

Psychologist brings personal touch to student issues

When Jon Hageseth counsels students having trouble with grades or fitting in on campus, it's easy for him to speak from the heart. Nearly 40 years ago, he found himself kicked out of college.

Hageseth, who grew up in rural, small-town Minnesota, received an athletic scholarship to play hockey at Bowdoin College, a historic, Northeast college in Brunswick, Maine. But he found that he didn't fit in — most there had attended private high schools, came from wealthy families and wore expensive clothes. His grades suffered and by the end of his sophomore year he was dismissed.

Hageseth returned to his native Minnesota and was admitted to Augsburg College on a probationary basis. He set a goal of graduating with a "B" average, and missed it only by a tenth of a point when he graduated in 1965.

Today, he uses his story while talking to students at UW-La Crosse. "I've been there, done that," explains Hageseth. "I can relate to students more and, hopefully, help them out. I'm not sure I recommend my example as a way to make it through college, but it shows things can work out."

That experience is one thing that motivates Hageseth, executive director of the UW-L Counseling, Testing and Health Centers. Another is working with great staff.

"People make the difference," notes Hageseth. "If you've got good people working with you, you get a lot of things accomplished."

Hageseth, selected as a 2000 Academic Staff Excellence Award recipient, says the centers have

accomplished much since he arrived in 1989. He points to four accomplishments in particular, emphasizing he worked with many colleagues on each project who share in its success —

- establishing a computer-based testing site
- creating a pre-doctoral psychology internship program
- co-founding of the Academic Discovery Lab
- helping the student health center become part of the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium



For another motivating factor, Hageseth looks back to his rural roots. "I have an internal standard for doing the very best job I can," he explains. "It's important for me to do a job correctly. If my name is attached to a project, it needs to have a

certain quality."

Hageseth says he was humbled to be nominated for the Academic Staff Excellence Award, and was honored to receive it. "To be recognized by your colleagues is the ultimate compliment," he says.

There are many others who do excellent work on campus and deserve recognition, Hageseth is quick to point out. He tries to do that each day with colleagues.

"Every day we have moments to give feedback and teach people who they are," he explains.

It's important to exchange a sincere greeting, listen to someone's story, express concern, say thanks, or say good job. "It doesn't seem like we do enough of that," he says.

The Jon Hageseth File

- **Executive Director** of UW-L Counseling, Testing and Student Health Centers
- **Co-director** of UW-L Academic Discovery Lab
- **Graduate faculty**, UW-L College Student Development and Administration Graduate Program
- **Contributor** to numerous national publications, presenter at various conferences, workshops
- **Doctorate and master's** from The Ohio State University; **bachelor's** from Augsburg College