments

By Ginny Arthur

Late last spring, the leadership of United Faculty (UF) and the Provost’s office agreed that UNI’s current student assessment instrument needed to be reviewed and evaluated. Both UF and the Provost’s office agreed to activate Section 3.2 of the Master Agreement which calls for a review committee composed of three members appointed by the Union, three members appointed by the Provost and three students appointed by NISG. The task of the committee is to review and recommend revisions in the current assessment form to the Provost.

Committee members appointed United Faculty include Professor Joyce Chen (Communication Studies), Professor Keith Crew (Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology) and Professor Robert Dise (History). The Provost is represented by Dean Joel Haack (CHFA & CNS), Dr. Sue Joseph Mattison (HPELS), and Ginny Arthur, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. Rebecca Bohnet (a senior from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts), Cassandra Hayne (a senior from the College of Natural Science), and Steffoni Smith (a graduate student in the College of Education) represent students.

The committee has been meeting since late September on a biweekly basis. They began their work by reviewing scholarly articles on student evaluation or assessment (the preferred term at UNI) of teaching. Early discussions centered on why the institution might want to collect student assessment information and how it ought to be used as part of faculty development and evaluation processes. Committee members agree students possess unique and important knowledge about the impact pedagogical methods used in a particular class have on their learning. Most agreed that the information from student assessments is helpful to faculty members as they reflect on how they could adjust methods, materials or evaluation tools to help improve student learning. Student assessment results are also one piece of the overall teaching portfolio which helps colleagues, heads and deans evaluate teaching effectiveness and provide feedback for improvement. Finally, all agreed it is important to use a reliable and valid measure that provides meaningful results.

Based on their reading and research the committee has chosen four nationally known assessment instruments for review and is systematically examining the positive and negative aspects of each. IDEA is a form first developed in 1975, which is now used by over 320 institutions, including Illinois State (peer), Univ. of Arkansas, Cal Poly, Kansas State, Truman State and both the New Mexico State and the South Dakota State systems. The questions are based on research identifying teaching methods shown to influence student learning positively. Results are nationally normed and scaled to account for factors such as the individual faculty member’s learning objectives for each course being assessed, discipline, whether the course is lower division, upper division, or graduate level, and whether the course is taught primarily for non-majors or majors.

The SETE (Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness) was developed by the University of North Texas, a peer institution, in response to a Texas law which requires Internet posting of all student course evaluations. In a project spanning two years, UNT conducted a literature review on measurement of effective teaching

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and then developed and rigorously tested a twelve item instrument which measures an instructor’s organization and explanation of materials, the learning climate established in the course and an instructor’s skill in guiding and encouraging self-directed learning in students. An overall score for teaching effectiveness is also provided.

Two other instruments identified for review are web-based tools. The literature supporting the Teaching and Learning Quality (TALQ) Scales indicates it measures factors which have been shown to promote student academic achievement. The Student Assessment of Learning Gains asks students to estimate how effective various course related materials and methods have influenced their gains in learning. The instrument is fully customizable by the faculty member and was developed with support from a grant from the National Science Foundation.

In addition to reviewing and recommending an evaluation instrument or instruments for classroom teaching, the committee will consider recommendations, based on research results, about how best to administer and use the results of student assessment. Wider faculty response will also be sought in the spring when the committee has narrowed the choice of instruments and is preparing recommendations for the provost.

—— Ginny Arthur is Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

New Undergraduate Advising Council

By Pierre-Damien Mvuyekure

While assessing advising services at UNI almost three years ago, the National Academic Advising Association or NACADA recommended the creation of a university-wide undergraduate advising body to the Provost. As its newly-launched website – www.uni.edu/advising-council – suggests, the Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost “advises the Provost on matters related to academic advising at UNI. It aids the Provost in the review and assessment of advising services and, as well, assists in promoting the professional development, evaluation and recognition of both professional and faculty advisors.” The Council is Chaired by Pierre-Damien Mvuyekure, Administrative Fellow, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

The Advising Council aims at promoting academic advising as an integral component of the teaching and learning environment at UNI, supporting continuing improvement of academic advising, advancing and developing professional and faculty advisor development, facilitating collaboration on mutual advising goals and needs, and advocating excellence in university-wide academic advising through periodic advising program reviews and assessments. To achieve these goals, the Advising Council works closely with several units across campus, including Office of Admissions, Office of Academic Advising, the Registrar’s Office, First Year Experience Council, Retention Council, the Liberal Arts Core Committee, the Honors Program, the Academic Learning Center, just to name a few. The Advising Council partnered with other units to prepare for and make the HLC visit to re-accredit UNI a success.
UNI Becomes Affiliate of The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)

By Laura Kaplan and Victoria DeFrancisco

Last spring the Provost’s office announced a new diversity initiative for academic affairs. What makes this initiative unique and substantial is in part the partnership with an international non-profit leadership development network, The National Coalition Building Institute. The NCBI has been in existence for 25 years and is dedicated to the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression. Rooted in an understanding of individual, community, and systemic change, NCBI leaders work with public and private organizations around the world to increase cultural competency, encourage collaboration and partnerships, and forge effective relationships within and across group identities. NCBI uses both cognitive and affective strategies to build on personal and communal knowledge and empathy. The focus is on institutional, structural change.

There are now over 60 university and college affiliates, such as California State University, Fresno, Clemson University, George Mason University, Ohio State University and Oregon State University. Each has its own team of volunteers with a shared set of skills and resources working to enhance diversity inclusion. The following is how NCBI describes such groups:

When a handful of like-minded leaders from an organization or community has been trained, a local NCBI resource team is formed. These teams offer prevention-oriented strategies and programs to deal with discrimination and other inter-group tensions. They are also available to intervene when specific inter-group conflicts arise.

To become an affiliate an organization must demonstrate a strong long-term commitment to the program, as evidenced by social consciousness, resources, and leadership from top administration. Ginny Arthur, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs has been delegated by the Executive Vice President and Provost to lead the initiative with two faculty Diversity Fellows (Laura Kaplan and Victoria DeFrancisco). The NCBI director of campus programs, Robert Dungey, provides continuing consultation to the associate provost and the diversity fellows.

Last fall, academic affairs personnel interested in joining the leadership team completed an initial exposure workshop and then a three-day intensive

"One of the highlights of the NCBI workshop was that after three days of working together, you get to know your colleagues in new ways. This definitely creates a sense of community and solidarity in our mutual efforts to foster a more diverse and inclusive campus culture." [Xavier Escandell, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology]

“What I’ve enjoyed most about the NCBI model is that it creates a safe space in which we can explore our own strengths and challenges pertaining to the many -isms that exist. My hope is that by engaging in this type of work the entire campus will eventually become a safe space, free of hatred, bigotry and bias.” [Deirdre Heistad, Department of Modern Languages]
training workshop to equip them with skills to lead future workshops on campus. The response to the workshop opportunities was tremendous, far exceeding the number the NCBI trainers could effectively work with. The intent is to offer training for additional workshop leaders again, hopefully in the next year. Those who could not be accommodated will receive the initial invitations to participate in workshops lead by UNI staff this term.

The NCBI director of campus programs provides continuing consultation to the associate provost and the diversity fellows. To ensure campus support before undertaking NCBI affiliation all deans, directors and department heads in academic affairs were invited to a full day workshop to preview the NCBI model.

All participants completed the training and are now official UNI NCBI leaders. They have committed to one full year of meeting monthly for two-hour training sessions and offering half and full day workshops. These workshops will begin during the Spring 2011 semester initially focused on faculty and academic affairs staff members.

Announcements for upcoming workshop dates for the Spring semester will be in the UNI Online Newsletter and on several websites. We invite you to sign up for workshops or write us with suggestions for groups to attend.

The pilot for Academic Affairs begins with staff and faculty, and will extend to students, and be available for other divisions of the university.

“I gained a sense of personal growth through the NCBI training. I am now more aware of my own biases and prejudices and can work on keeping them in check. I also learned the importance of listening to other people and got to experience just how difficult it is to acquire the skill of listening. I met a terrific group of people and now feel like a part of a community of colleagues with the shared goal of creating an ‘environment in which everybody wants to belong’.” [Doug Mupasiri, Mathematics]
Under the leadership of Ginny Arthur, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, the Diversity Fellows Victoria DeFrancisco (Communication Studies) and Laura Kaplan (Social Work) are working on multiple projects with the overall objective of enhancing excellence through diversity at UNI.

In addition to coordinating and organizing the workshops and meetings to establish the National Coalition Building Institute program, the Fellows have been meeting with groups across campus to introduce the initiative, generate ideas for future activities or resources, and learn how they may collaborate on efforts to make UNI’s campus a more inclusive learning community. DeFrancisco and Kaplan are seeking to meet with each college diversity committee, Faculty Senate, the University Diversity Council, the University Diversity Advisory Committee, the Northern Iowa Student Government (NISG), Jump Start and the Center for Multicultural Education staff. If readers are participating in other diversity initiatives and would like to connect with the Fellows, please contact them at the Provost’s office (273-7753) or via e-mail laura.kaplan@uni.edu or defrancisco@uni.edu.

One example of a developing project is the work Kaplan, DeFrancisco, NCBI trainers Karen Mitchell, Harry Brod and Jennifer Cooley have initiated with officers of the NISG and Tabatha Cruz, Program Coordinator of the CME. The intent is to organize students and staff to attend the Annual White Privilege Conference taking place in Minneapolis, April 13-16, 2011. The WPC examines issues of privilege beyond skin color by providing “a comprehensive look at issues of privilege including: race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, etc. - the ways we all experience some form of privilege, and how we’re all affected by that privilege.” Students attending will organize campus activities for the next academic year based upon their conference experiences.

DeFrancisco and Kaplan are also working with Graduate Assistant Derk Babbitt and Librarian Barbara Weeg to develop a virtual library of diversity related resources for teaching and extra-curricular work with students. If you have suggestions for materials please contact the Diversity Fellows. The library will be linked to the Executive Vice President and Provost’s website as well as Diversity Matters.

### NCBI Principles for Welcoming Diversity

- **Guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place.**
- **Every person and every issue counts.**
- **An optimistic tone gives people hope.**
- **Confronting the misinformation we’ve learned about other people and other groups moves us forward together.**
- **Welcoming and valuing diversity requires risk-taking and a willingness to make mistakes and clean them up.**
- **Generosity is the key to cross group relationships.**
- **Listening to the stories of others changes hearts, attitudes, and behavior.**
- **Listen to or look for the misinformation and/or hurt under any oppressive comment, slur, or action.**
- **Everyone has the capacity to lead the workplace in welcoming and valuing diversity.**
- **Creating an open and tolerant climate is about courageous and principled leadership.**
In Memorium: Janet E. McClain

“A champion of diversity and a mentor to a generation of teachers educated at the University of Northern Iowa has died.”
(Pat Kinney, Waterloo Courier on-line, October 29, 2010)

Janet McClain, director for over 20 years of the Multicultural Initiative in Teaching Program, dedicated to increasing the number of ethnically diverse educators teaching in Iowa schools, died October 27, 2010 from cancer. She taught in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Malcolm Price Laboratory School for over 30 years.

McClain was committed to retaining African American students at UNI and mentored many who became teachers in Iowa. She was an advocate for ethnic and racial minority students, for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students, and she promoted nonviolent conflict resolution between white and Latino students.

McClain was the faculty advisor and mentor for the Multicultural Teaching Alliance student organization that recently won the Philanthropic Program of the Year award for raising funds for the people of Haiti. She served on countless diversity committees and initiatives across campus tirelessly crusading for an outstanding, inclusive, multicultural learning environment. In 2009 she received the Dean’s award for Multicultural Initiatives in the College of Education, and in 2010 she was among the first to be honored at the UNI Diversity Town Hall meeting with a “Diversity Matters Award.”

McClain hosted a radio show on education for KBBG radio and was bestowed the title of “Soror” in the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She was very involved with her church and programs for youth in Waterloo.

Janet McClain was born in Chicago, IL. She received her BA from Northern Illinois University and her MA from the University of Dayton.

TWO SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS ESTABLISHED IN HONOR OF JANET McCLAIN

There are two concurrent initiatives to honor Janet McClain’s commitment to create educational opportunities for ethnic and racial minority students. One is a scholarship fund established by the Muchas Manos Light Work student organization. Muchas Manos offers scholarships, mentoring, tutoring, and hands-on experiences for UNI students to work in the Matagalpa communities in Nicaragua. The Janet McClain Scholarship Fund supports Nicaraguan students through the standard five years of college. Muchas Manos has an account with Veridian Credit Union for donations. Gloria Sumpter is President (missgloscorner@yahoo.com).

The second is a memorial scholarship fund for UNI students established by the Dean of the College of Education and the UNI Foundation “to provide scholarships for deserving students, with preference given to students of ethnic or racial status . . . .” The scholarship will be publicized with other foundation-sponsored opportunities. Donations may be made through the UNI Foundation. Contact Andrea Elliott (andrea.elliott@uni.edu) if you would like to make a contribution or need further details.
Congratulations! 2010 GRADUATES

More than 900 students graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in December 2010!

Over 500 participated in the Commencement Ceremony – held at the McLeod Center for the first time.

www.uni.edu