

# **UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM**

## **Equity Scorecard Project**

*A Collaborative Action Research Project with the  
University of Wisconsin System Office of Academic Diversity and Development  
and the  
USC Center for Urban Education*

*Funded by  
The University of Wisconsin System*



### **Report to the Chancellor**

#### **Submitted by the**

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## **Section I: Introduction**

The importance of diversity in higher education is driven by a number of factors, including persistent inequities, shifting demographics, workforce imperatives, and legal imperatives. The under-representation and the persistent achievement gap for students of color in the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) demand strategic action that will result in equity and education for all. Greater access to all UWS institutions for Wisconsin students, especially students of color and disadvantaged students, is and must remain high on the UWS's educational agenda.

With the proportion of Wisconsin high school graduates of color projected to increase as the total number of graduates decreases, the UWS developed strategic plans to articulate its institutional values for diversity. *Plan 2008* is the second 10-year System-wide plan designed to increase both the number of U.S. students of color and improve the academic outcomes of U.S. students of color. *Plan 2008* is consistent with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's (UW-L) institutional values as articulated throughout our strategic planning document, *Building our Academic Community of Learning and Inquiry*, which was approved by Chancellor Doug Hastad in 2004.

### ***History of EqS Development at UW-La Crosse***

In the fall of 2004, UW-L's Joint Minority Affairs Council (JMAC) met weekly to complete the drafting of *Phase II of Plan 2008*. Members of JMAC attended the UWS sponsored conference, *Reflections on Best Practices: Closing the Gap*. From this conference, the members of JMAC heard about the Equity Scorecard Project as presented by Dr. Estela Mara Bensimon. After the presentation, JMAC, under the leadership of Dr. Enilda Delgado and Dr. Roger Haro, completed an equity scorecard focused on student enrollment at UW-L relative to the larger Wisconsin population and enrollment in each of UW-L's four colleges during the spring of 2005.

The actions of the Drs. Delgado and Haro led the UWS in introducing a pilot Equity Scorecard project in Fall 2005 to be conducted in collaboration with Dr. Bensimon and her colleagues from the Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California. Five four year UWS campuses volunteered to participate in the pilot project: University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The thirteen 2-year University of Wisconsin Colleges are also participating in the pilot.

The Equity Scorecard (EqS) project is an 18-month pilot study that aims to assess progress toward the diversity goals stated in *Plan 2008* at the pilot institutions. The EqS process emphasizes the use of data in achieving goals. Existing data, disaggregated by ethnicity, was compiled and used to evaluate equity throughout the campus community. The purpose of the project is to identify where equity gaps exist and to understand the problems and obstacles that face the campus in bridging those gaps. Input and observations from the campus and the broader community was sought throughout the process to garner insights from multiple points of view.

Consistent with UW La Crosse *Plan 2008*, UW-L's Equity Scorecard Project addresses issues related to the following historically underrepresented racial/ethnic (synonymous to "minority") populations: African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino(a) and Asian American (with an emphasis on Southeast Asian). These groups are often referred to as the "underrepresented populations" in this document

The purpose of this report is to describe the activities and findings of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's EqS campus evidence team. This report describes the formation of UWL's EqS campus evidence team and sets the institutional context at the time the EqS was created. The four primary EqS perspectives, Access, Retention, Excellence, and Institutional Receptivity, are reviewed and discussed. Data outcomes included in each perspective report are measured through "vital signs." The vital signs are organized sets of data serving as starting points from which to measure the status of equity for a given perspective. After discussing vital signs used to measure equity in academic pathways, we highlight significant gaps in performance that the vital signs revealed. The narrative of gaps is accompanied by charts and graphs, illustrating areas the team identified as needing further investigation. The report concludes with the team members' initial recommendations for future action.

### ***Goals and Background of the University of Wisconsin Equity Scorecard Project\****

*\*This section is largely reproduced from the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education report.*

Higher education decision makers traditionally have favored interventions that look to *change the student* so that they are better able to adapt to the processes and structures that govern postsecondary institutions. The *Equity Scorecard* project (Bensimon, 2004) developed by researchers at the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education seeks to reframe the discussion from *student responsibility* to *institutional accountability* and place the processes of higher education center-stage to bring about change at the institutional level. This is accomplished through the in-depth examination of existing institutional data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity. The purpose of such an examination is to investigate the effectiveness of individual institutions in promoting equity and excellence in the educational outcomes of historically underrepresented students.

The key principle of the *Equity Scorecard* project is that individuals at all levels of leadership, responsibility, and power are the ones who can illicit change and bring about equitable educational outcomes. The capacity of individuals to become agents of change can be facilitated by engagement in a collaborative process. This principle is implemented by the formation of teams of *practitioner-researchers* who convene on a regular basis to examine data on student outcomes and develop a scorecard that represents the "state of equity" for their campus. These teams are comprised of faculty, administrators and students who come together to critically examine and discuss collected data in order to reach a measure of understanding about what leads inequities to persist on their campuses. Participants in the *Equity Scorecard* teams enable various members of the college community to transform raw data (usually seen only by institutional researchers and stored in obscure reports) into simplified, yet compelling "stories"

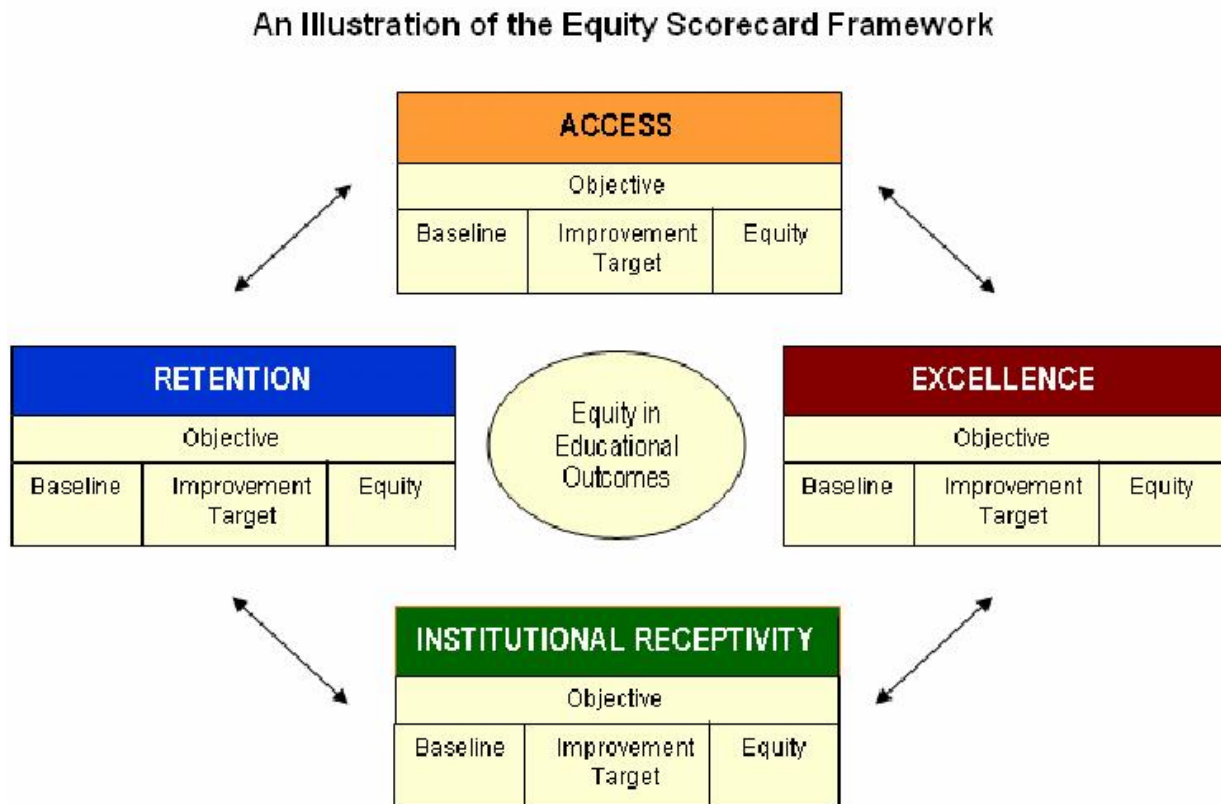
that are accessible to a wider audience. Organizational learning occurs when new knowledge is constructed by *Equity Scorecard* team members and is used to induce institutional change for the improvement of educational outcomes for underrepresented student groups.

*Equity Scorecard* team members begin by analyzing available data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, across four perspectives: access, retention, excellence, and institutional receptivity. The initial analysis of the data leads *Equity Scorecard* team members to question and focus on specific educational outcomes by student groups for further analysis. These questions in turn become the goals and indicators by which institutional effectiveness will be evaluated by the *Equity Scorecard* team. The result is the creation of an “Equity Scorecard,” a self-assessment framework that evaluates the current status of equity within the institution. The scorecard highlights areas in need for further attention and establishes performance goals in the four perspectives as a means to attain equity.

### ***The Equity Scorecard Framework***

The Scorecard is a “living” accountability framework that needs to be monitored to assess to what extent inequalities are being eliminated for four perspectives. The Equity Scorecard contains a set of indicators that provides an institution’s leadership with a comprehensive view of how well historically underrepresented students are performing. As such, an institution’s Equity Scorecard should be modified and updated on a routine basis. Four perspectives make up the structure of the Scorecard (see Figure 1):

Figure 1. Equity Scorecard Framework



Access Perspective: This perspective refers to programs and resources that can significantly improve life opportunities for underserved students.

Retention Perspective: This perspective refers to continued attendance from one year to the next and/or to completion of degrees. Retention can also refer to continued progress toward degrees in competitive majors.

Excellence Perspective: While measures of retention may represent the fulfillment of minimal requirements for “academic survival”, excellence measures represent higher level academic accomplishments that can lead to majors in STEM fields, transfer to selective institutions, winning academic scholarships, etc. The excellence perspective calls attention to the importance of institutions focusing on producing “leaders” and not just “survivors” (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 1999).

Institutional Receptivity Perspective: This perspective refers to goals and measures of institutional support that have been found to be influential in the creation of affirming campus environments for historically unrepresented students.

## **Section II: Institutional Context**

### ***The UW-L Equity Scorecard Campus Evidence Team***

UW-L Equity Scorecard campus evidence team is comprised of four faculty members, four staff members and several students appointed by Al Thompson, the Assistant to the Chancellor for Affirmative Action and Diversity, who also serves as the team leader.

- Al Thompson, Assistant to the Chancellor, Affirmative Action and Diversity, Team Leader
- Enilda Delgado. Associate Professor, Sociology
- Amanda Goodenough, Communications and Assessment, Campus Climate Resource Center
- Roger Haro, Professor, Biology
- Beth Hartung, Campus Climate Coordinator
- Fred Ludwig, Student
- Sara Johnson, Student
- Carolyn Olson, Student
- Bruce Riley, Professor, Mathematics
- Jacob Sciammas, Student
- Barbara Stewart, Director, Multicultural Student Services
- Teri Thill, Institutional Researcher
- Carmen Wilson, Professor, Psychology, and Faculty Senate Chair

In addition to the EqS campus evidence team members, students, faculty and staff from across the UW-L campus were invited to participate in team meetings as observers. Observers provide valuable insight and perspective as the team examines and explores campus data. Dr. Elsa Macias from the Center for Urban Education and Christa Bruhn from UWS Office of Academic Diversity and Development have worked as consultants to the team throughout the EqS process.

The EqS campus evidence team met at least once, and most often twice, a month from March 2006 to August 2007, starting with a two-day orientation to the EqS process held in Madison, Wisconsin, and led by Dr. Estela Bensimon and her team from the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California. Following the orientation, the UW-L EqS campus evidence team began exploring available data related to the Access dimension, with the draft report being completed in July 2006.

Over the remaining summer months and into the fall, the EqS campus evidence team examined data related to student retention and progress toward degree completion. The draft Retention report was completed in January 2007. After exploring vital signs related to the Excellence perspective, the EqS campus evidence team completed the draft Excellence report in early February 2007, and the draft report for the final perspective – Institutional Receptivity - was completed by July 2007.

## ***Defining Equity: The Equity Indicator***

The EqS project is driven by disaggregated student data and determines equity on given measures by calculating a comparative ratio where the proportion of the target population in the numerator is divided by the proportion of the target population in the denominator. For instance, if we wanted to determine whether African American new freshmen at UW-L were equitably represented relative to Wisconsin high school graduates, the proportion of the target population – African American students - among UW-L new freshmen is divided by the proportion of the target population among Wisconsin high school graduates. This complex bit of math is diagramed below:

<b>Description</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Equity Indicator</b>
# of African American UW-L new freshmen – Fall 2005	17	.010	.159
# of UW-L new freshmen – Fall 2005	1715		
# of African American Wisconsin high school graduates – graduating class 2005	3814	.063	
# of Wisconsin high school graduates – graduating class 2005	60998		

Interpreting the equity indicator can be a bit tricky; it's not accurate to say that an equity indicator of 0.40 is "twice as equitable" as an indicator of 0.20. The indicator does not give a straight measure of magnitude, but rather one of proportional representation. The farther the indicator value is from 1.00, the more skewed the representation of the target population. Values below 1.00 indicate under-representation and values above 1.00 indicate over-representation. Generally speaking for the purposes of this report, equity indicators that are below .80 or above 1.20 are considered inequitable and those between .80 and .90 or 1.10 and 1.20 are considered approaching equity.

## ***Past and Current Demographic Composition of UW-L***

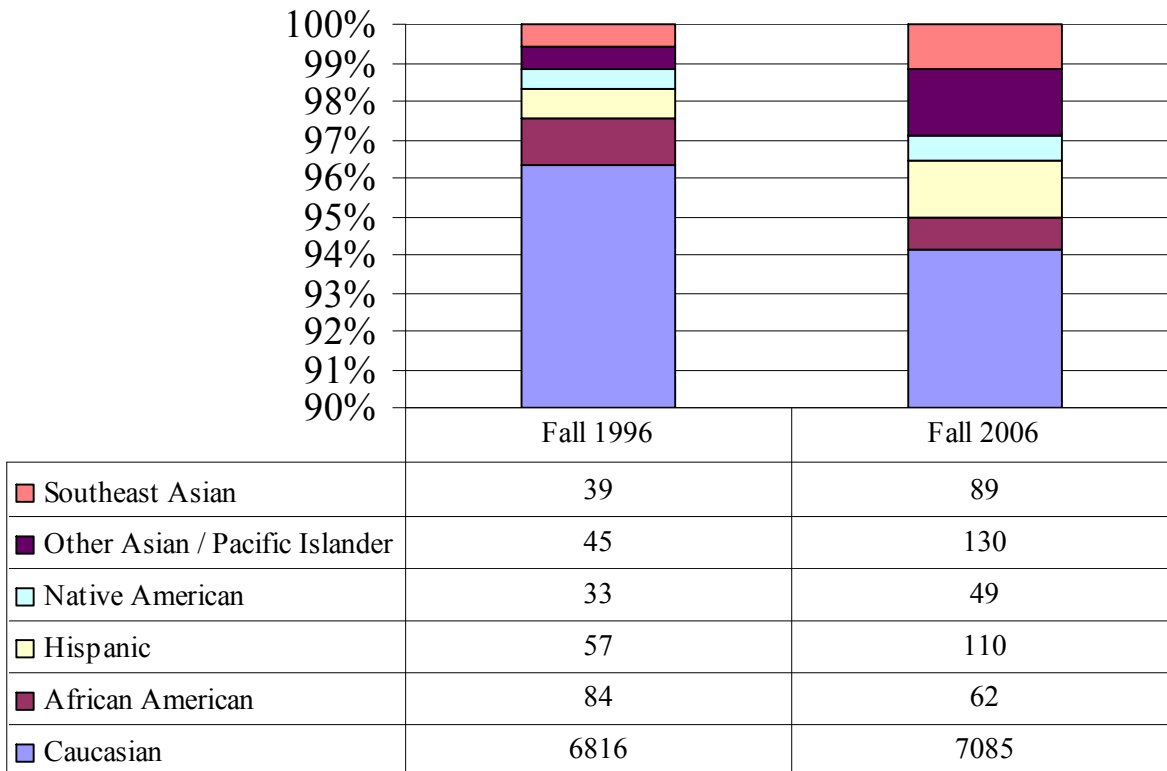
While the EqS project is forward-looking by design, the UW-L EqS campus evidence team has prepared some historical context regarding enrollment at UW-L that may help frame the discussion more clearly.

### **Total Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

In Fall 1996, 7161 full-time undergraduate students were enrolled at UW-L, 87 of whom were either international students or students who elected not to disclose their race or ethnicity. Of the remaining 7074, 96% (6816 students) were Caucasian. In contrast, in Fall 2006, 7700 full-time undergraduate students were enrolled at UW-L. Of these, 175 were either international students or students who elected not to disclose their race or ethnicity and 94% (7085) of the remaining 7525 were Caucasian. See Figure 2.



Figure 2. Full-time Enrollment by Race



On the surface, the past ten years have resulted in little change in U.S. students of color representation within the full-time undergraduate student body at UW-L; however, in looking at the data disaggregated by individual racial categories, a different picture emerges. The number of students of Hispanic, Southeast Asian, Other Asian or Pacific Islander, and Native American increased by between 148% to 289% since 1996. African American students, in sharp contrast to this trend, have decreased by 26%.

This shift in representation within the underrepresented student population is precisely what the EqS process is designed to bring into focus. The UW-L EqS team started with this basic observation to begin exploring equity with a focus on examining institutional processes and systems which might be hindering efforts to build a more diverse environment.

A recurring theme through the EqS project at UW-L will be the initially low representation of racially diverse students. Because the number of students from underrepresented groups is small in aggregate, disaggregating the data by race and then further by various measures identified in each of the four EqS dimensions will often result in just a small handful of students occupying each category or cell. It is irresponsible to draw conclusions for an entire population based on only a small number of the population's members; we are, after all, looking at people – individuals – who each exist in their own personal set of circumstances, and it is unfair to expect an entire group to behave, on average, the same as only a small number of representatives. For this reason, many of the recommendations made through the EqS process may by necessity focus on an initial goal of increasing overall U.S. students of color representation with subsequent

goals to be monitored and addressed as the total population of students from underrepresented groups increases.

### First Generation Students by Race/Ethnicity

Familiarity with the college process is often associated with better higher educational outcomes. Students who come from families where at least one parent has earned a baccalaureate degree may be better prepared to work within the system and to understand the importance of particular milestones (e.g., completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid in the spring before attending college, registering for classes early, etc.). It is often the case that U.S. students of color are believed to be first-generation college students in higher proportion than Caucasian students, and in some cases, it may be tempting to believe it is this co-linearity that drives certain areas of inequity.

As illustrated in Table 1, Native American and Southeast Asian students attending UW-L are more likely to also be first generation college students when compared to Caucasian students, but Other Asian or Pacific Islander students are less likely to also be first generation college students. African American and Hispanic students are about as likely as Caucasian students to be first generation. These data, when combined with data within each perspective report, may highlight areas where UW-L needs to be more proactive in approaching first generation students of color to ensure any potential lack of familiarity with the system is not adversely affecting their educational progress.

Table 1. UW-L Undergraduate First Generation Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	Caucasian	Unknown	Total
Total	71	125	55	171	124	7593	140	8279
% of Total	0.9%	1.5%	0.7%	2.1%	1.5%	91.7%	1.7%	100.0%
First Generation	20	38	21	39	45	2128	42	2333
% of First Generation	0.9%	1.6%	0.9%	1.7%	1.9%	91.2%	1.8%	100.0%
% of Race	28.2%	30.4%	38.2%	22.8%	36.3%	28.0%	30.0%	28.2%
<b>Equity Indicator*</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.35</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>1.00</b>

\*In Table 1, the Equity Indicator should be inversely interpreted as higher proportional representation for first generation status is a risk factor. Therefore, values above 1.20 should be considered inequitable and values between 1.20 and 1.10 are approaching equity.

## New Freshmen Profile by Race/Ethnicity

The following tables provide both descriptive and equity measures for new freshmen entering in Fall 2003, Fall 2004, and Fall 2005 for high school percentile rank, ACT Composite, ACT English, and ACT Math. The descriptives provide a median and interquartile range (25<sup>th</sup> percentile score and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile score) while the equity measures look at students with high school percentile rank in the top 25 percent of their class and ACT scores of 23 or higher.

Table 2: New Freshmen Profile - High School Percentile Rank & ACT Scores

Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Cohort Total		43	82	29	91	63	4500	4808
High School Percentile Rank	Median	62.3%	69.0%	71.1%	73.2%	73.4%	84.8%	84.4%
	25th %ile	49.0%	54.1%	55.9%	63.1%	59.9%	77.9%	77.1%
	75th %ile	74.6%	80.9%	80.5%	85.2%	78.3%	91.8%	91.6%
ACT Composite Score	Median	22	22	23.5	23	19	25	25
	25th %ile	20	20	22	22	17	23	23
	75th %ile	24.5	24	25	26	21	27	27
ACT Math Score	Median	21	22	23	24	20	25	25
	25th %ile	19	19	20.5	22	17	23	23
	75th %ile	24	25	25	27	23	27	27
ACT English Score	Median	22	21	22.5	22	17	24	24
	25th %ile	20	19	20	21	15	22	22
	75th %ile	25	25	26	25	19	27	26

Table 3: New Freshmen ACT Scores

Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Cohort Total	43	81	30	88	64	4463	4769
Share	0.9%	1.7%	0.6%	1.8%	1.3%	93.6%	100.0%
ACT Composite 23 and above	19	36	18	57	9	3679	3818
Share	0.5%	0.9%	0.5%	1.5%	0.2%	96.4%	100.0%
Equity Indicator	0.55	0.56	0.75	0.81	0.18	1.03	1.00
ACT Math 23 and above	15	38	18	60	20	3469	3620
Share	0.4%	1.0%	0.5%	1.7%	0.6%	95.8%	100.0%
Equity Indicator	0.46	0.62	0.79	0.90	0.41	1.02	1.00
ACT English 23 and above	18	27	16	36	2	2996	3095
Share	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%	0.1%	96.8%	100.0%
Equity Indicator	0.65	0.51	0.82	0.63	0.05	1.03	1.00

Note: Cohort total includes students for which no ACT scores were reported.

Table 4: New Freshmen High School Percentile Rank

Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Cohort Total	43	81	30	88	64	4463	4769
Share	0.9%	1.7%	0.6%	1.8%	1.3%	93.6%	100.0%
Top 25%	9	23	13	39	26	3548	3658
Share	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%	97.0%	100.0%
Equity Indicator	0.27	0.37	0.56	0.58	0.53	1.04	1.00

Note: Cohort total includes students for which no high school rank was reported.

## **Section III: Access**

### ***Access Defined***

Access to higher education encompasses not only admissions and matriculation to a higher education institution, but also access to resources, majors and programs within the institution that support students in achieving success in their chosen field. The UW-L EqS team was interested in examining, to the extent feasible, both kinds of access; however, as previously mentioned, the low initial populations of non-majority students leads to an initial focus on admissions and matriculation.

The EqS team at UW-L examined a significant amount of data related to access to the University and within the University and decided for this initial report to focus on 6 equity measures, each of which is disaggregated by race / ethnicity:

- 1) The composition of UW-L new freshmen (Fall 2005) relative to the composition of Wisconsin high school graduates (graduating class 2005);
- 2) The composition of UW-L applicants (Fall 2005) relative to the Wisconsin ACT takers (graduating class 2005);
- 3) The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to all UW-L applicants
- 4) The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to UW-L completed applicants (Fall 2005);
- 5) The composition of incomplete applications to UW-L (Fall 2005) relative to all applications to UW-L (Fall 2005); and
- 6) The composition of enrolled students at UW-L (Fall 2005) relative to admitted students to UW-L (Fall 2005).

### ***Academic Pathways Vital Signs***

Prior to the first team meeting, Teri Thill, Director of Institutional Research, completed the “vital signs” worksheet for the Access perspective (see Appendix A) as recommended by the OADD team working in conjunction with David Blough, UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research (OPAR). The purpose of the vital signs data is to provide a starting point for the team to begin a focused dialogue on a given perspective and a basis from which to ask additional questions pertaining to that perspective. The completed vital signs provided the team with the baseline data disaggregated into six racial/ethnic categories, plus international students and students who choose not to disclose their racial/ethnic background:

- 1) African American;
- 2) Southeast Asian;
- 3) Other Asian / Pacific Islander;
- 4) Hispanic;
- 5) Native American; and
- 6) White non-Hispanic.

From this initial data, the UW-L EqS team posed numerous additional questions and examined data that might help shed some light on those questions. After much discussion, the team decided on the following elements as the most important to focus on for the initial Access dimension report:

- 1) How many students graduated from Wisconsin schools in the 2005 graduating class disaggregated by race/ethnicity?
- 2) How many Wisconsin high school students in the 2005 graduating class took the ACT exam by race/ethnicity?
- 3) In Fall 2005, how many students submitted admission applications to UW-La Crosse by race/ethnicity?
- 4) In Fall 2005, how many applicants were admitted, among those who applied and among those with completed applications by race/ethnicity?
- 5) In Fall 2005, how many new students enrolled at UW-La Crosse by race/ethnicity?

## ***Admissions and Matriculation***

In 2004, the state of Wisconsin graduated nearly 61,000 students<sup>1</sup>. Of these graduates, roughly 86% were non-Hispanic Caucasian. A 2003 University of Wisconsin System report showed that while the “overall number of Wisconsin high school graduates is projected to decrease by 8%” over the next 15 years there are “projected increases in the number of Hispanic and Asian high school graduates” (Huhn, 2004:1). Due primarily to the “projected rapid growth in the number of Hispanic high school graduates, the class of 2018 will be more racially diverse than the class of 2003. By 2018, projections show that more than 1 in 5 Wisconsin high school graduates will be non-White” (p. 1).

The number of students of color at UW-L has not been representative of state demographics, nor has it kept up with shifts in demographics across the state. For example, while African Americans represent 6.3% of HS graduates, they represent 1% of the 2005 UW-L freshmen class. Likewise Native Americans, Latinos, and Asians<sup>2</sup> represent 1.1%, 3.3%, and 3.4% of Wisconsin high school graduates and .8%, 1.6%, and 3% of the 2005 UW-L freshmen class, respectively (See Table 5).

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<sup>1</sup> Our analysis begins with WI HS graduates and those who take the ACT test. We are not addressing a critical mass of Wisconsin youth who drop out prior to attaining a high school diploma. While we believe the UW-System is a key stakeholder in finding solutions to improve retention and graduation of all PK-12 students in the state, this report will not address access from this perspective.

<sup>2</sup> One must exercise caution when interpreting these numbers, since the state of Wisconsin does not disaggregate Asian origin as is mandated for Plan 2008. Thus the Asian numbers represent all Asians, and not just post-1975 Southeast Asians, which is the targeted Plan 2008 population.

Table 5: Wisconsin Educational Pipeline from High School Graduation to enrollment at UW-L

		African American	Asian American / Pacific Islander	Native American	Hispanic / Latinos(as)	Caucasian	Other*	Total
<b>WI HS Graduates, graduating class 2005</b>	#	3814	2063	688	2024	52409	0	60998
	%	6.3%	3.4%	1.1%	3.3%	85.9%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>WI ACT Takers, graduating class 2005</b>	#	1876	1409	318	1061	37867	0	42531
	%	4.4%	3.3%	0.7%	2.5%	89.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b># of Applications to UW-L, Fall 2005</b>	#	83	123	35	90	5790	127	6248
	%	1.3%	2.0%	0.6%	1.4%	92.7%	2.0%	100.0%
<b># of Completed Applications to UW-L, Fall 2005</b>	#	43	103	29	73	5559	110	5917
	%	0.7%	1.7%	0.5%	1.2%	93.9%	1.9%	100.0%
<b># Admitted to UW-L, Fall 2005</b>	#	31	98	29	71	3920	83	4232
	%	0.7%	2.3%	0.7%	1.7%	92.6%	2.0%	100.0%
<b># New Freshmen Enrolled, Fall 2005</b>	#	17	51	13	27	1580	27	1715
	%	1.0%	3.0%	0.8%	1.6%	92.1%	1.6%	100.0%

\*Other category includes international students and students who have chosen not to identify their race or ethnicity.

Not surprisingly, the equity measure comparing UW-L new freshmen to WI high school graduates reflects this inequity. See Table 6.

Table 6: The composition of UW-L new freshmen (Fall 2005) relative to the composition of Wisconsin high school graduates (graduating class 2005)

	African American	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Caucasian
UWL New Freshmen / WI HS Graduates	0.16	0.67	0.53	0.47	1.07

These data led the EqS Team to take a step back and look at the “pipeline” of students applying to UW-L in order to determine if there were possible institutional processes that may be acting as barriers to enrollment for students from underrepresented groups. Since the completion of a standardized test is required for admission as a new freshman at UW-L, we compared Wisconsin high school graduates who took the ACT to UW-L new freshmen. These students have a wide range of higher education choices both within the state of Wisconsin, in neighboring states, and across the nation.

Our comparison revealed that the popularity of UW-L varies by racial/ethnic group. Over 15 percent of all non-Hispanic White ACT takers in the state of Wisconsin applied for admissions to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.<sup>3</sup> This figure is significantly lower among Native Americans (11.0%), Asians (8.72%), Hispanics (8.48%), and African Americans (4.42%). Again, it is unsurprising given the above data that the equity measure comparing UW-L applicants to WI ACT takers shows inequity. See Table 7.

*Table 7: The composition of UW-L applicants (Fall 2005) relative to the Wisconsin ACT takers (graduating class 2005)*

	African American	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Caucasian
UWL Applicants / WI ACT Takers	0.30	0.75	0.38	0.58	1.04

Because there is inequity in the number of applicants relative to the eligible pool, as defined by ACT takers, it is not surprising that there is further inequity in the enrollment of new freshmen relative to the same available pool. This raises a concern as to why eligible, as defined by taking of the ACT, high school graduates of color are not applying to UW-L in equal proportion to White students. Are we recruiting students from high schools that serve large numbers of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans?

While there is a clear under-representation of racial and ethnic applicants and new freshmen relative to the pool of ACT takers, there is further disturbing news in that a disproportionate number of applications among students of color are incomplete. On average, 4 % of non-Hispanic White applications are considered incomplete. The percentage of all applications that were considered incomplete for African Americans, Asians, Native Americans and Hispanics were 48%, 16% 17% and 19%, respectively. These numbers are of grave concern and further investigation into determining the barriers that prevent potential students from completing the application process need to be considered.

It is important to recognize the patterns of inequity found in the educational pipeline from high school graduation through submission of application at UW-L. However, the data reflects that once an application is determined to be complete, there is equitable or above equitable likelihood of admissions. See Tables 8 and 9.

*Table 8: The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to UW-L applicants (Fall 2005)*

	African American	Native American	Southeast Asian	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Caucasian
UWL Admitted / UWL Applicants	0.55	1.22	0.97	1.29	1.16	1.00

<sup>3</sup> This is assuming that all applicants to UW-L come from the state of Wisconsin.



*Table 9: The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to UW-L completed applicants (Fall 2005)*

	African American	Native American	Southeast Asian	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Caucasian
UWL Admitted / UWL Applicants	1.01	1.40	1.23	1.38	1.36	0.99

Furthermore, this pattern persists with matriculation. See Table 10.

*Table 10: The composition of enrolled students at UW-L (Fall 2005) relative to admitted students to UW-L (Fall 2005)*

	African American	Native American	Southeast Asian	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Caucasian
UWL Enrolled / UWL Admitted	1.35	1.11	1.70	1.11	0.94	0.99

There is a proportional representation of White and Hispanic students that will enroll at UW-L relative to those who were admitted within that specific population. Moreover, African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans are disproportionately more likely to enroll at UW-L based on being admitted.

It is important to focus for a moment on the good news found in this data. Upon completion of the application, students of color are likely to be successful in the admissions and matriculation process at UW-L. However, one needs to be mindful of the caveat here, which is that UW-L does not appear to attract a proportionate number of non-White high school students or ACT takers. Further investigations needs to occur.

### ***Internal Access to UW-L Colleges***

As previously noted, UW-L has a low representation of racially diverse students. While the intent of the EqS project is to measure both external and internal access, this report will not look at internal access because disaggregating the data by race and then further by college results in only four of 24 cells with 5 or more students, thus making it statistically impossible to draw conclusions for this data.

### ***Summary***

- Relative to the high school graduates from Wisconsin, African American, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic UW-L new freshman are underrepresented.
- High school graduates of color who have taken the ACT are not applying in equal proportion to White students.
- A disproportionate number of applications among students of color are incomplete.

- Students of color are likely to be successful in the admissions and matriculation process at UW-L once an application is completed.
- Initial findings indicate alignment to recommendations found in the University's Strategic Plan and Plan 2008.
- The EqS team will be holding open forums with internal and external constituencies to receive feedback and develop recommendations for action.

References:

Bensimon, E.M., Hao,L, & Bustillos, L.T. 2003. "The State of Equity in California's Postsecondary Educational System."

Huhn, Clare. 2004. "Wisconsin's High School Graduating Class: Projections by Race to 2018." Academic Planning and Analysis Office of the Provost University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## **Section IV: Retention**

### ***Retention Defined***

Retention refers to continued attendance from one year to the next and/or to completion of degrees. Retention can also refer to other measures of continued progress toward degrees (for example, completion rates for students in foundational/general education courses, retention rates for students according to program type, and profile of non-returning students).

The EqS team at UW-L began exploring the Retention perspective by examining first-to-second year retention and six-year graduation rate data. This led to further exploration to try to uncover what happens between the first year and graduation, which resulted in five equity measures, each disaggregated by race/ethnicity:

- 1) The composition of students returning in the Fall of their second year who started at UW-L as new freshmen (three groups of three cohorts combined, spanning cohorts starting Fall 1997/Fall 1998/Fall 1999, Fall 2000/Fall 2001/Fall 2002, and Fall 2003/Fall 2004/Fall 2005) relative to the starting cohort composition;
- 2) The composition of students graduating from UW-L within six years of their first term who started as new freshmen at UW-L (two groups of three cohorts combined, spanning cohorts starting Fall 1994/Fall 1995/Fall 1996 and Fall 1997/Fall 1998/Fall 1999) relative to the starting cohort composition;
- 3) The pre-college preparation (as measured by ACT Composite score) of students who are retained at UW-L from their first to second year of undergraduate study;
- 4) The pre-college preparation (as measured by ACT Composite score) of students who start their undergraduate study at UW-L and receive their degree within six years of their first term;
- 5) The composition of students receiving passing grades in several groupings of General Education (now University Core Curriculum) courses (Academic years 2003-04/2004-05/2005-06) relative to the composition of students who register for the courses (Academic years 2003-04/2004-05/2005-06);

Due to the low actual number of students of color who are enrolled at UW-L, it was necessary for the EqS team to combine data from multiple cohorts of students in order to maintain student confidentiality and privacy. Where there are significant trends in the data in the combined years, they will be noted in the text.

### ***Retention Vital Signs***

As with the Access Perspective, “vital signs” relative to the Retention perspective were completed according to the recommendations of the OADD team and David Blough. From this initial data, the UW-L EqS team posed numerous additional questions and examined data that

might help bring out the story behind the data. After much discussion, the team decided on the following key elements related to the Retention perspective:

- 1) How many students started in several fall terms at UW-L as new freshmen disaggregated by race/ethnicity?
- 2) How many of those beginning new freshmen returned to UW-L the fall after their first fall disaggregated by race/ethnicity?
- 3) How many of those beginning new freshmen received their baccalaureate degree from UW-L within 6 years of their first fall term disaggregated by race/ethnicity?
- 4) Are students of similar pre-college preparation (as measured by ACT Composite score) as likely to be retained from their first to second year?
- 5) Are students of similar pre-college preparation (as measured by ACT Composite score) as likely to graduate from UW-L within 6 years of their first term?
- 6) Do students who are retained from their first to their second year receive better grades in General Education (now University Core Curriculum) courses than students of the same race/ethnicity who are not retained?
- 7) Do students who graduate from UW-L within 6 years of their first term receive better grades in General Education (now University Core Curriculum) courses than students of the same race/ethnicity who do not graduate from UW-L?

### ***First-to-Second Year Retention***

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse enjoys high overall first-to-second year retention, but the EqS team was curious to see if students of color enjoyed the same high rates as their Caucasian counterparts. Table 11 displays average first-to-second year retention data for new freshmen first enrolling at the university during the falls of three three-year periods (Fall 1997, Fall 1998, & Fall 1999; Fall 2000, Fall 2001, & Fall 2002; Fall 2003, Fall 2004, & Fall 2005).

Table 11. Freshman to Sophomore Year Retention Rates

Cohorts Starting	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Fall 1997, Fall 1998, Fall 1999	49	57	35	66	51	4885	5143
Original Share	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%	1.3%	1.0%	95.0%	100.0%
Retained	31	42	23	47	39	3973	4155
Retained Share	0.7%	1.0%	0.6%	1.1%	0.9%	95.6%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator (Retained Share / Original Share)</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Retention Rate	63.3%	73.7%	65.7%	71.2%	76.5%	81.3%	80.8%
Fall 2000, Fall 2001, Fall 2002	42	77	29	77	65	4514	4804
Original Share	0.9%	1.6%	0.6%	1.6%	1.4%	94.0%	100.0%
Retained	30	58	20	60	54	3788	4010
Retained Share	0.7%	1.4%	0.5%	1.5%	1.3%	94.5%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator (Retained Share / Original Share)</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Retention Rate	71.4%	75.3%	69.0%	77.9%	83.1%	83.9%	83.5%
Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005	46	83	30	93	63	4581	4896
Original Share	0.9%	1.7%	0.6%	1.9%	1.3%	93.6%	100.0%
Retained	34	67	23	69	46	3882	4121
Retained Share	0.8%	1.6%	0.6%	1.7%	1.1%	94.2%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator (Retained Share / Original Share)</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Retention Rate	73.9%	80.7%	76.7%	74.2%	73.0%	84.7%	84.2%

Retention rates increased for all student groups over the three time periods except for Asian American students, and all students groups were either approaching or at equity in all three time frames. The increase in retention rates might be partially attributed to the increased academic profile of incoming freshman students during the nine-year period. In addition, academic support services for students have increased, especially for multicultural students, during the nine-year period.

It is heartening to note that the retention rate from the middle group of years to the most recent years for African American, Hispanic and Native American students increased more than the rate for Caucasian students (5.4, 5.4, 8.3, and 2.0 percentage points respectively), indicating a closing of the retention gap for those student groups. The dramatic drop in retention rate for Southeast Asian and Other Asian/Pacific Islander students (8.4 and 3.9 percentage points), however, is particularly troublesome as these two racial groups comprise a growing proportion of the area UW-L serves. All the same, this first piece of evidence shows promise for students of color who enroll at UW-L as they appear to be no more likely to leave within their first year of college than Caucasian students.

## 6-Year Graduation

Graduation from the institution a student started at within 150% of expected degree completion time is often considered the industry standard measure for student success. For example, UW-L undergraduates have an expected degree completion time of four years, therefore 150% of expected degree completion is six years. As with first-to-second year retention, UW-L enjoys relatively high overall six-year graduation rates. Table 12 displays average six-year graduation information for students first enrolling at the university during the falls of two three-year periods (Fall 1994, Fall 1995, & 1996 and Fall 1997, Fall 1998, & Fall 1999).

Table 12. 6-Year Graduation Rates

Cohorts Starting	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Fall 1994, Fall 1995, Fall 1996	74	57	27	54	33	4973	5218
Original Share	1.4%	1.1%	0.5%	1.0%	0.6%	95.3%	100.0%
6-Year Graduates	21	13	10	18	9	2631	2702
Graduation Share	0.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.3%	97.4%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b> (Graduation Share / Original Share)	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Graduation Rate	28.4%	22.8%	37.0%	33.3%	27.3%	52.9%	51.8%
Fall 1997, Fall 1998, Fall 1999	49	57	35	66	51	4885	5143
Original Share	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%	1.3%	1.0%	95.0%	100.0%
6-Year Graduates	19	26	15	25	25	2998	3108
Graduation Share	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%	96.5%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b> (Graduation Share / Original Share)	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Graduation Rate	38.8%	45.6%	42.9%	37.9%	49.0%	61.4%	60.4%

Graduation rates for all student groups increased between the two time periods with the exception of the graduation rate for Asian/Pacific Islander students, however, all student of color groups are below equity. While the large increase in graduation rates for Hispanic students (24.8 percentage points), Southeast Asian students (21.3 percentage points), and African American students (10.4 percentage points) indicate movement in the right direction, there is very clearly something happening after a student's second year at UW-L that is causing students of color to leave – either for another institution or to drop out entirely – before completing their baccalaureate degree.

The EqS team began brainstorming potential areas to explore which might explain the sudden shift from equity in first-to-second year retention to inequity in graduation rates. The team postulated a variety of possible causes – many of which we were unable to locate existing data that could be used to measure<sup>4</sup> – before deciding to focus on how students are advised. This

<sup>4</sup> One of the tenets of the UWSA EqS Pilot Project is that participating institutions use only existing sources of data. While this tenet limits the ability of the existing campus evidence team to begin new data collection initiatives, the

direction is not meant to imply that academic advisors are the cause for student non-completion, but rather reflects an area where sufficient data is available to examine for potentially inequitable results.

### **Academic Preparation of Retained Students**

One plausible explanation for why some students complete their baccalaureate studies at UW-L and others don't may be related to their pre-college academic preparation. In order to isolate the effect of different levels of pre-college preparation, the EqS team divided students into groups based on their ACT Composite score and compared outcomes by student race and ethnicity within each group. Table 13 contains data on the first-to-second year retention of students who started at UW-L as new freshmen in Fall 2003, Fall 2004, and Fall 2005 by ACT Composite score range and race/ethnicity.

*Table 13. Retained Students by ACT Composite Range*

Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005		African American	Native American	Southeast Asian	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	All Others	Total
23 and above	Group Cohort	19	18	9	57	36	3679	3818
	Group Share	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%	1.5%	0.9%	96.4%	100.0%
	Retained	15	15	6	40	28	3194	3298
	Retention Rate	78.9%	83.3%	66.7%	70.2%	77.8%	86.8%	86.4%
	Retained Share	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%	1.2%	0.8%	96.8%	100.0%
	<b>Equity Indicator (Retained Share / Group Share)</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
22 and below	Group Cohort	21	12	55	25	42	716	871
	Group Share	2.4%	1.4%	6.3%	2.9%	4.8%	82.2%	100.0%
	Retained	17	8	41	22	37	623	748
	Retention Rate	81.0%	66.7%	74.5%	88.0%	88.1%	87.0%	85.9%
	Retained Share	2.3%	1.1%	5.5%	2.9%	4.9%	83.3%	100.0%
	<b>Equity Indicator (Retained Share / Group Share)</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Note: Students with no reported ACT Composite score are not included.

Even with the imbalance mentioned in the Introduction in terms of enrolled students within each ACT Composite score group, students of color admitted with lower ACT Composite scores are almost all at or approaching equity in terms of first-to-second year retention. In fact, the retention rate for all U.S. students of color except Native Americans is higher for students enrolling with lower ACT Composite scores, which would seem to indicate that services and advising available to these students are successfully aiding their transition to college.

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EqS process can – and has – brought to light areas where we as University may need to focus more attention on collecting comparable assessment data for all students.

As the data above indicates, however, first-to-second year retention is only part of the story. Table 14 contains 6-year graduation data for students who started as new freshmen in Fall 1997, Fall 1998, or Fall 1999, again broken out by ACT Composite score.

*Table 14. Graduation Rate by ACT Composite Range*

Fall 1997, Fall 1998, Fall 1999		African American	Native American	Southeast Asian	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Hispanic	All Others	Total
23 and above	Group Cohort	12	13	4	27	18	3067	3141
	Group Share	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.9%	0.6%	97.6%	100.0%
	Graduated	6	8	2	11	7	1994	2028
	Graduation Rate	50.0%	61.5%	50.0%	40.7%	38.9%	65.0%	64.6%
	Graduation Share	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	98.3%	100.0%
	<b>Equity Indicator</b> (Graduation Share / Group Share)	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
22 and below	Group Cohort	33	16	44	34	32	1618	1777
	Group Share	1.9%	0.9%	2.5%	1.9%	1.8%	91.1%	100.0%
	Graduated	12	7	21	13	17	999	1069
	Graduation Rate	36.4%	43.8%	47.7%	38.2%	53.1%	61.7%	60.2%
	Graduation Share	1.1%	0.7%	2.0%	1.2%	1.6%	93.5%	100.0%
	<b>Equity Indicator</b> (Graduation Share / Group Share)	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Note: Students with no reported ACT Composite score are not included.

Even when students of color have ACT Composite scores above 23, they still are not graduating at same rates as White students. The impact of decreasing financial aid, a campus climate that may or may not be supportive of multicultural students (as evidenced by the student response to the campus climate survey), and lack of intensive academic support may explain the gap between White students and students of color in regard to their respective graduation rates. In addition, students of color that have a higher ACT Composite score may be less inclined to seek academic support and assistance which may ultimately affect graduation rates for students of color.

### **Grade Distributions for General Education Courses**

Successful completion of the general education program is required for graduation, so poor student performance in or non-completion of general education courses at best delays student progress towards graduation and at worst stops it altogether. The strong retention and graduation rates at UW-L suggest that students are successfully completing their general education requirements. The disproportionate graduation rates for students of color, however, may be due to poor grades received in their general education courses.

Tables 15a and 15b display equity indicators for students who received a grade of C or higher in any of several courses included in six areas of general education compared to all students who enrolled for the same courses during academic years 2003-04, 2004-05, or 2005-06. Students who register for a course, but withdraw from the course after the first week are included in the total as the course is indicated on the student transcript as attempted but withdrawn. Areas of



inequity indicate clusters of courses where students of color are underrepresented in the group of students successfully completing the course.

*Table 15a. Grade Distributions for Social Science & Humanities General Education Courses*

English Literature <sup>1</sup>	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Total	13	34	16	30	26	2510	2629
Share of Total	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%	1.1%	1.0%	95.5%	100.0%
ABC	12	30	14	24	23	2346	2449
Share of ABC	0.5%	1.2%	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%	95.8%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>
History <sup>2</sup>	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Total	42	82	41	84	90	5193	5532
Share of Total	0.8%	1.5%	0.7%	1.5%	1.6%	93.9%	100.0%
ABC	33	70	34	71	66	4638	4912
Share of ABC	0.7%	1.4%	0.7%	1.4%	1.3%	94.4%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Social Sciences <sup>3</sup>	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Total	50	80	43	79	75	4710	5037
Share of Total	1.0%	1.6%	0.9%	1.6%	1.5%	93.5%	100.0%
ABC	30	60	27	53	40	4057	4267
Share of ABC	0.7%	1.4%	0.6%	1.2%	0.9%	95.1%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes UW-L Courses ENG 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, & 206

<sup>2</sup> Includes UW-L Courses HIS 101, & 102.

<sup>3</sup> Includes UW-L Courses SOC 110, ECO 110, & PSY 100.

*Table 15b. Grade Distributions for Science & Math General Education Courses*

Lab Sciences <sup>1</sup>	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Total	52	91	58	98	81	5479	5859
Share of Total	0.9%	1.6%	1.0%	1.7%	1.4%	93.5%	100.0%
ABC	31	63	36	68	43	4574	4815
Share of ABC	0.6%	1.3%	0.7%	1.4%	0.9%	95.0%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Math <sup>2</sup>	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Total
Total	54	114	59	89	94	5485	5895
Share of Total	0.9%	1.9%	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%	93.0%	100.0%
ABC	22	54	21	55	47	3993	4192
Share of ABC	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	1.3%	1.1%	95.3%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes UW-L Courses BIO 101, 105; CHM 103; PHY 103, 155; GEO 110; ANT 101; & MIC 100.

<sup>2</sup> Includes UW-L Courses MTH 145, 150, & 151.

While students of color are performing equally well to white students in literature and history, students of color do not perform as well in the social sciences, lab sciences, and math courses.

The data for the lab sciences seems sufficiently consistent to suspect something systemic may be preventing students of color from succeeding in these courses. The inequities shown in the lab sciences may be somewhat linked to similar inequities in mathematics courses, which are often pre-requisites or co-requisites for lab science courses. It may be the case that students, especially those students who are non-majors, are attempting to take multiple lab science and math courses at the same time. This rigorous course load may lead to poor performance or to students withdrawing from a course after the first week, both of which might be avoided with careful academic advising and proper course placement.

For students that have majors in the College of Science & Health, the curriculum is rigorous and students are expected to take the requisite courses each semester to matriculate through the major successfully. Perhaps some type of pre-evaluation of students (other than the ACT) regarding their aptitude in science would assist with the advising and academic support of science majors at UW-La Crosse.

It is in the best interest of the university to investigate ways to help all students be more successful in general education courses the first time they enroll in a course. Advising and proper course placements are two areas in which the university might most easily and effectively influence student success in general education courses. University faculty members have built (and continuously revise) their curricula with student success in mind. Advising for student success should be the standard at the university as well.

An example of how one department is working to ensure equitable results for all students comes from recent analysis completed by the Mathematics Department, where student performance in general education mathematics courses was explored. The results of this analysis identified three advising related issues that negatively impact student success in the courses:

- 1) Advising and placement information provided to students is sometimes is taken as just a recommendation when in fact, placement information should be given top priority by students and advisors as they make course selections
- 2) Enrollment in a required math can sometimes be delayed; and
- 3) Transfer students sometimes lack the appropriate guidance and advising as to which math course to take when they transfer to UW-La Crosse.

In light of these findings, the department is making several changes to student advising that they hope will result in better outcomes for all students.

## **Summary**

- First to second year retention rates increased for ALL student groups except for Asian American students and all students were either at or approaching equity during the most recent three three-year time frames.

- While graduation rates increased during the two most recent three-year time frames for ALL groups, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students, the graduation rates for students of color groups are BELOW equity.
- Students of color admitted with ACT Composite scores less than 23 are all at or approaching equity in terms of first to second retention. In fact, students of color with lower ACT scores appear to be more likely to return to UW-L for their second year of instruction than students of color with higher ACT Composite scores.
- Students of color admitted with ACT Composite scores of 23 or above are still not graduating at the same rate as White students.
- In regard to General Education courses, students of color are performing equally well to white students in literature and history; students of color do not perform as well in the social sciences, lab sciences, and math courses.

## **Section V: Excellence**

### ***Excellence Defined***

Where Access refers to entrance into the University and Retention refers to progress toward and attainment of degrees, Excellence shifts the focus toward measuring how well the University is helping students not just attain their degree but experience and participate in additional educational experiences that add depth and value to their classroom experiences. Excellence exists in a myriad of programs through a variety of opportunities, however in order to assess how well the University as a whole is doing to promote excellence for all students, this report will focus on measures that can be considered, at least to some extent, to be available to all students regardless of their major field of study.

The EqS team at UW-L began exploring the Excellence perspective by examining student GPA, participation in University and program-based Honors programs, and participation in international opportunities provided through the University. Additionally, the team explored data available from the Spring 2003, 2004 and 2006 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement to capture student experiences that are too difficult to quantify through the use of central data systems.

### **National Survey of Student Engagement Data**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses college students' involvement in curricular activities that are associated with academic achievement. The NSSE is based on extensive research that shows that the time and energy college students devote to educationally purposeful activities is an excellent predictor of learning and personal development. The survey includes items known to be related to important college outcomes and encompasses a broad range of activities from such things as the number of papers student write and participation in class discussions to their involvement in experiential learning and extracurricular activities. Since its development, over 1100 colleges and universities have participated in the NSSE; each year hundreds of thousands of undergraduate students complete the NSSE. Respondents are freshmen and seniors.

UW-L has participated in the NSSE every year since 1999, with the exception of 2005. During the most recent three years, response rates have ranged between 38% and 56%, yielding samples of between 774 and 1820 students. Research suggests that, contrary to intuition, non-responders actually tend to be more engaged than responders. Possibly, students who choose not to respond are busier than those who do respond. Due to limited numbers of students of color responding in any given year, we have combined NSSE data from the three most recent years that UW-L has participated in the survey (2003, 2004, and 2006); Table 16 displays the total eligible student population at UW-L for those three spring terms, as well as the distribution of UW-L respondents. Overall analyses from each year suggest that general results have remained relatively stable over those years.

Table 16: Spring 2003, Spring 2004, & Spring 2006 Enrolled Freshmen & Seniors and NSSE Respondents

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others	Grand Total
Enrolled Freshmen & Seniors	#	99	171	93	312	11396	12071
	Share	0.8%	1.4%	0.8%	2.6%	94.4%	100.0%
NSSE Respondents	#	21	52	21	105	3757	3956
	Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%	100.0%

## Excellence Vital Signs

After reviewing data from both the central student data warehouse and the NSSE respondents, the team decided on 5 equity measures, each disaggregated by race/ethnicity:

- 1) The composition of students enrolled in Fall 2006 who have officially declared either the University or a department-level Honors emphasis;
- 2) The composition of students enrolled in Fall 2006 who achieved Dean's List;
- 3) The composition of students enrolled in Fall 2006 who earned a term GPA of 3.0 or greater, between 2.0 and 3.0, and 2.0 and below;
- 4) The composition of NSSE respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, & 2006 who reported that they completed a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, clinical experience, completed an independent study or self-designed major, and/or worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of the classroom; and
- 5) The composition of students enrolled in Fall 2006 who had completed an international education experience at any point up to and including that term.

## Academic Achievement

### Honors Programs

Table 17 displays student participation in University or department-level honors programs for all undergraduates enrolled in Fall 2006.

Table 17: Undergraduate Participation in Honors Programs, Fall 2006

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Grand Total
Students	#	64	119	54	137	107	7400	7881
	Share	0.8%	1.5%	0.7%	1.7%	1.4%	93.9%	100.0%
Fall 2006 Honors	#	0	*	0	*	0	141	144
	Share	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	97.9%	100.0%
	<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>1.00</b>

\* Cell sizes less than five have been blanked out to protect student anonymity.

UW-L offers a University Honors program, as well as departmental based honors programs. Overall participation in formal Honors programs, both at the university and departmental levels, is low (1.8% of undergraduate students); participation for students of color is even lower. For both the University and departmental programs, low levels of participation could result from a lack of awareness about honors programs. Additionally, there is an increased expectation of work, but no linked scholarships to support students in the program. An additional challenge specific to the University Honors program is course scheduling. Currently, 75% of University Honors students are science majors. Science majors, especially, have to adhere to a fairly rigid schedule to graduate on time. The University Honors program can only offer three classes each semester, and students must fit those courses into their already demanding course schedules around their other requirements.

While many departments offer some type of honors program, participation varies widely across departments. Of the department-based honors programs, the Psychology Honors Program routinely enrolls the largest number of students. All eligible students receive information about the program during the pre-registration advising period in the fall semester of their junior year. Students apply for and are admitted to the program during the fall semester of their junior year. In the spring semester, students take both an honors seminar and an advanced research methods class to specifically prepare them to conduct a program-required research project. During the seminar, students write a grant proposal which they submit for funding from the Undergraduate Research Committee. Grants provide students with money for supplies and equipment, as well as a small stipend. Students collect data during the following year, and present their research both at the UW-L Celebration of Student Research, as well as at the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference. Approximately 33% of UW-L psychology students attend graduate school, and many choose to participate in the honors program as a way to be more competitive graduate school applicants.

### **Dean's List & Term GPA**

Dean's list for all colleges is based on term GPA; students with term GPA of 3.5 or higher are recognized as being on Dean's list. Table 18 displays student academic achievement as measured by term GPA for all undergraduates enrolled in Fall 2006.

Table 18: Undergraduate Participation in Dean's List, and Term GPA, Fall 2006

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Grand Total	
Students	#	64	119	54	137	107	7400	7881	
	Share	0.8%	1.5%	0.7%	1.7%	1.4%	93.9%	100.0%	
Fall 2006 Dean's List	#	6	21	8	20	10	2561	2626	
	Share	0.2%	0.8%	0.3%	0.8%	0.4%	97.5%	100.0%	
	<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>1.00</b>	
Fall 2006 Term GPA	3.00 and above	#	23	51	25	60	31	4987	5177
		Share	0.4%	1.0%	0.5%	1.2%	0.6%	96.3%	100.0%
		<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>1.00</b>
	Between 2.00 & 3.00	#	26	47	22	51	37	1879	2062
		Share	1.3%	2.3%	1.1%	2.5%	1.8%	91.1%	100.0%
		<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>1.55</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>1.56</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>1.00</b>
	2.00 and below	#	15	21	7	26	39	534	642
		Share	2.3%	3.3%	1.1%	4.0%	6.1%	83.2%	100.0%
		<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>2.17</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Even when controlling for ACT scores all student of color groups are under equity for Dean's list. This inequity continues across all GPA ranges. Students of color with equally high ACT scores are under-represented at higher GPA ranges and over-represented at lower GPA ranges.

When combined with data from the Retention Perspective report showing inequity in student grades in several University Core Curriculum groupings, these data point to significant concerns regarding the support available to students of color to enable them not only to succeed but to excel as students at UW-L. UW-L is admitting these students and thereby conveying to them that we believe they can be successful at UW-L; however these data show that we are not doing enough to live up to that promise.

In order to rule out the possibility that student motivation to succeed is negatively impacting student GPA, the team explored items on the NSSE related to student reported level of academic challenge. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance. Table 19 reports data on NSSE respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, and 2006 who reported that they often or very often worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.

*Table 19: NSSE Respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, and 2006 Indicating They Often or Very Often Worked Harder than They Thought They Could to Meet an Instructor's Standards or Expectations*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others	Grand Total
NSSE Respondents, Spring 2003, 2004 & 2006	21	52	21	105	3757	3956
Respondent Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%	100.0%
Students indicating they often or very often worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	15	19	11	46	1882	1973
Share	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	2.3%	95.4%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>1.43</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Generally students of color report that they are challenged to work at or beyond their expectations in completing class assignments. The exception to this is Hispanic students, however additional research may be needed to determine how much of this is a cultural tendency to underreport effort.

### ***Participation in enriching educational experiences***

There are several more or less optional academic opportunities in which students can participate in to enhance or enrich their educational experience at UW-L. Many departments and programs on campus encourage students to complete field work, independent study courses, and/or undergraduate research projects in conjunction with faculty. See Table 20.

*Table 20: NSSE Respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, and 2006 Reporting Participation in Extra-Curricular Academic Opportunities*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others	Grand Total
NSSE Respondents, Spring 2003, 2004 & 2006	21	52	21	105	3757	3956
Respondent Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%	100.0%
Completed a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, clinical	9	25	15	46	1974	2069
Share	0.4%	1.2%	0.7%	2.2%	95.4%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>1.37</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Completed independent study or self-designed major	*	6	*	14	426	453
Share	0.7%	1.3%	0.9%	3.1%	94.0%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside course	5	12	5	18	613	653
Share	0.8%	1.8%	0.8%	2.8%	93.9%	100.0%
<b>Equity Indicator</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.00</b>

\* Cell sizes less than five have been blanked out to protect student anonymity.



The data show that students of color are usually at or above equity in terms of participation in enhanced educational opportunities. Specifically, Native American students are more likely to complete a practicum, or some similar field experience, to complete an independent study, or to engage in research with a faculty member than Caucasian students. African American students are more likely to complete an independent study or to engage in research with a faculty member than Caucasian students. Finally, Hispanic students also are more likely to engage in research with faculty than Caucasian students. This may point to a difference in cultural values for some student of color groups, such as Native American students, who may be more focused on the quality of their experiences and how they contribute to their growth and enrichment as students as opposed to the potential for current activities to enhance their future job prospects. These data support the data from the previous section regarding student motivation, and the need for additional institutional support to bring the measures of academic quality in line with a broader student experience and expectations.

In general, UW-L students participate in enriching educational experiences at equal or higher rates than students attending similar institutions, in part, perhaps, because UW-L emphasizes such activities more and offers more opportunities. For example, UW-L offers undergraduate students grants to complete research. UW-L also has the largest centralized internship program in the UW System, which allows those students in academic programs not requiring a fieldwork experience to obtain real-world experience in their area of study. Approximately 600 students participate in the program annually. Student Activities and Centers also provides students with many opportunities to become involved in the local and national community. One example is the Involvement Center, created over 10 years ago to promote on-campus and off-campus involvement of students. The Center is designed to help students find volunteer opportunities in the community in addition to encouraging on-campus involvement. UW-L continues as an active member in Seven Rivers Region Volunteer Coordinators.

*Table 21: Enrolled Undergraduate Participation in International Experiences (a.k.a., Study Abroad) To-Date, Fall 2006*

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Other Asian / Pacific Islander	Southeast Asian	All Others	Grand Total
Students	#	64	119	54	137	107	7400	7881
	Share	0.8%	1.5%	0.7%	1.7%	1.4%	93.9%	100.0%
Study Abroad (at all thru Fall 2006)	#	5	9	5	5	*	520	547
	Share	0.9%	1.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%	95.1%	100.0%
	Rate	7.8%	7.6%	9.3%	3.6%	2.8%	7.0%	6.9%
	Equity Indicator	1.13	1.09	1.33	0.53	0.40	1.01	1.00

\* Cell sizes less than five have been blanked out to protect student anonymity.

International education has been the focus of significant promotion at UW-L for the past several years. UW-L students value international education to such an extent, that they voted in 2004 to include money for international education in the Academic Initiatives, which resulted in an increase in academic fees for all students. Specifically, any student who studies abroad is eligible for a \$750 scholarship for each semester they are abroad. The goal is to provide all students who study abroad with enough money to purchase a plane ticket to their international

site, thereby offsetting some of the financial burden. Generally, most student of color groups appear to participate in international education at or above equity, however, Asian students are under equity on this measure.

Additional data from the NSSE shows that Asian, Native American, and African American students are more likely to have additional family care responsibilities. Table 22 below shows students who report spending at least some time each week caring for dependents (children, parents, other relatives).

*Table 22: NSSE Respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, and 2006 Reporting Some Hours-per-Week Caring for Dependents (Children, Parents, Other Relatives)*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others	Grand Total
NSSE Respondents, Spring 2003, 2004 & 2006	21	52	21	105	3757	3956
Respondent Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%	100.0%
Students reporting some hours per week providing care for dependents (children, parents, other relatives)	5	6	4	43	507	565
Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%	100.0%
Equity Indicator	1.67	.81	1.33	2.87	.94	1.00

## Summary

Generally, the data related to the Excellence perspective is somewhat mixed. While UW-L students of color are under-represented in University Honors and other GPA-based distinctions, they appear to participate at or above equity in what may be more substantive or career-progressing academically enriching programs. It may be that the University could explore using criteria other than GPA for recognition of high achieving students.

- Students of color who are equally well prepared for college, as measured by ACT scores, do not earn the same GPA's as Caucasian students.
- Students of color are underrepresented in both University and departmental Honors programs.
- All students of color, except Asian/Pacific Islander students, work with a faculty member on a research project more frequently than Caucasian students.
- Native American and African American students are more likely to complete an independent study than Caucasian students.
- Native American students are more likely to complete an internship, practicum, or clinical-type experience than Caucasian students.
- All students of color, except Asian/Pacific Islander students are at least as likely to complete an international education experience as Caucasian students.

## Section VI: Institutional Receptivity

### *Institutional Receptivity Defined*

Institutional receptivity refers to goals and measures of institutional support that have been found to be influential in the creation of affirming campus environments for historically underrepresented students. Institutional receptivity measures how comfortable underrepresented students feel during their academic experiences at University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

The measures of institutional receptivity are generally less quantitative than other measures included in earlier preliminary reports. While some hard data are available this bears on the question of campus climate, including the demographic make up of the faculty and results from specific items on the NSSE, and the voices or viewpoints from students of color.

The Equity Scorecard (EqS) team at UW-L began exploring the institutional receptivity perspective by examining diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators, evidence of campus climate from the NSSE, and the viewpoints of students participating in open forums at the beginning of the EqS process. The sources of data used for the institutional receptivity perspective are:

- 1) The racial and ethnic diversity of full time faculty, staff, and administrators who were employed at UW-L during Fall 2005. Data for these analyses came from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in which Southeast Asians are not disaggregated from other Asian Americans;
- 2) The campus climate as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in which students respond to questions regarding faculty receptivity, and the university's perceived support for value of diversity initiatives; and
- 3) The tabulation and summation of student voices and thoughts about diversity issues and initiatives at UW-L, as collected at the beginning of the Equity Scorecard Project process on February 21, 2006.

As previously mentioned, the equity measure consists of a comparative ratio where the proportion of the target population in the numerator is divided by the proportion of the target population in the denominator. For instance, the proportion of Hispanic employees at UW-L is divided by the proportion of Hispanic employees working in our Peer Institution group for Fall 2005. This complex bit of math is diagramed below:

<b>Description</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Equity Measure</b>
# of Hispanic employees at UW-L	14	0.017	0.75
# of total employees at UW-L	804		
# of Hispanic employees at all Peer Institutions	664	0.023	
# of total employees at all Peer Institutions	4550		

Generally speaking, equity measures that are below .80 are considered inequitable and those between .80 and .90 are considered approaching equity.

### ***Institutional Receptivity Vital Signs***

As with the previous perspectives, “vital signs” relative to institutional receptivity perspective were completed after discussions by the UW-L Equity Scorecard Team. From the discussions, the team decided on the following key elements related to the Institutional Receptivity perspective:

- 1) Composition of UW-L Employees compared to our 24 Peer Institutions
  - a) Total Full-time Employees
  - b) Non-instructional Executives & Professionals
  - c) Full-time Faculty with 9 month Contracts
  - d) Part-time Instructional/Research Assistants
  - e) Skilled Crafts, Service & Maintenance Personnel
  - f) Full-time Clerical and Secretarial Personnel
  
- 2) Composition of NSSE respondents from Spring 2003, 2004, & 2006 evaluating on the following:
  - a) The Diversity of Perspectives in the Curriculum
  - b) Relationships with Faculty, Advisors, Administrative Offices, & Other Students
  - c) Overall Support Received from the University
  
- 3) Open responses to major concerns, issues, fears, and anticipated problems associated with UW-L by our students of color

### ***UW-L's Performance Peers***

In early summer 2005, prompted by increasing requests for peer comparison data by campus leaders, a working group consisting of the Provost, three academic deans, the Dean of Student Development and Academic Services, one out-going interim academic dean, the Chief Information Officer and former Director of Institutional Research, the Special Assistant to the Provost on Assessment, and the Director of Institutional Research was convened for the purpose of compiling a list of preliminary performance peers.

The working group identified 15 factors on which they would like to select an initial list of potential peers, however due to time constraints and data limitations, only 12 of the initial factors were available for comparison. From an initial list of over 600 institutions, initial review of the data narrowed consideration to only a small handful of institutions (< 75) who were deemed to be most likely peers. The working group discussed each of the institutions on the “short list” in turn, gathering information on mission, reputation, size of the student body, program array and accreditation status. Additionally, some members brought in peer group lists from institutions they felt were similar to the University and the institutions on those lists were also discussed.

The top regional institutions in the U.S. News rankings for the University's Carnegie Classification were also included. From this discussion, 40 institutions were identified as those worthy of further investigation.

Detailed information, including full data on each of the 12 initial factors plus 3 additional factors identified during the second discussion, was prepared from IPEDS data and routed to the working group members for additional review and comment. Sixteen institutions were, upon closer inspection, considered too dissimilar from the University on at least one key factor to be considered a peer by the working group; the remaining 24 institutions were established as UW-L's performance peer group. The 24 institutions are listed below, with those peers located in the upper Midwest bolded.

#### UW-L's Peer Institution Group

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. College of Charleston                        | Charleston, SC           |
| 2. Kutztown University of Pennsylvania          | Kutztown, PA             |
| 3. Radford University                           | Radford, VA              |
| <b>4. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire</b>    | <b>Eau Claire, WI</b>    |
| <b>5. University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh</b>       | <b>Oshkosh, WI</b>       |
| <b>6. University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point</b> | <b>Stevens Point, WI</b> |
| 7. Western Washington University                | Bellingham, WA           |
| 8. Appalachian State University                 | Boone, NC                |
| 9. Central Connecticut State University         | New Britain, CT          |
| 10. Eastern Illinois University                 | Charleston, IL           |
| 11. Humboldt State University                   | Arcata, CA               |
| 12. Murray State University                     | Murray, KY               |
| 13. Northern Michigan University                | Marquette, MI            |
| 14. Rowan University                            | Glassboro, NJ            |
| 15. Salisbury University                        | Salisbury, MD            |
| 16. Sonoma State University                     | Rohnert Park, CA         |
| 17. SUNY College at Cortland                    | Cortland, NY             |
| 18. SUNY College at Oswego                      | Oswego, NY               |
| 19. The College of New Jersey                   | Ewing, NJ                |
| <b>20. Truman State University</b>              | <b>Kirkville, MO</b>     |
| <b>21. University of Minnesota-Duluth</b>       | <b>Duluth, MN</b>        |
| <b>22. University of Northern Iowa</b>          | <b>Cedar Falls, IA</b>   |
| <b>23. Western Illinois University</b>          | <b>Macomb, IL</b>        |
| <b>24. Winona State University</b>              | <b>Winona, MN</b>        |

### ***Comparison of UW-L Employees to Peer Institutions' Employees***

According to data maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS), the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse had 1,185 total full-time and part-time employees as of October 31, 2005, an increase of 16 employees from the prior year. Males make up 49.11 % of the workforce at UW-L, an

increase from 48.93% on October 31, 2004. Of the 1,185 UW-employees, 1,072 (90.46%) are white and 113 (9.54%) are employees of color, a proportional increase from 8.30% a year earlier.

Table 23 displays total full-time employees at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the twenty-four peer institution group. The “All Others” category consists primarily of Caucasians, but also includes Non-Resident Aliens. The United States Department of Education does not disaggregate Southeast Asian Americans from others of Asian descent.

When comparing University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with our peer institutions, equity indicators (UW-L share/Total Share) shows that African American and Hispanic employees are underrepresented or underutilized within the UW-L workforce while Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander employees at UW-L were equitably represented within the workforce.

*Table 23. Total Full-time Employees Fall 2005*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Full-time Employees (UW-L + Peers)	1467	664	205	831	25027
Total Share	5.1%	2.3%	0.7%	2.9%	87.8%
UW-L Total Full-time Employees	13	14	12	37	728
UW-L Share	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	4.6%	90.5%
Equity Indicator (UW-L Share / Total Share)	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.75</b>	2.07	1.58	1.03

The EqS team also investigated the racial and ethnic composition of employees within major employee categories in order to better understand UW-L hiring patterns compared to the campuses within the peer institution group. As shown in Table 24, inequities exist for African American employees in every employee category except for part-time instructional positions. Additionally, there weren't any non-instructional executives and professionals or clerical support employees who were of Hispanic descent, although Hispanic employees were equitably represented within the full-time faculty and part time instructional academic staff categories. Native American and Asian/Pacific Islanders were above equity levels for all employee categories.

*Table 24. Equity Indices for Major Employee Categories at UW-L Relative to Our Peer-Institution Group Fall 2005*

Employee category	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Non-instructional Executives & Professionals	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.00</b>	1.26	1.27	1.06
Full-time Faculty with 9 mo. Contracts	<b>0.55</b>	1.52	1.46	1.42	1.01
Part-Time Instructional/ Research Assistants	0.93	0.85	2.70	3.17	0.96
Skilled Crafts, Service & Maintenance	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.36</b>	4.56	1.91	1.02
Full-time Clerical and Secretarial	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	4.02	1.56	1.05

Because there is a long standing “chicken and egg” discussion regarding whether a multicultural campus starts with a diverse faculty and staff population, or a diverse student population, the Equity Scorecard Team was curious about how the ratio of undergraduate students of color to full-time faculty of color at UW-L compares to our peer institutions. Table 25 indicates that undergraduate student-to-full-time faculty ratios for African American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian students and faculty were below equity. The limited number of faculty of color multiplies the responsibilities for those faculty beyond academic scholarship and teaching by adding extended service expectations for advising and mentoring students of color and serving on diversity related committees.

*Table 25. Undergraduate Student to Full-time Faculty Ratios Fall 2005*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Undergraduates	83	90	35	123	5790
Undergraduate Share	1.4%	1.5%	0.6%	2.0%	93.9%
UW-L Full-time Faculty with 9 mo. Contracts	6	13	4	25	305
Faculty Share	1.7%	3.7%	1.1%	7.1%	86.2%
Equity Indicator (UW-L Share / Total Share)	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.28</b>	1.09

## ***National Survey of Student Engagement***

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses college students’ involvement in curricular activities that are associated with academic achievement. Respondents are only freshmen and seniors. Additional information about the NSSE can be found in the Excellence Report. Due to the limited numbers of students of color responding in any given year, we have combined the NSSE data from the three most recent years. General results have remained relatively stable over those years.

In exploring student responses to several NSSE items that the team felt may be related to student perceptions of the receptivity of the campus climate, the EqS Team uncovered some results that challenged the practical experience and wisdom of many student services personnel on campus. It is impossible to explain this contradiction by simply examining existing data sources, however, which led to the Team to interpret equity measures from NSSE with some caution. That said, the EqS team believes that the NSSE data, in that they reflect the attitudes and experiences of at least a sub-set of UW-L students, are important to consider as one voice in what is undoubtedly a complex campus conversation regarding institutional receptivity.

Table 26 indicates that Hispanic and Native American NSSE respondents felt that the UW-L curriculum as a whole did not provide diverse perspectives, though in contrast African American respondents were more likely to respond that the UW-L curriculum often or very often represented diverse perspectives. This finding may point to questions of perspective in that what

is considered “diverse perspective” differs among students. It should also be noted that the question does not specify diverse *racial and/or ethnic* perspectives, and that some students may be responding considering a broader definition of diversity than others.

*Table 26. NSSE Respondents (Spring 2003, 2004, and 2006) Indicating if They Thought the Curriculum at UW-L (i.e., Classes/Assignments) Provided Diverse Perspectives*

	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Responding “often” & “very often”	14	19	7	56	2070
“often” & “very often” Share	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%	2.6%	95.6%
Total Responding	21	52	21	105	3757
Total Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%
Equity Indicator (“often” & “very often” / Total Share)	1.22	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.61</b>	0.97	1.01

When it comes to interactions with UW-L faculty, staff and administrative offices, and other UW-L students, students of color responses are similar to responses of Caucasian students.



*Table 27: NSSE Items Relating to Respondent Interactions with UW-L Faculty, Staff & Other Students*

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Responding		21	52	21	105	3757
Total Share		0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%
“Often” or “Very Often” Discussed Ideas From Their Readings/Classes with Faculty Outside of Class	Total Responding	6	6	4	17	506
	Total Share	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	3.2%	93.9%
	Equity Indicator	2.10	0.85	1.40	1.19	0.99
Established “Quality” – “Friendly, Supportive, Belonging” Relationships with Other UW-L Students	Total Responding	15	43	17	74	3252
	Total Share	0.4%	1.3%	0.5%	2.2%	95.6%
	Equity Indicator	0.83	0.96	0.94	0.82	1.01
Established “Quality” – “Friendly, Supportive, Belonging” Relationships with UW-L Faculty	Total Responding	15	41	19	78	2923
	Total Share	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%	2.5%	95.0%
	Equity Indicator	0.92	1.01	1.16	0.96	1.00
Established “Quality” – “Friendly, Supportive, Belonging” Relationships with UW-L Administrative Personnel & Offices	Total Responding	13	31	12	60	2174
	Total Share	0.6%	1.4%	0.5%	2.6%	94.9%
	Equity Indicator	1.07	1.03	0.99	0.99	1.00

Similarly, as shown in Table 28, students of color satisfaction with academic support and advising were comparable to their Caucasian counterparts. Native American students, however, rated the quality of academic advising they received at UW-L more highly than other students.

*Table 28: NSSE Items Relating to Respondent Academic Support & Advising*

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Responding		21	52	21	105	3757
Total Share		0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%
UW-L Provided the Support Respondents Needed to Succeed Academically “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much”	Total Responding	16	35	15	68	2614
	Total Share	0.6%	1.3%	0.5%	2.5%	95.1%
	Equity Indicator	1.10	0.97	1.03	0.93	1.00
“Good” or “Excellent” Quality Academic Advising	Total Responding	15	38	18	74	2508
	Total Share	0.6%	1.4%	0.7%	2.8%	94.5%
	Equity Indicator	1.07	1.09	1.28	1.05	1.00

With these results, it is not surprising then that when it came to rating the quality of their entire undergraduate experience at UW-L, students of color again responded similarly to Caucasian students (Table 29).

*Table 29: NSSE Items Relating to Respondent Satisfaction with Entire Undergrad Experience at UW-L*

		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian / Pacific Islander	All Others
Total Responding		21	52	21	105	3757
Total Share		0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	95.0%
Entire Educational Experience at UW-L “good” or “excellent”	Total Responding	15	42	19	83	3316
	Total Share	0.4%	1.2%	0.5%	2.4%	95.4%
	Equity Indicator	0.81	0.92	1.03	0.90	1.00
“Probably” or “definitely” would go to UW-L again if they could start over	Total Responding	16	42	19	86	3201
	Total Share	0.5%	1.2%	0.6%	2.6%	95.2%
	Equity Indicator	0.90	0.95	1.06	0.96	1.00

## ***The Voices of UW-L Students of Color***

The Equity Scorecard Team heard the voices of the UW-L students in an open forum on February 21, 2006 in which there were viewpoints of hope and concerns about the university’s diversity efforts overall. Students were cautiously optimistic about whether the EqS Project would insure accountability. Students had seen the same pattern of initial celebration and lauding

of diversity initiatives before with Plan 2008, only to see the project reduced to a hefty report that eventually lands on a bookshelf, unread. The following outline provides an overview of the students' voices:

- Assessment and Improvement of Plan 2008
  - Outcomes of Equity Scorecard will produce tangible realistic results
  - Equity Scorecard will give the UWL administration, faculty, staff a solid perspective on specific issues/areas where they need to improve upon and also where they are doing well
  - Better understanding of where we are as a campus and identify strategies for achieving the goals of Plan 2008
- Accountability
  - Holding the university accountable for diversity in faculty and staff along with students
  - Increase visibility to equity/lack of equity to LAX community and campus
- Leadership
  - Continuity of leadership – both at the highest level and at the team level
  - Also expanding expectation of “leadership” to include governance group leaders, deans, dept. chairs, and student leaders
- General reluctance
  - General reluctance to put effort behind “yet another initiative” – initial push will be hard; people are tired of working on initiatives that don't result in any change
  - Stop talking and act. ACTION!!!

As the students continued to voice their concerns about the project, the EqS team recognized the magnitude the students' concerns. Throughout the following months of reviewing data and drafting reports, these concerns repeatedly resurfaced to remind us of the importance of insuring the actionability of our findings.

### ***Summary of Institutional Receptivity Findings***

- African American and Hispanic/Latino(a) individuals are underrepresented among employees at UW-L, especially among administration, faculty, skilled crafts/service/maintenance, and clerical and secretarial staff.
- Hispanic/Latino(a) and Native American students do not perceive the curriculum to provide diverse perspectives at the same rate as other groups of students.
- African American and Native American students are more likely to discuss ideas from classes with faculty than other groups of students.
- Native American students tend to be more satisfied with advising than other groups of students.
- Students of color rate relationships with other students, faculty, and administration at levels equal to white students.
- Students of color report that UW-L provides the support they need to succeed academically at the same rate as white students.

- Students of color are as likely as white students to report that, if they could start over, they would still choose to attend UW-L.

## Section VII: Summary

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Equity Scorecard Team started to meet in February 2006. Throughout the process, the team's main focus was to honor the students' request to have the Equity Scorecard Project make a positive and significant change within the University's academic culture. The last thing the team wanted was to create another lengthy report only to reside on someone's shelf or computer desktop. After eighteen months of deliberations on the four perspectives: Access, Retention, Excellence, and Institutional Receptivity, the Equity Scorecard Team is forwarding its findings to Chancellor Gow and the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse's community.

The report will be disseminated by informing the campus community through *Campus Connections* and the *Racquet*. Other possible avenues of communication will be attending departmental, college and divisional meetings to discuss the Equity Scorecard Project's findings. The findings should assist the university community to determine through dialogue how to proceed with ensuring UW-L is an inviting community for all students.

The next steps are (1) a team meeting with Chancellor Gow, (2) sending the team report out to the campus, (3) starting the process of meetings with offices and departments to review findings, (4) creating an accountability structure that will continue the Equity Scorecard Project, and (5) partnering with Joint Minority Affairs Council (JMAC) to implement the goals and objectives of *Plan 2008*.