

Report and Recommendations on Interinstitutional Collaboration and Credit Transfer for NEW ERA institutions

July 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2005, the NEW ERA Board requested a faculty dialogue group be established of volunteers representing the different institutions involved in the alliance (the University of Wisconsin [UW] and Wisconsin Technical Colleges [WTC]). The overall charge to the dialogue group was based on a strategy of the NEW ERA Board to develop a more seamless higher educational environment for students among the various NEW ERA institutions. Specifically the group was to;

- identify and clarify interinstitutional collaboration issues between the UW and WTC systems,
- explore teaching and curriculum in the UW and WTC systems, particularly in relation to credit transfer potential, and
- recommend specific strategies, activities and events to build stronger relationships among the faculty of NEW ERA institutions.

The group met six times during the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006 to identify issues or problems impeding greater collaboration and discuss possible solutions and strategies to achieve them. The group also heard several presentations on transfer, articulation agreements, and existing and potential collaborations. Based on these discussions and presentations, the group identified four main themes of concern; *Knowledge of each Educational System, Collaboration, Transferability, and Mutual Respect between Institutions*. Within each of these themes are specific related issues or questions the group believes are important components to achieving the goal of NEW ERA. The charge of exploring teaching and curriculum in relation to credit transferability is incorporated into the issues identified and recommendations.

MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Lack of knowledge of each institution regarding the other
- Lack of collaboration between faculty and staff at the various institutions
- Problems of transferability of courses and credits between each institution
- Fostering mutual respect between institutions

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase interactions between faculty and staff at each institution through
 - Small group or department-level meetings across institutions
 - Presentations at each institution by each institution
 - Annual events such as workshops across institutions
 - Guest lectures
- Clearly defining each institution's role in educating the people of Wisconsin.
- Clarify public perceptions of each institution in the eyes of the public in general as well as potential students.
- Identify programs that are good candidates for collaboration across institutions.
- Identify the current collaboration agreements in UW and WTC systems across the state use them as models for future collaboration, and publicize them.
- Identify benefits of collaborations to students, faculty, staff, and the institutions.
- Identify and publicize the resources available to faculty and staff who engage in collaboration.
- Provide funding for attendance at conferences and presentations that encourage collaboration

- Build relationships across institutions to encourage discussion of potential transfer collaborations (including continuing a Faculty Dialogue Group).
- Research other transfer agreement policies elsewhere.
- Identify courses, curriculum, and disciplines where transfer agreements would be most logical or beneficial.
- Investigate whether “seamless” transferability is possible or even desirable.
- Consider aligning curricula across the UW system.

We believe the most valuable outcomes from this collaboration will be mutual respect between institutions and a better educational environment for the students and other citizens of Wisconsin.

FINAL COMMENT & REQUEST

Although this is a final report from the Faculty Dialogue Group regarding the charges given to us by the NEW ERA Board, it is by no means the final step in the process. Over the past year we have engaged in discussion and debate regarding how our institutions can better collaborate and what could be done to make this occur. Not only was it a learning experience but it gave us the sense that if a diverse group like ourselves, who really had no knowledge of each other until we joined this group, can develop a professional camaraderie and talk frankly about these issues, there is hope something will be accomplished on a larger scale. We therefore request a response by the NEW ERA Board to our report including issues and recommendations that appear beneficial to the alliance and an outline plan of what the next steps will be to continue the work this group has started in an attempt to foster better collaboration amongst our institutions.

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Each of the themes and issues are explained and recommendations are given to address these issues. Although several recommendations have been given for each theme, the first item listed under each theme's "Recommended Strategies, Activities and Events" is considered by the faculty group to be the most important and/or beneficial to accomplish. This item has also been highlighted for ease of recognition. The last sections include a final comment and request, a list of potential valuable outcomes from the recommended activities, and acknowledgements.

1. KNOWLEDGE OF EACH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

One of the most prevailing issues the group found was the lack of knowledge each institution has regarding the other. Although the 4-year and 2-year institutions in the UW System are somewhat familiar with what each does, there is probably little understanding between WTC and the UW on what services each institution actually provides and what their missions involve. This lack of understanding also extends to faculty and staff within similar disciplines at the different institutions. Without a better understanding of the purpose of these institutions and what similar disciplines are doing at each institution, misinformation and inaccurate perceptions can develop. As a result, faculty and staff at each institution will have predetermined attitudes regarding the other institutions and this potentially limits their views on the importance of each to educating the people of our area. Finally there is the issue of public perception of the different institutions. Often heard is "one goes to one institution to get a degree and another to get a skill." Thus the lack of understanding in these three areas (between each institution, faculty and staff, and public perception) seems to be a stumbling block in initiating better collaboration and credit transfer.

1.1. ISSUES & QUESTIONS

- 1.1.1. Roles of each institution: What are the roles of each institution in educating the people of Wisconsin? If there is a belief each institution delivers exclusively different services to its community and people must choose one or the other, there is less chance of the institutions working together, and faculty and staff may be unwilling to commit time to develop collaborative programs. Also, if faculty and staff believe the institutions are *competing* for students and resources, little will be done to work cooperatively with those threatening the “well being” of their institution. This leads to the next issue.
- 1.1.2. Overcome perceptions of WTC & UWC: One issue that must be addressed is to ensure the mission of the WTC and the UW College (UWC) are clearly defined so unnecessary duplication of curriculum is avoided. The real goal is for students who have already taken similar, if not identical, courses at one institution to be able to transfer to another institution without “starting all over again.” Therefore collaboration between institutions is highly encouraged where applicable for programs and courses, to avoid a duplication of services.
- 1.1.3. Structure of courses: Faculty and staff have little or no exposure to the course content or methodologies employed at the various institutions, even within the same disciplines. Because of this there appears to be a belief the same or similar course taught at another institution might not be at an adequate level to be considered equivalent. If more collaboration and credit transfer is to be achieved, departments within these institutions must become familiar with and review similar courses to determine what content and educational experience should be shared across the region by all institutions
- 1.1.4. Credentials of faculty/instructors: A concern by some is the credential level of faculty and instructional staff at the UW compared to WTC. Although WTC follows the same accreditation criteria as the UW, there seems to be the belief that those who have terminal degrees in their fields will provide better learning environments and educational experiences for their students. The UW system has emphasized terminal degrees for those hired in tenure-track positions. Therefore, since there is a perception instructors at WTC only have Master degrees or less while instructors at the UW have PhDs, the level of education will be higher at the UW compared to the WTC.
- 1.1.5. Public perception of the institutions: This is probably the issue most difficult to address but an important one to consider. As with any reputation, it is hard to change the perception people have once it has become pervasive in a community. If people believe they must chose a school for a “skill or a degree”, this is what they will base their choices upon.

Perhaps the reason for this perception is that in many cases, the public’s perception is close to reality. Most of the time our institutions appear to lack any common ground or cooperation between them. Although many in this Faculty Discussion Group are experienced in our field, have great community and campus respect, and work very hard to provide a high level of education for our students, even we are unfamiliar with much of what is happening at the other institutions. It is easy to see how such a situation occurs as many of us wear many different “hats” and are often stretched thin as more tasks are requested of us and none are ever removed. This allows very little time to seek out or even initiate collaborative programs or work. The sooner faculty and staff at the various institutions begin to outwardly demonstrate the similarities between the institutions, the sooner the perception of “chose one or the other” will begin fade.

1.2. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Many of the recommendations by this group for this theme could address several issues of concern. The following is a list of these activities or events and, where applicable, how they would address specific issues.

1.2.1. **Increase interactions of faculty and staff between institutions:** It is the belief of this group that more interaction should occur between faculty and staff of different institutions. Once this occurs it will improve the chances of developing partnerships and collaborative programs along with dispelling inaccurate perceptions and increasing the respect of faculty and staff at each institution. As mentioned previously, most faculty and staff carry heavy work loads and attempting to bring these groups together might be daunting. The first step might be to present to faculty and staff the importance of these types of activities and the benefit it will bring to each institution, their own career goals, and the students we so often say we are here for! Activities to promote such interaction include:

1.2.1.1. *Small Group or Department-level Meetings across the Institutions* These types of meetings might be the first step, and easiest to accomplish in producing better understanding between institutions. These could become annual or bi-annual meetings. The meetings could also be the beginning of discussion on topics more relevant to specific areas of study. A possible topic to initiate collaboration could be the issue of course content, what should be included in introductory courses and whether some common ground be found. Another topic could be the credentials of faculty and staff at each institution and whether varying degrees among instructors really impacts the level of student learning and their educational experience.

1.2.1.2. *Presentations at each institution by each institution* The Faculty Dialogue Group had presentations from both the UW and WTC regarding the structure and function of each institution. Not only was it informative but led to many questions and discussion among the group. This interaction was very productive and it appeared much respect for each institution was gained. Such presentations and discussion would be beneficial even if conducted at a local level and might be a good starting point to increase interaction. The presentations could focus not only on structure and function of the institutions, but also share student data, faculty and staff responsibilities and service requirements, or reoccurring issues at the institutions.

1.2.1.3. *An annual event* This could be a workshop-style conference where faculty and staff present ideas on education, class methodology, or institutional information. The presentation would not have to be research orientated (as with many professional conferences), but more informal in character. There should also be ample time for attendees to mingle and engage in casual conversation. The main goal is for those attending to gain more information on each institution and meet others who might have similar interests. Coordinators of such events should not just request presenters but solicit specific faculty and staff to attend and present. Campus and Institutional support should also be provided and an emphasis should be placed on the value of such an event as a highly regarded form of Professional Development. It could also be open to the public and specific members of the community could be invited including politicians, school board members, high school counselors, or even potential students and parents.

1.2.1.4. *Guest lecturers* Perhaps a program of “exchanging” faculty and staff as guest lecturers for classes at the various institutions could be developed. Not only does this bring

something interesting to a course, it would allow more interaction between faculty and staff and develop better relationships.

1.2.2. Clearly establish the roles of each institution: It would benefit many to determine exactly what each institution's role is in educating the people of Wisconsin. For example, the technical schools would be for preparing students for a particular vocation or skill while the 2-year UW Colleges prepare students to transfer to 4-year UW schools. In doing so, the fear of some that the technical schools will start "competing" for students with the 2-year schools could be diffused. Even if roles are clearly defined, it would be extremely important to also resolve the transferability issues between the UW and WTC so students could transfer some of their credits between institutions if they decide to change direction in their education.

1.2.3. Clarify public perception of the institutions: More public presentations and exposure to the collaborative efforts by the institutions needs to begin. Also the collaborative programs or work conducted by faculty and staff needs to be brought forth so the public can not only become aware faculty and staff at the various institutions are working together, but to demonstrate they have options when it comes time to decide what type and where they will get their education.

Another aspect to this perception issue is how each institution is presented to potential students. Although parents can be a strong influence on their children, high school counselors and teachers have a large impact on student's perception of the institutions. If counselors and teachers also have misconceptions about the purpose of our institutions, this will be passed along to generations of students. More information about each institution at the high school level would help potential students make better decisions about choosing a school.

1.2.4. Overcome perceptions of WTC & UWC: Through many of the activities recommended, the perception of what the technical colleges do and what their mission is will become better understood.

2. COLLABORATION

Although knowledge of each institution is a critical step in developing better transfer of courses, another important aspect that would dovetail very nicely from this increase in interaction would be the creation of various collaborative efforts by faculty and staff at different institutions. Even though the focus here is to provide more collaborative program opportunities for students, it could also include less extensive partnerships between each institution. This could be as simple as faculty and staff in a similar discipline working to develop courses, trips, or other educational experiences.

2.1. ISSUES & QUESTIONS

2.1.1. Potential programs for collaboration and programs not appropriate: Attempts should be made to identify those programs across the institutions that align best with collaborations and those that do not. This would save time in development of such collaborations by focusing efforts in areas most conducive to succeed in such ventures. Once these types of collaborations are identified, the personnel involved should be encouraged to develop such programs and given support to do so.

- 2.1.2. Existing Articulation Agreements: What existing articulation agreements already exist in the UW and WTC systems (not just NEW ERA institutions)? How were these formed? Who initiated the process and who was involved? What obstacles did they have to overcome? What has been the benefit of such agreements and who (and how many) have directly benefited from these programs? These are questions that need to be addressed to help understand the process of how articulation agreements develop.
- 2.1.3. Benefits of collaboration (students and each institution): A list of additional benefits from collaborations for students, faculty, and institutions should be developed and used as promotional material to recruit potential collaborators.
- 2.1.4. Obstacles to collaborations: Along with benefits, any obstacles or deterrents to collaborations should also be identified and then addressed. In doing so, there will be specific answers to those who have questions regarding collaboration.
- 2.1.5. Resources available (amount and allocation): A list of resources available to faculty and institutions to develop and support collaborations should be developed and also used as promotional material to recruit potential collaborators. Another aspect to address is the compensation for faculty for developing and participating in collaborations. This area needs to be defined and specifically expressed at the outset for all involved. If compensation will be equal for all types of collaborations and collaborators, it must be defined and if not, explanations should be presented explaining the reasoning. Often promises of compensation or support are given at the beginning of a project but eventually evaporate or are reduced as the project continues. Those involved in collaborations should be given specific details of what their compensation will be and what is expected of them regarding the project.

2.2. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Many of the recommendations given for “*Knowledge of Each Educational System*” in the previous section could also result in more collaborations as faculty and staff from each institution begins to interact with each other. Beyond those activities are the following suggestions;

- 2.2.1. Identify potential programs for collaboration as well as programs not appropriate for collaboration, and identify obstacles to collaborations: Deans, Student Services Directors, and department Chairs should be solicited for their ideas on which programs are currently best suited for collaboration, which are most likely not, and what obstacles they believe would impede collaborations. Once this list is compiled, NEW ERA could identify which of these could be targeted as ones most appropriate or with the potential to succeed. A list could also be developed regarding obstacles and used to anticipate, or even prevent such problems.
- 2.2.2. Publicize existing Articulation Agreements: There are existing agreements already between several institutions within the NEW ERA including those between UW-Green Bay and Northwest Technical College (Police Science, Correction Science, Health Care Business Service, and Supervisory Management) and UW-Oshkosh and Fox Valley Technical College (Police Science and Fire Protection programs). There is also the Collaborative Nursing Program across the entire WTC and several 4-year UW campuses (including UW-Green Bay and Oshkosh). Several UW-Colleges offer 4-year degrees on their campuses through one of the 4-year institutions (UW-Fox Valley and UW-Platteville provide a Mechanical Engineering degree and Moraine Park Technical College, UW-Fond du Lac, and UW-Stout provide a degree in Industrial Management). Within the NEW ERA

institutions there is an agreement between all libraries in the alliance to share resources and there will eventually be issuing library cards.

Not only should these articulation agreements be used as models to develop future collaborations, they should also be publicized more, especially to the faculty to demonstrate that these types of partnerships can occur. This will hopefully encourage more involvement of faculty and staff when opportunities arise.

2.2.3. Identify benefits of collaboration (for students and each institution): As a tool for recruiting individuals, a list of tangible benefits for being involved in such activities needs to be developed by NEW ERA. Of importance to many faculty and staff is the issue of professional development and what constitutes an activity that falls into this category. It is highly encouraged that department and campus leaders be aware of the importance of this collaboration topic. When reviewed for merit or promotion, these types of collaborative efforts should be considered a valuable form of professional development for faculty and staff who are conducting such work.

2.2.4. Identify current resources available (amount and allocation): As mentioned previously, a specific list of the resources and compensation available would go a long way in getting faculty and staff to initially engage in collaboration. It is important that incentives are also included in the discussion because with faculty and staff having so many different responsibilities, they must budget their time for those activities most productive in accomplishing all their service requirements. Although monetary incentives are sometimes a good tool, other “perks” could be offered including release time or a reduction in some other campus responsibility.

2.2.5. Provide additional Support of Collaborative Group Attendance and Presentations at Conferences: Funding for attendance at collaborative conferences or presentations regarding collaborative programs should be given priority to encourage those involved to be investigating such options or disseminate their experience and to be sure these activities are included as valued professional development.

3. **TRANSFERABILITY**

This area is where students would benefit most if agreements are developed. Although the current transfer system between institutions are highly complex and confusing to some, and probably will be very difficult to remedy, it should not be ignored because of these problems. This issue should be addressed not only to provide better transferability for students, but also to demonstrate the ability and willingness of the institutions to work together as educational partners to offer the best learning experiences for our students.

We believe this dialogue group and the NEW ERA are being proactive in this area by trying to develop such agreements. One presenter noted he was unaware of any other group like ours working on this situation. By identifying and recommending strategies to accomplish the previous issues (1. Knowledge of each educational system and 2. Collaboration), we believe we will lay the foundation to achieve better and more comprehensive transfer between institutions. Beyond the questions involved with these first two themes, specific questions and issues still exist for transferability of our courses.

3.1. ISSUES & QUESTIONS

- 3.1.1. Are there other systems or models we can utilize? As we begin to venture into developing transferability between institutions, it would be beneficial to review any other systems currently in place that provide similar transferring options. This would provide a guide to follow so we are not spending a large portion of time “reinventing the wheel” and help to avoid problems encountered by other groups.
- 3.1.2. Are there courses, curriculum, and/or disciplines where transfer agreements would be most logical or beneficial? A good starting point to begin developing transfer agreements might be where courses, curriculum, or disciplines are most closely related. Instead of working to develop an entire “seamless” transfer program covering all areas, it would more efficient to work on those areas where course transfer could be developed relatively easily or have the biggest impact with transferring students.
- 3.1.3. What is “seamless” transfer? What is the goal of such a transfer system? Is “seamless” a realistic goal? Although often mentioned as a one of the goals of collaboration, this term has not adequately been defined. Does it imply every course across all disciplines? Are there limitations? Can this type of system really be accomplished? If so, answers to these questions should be identified and distributed with other transfer information. A set of goals for “seamless” transfer should also be established based upon the answers to the above questions with specific benchmarks to measure the progress and success of these goals.
- 3.1.4. Build relationships across organizations: As with collaboration, one of the first steps in the transferability issue would be to develop relationships between groups. These could either be between institutions and individuals who historically have had a large amount of transfers between their intuitions, between local intuitions, or across the entire Wisconsin educational system. An important component of this would have to include the faculty of similar disciplines; since these are the individuals to ultimately decide what courses are acceptable for transfer.
- 3.1.5. Changes to course requirements and curriculum at the 4-year UW institutions: Many times requirements and course curricula change at the 4-year UW institutions and the WTC and UW Colleges are not necessarily informed of such changes (until a student tries to transfer and is told what was acceptable before is now not!). The issue is not that changes are taking place, it is the fact the other institutions are not informed so changes could be made at these institutions so transfer of these courses is still acceptable.
- 3.1.6. Specific collaborative program agreements: These types of programs will probably be the most successful as all who are involved will have a say in their design. Several have previously been mentioned in this report and could possibly be used as models for developing other such agreements.

Another area to address would be to begin discussion about developing standards for freshman/sophomore courses. This could begin to ease some of the concerns about the differences in curriculum at different institutions, specifically within the UW System but also between the UW and WTC. A specific course taught at one WTC campus is an acceptable transfer as the same course to another WTC campus; this type of agreement (along with acceptance and respect of faculty and staff at other campuses) should be the goal for all institutions involved in this process.

- 3.1.7. Blanket policies might be difficult: Although it would be the ultimate goal to achieve, it is hard to imagine one policy fitting all curricula and/or courses across each institution. Perhaps the best way to start is to work on other types of collaboration, such as sharing curricula or classes.
- 3.1.8. Process and requirements: There should be some sensitivity to each institution's transfer processes and requirements. Other institutions should be patient and prepared to allow appropriate time for the process.
- 3.1.9. Impact on the institutions: How would better transferability between WTC and UWC impact each institution? Perhaps there would not be an impact if, as suggested earlier, each institution's role is clearly defined. This issue must at least be considered as discussions progress regarding transferability.
- 3.1.10. Curricula alignment throughout the UW System: Even though the members of this group who work in the UW System understand the complexities and difficulties in successfully accomplishing this aspect, the group believes it is an important issue in transferability and should be noted in this report. One of the most frustrating aspects of transferring has become the issue of similar courses throughout the UW System having various course numbers and credit value. This is often prevalent in the freshman/sophomore courses where introductory courses seem to have different requirements or proficiencies at each UW campus. It would be very beneficial to have a similar numbering system and at least minimum course content for these types of courses (similar to the WTC system). Not only would it aid in some of the transfer issues but also improve the perception of the UW "System" with the public.

3.2. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- 3.2.1. Build relationships across organizations: A meeting should be set for all key personnel involved to begin to build relationships and discuss potential transfer collaborations. This should not only include transfer personnel but the faculty members involved in these courses or curricula from each institution. As noted by several presenters, it is the faculty who decides which courses are acceptable for transfer from other institutions; therefore it is critical they are involved in any type of discussion regarding courses in their discipline. Ideally faculty and departments at the 4-year UW institutions should be the leaders in initiating these discussions. Individual faculty members (perhaps even department Chairs) who strongly believe in this transferability goal should be sought and encouraged to begin such discussions not just within their institutions, but with the other institutions. If one department does conduct such meetings and begins developing better transferability between institutions, it would become a model or case study for others to follow!

This issue of faculty involvement goes back to the perception of institutions. Until faculty get to know the educational system and faculty at other institutions, it will be hard to get them to collaborate, let alone agree on transfer of courses. Perhaps some view their courses, curricula, and educational experiences as superior to the others. Yet it is probably more likely they are unaware of what their colleagues actually do at the other institutions. The critical first step is to get them to discuss these issues as equals, with all benefiting from such interaction.

Finally, this brings up the issue of continuing the Faculty Dialogue Group as a vehicle to encourage and promote interinstitutional interaction in the future. It is the belief of this group that continuing a group in the future should be considered. These future groups could be of other willing participants who meet once a month to discuss a variety of issues designated by NEW ERA. This ongoing group could also be the leaders in developing new ideas, addressing issues, and fostering collaboration between institutions and become the catalyst for continued interaction between the NEW ERA institutions. As members of this first Faculty Dialogue Group we will become advocates for future collaborations and programs encouraging interinstitutional partnerships and provide assistance to any group wishing guidance or help in starting such activities.

The current faculty dialogue group has invested considerable time in just learning about the different systems, the existing transfer and collaboration agreements, and resources within the NEW ERA. We recommend the involvement of new faculty in this initiative, but recognize the substantial learning curve that will challenge new members. Therefore, the existing group requests consideration of remaining involvement as this process moves forward.

3.2.2. Are there other systems or models we can utilize? Research should be conducted and the results disseminated to key transfer personnel regarding what, if any, transfer agreement policies currently exist in other educational systems. Perhaps other state systems exist and could be utilized in the discussion and development of our transfer system.

3.2.3. Identify specific courses, curricula, and/or disciplines where transfer agreements would be most logical or beneficial. A review of courses, curricula, and/or disciplines should be conducted to first identify similarities and then prioritize which would be the most appropriate for initial transfer agreements. Another aspect to consider when identifying similarities in courses should be which courses would most often be the type to transfer. It would be more beneficial to identify these and work on developing transfer agreements instead of courses that would least likely be transferred.

Perhaps the process of assessment might be a key topic that ties some of these curricula. Departments have been developing assessment tools and criteria for several years and it might be beneficial for departments at different institutions to share ideas as a way to collaborate and even streamline the process.

If a specific group does collaborate on a transfer agreement in a specific area, it would very beneficial if they also develop a “case study” of the process. This could then be presented as model for the process but also as a catalyst to encourage others to follow. Perhaps there are grants or other funding opportunities available to cover the cost of such an activity.

3.2.4. What is “seamless” transfer? What is the goal of such a transfer system? Is “seamless” realistic? These should be some of the questions addressed at a meeting of transfer personnel. This would begin to set the goals of what is trying to be accomplished and also help to clearly identify what is possible and what is not. It is also important to answer the questions most often asked: Why do we need to do this? How much work will this entail? How will the institutions benefit? How will students benefit? How will I benefit? With growth agendas so important to each school, how will it impact enrollment?

3.2.5. Curricula alignment throughout the UW System: When this topic is first brought up, the phrase “when pigs fly” is often muttered, yet there are some activities included in this report

that could be used by NEW ERA to initiate some discussion on this issue. Interinstitutional departments within the NEW ERA who already have existing agreements or collaborative programs could review their courses to see which are the most likely to have similar course numbers, minimum course content, and acceptable transfer between schools.

Revising course numbers using the existing UW System procedure would be difficult and time consuming; yet as with other complicated issues in this report, it does not preclude them from being identified and addressed. Nothing will change unless something is done. Even if UW course numbers could not be changed, the use of the Transfer Information System (TIS) could indicate the acceptance of these courses when transferring between NEW ERA institutions. Imagine how much notice NEW ERA would get if it could accomplish even a simple type of “seamless” transfer for one program or department’s courses between its institutions.

Another possibility could be a “cooperative degree” from the NEW ERA institutions. Students could chose from a variety of courses at different schools and take them when they could (even evenings, summers, and winterim). This would be more of an open transfer agreement and might apply more to an Associate Degree, yet it would give students many more options in course selection compared to having to enroll in one school and be limited to that institution’s course scheduling and times. If this was to occur, perhaps a cross-listing of courses at the different institutions could occur in class catalogs or online.

4. MUTUAL REPECT BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS

The Faculty Dialogue Group believes this theme is a critical aspect in achieving a more cooperative alliance between institutions. Many of the issues and recommendations already provided in this report address some of the reason why there might be some lack of respect and how this might be overcome. These subjects are not repeated here, but it is worthwhile to follow the logic of our ideas in a brief explanation. As faculty and staff begin to better appreciate each system by understanding the role of each institution and start to interact with their counterparts (and in a real sense, their colleagues), collaboration will have a better chance of occurring because of the respect gained for individuals. As interinstitutional interaction and collaboration increases, transfer issues will become much easier to identify and resolve between institutions who now have mutual respect for each other. Finally, as respect grows between institutions through all these activities, a more cohesive, productive, and effective educational resource alliance can emerge to educate the communities we serve.

5. ISSUES FOR FUTURE ATTENTION

We present the following issues that need to be acknowledged and dealt with by the leadership of our institutions. While such an activity may seem quite discouraging, full anticipation of the realities faced in the short- and long-run is essential to making any real progress.

5.1. THE POTENTIAL OVERLAP & COMPETITION BETWEEN THE UW & THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES

The increasingly high cost of UW tuition coupled with greater transferability of technical college courses could create incentives for students whenever possible to choose to attend technical colleges, which have much lower tuition, instead of *any* UW institution. Two year colleges that specialize in offering lower level courses may be especially impacted by greater transferability. In a nutshell, if a student can choose to take *Introduction to Psychology* from a technical college or from a two-year UW college and there is no difference in its transferability and it's cheaper at one, why would a student attend the more expensive institution? There are some good reasons,

but such overlaps usually catch the attention of the legislature that cites such overlaps as additional signs of inefficiencies which make further budget cuts sound reasonable. The legislature's enthusiasm for the cooperative arrangements among the three types of institutions is driven by the push to reduce allocations justified by increased efficiency.

5.2. LACK OF INCENTIVES FOR FACULTY TO SUPPORT COOPERATION AND SHARING OF RESOURCES WITH THE OTHER INSTITUTION

Calls for more cooperation and sharing and initial discussions associated with our Faculty Dialogue Group have obvious merit as a first step in implementing our agenda items, but beyond that, what is missing is INCENTIVE. Why should faculty be eager to spend time and effort participating in any major way on any of the endeavors we have so thoughtfully outlined? Faculty and staff already feel that they are overworked. So when they are asked to get actively involved in something new, the response is quite predictable. It's not one brimming with enthusiasm to participate at any level. Some faculty and staff may think the initiatives have considerable merit and are most worthy of implementation, but since the common perception is that their "plates are already full or even overflowing," even these folks may simply do nothing.

This raises several key questions: "Why should faculty and staff members choose to participate in a meaningful way in any of our proposed activities? Where's the payoff? Where's the "incentive?" When the general issue of "no incentive" is coupled with varying levels of skepticism and disdain for anything other than what faculty are already doing, there is an even bigger obstacle to any type of participation, much less *enthusiastic* participation.

We would like to suggest that the board give serious consideration to (a) what kind of a case it will make to implement our and their agenda, (b) how to make that case, and c) how such actions will overcome some inherent barriers to implementation.

6. FINAL COMMENT & REQUEST

Although this is a final report from the Faculty Dialogue Group regarding the charges given to us by the NEW ERA Board, it is by no means the final step in the process. Over the past year we have engaged in discussion and debate regarding how our institutions can better collaborate and what could be done to make this occur. Not only was it a learning experience but it also gave us the sense that if a diverse group like ourselves, who really had no knowledge of each other until we joined this group, can develop a professional camaraderie and talk frankly about these issues, there is hope something will be accomplished on a larger scale. We therefore request a response by the NEW ERA Board to our report including issues and recommendations that appear beneficial to the alliance and an outline plan of what the next steps will be to continue the work this group has started in an attempt to foster better collaboration amongst our institutions.

7. MOST VALUABLE OUTCOMES

1. Knowledge of each Educational System

- More knowledge of the missions of the various institutions
- More relations between faculty and staff in similar disciplines at different institutions
- Definition and understanding of requirements of degrees
- Overcome perceptions of WTC and UWC
- Informed and possibly improved public perception of each institution

2. *Collaboration*
 - A “win-win” framework that could be used with the respective faculties showing the advantages to all involved
 - Dialogue that will allow more sharing of ideas and resources in times of tight budgets.
 - Finding more ways to work together to serve our students more effectively
 - Ability to exchange information on incoming students’ skills
3. *Transferability*
 - Simple transfer matches; compromises
 - Better integration
 - More transferability of credits
 - A vehicle to approve transferability with integrity
4. *Mutual Respect between Institutions*
 - Trust among institutions
 - Understanding and respect for each other and the other institutions and systems
 - Recognition of instructors’ competencies

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It is also important we recognize and thank the various individuals who attended our meetings to give presentations or be involved in panel discussions. They shared with us their insight into various aspects of collaboration and transfer and gave us the necessary information to develop this report. It was often these individuals who sparked an idea about the themes and issues contained in this report. We appreciate their efforts and concern about this issue to take time out of their very busy schedules to come and talk with us!

GUESTS & PRESENTERS

Fran Garb, UW System, Presentation on UW System's Mission and Structure

Paul Gedlinske, UW Oshkosh, Transferability Panel Discussion

Anne Kamps, NWTC, Articulation Agreements

Marge Rubin, FVTC, Articulation Agreements & Transferability Panel Discussion

Larry Rubin, UW System, The Transfer Information System (TIS)

Jim Simmons, UW-Oshkosh, Bachelor of Fire & Emergency Response Management (Successful Collaborations)

Jan Thornton, UWGB, UW Nursing Consortium (Successful Collaborations)

Rhonda Uschan, UW-Fox Valley, Transferability Panel Discussion

Patrick Wilkinson, UW Oshkosh, NEW ERA Library Project (Successful Collaborations)

Susan May, FVTC, and Lori Weyers, NWTC, The Technical College System's Mission and Structure

NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue Group 2005-06

Douglas Bockstiegel, Assistant Professor, Business, UW Sheboygan

Gene Francisco, Civil Engineering Instructor, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

David Gratz, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Professor, English, UW-Manitowoc

Michael Jurmu, Associate Professor, Geography and Geology, UW-Fond du Lac

John Koker, Professor and Chair, Mathematics, UW-Oshkosh

Dubear Kroening, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences, UW-Fox Valley

Timothy Meyer, Professor, Communication, UW-Green Bay

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Victor Schueller, Instructor of Anatomy and Physiology, Lakeshore Technical College

James Simmons, Professor, Department Chair, Political Science, UW-Oshkosh

Steven Trewyn, Instructor, Mathematics, Moraine Park Technical College