

## **Report and Recommendations on Interinstitutional Collaboration and Credit Transfer for NEW ERA Institutions**

### **May 2007**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the fall of 2006, the NEW ERA Board requested the continued service of the faculty dialogue group. The group was to consist of the 2005-2006 members as well as a new group 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 to continue their work 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 continue to:

- identify and clarify interinstitutional collaboration benefits and issues between the UW and WTC systems
- explore teaching and curriculum in the UW and WTC systems, particularly in relation to credit transfer potential
- 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 2006 and the spring of 2007 to further identify issues or problems impeding greater collaboration and discuss possible solutions and strategies to achieve them. In an effort to build stronger relationships and collaboration among the faculty of the NEW ERA institutions, and to address some of the major recommendations from the 2005-2006 group, the dialogue group focused their efforts on the planning and execution of the first *Faculty Dialogue: NEW ERA Collaborative Conference*. The goals of the conference were directed toward the major issues identified by the 2005-2006 group including:

- improving the knowledge of each institution regarding the other
- increasing interaction and collaboration between faculty and staff at the various institutions
- reducing problems of transferability of courses and credits between each institution
- fostering mutual respect between institutions

The conference was held on Friday, April 27, 2007, at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Wisconsin. The participants included approximately 100 faculty from the disciplines of English, Math, Social Sciences, Communication, Natural Sciences and Business from UW-Green Bay, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Fond du Lac, UW-Fox Valley, UW-Manitowoc, UW-Sheboygan, UW-Marquette, Fox Valley Technical College, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College and Lakeshore Technical College.

Feedback was gathered from conference participants and NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue group members; these recommendations for future action have been compiled.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2007-08 FACULTY DIALOGUE GROUP**

- **Develop and maintain a Communication Plan**
- **Encourage more representation from the UW-Colleges**
- **Invite and encourage representation from the College of the Menominee Nation**
- **Restructure the membership term for service in the group**
- **Hold another conference with clearly stated objectives and outcomes**

- **Consider providing the Faculty Dialogue Group with a budget for its activities**
- **Specific recommendations for the 2007-08 Faculty Dialogue Group:**
  - Continue to work on recommendations from the 2005-06 report
  - Continue to focus on fostering open communications and collaboration between faculty of all disciplines in all the NEW ERA institutions
  - Elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recorder from the faculty membership

We continue to believe that the most valuable outcomes from collaboration efforts among NEW ERA faculty will be mutual respect between institutions and a better educational environment for the students and all other citizens of Wisconsin.

#### **FINAL COMMENT & REQUEST**

As the second year of the NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue Group comes to an end, there is no doubt the group believes it has been very successful in initiating discussion and debate regarding how our institutions can better collaborate. This group and its work should be continued and focus on dissemination of what we are doing, foster further discussion on the issues and encourage more involvement in these types of activities. As mentioned in the 2005-06 report "...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." Although our group worked productively on these issues, how would other faculty at our institutions respond to such discussions? It became apparent from the response of faculty at the spring conference that our colleagues are interested in beginning more open discussions on various issues. Therefore we think the Faculty Dialogue Group could be the necessary vehicle to deliver those opportunities to our institutions so we can continue to engage in these discussions. As our students and the *needs* of those students rapidly change, we need to be cognizant of these changes and have the ability to adapt to provide educational services accommodating these needs while still maintaining the level of academic rigor that Wisconsin's schools are known for. The recommendations and work by the Faculty Dialogue Group is one component in achieving this and we hope the NEW ERA Board recognizes this and will support the continuation of the group. We therefore request a response from the NEW ERA Board to this report including issues and recommendations that appear beneficial to the alliance and their plan of how to continue the work this group.

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The schedule of the day's activities included:

- Registration and Continental Breakfast; Networking
- A presentation from three veteran faculty dialogue group members on their experiences as members of the faculty dialogue group
- An overview of NEW ERA
- A Panel Discussion on the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Technical Colleges: Missions, Structure, Misperceptions, Faculty, Similarities and Differences
- Lunch Buffet and Conversation
- Break-Out Sessions by Subject Areas: Accounting, Business, Communication, English Composition, Math, Science, Social Sciences
- Closure and Summary

In an effort to build fun and excitement into the day, drawings for prizes were held throughout the day. Many of the door prizes were paid for by faculty dialogue group members.

Feedback was gathered from conference participants and NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue group members, and recommendations for future action have been compiled. Copies of the evaluation summaries are attached to this report for your review.

## 1. **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2007-08 FACULTY DIALOGUE GROUP**

Along with the conference, the group discussed various issues relating to our charge and what revisions could help to meet these goals. The following are recommendations from the 2006-07 Faculty Dialogue Group for the coming year:

- 1.1. Develop and maintain a Communication Plan:** Even though the group and Board are familiar with our work, there seems to be little dissemination of this beyond our intimate group. Information about what has been accomplished by this group and its future goals should be better communicated to various groups including
- NEW ERA institutions
  - communities NEW ERA serves
  - institutions and communities outside NEW ERA
  - governmental representatives

By developing and implementing this plan, NEW ERA will get more exposure about their initiatives and we hope this will encourage others to follow and to help in obtaining additional funding that could be put into the recommended budget for Faculty Dialogue Group activities.

The Communication Plan might include

- a brief presentation of information about each institution
- a description of NEW ERA and its mission and vision for the region
- a historical narrative of the formation of the Faculty Dialogue Group
- a compilation of the Faculty Dialogue Group accomplishments
- a list of future goals and events of the group including the continuation of fostering open communication between faculty of NEW ERA
- a guideline for how others could develop a similar group
- a plan for dissemination of information to high school counselors regarding the various paths students can take to achieve a higher education degree (not just deciding a between a tech school or a university and how some 2-year schools do offer 4-year degrees in certain programs).

Although components of this plan should be in written form for distribution, it is also recommended there be some sort of “traveling-road-show” created for Faculty Dialogue Group members present these parts of the Communication Plan to various groups. These face-to-face presentations would be a great way to disseminate information about NEW ERA and the Faculty Dialogue Group.

- 1.2. Encourage more representation from the UW-Colleges:** During the first year every UW-College in NEW ERA had a representative. They were major players in the group’s activities and provided significant input to the discussion and additional perspective from the various regions represented within NEW ERA. As it was understood by the group, the second year’s group included only 2 representatives from the UW-Colleges because of monetary constraints.

This diminished the UW-College's perspective in the group and also put more responsibility on these individuals to represent the UW-Colleges in the Faculty Dialogue Group's activities. The group highly recommends the Board considers having a representative from every UW-Colleges campus.

- 1.3. Invite and encourage representation from the College of the Menominee Nation:** Although an institution within the NEW ERA organization, there has never been any representation from the College of the Menominee Nation on the Faculty Dialogue Group. We recommend this institution be invited to have a representative in the group. Their unique perspective could be insightful to the group and perhaps foster collaboration amongst otherwise distant programs.
- 1.4. Restructure the membership terms for service in the group:** Initially faculty involved in the group were to serve a 2-year term, with new members joining each year. The idea was to retain some members from the previous year to be leaders and help bring the new members up to speed on how the group works. As the original 2-year term for some members ends this year, several of these "veterans" wish to continue being involved with the group. We recommend the Board consider having 3 different types of faculty on future groups. These would include new members serving their first year, members who are in their second year and members who have served more than 2 years (the "veterans"). Some current members feel that a 2-year term seems adequate, but the group is just getting used to working together and becoming cohesive. The "veterans" on the group could help maintain this cohesiveness and help guide the newer members.
- 1.5. Hold another conference with clearly stated objectives and outcomes:** The group believes the conference held in the spring of 2007 was a success and got faculty from across all the NEW ERA institutions to learn about each other and candidly discuss various issues regarding our missions, educational methods and potential collaborations. We recommend another such event next academic year to follow up on this initial meeting that would be designed to incorporate various suggestions gathered by the group. One of these suggestions is based upon the results of surveys taken during and after the conference indicating that some attendees were confused about the exact objectives of the conference and what types of outcomes were expected. This and other suggestions, such as a longer lead time in announcing the event and more complete representation from the various disciplines can easily be addressed.

What might be more difficult to overcome is the perception of some (and specifically expressed by some attending the conference) that collaboration is not possible, nor necessary. This barrier for some might never be overcome no matter what this group does, but it should be addressed by next year's group and perhaps be considered a discussion point for future conferences. Maybe with future dissemination of our work and recognition and support of the Faculty Dialogue Group from other groups or agencies (local government, the Board of Regents, etc.) these types of perspectives on what we are trying to accomplish will fade and more involvement will occur.

- 1.6. Consider providing the Faculty Dialogue Group with a budget for its activities:** There is no doubt in the minds of the members that the work of the group over the past 2 years has been substantial and significant. We hope the Board also sees the group as productive in initiating changes throughout NEW ERA institutions and will continue to support their activities for the years to come. If this is the direction the Board desires, then we recommend the Board provide a budget for the group's activities. This recommendation was first discussed during the conference planning meetings when we discovered we had no budget to fund the conference. This budget would help fund not only future conferences the group hopes will become an annual event, but

also other recommendations presented in this report (faculty travel to communicate the group's work, additional faculty member involvement, etc.).

**1.7. Aligning Curricula Across the UW-SYSTEM:** As recommended in the report last year, the notion that courses at various campuses in the UW-System that are similar in content and transfer as equivalents to other campuses, yet are titled and numbered differently is confusing to many students (and parents) who view the UW-System as being one entity. Although it would be a daunting task, many some would say impossible to accomplish, a review of how courses are titled and numbered should begin throughout the UW-System to identify the amount of courses that transfer as equivalents and how best to revise the protocols. Two specific comments that were discussed by the Faculty Dialogue Group were if the tech schools can have similar titles and numbers for course throughout the state, what are the barriers (and how can they be overcome) for the UW-System, and wouldn't aligning the naming and number of UW course give a better perception to the public that the UW-System is really a cohesive system?

**1.8. Specific recommendations for the 2007-08 Faculty Dialogue Group:** This year's group recommends the following items for the incoming group:

1.8.1. Continue to review and work toward achieving recommendations provided in the 2005-06 report. This document contains numerous items from the original group's work that still need to be addressed and could be used as a guide for future Faculty Dialogue Groups.

1.8.2. Continue to focus on fostering open communication and collaboration between faculty of all disciplines in all NEW ERA institutions.

1.8.3. With 2 years of incredible guidance and leadership from Jan and Marsha, it is time for the group to be more involved in its own management and direction. The 2007-08 group should elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Recorder from the faculty involved, with the understanding that the Vice-Chair would become Chair the following year and that there would be a rotation of the Chair each year so each type of institution would be represented (one year the technical schools, then a UW-Colleges faculty, then a UW 4-year school, etc.).

## **2. FINAL COMMENT & REQUEST**

As the second year of the NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue Group comes to an end, there is no doubt the group believes it has been very successful in initiating discussion and debate regarding how our institutions can better collaborate. This group and its work should continue to focus on dissemination of what we are doing, foster further discussion on the issues and encourage more involvement in these types of activities. As mentioned in the 2005-06 report "...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." Although our group worked productively on these issues, how would other faculty at our institutions respond to such discussions? It became apparent from the response of faculty at the spring conference that our colleagues are interested in beginning more open discussions on various issues. Therefore we think the Faculty Dialogue Group could serve as the necessary vehicle to deliver those opportunities to our institutions so we can continue to engage in these discussions. As our students and the *needs* of those students rapidly change, we need to be cognizant of these changes and have the ability to adapt to provide educational services accommodating these needs while still maintaining the level of academic rigor that Wisconsin's schools are known for. The recommendations and work by the Faculty Dialogue Group is one component in achieving this and

we hope the NEW ERA Board recognizes this and will support the continuation of the group. We therefore request a response from the NEW ERA Board to this report including issues and recommendations that appear beneficial to the alliance and their plan of how to continue the work of this group.

### **3. MOST VALUABLE OUTCOMES**

The 2005-06 Faculty Dialogue Group identified four important outcome areas from the first year's meetings. Each is followed by a comment on progress made by the 2006-07 group.

#### ***3.1. Knowledge of each Educational System***

In the second year, new members learned more about the similarities and differences among the various institutions participating. Returning members continued to add to their previous knowledge through interactions with new group members and from interacting with faculty colleagues at their respective institutions. We would assume that next year's group will follow much of the same path and will have the additional benefit of having participated in our conference.

#### ***3.2. Collaboration***

In the second year, our group continued to make excellent progress in identifying and enhancing current areas of collaboration and looking into new areas. Highlights included the enactment and UW Board of Regents approval of new bachelor's degrees for technical college graduates who wanted to complete a four-year degree at both UW-Green Bay and UW-Oshkosh. Once implementation begins this academic year, more opportunities will present themselves for new collaborations.

#### ***3.3. Transferability***

In the second year, our group made progress not only identifying more areas for negotiated transferability but also discussed some areas that would not be good transfer candidates. These activities should enable next year's group to focus more attention on transfer issues that bode well for successful arrangements.

#### ***3.4. Mutual Respect between Institutions***

In the second year, our group increased the base of mutual respect through the addition of new members and, mainly, through the conference which brought in many faculty members from participating institutions who had the chance to interact and learn from each other. We anticipate that as dialogue continues among the various institutions that respect will continue to grow. We also anticipate an increase in respect resulting from another conference and from the interactions between UW-Oshkosh and UW-Green Bay as their Bachelor of Applied Studies degree programs are implemented.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We once again thank our conveners, Jan Thornton and Marsha Rossiter, who organized and directed our meetings. Their insight and guidance were invaluable to us. We also appreciate the various institutions providing funding for our meals at these meetings.

It is also important we recognize and thank Jeff Rafn, Chair, NEW ERA and President of Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Susan May, Executive Vice President of Fox Valley Technical College; and Larry Rubin Assistant Vice President of the UW System for their informative presentations at the *Faculty Dialogue: NEW ERA Collaborative Conference*.

The group would like to thank Fox Valley Technical College for the continued use of the Bordini Center for our meetings; it was a central location for us and right off US-41. We would like to thank Linda Lazic in Susan May's office for her work in arranging our meetings. We also are grateful for the use of the FVTC facilities for the spring conference.

And thank you to the board for your confidence in, and support of, the NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue Group.

**NEW ERA Faculty Dialogue Group 2006-2007**

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

**Anne Kok**, Associate Professor and Chair, Social Work, UW-Green Bay

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

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**Donna Rich**, Associate Professor and Chair, Biology, UW-Green Bay

**Christine Roth**, Assistant Professor, English, UW-Oshkosh

**Marilyn Sagrillo**, Associate Professor, Accounting, UW-Green Bay

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

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