

UW-La Crosse College of Liberal Studies receives \$29,287 UW System 2009-2010 Diversity Grant Program to establish EAGLE MENTORING PROGRAM.

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Víctor M. Macías-González, Associate Professor of History and Barbara Stewart, Associate Dean for Campus Climate and Diversity and Interim Director of the Office of Multicultural Student Services, worked together to create a collaborative program to help academic departments in the College of Liberal Studies to retain 2nd year historically under-represented and socio-economically underprivileged students (protégés)

The Eagle Mentoring Program (EMP) is designed to provide a supportive and nurturing experience for the personal and intellectual development of protégés. EMP addresses research on “the sophomore slump” as well as Equity Scorecard findings indicating UW-La Crosse is not retaining 2nd year minority students, and covers a serious gap in mentoring of minority students between the 1st and 4th years.¹ Specialists describe the “Sophomore Slump” as a period of “confusion and uncertainty” when students engage in self-exploration but lack knowledge about campus resources front-loaded into the 1st year experience but lacking in subsequent follow-through.² It is when poor and minority students most often drop out of college.

The Eagle Mentoring Program (EMP) will empower students with:

- a supportive and nurturing network of support,
- knowledge of institutional programs and policies,
- consistent contact with faculty in her/his major department through a faculty mentor,
- help to develop the skills set to excel in advanced undergraduate research and writing, information about additional opportunities for career development and research.

Dr. Macías-González, the Eagle Mentoring Program Director, will lead an instructional team that leverages resources and personnel from academic departments and Offices of Financial Aid, Counseling & Testing, Career Services, International Education, and Multicultural Student Services.

PROGRAM GOALS:

¹ Susan R. Furr and L. Gannaway, “Easing the Sophomore Slump: A Student Development Approach,” *Journal of College Student Personnel* 23 (1982): 340-341; Laurie A. Schreiner, *Visible Solutions for Invisible Students* (Columbia: National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, 2000); Jimmie Gahagan and Mary Stuart Hunter, “The Second Year Experience: Turning Attention to the Academy’s Middle Children,” *About Campus* 11, 3 (July-Aug. 2006), 17-22; Sarah Lipka, “After the Freshman Bubble Pops,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, 3 (9/8/2006): A36; and Enilda Delgado, et al., *Report to the Chancellor by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Equity Scorecard Team, Dec. 2005-Oct. 2007*, 19-27.
<http://www.uwlax.edu/AAOD/equityscorecard.htm>

² Furr & Gannaway, 340-341 and Gahagan and Hunter, 27-22.

The Eagle Mentoring Program at UW-La Crosse has a broad goal of assisting the College of Liberal Studies and its Academic Departments, to more fully utilize Student Support Services and community resources to help diverse students form a more positive identification with the Institution and Community by conveying and providing students with a sense or feeling of genuine concern, caring, warmth, welcome and satisfaction with their college experience, so that they can be motivated and inspired to achieve academic excellence. There are five specific program objectives:

1. *Protégés will learn about campus resources, services, and engage in academic and professional development activities that enhance each protégé's educational experience.*

Attendance of workshops that increase minority student knowledge about campus resources and services that can be used to increase their retention during the 2nd and 3rd years. Participation in a series of monthly workshops over the Fall and Spring that will present topics such as: financial aid, study abroad, internships and other forms of service learning, summer research opportunity programs, undergraduate research program, career exploration, interviewing etiquette, and to explore the graduate school application process through the crafting of individual *curriculum vitae* and statements of purpose.

2. *Protégés and mentors will create a learning community that will facilitate a supportive, affirming, welcoming, and inclusive campus climate.* Protégés will receive support and positive affirmation leading to a sense of a more welcoming and inclusive campus climate while creating a social support network with other protégés and mentors. By attending workshops, lectures, and films that explore U.S. academic culture and identity politics, they engage in social and cultural activities that will enrich EMP's rigorous experience of professional and academic development.

3. *Development of writing and research literacy skills in the Social Sciences and Humanities.*

Protégés will develop an appreciation and familiarity with writing, research, and communication methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities, enriching their educational experiences, particularly contributing to their success in capstone course experiences and/or senior or honors thesis. Workshops will discuss faculty expectations of student, preparedness, basic research literacy, how to read and discuss assignments, how to conduct discipline-specific library and online research and review bibliographic citation.

4. *Protégés and faculty will build a mutually respectful mentoring relationship* through which they can gain greater perspective on how faculty and staff can contribute to student efforts to achieve an undergraduate degree while learning more about their major's discipline, course content, academic culture, and life experiences.

5. *Create an individual Academic Achievement Plan.* Each protégé will work with EMP Director and faculty mentor, in conjunction with her or his major department's academic advisor, to create an individual Academic Achievement Plan (AAP) outlining course of study for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years, to include opportunities for internships, study abroad, summer enrichment opportunities, extracurricular activities, and to explore possibilities for Undergraduate Research Grant and other remunerated research and academic enhancement summer opportunities. The AAP will include drafts of *curriculum vitae* and statement of purpose

that could be used to prepare applications for career and academic opportunities, but also identifies key areas for improvement and will be highly individualized for each protégé.

After completing a year's enrollment in EMP, it is expected that protégés will continue the relationship with their faculty mentor to explore further opportunities for educational enhancement such as enrolling in a Summer Research Opportunity program, completing an Undergraduate Research Grant Proposal over the student's 3rd or 4th year, or applying to graduate or professional programs.