Use of service learning is burgeoning in classrooms across the country as seen Classroom page 2.

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Education students inaugurate first Cultures and Communities course by Laura L. Hunt

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### Marketing Research
Students formed teams and conducted interviews with youth and parents to study the Milwaukee community’s experience with violence in the media and violent toys.

### Latino Literature
Students connected with local agencies like the United Community Center to conduct oral history projects for Hispanic senior citizens.

These service learning activities go beyond volunteerism. As students apply theory in a community setting, they are meeting needs identified by the community and informing their understanding of course material. Through reflection on their service—often in the form of journaling, class discussion, or portfolios—students enhance their learning and increase their personal development, leadership skills and sense of civic responsibility.

This approach to teaching and learning has profound effects on students, the community, and faculty. For example, one student studying intercultural communication wrote in her journal, “As the weeks go by I am learning more… One can only see the diversity of a city when they dare to take a step away from his or her comfort zone and try something different.”

Another student simply reports, “The service learning project seems to have filled a void in my life.”

Community agencies also gain from working with service learners. “Our English as a Second Language adults benefit from assistance in the classroom because they are able to have more one-on-one attention,” said Kelly Collingwood, Volunteer Coordinator for the Spanish Center.

Sashi DeHuan of the YMCA mentorship program says UWM’s service learners are “excellent role models for their students and for other mentors.” Positive experiences like these occur when the organization assumes the lead in defining the need and opportunity for service learning.

Faculty also learn from their students and the agencies when they opt for a service learning component in their courses. One professor says her students had such a great learning experience that it caused her to re-think how she teaches all of her courses. Others say service learning has brought them closer to their students and increased their knowledge of community assets and needs.

“Service learning gives students the opportunity to understand the ethics of reciprocity and social responsibility,” said Lisa Bradford, an assistant professor in communication. “It also gives them a sense of worth—they can feel somewhere is better because they were there. I think that one of the reasons a number of students continue in service learning placements after class is over.”

Implementing service learning requires a significant investment of time on the part of faculty, the community partners, and students. To help with this process, UWM’s Institute for Service Learning (ISL), provides resources ranging from individual consultation to placing students in the community to an ever-expanding library. With this support, the number and quality of service learning courses will continue to expand, and so too will the boundaries of the classroom.

For more information about service learning, contact Dean Pribbenow, ISL Director, at 229-3702 or by e-mail at prbben@uwm.edu. You can also visit the ISL website at <www.uwm.edu/Dept/ISL>.

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### Cultures and Communities: Learning for the new Century

By Adam Rose, Student Assistant, Milwaukee Idea Office

Integrating Milwaukee’s diverse culture into the general education curriculum at UWM is a challenging goal of The Milwaukee Idea’s Cultures and Communities (CC) initiative.

The 21st century requires a different kind of education to keep pace with changing times, says Gregory Jay, director of Cultures and Communities. “We envision an alternative to the current general education requirements that will help students succeed in a multi-cultural world.” To achieve that aim, the curriculum will emphasize cross-cultural literacy, interdisciplinary study and community engagement.

Said Sandra Jones, Assistant Director of the initiative, “The response to and excitement for this program is overwhelming. The campus and the community want to see something different in approaches to education. The Cultures and Communities curriculum will indeed be different than the current general education requirement, but not inferior or superior. The curriculum won’t be in place until the fall of ’01, but Jay and Jones have already prepared English courses that will place an emphasis on the history of America and what it was like for people of various backgrounds to immigrate to the United States.

Cultures and Communities plans to start with two or three foundation courses for freshmen and sophomores around which the program will be built. The 100-150 students expected to participate will be an experimental group. Upper level courses will be determined, in part, by their feedback.

For those students who ask, “What’s in it for me?” Cultures and Communities has some good answers. First, students can expect to be more sophisticated in world diversity and have real world experiences.

“Students will come to UWM when they realize that they can get something here they can’t get anywhere else. We want people to say, ‘hey, that’s a UWM student,’ and recognize them as sophisticated in world diversity and have real world experience.”

For more about Cultures and Communities contact Sandra Jones, 229-2296; sejones@uwm.edu or Greg Jay, 229-5960; gjay@uwm.edu.

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Gregory Jay, Director of Cultures and Communities and Sandra Jones, Asst. Director with friend of the initiative Victoria Redmond.

For more on Cultures and Communities, see page 4
community engagement has led to educational and administrative change.

Wergin says he was struck by the excitement and interest the Milwaukee Idea is generating. “I was originally attracted by the sheer ambition of the Milwaukee Idea,” he said. “It’s very hard to get a complex university, especially one that is as diverse as UW-M behind a central idea – it just doesn’t happen very often. Change typically comes very slowly in higher education. ... what I really think is intriguing about this study is finding out if the chancellor has given voice to a sort of communal aspiration that people didn’t realize they had until she enunciated it.”

Wergin will likely discover the answer to that question and many more as he documents UW-M’s efforts to reinvigorate its urban mission and embrace the principles of engagement. He believes UW-M is facing an important transformation:

“The urban university model will be one of the most powerful for higher education in the next 10-20 years,” he said. “This is because of an increasing awareness that the real value of higher education is not to be isolation and embrace the principles of engagement. The whole engagement agenda is tantamount to an ever-expanding library. With this support, the number and quality of service learning courses will continue to expand, and so too will the bound-aries of the classroom. For more information about service learning, contact Dean Pribbenow, ISL Director, at 229-3702 or by e-mail at pribbeno@uwm.edu. You can also visit the ISL website at <www.uwm.edu/Depts/ISL>.”

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The study itself is being conducted by Jon Wergin, Ph.D., an independent consultant who is an expert on organizational change in higher education and a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University. Over the next several months Wergin will meet with community leaders, students, faculty, staff and administrators to gauge the extent to which UW-M’s commitment to community collaboration and partnerships is being met.

From the classroom to the community: Service learning at UWM

By Dean Pribbenow, Director, UWM Institute for Service Learning

Use of service learning is burgeoning in classrooms across the country as universities seek to connect more closely with their communities and enhance student learning with real-world experiences. UWM is no exception. Last spring, an estimated 235 students took a class in which they considered, for example, these service learning highlights from the spring, 2000 semester:

• Intercultural Communication students tutored, mentored, and provided other services at such organizations as the Hillel Foundation, Reach Out and Read and the Boys and Girls Clubs to learn more about theories of intercultural communication.

• Health Care Delivery students worked with their instructor to develop and implement a survey at the MLK Heritage Health Center that assessed how information about pre-natal care was communicated to pregnant women.

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