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Service Learning, Multicultural Education and the Core Curriculum

Equity Scorecard

Student Profiles

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Any recent headlines about the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee have been about our plans to expand beyond our 93-acre campus on Milwaukee’s East Side. Already in existence are our School of Continuing Education facilities in the Plankinton Building in downtown and the Great Lakes WATER Institute on Milwaukee’s South Side. To those, we propose adding an academic health center (including public health) in downtown Milwaukee and a new biomedical engineering campus on the County Grounds in Wauwatosa.

Less publicized, but also of great significance, is our continuing attention to enroll, educate, and graduate ever increasing numbers of students. Managing our population is among our great current and future challenges.

Over the past decade, our enrollment has grown 27 percent to more than 28,300 students. Over that same period, growth for the entire UW System (the 13 four-year universities plus the 13 two-year colleges) was just 11 percent. More than a third of all UW System student growth over the past decade has happened at our university.

As we look at UWM today, we find it is increasingly the university of first choice across Wisconsin. That is seen in real numbers, as UWM now enrolls more Wisconsin residents than any other university. Based on the applications we’ve received this year, we know UWM will continue to grow. At this rate, we certainly will approach 30,000 students within the next two years — a level never reached before by UWM, even at the height of the Baby Boom.

Needless to say, the growth is putting significant strain on our operations. Observing and anticipating this growth, our university staff has made understanding and managing this growth a priority. The last thing we want to do is allow this growth to manage us. If we do not properly address enrollment management, then we risk major problems such as lack of space, not enough faculty and teaching academic staff, and unnecessarily delaying students from graduating on a reasonable schedule because required courses were unavailable or filled.

For nearly four years, the UWM Enrollment Management Steering Committee has been meeting to develop a profile of enrollment that we can support. Recently, the committee put forward the objective that UWM “seeks to recruit and enroll an increasingly diverse, academically prepared group of new undergraduates and graduate students, and to increase retention.” As a starting point, the current emphasis is on the freshman class.

To support our enrollment initiatives, we are raising more money for students in the form of scholarships. The $100 million fundraising campaign we are currently conducting includes a $25 million objective for new scholarship dollars. I am very happy to report that we have already surpassed that goal for scholarships. But we know that our scholarship support needs to increase, and we’ll be focusing on that over the coming year.

Our Access to Success program has demonstrated that when we provide targeted academic and support services, students achieve greater success. We need to provide more support services for more students as the campus continues to grow — and this includes the very challenging question of student housing. One of the biggest determinants of success for a college student is whether he or she lives on campus and, therefore, becomes integrated into the life of the university.

If we could go from having the lowest percentage of beds in the UW System to among the highest — or at least get enough housing so that we could offer a bed to all incoming freshmen — our retention and graduation rates would be much, much higher. Right now, UWM can house only about 10 percent of all students. If we could provide campus housing for each year’s class of new freshmen — about 4,500 beds — we would see a significant improvement in retention and graduation. In January 2008, we will open the RiverView Residence Hall with nearly 500 beds for freshmen. If we can build one or two more housing projects, I believe we will get to 4,500.

Research into campus communities shows that if a student body is homogeneous in age, race, gender, or ethnicity, then the learning experience is not as valuable as when a student body is very diverse. UWM and the UW System are dedicated to making sure all students get the best educational experience they can. In today’s world, that means you need to have a very heterogeneous population. I would say that UWM today, more than many other universities, has that heterogeneity. But we need to ensure that it will continue to grow, and we will do that through our enrollment management efforts.

— Carlos E. Santiago
Chancellor
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## Myriad

**FALL 2007**

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### ON THE COVER:

Cultures and Communities Program staff (from left to right): Sharon Adams, Gregory Jay, Iris Christian, Cheryl Ajiorotutu, Brenda Smith, Julianne Price, Deborah Fagan. Not pictured: Scott Walter and Raoul Deal.
On August 20, Michael Powell joined the UWM community as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Climate. What does Powell’s new title mean? “Diversity is more than just numbers,” he says. “Real diversity requires a change in the culture and ethos of the institution.”

Powell brings two decades of experience working in similar positions at Northwestern, Tufts, William and Mary, and Central Michigan, among other colleges and universities. But his understanding of cross-cultural communication began in childhood, as he moved all around the U.S. and Europe with his military family.

Powell received an athletic and academic scholarship to attend the University of Maryland at College Park, but when he sustained two knee injuries in three years, it became clear that football wasn’t the key to his future. So he dove into academics and became chair of the campus Thurgood Marshall Pre-Law Society. He went on to pursue a law degree and is now a licensed civil rights/employment law attorney.

“Law school provides you with a different way of thinking,” says Powell. “It enables you to hone your analytical and critical thinking skills. Also, given all of the legal issues and implications that often surround diversity — such as affirmative action and Title IX — having a law background helps me to cut through the legalese.”

After law school, Powell’s plan was to enter the Marine Corps as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) Officer (even though he says it isn’t really like the television show “JAG”). But while he was waiting to attend training, Powell was offered a job as the interim Campus Compliance Officer at his alma mater.

He remembers, “I was really enjoying my experience being back on the campus — the interaction with the students and being in a position to make a difference,” so he said goodbye to the Marine Corps and launched a new career.

Powell has spent the last 20 years listening to people, developing and implementing strategies to promote diversity, and pursuing a fresh, creative, and holistic approach to diversity challenges and solutions.

Two philosophies guide Powell: “Traditional procedures will generate traditional results” and “One of the definitions of ‘insanity’ is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Therefore, he says, “we must work outside the box, try new approaches with respect to diversity and attracting under-represented faculty, staff, and students. It’s not rocket science; it’s a matter of institutional commitment, being willing to take risks and do things differently.”

It may not be rocket science, but Powell admits that it’s not easy and that all colleges and universities face this challenge. “My goal, working as part of the UWM team, is to help UWM distinguish itself in this area,” he says.

Distinguishing itself will include fostering an environment at UWM where all faculty, staff, and students “have a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership, a sense that this is their university.” A host of programs, resources, and conversations will be needed to make this happen.

Powell looks forward to having these conversations with students, faculty, and staff across campus in the coming weeks and months, as he learns more about UWM’s particular challenges, opportunities, and strengths. He hopes to discuss such issues as: why diversity is important to the mission of the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee; how ultimately academic success is contingent on our ability to increase diversity on campus; and why all UWM graduates must have an understanding and appreciation of the importance of diversity, especially given the demographic realities of the twenty-first century.

While Powell is excited to assume leadership as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Climate, he emphasizes that “no one person is going to be successful in advancing this agenda. The entire campus community has a role to play in fostering an educational environment that values, supports, and reflects diversity.”
It is experiences like Clara’s and those of many other UWM students — experiences that are often unforgettable and sometimes even life-changing — which are demonstrating that the Cultures and Communities Program and the Institute for Service Learning are realizing important goals for expanding multicultural education at UWM. The rationale for the program, a bit of its history, and how it works today are outlined herein in an article adapted from Diversity Digest, a publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

As the state’s largest urban university, located in the heart of Milwaukee, UWM is positioned to create a distinctive learning environment for students. Wisconsin’s cultures and communities are rich with resources that can be brought into our classrooms. At the same time, our classrooms should extend into our communities so that students better understand the world they are studying.

Like most American universities and colleges, UWM has a token “diversity” requirement: students must take one three-credit course that focuses on the experiences, cultural traditions, and worldviews of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and/or Asian Americans. But this one-class requirement represents the most minimal of gestures towards multiculturalism and diversity. In addition, there is no campus-wide requirement for civic engagement or service learning. The Cultures and Communities Certificate Program offers an alternative to this approach by providing a general education option that integrates diversity and community engagement in the core curriculum.

“I feel like I’ve grown a lot as a student and a person. Service learning has taught me as a student the importance of being part of the community outside the university. It has also allowed me to form bonds with people I would never have had the opportunity to interact with otherwise. The lessons I learned from this course and my service learning experience will surely stay with me throughout my remaining years at UWM and in my future career.”

— Clara Forrest, UWM service learning student
Grant Helps Students and Faculty Get Talking on Tough Issues
By Deborah Fagan

UWM’s Cultures and Communities Program has been recognized by the Ford Foundation with a $100,000 grant from its “Difficult Dialogues” initiative. Cultures and Communities was one of just 27 programs out of over 400 applicants nationwide selected to receive the grant, which helps to expand teaching, research, and community engagement on race, ethnicity, and cultural and religious pluralism.

According to the Ford Foundation, “Difficult Dialogues was created in response to reports of growing intolerance and efforts to curb academic freedom at colleges and universities. The goal is to help institutions address this challenge through programs that enrich learning, encourage new scholarship and engage students and faculty in constructive dialogue about contentious political, religious, racial and cultural issues.”

Cultures and Communities has put the grant to work with a number of noteworthy activities and accomplishments. Among them are:

- Two faculty development institutes that offered faculty a chance to explore strategies for bringing difficult dialogues into their courses and service-learning assignments. A recent institute examined the challenges of multicultural education in light of polarization over such issues as the Iraq war, immigration, and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
- Support for the development of new courses like “Good and Evil in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,” which is being taught this semester by Rachel Baum of the Department of Hebrew Studies. A course on spirituality was also developed by Mary Louise Buley-Meissner of the English Department and offered as a Freshman Seminar.
- Co-sponsoring several conferences that explore cultural and racial divides and promote dialogues with community partners on overcoming them. Examples include the “Fighting for Common Ground Conferences,” which were held over the past two years; “What it Means to Be Latina/o”; and the “March on Milwaukee,” marking the 40th anniversary of Milwaukee’s open housing movement.
- A lecture series on race and representation that brings noted scholars and artists to campus.

“Difficult Dialogues is an important piece of a multicultural education program that encourages students to think critically about their own cultural identity and how that identity affects their interactions with others,” says Gregory Jay, director of the Cultures and Communities Program. “Critical self-reflection is a required foundation for true cross-cultural dialogue.”

Service Learning
continued from page 3

A Model for Diversity and Service Learning

The Program’s distribution of courses includes many that carry Cultural Diversity (CD) accreditation and at least one focused on global cultures and communities. Thus, students who complete the certificate are more likely to take three or four CD classes.

Students are required to take at least one service-learning class, ensuring that they experience the pluralism that is Milwaukee. Academic learning about diversity in the classroom is tested, expanded, and reflected upon through “real-world” experiences in the community.

Service learning is paired with a multicultural education program that targets student awareness and focuses attention on structural inequality, cultural identity, and the historical and systemic nature of oppression. To give our curriculum this foundation, we designed a core course that, although taught across various disciplines, emphasizes these topics and incorporates service learning as an integral method of exploring them.

We mainstreamed the core course, now called “Multicultural America,” by inviting departments to design their own sections in collaboration with us. Today, the course is offered in Anthropology, English, Film, History, Sociology, and Women’s Studies. This arrangement provides departments an incentive to offer the course, since it meets their obligation to offer general education classes, adds diversity, appeals to younger faculty and faculty of color, and boosts enrollments.

As the core course evolved, we began to teach about “whiteness” and white privilege. White students’ attitudes of resistance to antiracist or multicultural education are all too familiar. Often students naively believe that America is a place where anyone can succeed by working hard and playing by the rules, and that people who are poor, illiterate, incarcerated, or trapped in dead-end jobs “got what they deserved.”

Readings and videos on white privilege take the onus for antiracism off the students of color and help white students write reflectively about their service-learning experience, prompting them to see their own cultural identities and histories in a critical light. Crucial to this transformation are the relationships of trust, communication, and learning developed with people in the community. These relationships help students discard old stereotypes through the intercultural understanding made possible by engagement.

Program Outcomes

The combined curriculum of service learning and diversity education has measurable outcomes. In a survey conducted in spring 2006, 89 percent
of students reported increased awareness of community needs; 62 percent felt service learning had enhanced their understanding of course content; and 76 percent said they had increased their understanding of diverse cultures. Students regularly testify that service learning transforms and deepens their academic knowledge. Since many are freshmen or sophomores, they also find that this experience is vital to their evaluation of possible career choices and plans of study, and a number of those surveyed expressed increased interest in civic service.

By creating a general education program with a focus on critical multiculturalism and community engagement, the Cultures and Communities Program and its Institute for Service Learning are revitalizing the urban mission of the university, reconnecting the campus to the community, and reinvigorating the academic experience of both students and faculty. In uniting several components — among them multicultural education, service learning, advising, grants, and special events — and in positioning the community not as a “problem” or “deficit,” but rather as co-teacher, we have formed a new model for engaging students with diversity and civic affairs.

For more information on the Cultures and Communities Program and the Institute for Service Learning, go to our websites at www.cc.uwm.edu and www.uwm.edu/dept/isl.

Storied Recovery: Participant Observation Courses in New Orleans

By Lee Abbott

In January 2008, the Cultures and Communities Program will be offering two UWinteriM courses, Anthropology 150 and 540, where students will travel to New Orleans to conduct research and materially assist city residents rebuilding their homes and communities in the wake of the 2005 hurricanes.

Specifically, the UWinteriM courses allow students to understand and address the social and physical conditions of the Lower Ninth Ward, an area of the city that was completely inundated after both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Historically, the Ninth Ward has been the site of massive floods and subsequent rebuilding efforts, particularly in 1927 and 1965. This is due to governmental neglect of the levees and poor city services for this predominantly working class and African American community.

“The Ninth Ward was selected as a focus for the courses because it was the worst hit, the one with the most problems, and least attended to as we talk about recovery in the city,” says Cheryl Ajirotutu, associate director of the Cultures and Communities Program and coordinator of the UWinteriM courses. The courses will be part of a three-year commitment of the Cultures and Communities Program, with students collaborating with Louisiana State University Anthropology Professor Joyce Jackson in collecting and documenting the stories of returning residents.

“One of the most important issues facing Ninth Ward residents, and one which Winterim students will have a hand in affecting,” says Ajirotutu, “is the issue of land tenure.” In many places in the Lower Ninth, the storms washed clean house lots that had been in families for generations, or simply lifted homes from their foundations and set them adrift down the street. As residents come back to rebuild, they must reestablish their claim to the property site, a process made exponentially more difficult since, for many, their legal records of land ownership were lost in the flood.

Partnering with NENA (Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association), students will help organize resident block captains to document who is coming back and rebuilding. “Relying on local memory, oral histories, and participant observation, students will help [NENA] with community development pieces,” Ajirotutu explains. “Some of it is doing neighborhood block mapping; who lived where, who came back, who’s not coming, and finding out what happened to residents.” These block maps and documentation will then be used to help NENA and residents establish the land tenure rights necessary for them to rebuild.

Through collecting stories of survival, return, and recovery, students and participating faculty researchers will be able to assess firsthand the effects and struggles that New Orleans residents are facing, and to develop an understanding of the parallel in the struggles of Milwaukee communities suffering from economic, political, and social neglect. Ajirotutu explains that much of the idea for the Cultures and Communities project in New Orleans came out of the 2005 Common Ground Conference, where parallels in social conditions between New Orleans’ and Milwaukee’s most impacted communities were addressed. “We realized we had a lot of common themes. One was the impact of segregation in both communities: how that defined the Ninth Ward and how that defines areas within Milwaukee,” says Ajirotutu. “In Milwaukee, we had city red-lining, and a freeway that destroyed a community, the Bronzeville area.” She further points out, “When we look at New Orleans, we have this sort of moving [of communities], as well as floods that have come over time. That’s an example of a parallel.”

Recording the stories of survival, return, and recovery is crucial work for students in the Winterim courses; work that will impact not only scholarly research into one of America’s unique communities, but also demonstrate solidarity with this community in its time of enormous need.
What struck Megan Potts most powerfully about New Orleans, even before she arrived there in March 2006, was what she saw as the U.S. Government’s apparent lack of concern and response to the disaster and its victims that followed Hurricane Katrina. “Why didn’t they rush in?” she asks. “It’s not like we don’t have the money.” When Potts, along with about 18 other UWM students, reached New Orleans’ now famous Ninth Ward, she found herself in an encampment of student and youth volunteers who had all given up spring break in flashier locales in order to pick up where the government had failed.

The Ninth Ward is one of many New Orleans neighborhoods where both the middle class and the working poor of all races have yet to see the adequate governmental response to their housing and rebuilding needs.

Potts, a sophomore in elementary education from Madison, says she didn’t know that much about New Orleans before spending her spring break gutting homes and meeting survivors of the storm. But her sense of compassion and responsibility, developed during her mission trips as a young student, made the decision to travel to the Crescent City both obvious and necessary.

During these earlier experiences on church mission trips, Potts became aware of the acute disparities in wealth, educational resources, and level of parental involvement between the students at her hometown schools in Madison and inner-city schools in Chicago. There, she volunteered as a teaching assistant in preparation for her desired career as an elementary school teacher. In many cases, she recalls, teachers had to fill the role of both the students’ parents and teacher. Similarly, in the Ninth Ward, Potts says she became more aware of the circumstances and effects of poverty. “Witnessing such things makes you not judge people’s circumstances, how people are born into them, and how it’s impossible to get out of.”

Along with the groundwork laid by her experiences in cross-cultural and cross-class service projects, Potts says she became involved with the recovery work in New Orleans because of her desire to overcome the low expectations of social conscience put on her generation. “This is part of history,” she points out.

“When you see people suffering, you want to fix it,” Potts says of her decision to be part of New Orleans’ recovery. In fact, Potts’ journey to the Crescent City reflects the growing sense of mission and purpose for many youth in the United States and around the world, as volunteers from various churches and political organizations spend months to years helping gut homes and rebuild what the water took away.

While gutting homes, Potts had the chance to talk to the residents in the area in which she worked. Communicating with Ninth Ward residents helped Potts realize the importance of what she was doing, and gave purpose to the reason why they were down there. As for the influence of her work upon people, she says, “I felt like part of me was left there, and I wouldn’t have felt that way if it was only about the physical rebuilding.”
Reflections on My Trip to Vietnam
By Chia Youyee Vang

During one short week this spring, I had the opportunity to experience a vastly different culture and expand my worldview while, at the same time, forging a deeply personal connection with my past and my cultural traditions. From May 11 through 19, 2007, I took part in a business and cultural familiarization mission to Hanoi, Vietnam, organized by the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, World Trade Center-Wisconsin, and Lexington Langha Investment and Development Partnership. The goal of the mission was to introduce southeastern Wisconsin community leaders to business, investment, education, and cultural exchange opportunities in Vietnam, the newest member of the World Trade Organization. As a Southeast Asian historian and a teacher of the American war in Vietnam, I was particularly interested in learning about the social, economic, cultural, and political transformations since the end of the war in 1975. In addition, I wanted to better understand the incorporation of Vietnam’s more than 50 ethnic groups into the different aspects of Vietnamese life.

But as a Southeast Asian refugee myself, I had a personal, as well as professional, stake in this visit. As a child, my family fled Laos as a result of the Vietnam War, and I grew up in the United States with both an American and Southeast Asian refugee understanding of the war: fighting against the evils of Communism. The plethora of academic studies, memoirs, and newspapers articles clearly demonstrates that Americans were shocked by the atrocities that took place in Vietnam at that time. Experiences of the nearly two million Southeast Asian refugees following the war included much hardship and tragedy. However, most Americans, including Southeast Asian Americans, have varied understandings of those who stayed behind. Frequently, we hear about the political persecution of those who sided with the Americans. It is not as common for us to hear about the enormous economic hardship endured by those who stayed behind.

The brief but highly charged trip helped me reconcile some of my personal fears and the ways in which I have been conditioned to see the Vietnamese, in particular the North Vietnamese, as the enemy. Several conversations with young Vietnamese in local settings, as well as in structured meetings, revealed their fascination with the varied economic directions that the country is heading. While the war placed a historic scar in Vietnamese history and the hardships following the war put the country behind in terms of economic development, many do not dwell on the past. With a literacy rate of more than 90 percent, young people are learning English and are looking forward to making Vietnam a prosperous country. Seventy percent of Vietnam’s more than 70 million people live in rural areas and experience a great deal of poverty. Like many developing countries, however, young people are moving into crowded urban centers to work in factories, as well as at other service jobs that cater to the increasing foreign investments in the country.

Although I attended various meetings that opened my eyes to different aspects of Vietnamese civic and political life, the most memorable part of my trip was meeting Mai Chau Hang, who was a Green Hmong woman from Sappa in Hoa Binh Province. This meeting was made possible by the co-owner of the 54 Traditions Gallery in Hanoi, who arranged for Mai to come to Hanoi. Mai and I talked for nearly two hours. Since we both spoke the Green Hmong dialect, we were able to understand each other about 95 percent of the time. Some words I used differed from the terms she used due to more than one hundred years of migration as my ancestors continued on to Laos, whereas hers remained in northern Vietnam. From speaking with Mai about daily life, I learned that although our lives were separated by a century of migration, including my family’s journey that led us to live in one of the most high-tech societies in the world, our identities as Hmong people are connected by a common language and traditions. She held my hand for almost the entire time that we spoke. Although we were meeting for the first time, it felt as though I was reuniting with a long-lost older sister.

In addition to this very personal encounter, I came back to the U.S. with a backpack full of books written by Vietnamese authors about their history, in particular their experiences of the French and Americans, during the last half of the twentieth century. As I teach the history of Vietnam War this semester, I will be able to provide not only a more comprehensive, but also a more balanced overview of the war from a global perspective.

This article is an abbreviated version of Chia Youyee Vang’s reflections on her trip. To learn more about Vang, please see her profile on page 20.
In keeping with its commitment to provide equal “access to success” for all students, UWM has joined five other campuses in a UW System pilot project called “Equity Scorecard.” This voluntary self-assessment initiative is designed to help universities more effectively analyze and act upon data that may reveal inequities between students of color and white students.

These data can include everything from the percentage of American Indians who apply and are accepted to UWM, to the number of African American students who are engineering majors, to the percentage of Southeast Asian freshmen who return to UWM as sophomores, to the number of Latina/o students graduating from UWM, and much, much more.

“The information is not new,” says Provost and Vice Chancellor Rita Cheng, who leads the UWM Equity Scorecard Evidence Team. “It’s data we have analyzed prior to launching our Access to Success program, but the data are now presented in a way that engages more people in the discussion.” It will help UWM in taking stock of current programs and launching new ones.

The Equity Scorecard Evidence Team looks at data through these four lenses:

- **ACCESS** – To what extent do students of color have access to the institution and its programs and resources?
- **RETENTION** – To what extent do students of color continue beyond their freshman year and all the way to graduation?
- **INSTITUTIONAL RECEPITIVITY** – What is the climate of the campus environment for students of color?
- **EXCELLENCE** – To what extent are students of color succeeding academically and going on to do graduate work?

Because the Equity Scorecard pilot views inequities in student access and success as a problem of institutional performance and accountability, it analyzes data not to identify problems with students but rather to identify UWM’s problems and address them. “In fact, changes have already been made, including modifications to the admissions process,” says Cheng. And the Equity Scorecard team isn’t waiting until the project is completed to begin implementing what they are learning. “The different ways of looking at data are a part of our day-to-day conversations,” she explains.

There are, of course, many challenges. “With a campus this size,” says Cheng, “there’s just so much data, so it’s a challenge just to sift through and decide the best way of presenting very, very complex issues.” The Equity Scorecard team must first decide what questions to ask before it can begin using the data to answer them. For example, What is equity? What would equity at UWM look like? How can UWM achieve equity for all its students?

UWM has been working to answer these questions for many years, but what Equity Scorecard now offers is an opportunity to develop strategic solutions based on data, not assumptions.

In the long run, Cheng hopes that Equity Scorecard will provide UWM with ways to monitor and track progress, which will ultimately lead to expanding those programs that are showing success, and developing new programs and new structures to address areas where there are still gaps between white students and students of color.

One of the programs being monitored by Equity Scorecard is Access to Success (A2S). Begun in 2005 to improve exactly what its name suggests — access and success for all UWM students — A2S has already resulted in higher retention and graduation rates.

Equity Scorecard was developed by a team of researchers at the University of Southern California, led by Professor Estela Mara Bensimon. According to Bensimon, “We must deliberately and energetically remove the conditions that deny or impede equitable outcomes for all students” (Change Magazine, Jan/Feb 2004).

“This is the vision of many faculty, staff, and students working together on Access to Success,” says Cheng. And this is also why the team members believe it’s crucial for UWM to assess itself, as honestly as possible, using the Equity Scorecard.

For more information, please visit www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/climate/eqsc/intro.cfm.
Wilfred Fong came to UWM in 1983 as a graduate student and completed his master’s degree in Library and Information Studies in 1985. He was immediately hired as a resource center manager and worked until 1989 when he was promoted to assistant dean of the School of Information Studies. As an assistant dean, Fong worked with advisors and helped manage the budget. With his focus on technological advancement, Fong played a major role in supporting SOIS’ online or hybrid courses, teaching library and information science classes, and training librarians from around the world. In 2001, US News and World Report ranked UWM’s distance education program as one of the top ten web-based programs. Fong’s years of commitment and contributions to UWM laid the groundwork for his current position, which he began four years ago, as the associate dean of Business and Information Technology and acting director of IT Programs at the new University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Ontario, Canada.

Q: How did you feel when you found out that you were receiving the award?
A: I was blown away. I just paused, and was speechless. It was very thoughtful and I’m very thankful and honored.

Q: What contributed to your current professional success?
A: I worked at UWM for 18 years in several different capacities, and they laid the groundwork for where I am now. I give a lot of credit to former Dean Mohammad Aman. He was a great mentor, professor, and friend. I learned enough to be confident in making the decision to transition.

Q: How does it feel to work at a university in Canada?
A: It feels great as Toronto is truly multicultural. It’s extremely diverse with immigrants and people from all over the world. We respect and enjoy the different languages and cultures.

Q: If UWM brings you back to teach a class for one day on any topic, what will it be?
A: I wouldn’t really teach; it would be more of a motivational speech. I would simply tell students to treasure their time at UWM, to stay in school, and to complete their degrees. I would also tell them to explore their talents because UWM offers many degrees in diverse areas, which can help bring out the best in them. Lastly, I will tell them to challenge themselves healthily and set high, but obtainable, goals.

Q: Have you noticed any changes at UWM since you left?
A: Yes, I love how they relocated the multicultural student offices to high traffic, easily accessible areas. It makes me feel good to see the changes.

Myriad would like to congratulate the first graduating class of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in spring 2007. Wilfred Fong joined this new university in 2003 as a founding faculty member.

Patrick Sims is an accomplished actor, teacher, playwright, and director. He completed the UWM Professional Theatre Training Program in 2000, and is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Theatre & Drama at UW-Madison. As the founder and director of Theatre for Cultural and Social Awareness at UW-Madison and former artistic director of Human Experience Theatre at UWM, Sims utilizes theatrical presentations to explore sensitive subject matters for enhancing cultural competencies in the schools, communities, and workplace environments. He continues his acting career in various venues with strong performances in the American Players Theatre and the Madison Repertory Theatre. One of Sims’ recent works, Ten Perfect, a one-person play on the triumph of human spirit, is inspired by the life of James Cameron, founder of America’s Black Holocaust Museum, who survived a lynching in 1938. UWM is planning to bring this performance to campus in spring 2008.

Patrick Sims

continued on next page
**Q: How did you feel when you found out that you were receiving the award?**
A: I was extremely surprised, but also very honored. Although I was only one of three African Americans who graduated from the Theatre Department in the year of the millennium, UWM gave me an opportunity to make some positive cultural contributions to that department.

**Q: What contributed to your current professional success?**
A: It started out as an obstacle, but UWM became a stepping stone by letting me address challenges I faced as a student. As I was very vocal about these challenges, they opened up doors of opportunities for me so other students of color wouldn’t have to deal with the same issues.

**Q: If UWM brings you back to teach a class for one day on any topic, what will it be?**
A: The topic of my class would be “Networking, the Key to Success.” I have lived by this pillar throughout my college and early career. I would highly recommend students establish a network of mentors to provide guidance on their decision-making process. This will be very beneficial for their entrance into graduate studies and employment.

**Q: What is your view on diversity?**
A: I believe the best leaders of tomorrow will be those who have the knowledge, compassion, and appreciation for the communities they serve. I completely support diversity, value the opportunity to learn about other cultures, and encourage everyone to be open-minded.

**Q: What are your words of encouragement for students of color on campus?**
A: Don’t give up; there’s a method to the madness. Your test becomes your testimony and I’m a living example.

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**STEVEN RILEY LE MOINE**  
*Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD)  
Award, College of Health Sciences*

Steven LeMoine received a undergraduate degree in Health Care Administration in 2000 from UWM and Master of Health Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University, Medical College of Virginia Campus in 2004. Through career advancement at a remarkable pace, he is now the director of Cardiovascular Services at Oakwood Hospital and Medical Center in Dearborn, Michigan. While at UWM, LeMoine was a student leader serving as the chapter president of the American College of Healthcare Executives, an organization that he continues to be involved in at the national level. He was also a McNair Scholar and conducted research on stroke rehabilitation under the mentorship of Professor Mary K. Madsen. LeMoine credits his success to the outstanding faculty members who worked tirelessly in cultivating positive learning environments for students.

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**SIMONE CRISTINA DA CONCEIÇÃO**  
*Graduate of Last Decade (GOLD)  
Award, School of Education*

Simone Conceição came to UWM as an English as a Second Language (ESL) student in 1989. After one semester, she was accepted into an academic program,
and received a B.A. in Anthropology in 1992 and M.S. in Adult & Continuing Education in 1997. She continued her education at UW-Madison and earned a Ph.D. in Continuing & Vocational Education in 2001. Conceição has worked at UWM for 15 years and is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Administrative Leadership. She is recognized as a leading authority in the area of Adult Learning and Distance Education, and is the recent recipient of the prestigious Early Career Award from the Commission of Professors in Adult Education. Conceição is very active on campus and in the community. She helped found the Brazilian Association in Milwaukee, which provides services and support to new arrivals from Brazil and other South American countries.

**Q: How did you feel when you found out that you were receiving the award?**

A: I was surprised. I knew about the nomination, but winning the award made me feel good. I definitely think that it shows trajectory in your work and service to the university.

**Q: What contributed to your current professional success?**

A: UWM contributed tons, but I have to give a lot of thanks and appreciation to my colleagues for their mentoring and support.

**Q: If UWM brings you back to teach a class for one day on any topic, what will it be?**

A: In the form of motivation, I would, first of all, say that failure isn’t final. There were many times in my life that would be considered “failing” moments, but I chose not to let things end there. And there were many reasons why, by society’s standard, I should not have made it, but I continued on the course to complete my life’s goal. I also found that with great sacrifices, there were also great rewards.

**Q: What is your view on diversity?**

A: My view on diversity is that different backgrounds and experiences allow us all to contribute something. No one should be discounted. I especially take this view because my background is very diverse. I am a Christian, a female, and an African American, just to name a few.

**Q: What are your words of encouragement for students of color on campus?**

A: I would summarize and paraphrase a verse from the Bible in Ecclesiastes 9:11 that the race is not always to the swift, battle to the strong, wealth to the brilliant, or fame to the most skilled, but time and chance happen to them all.
Students Find Support and Success in McNair Program

By Jim Loew

UWM was one of the first campuses in the United States to receive funding for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, which was created in 1989 by the U.S. Department of Education. The McNair Program invests in students from low-income families, first-generation college students, and students with backgrounds that are underrepresented in graduate education, in order to help them enter and succeed in graduate studies.

Wendy Geniusz did just that — entered and succeeded in graduate studies. “I was involved with the program in the summer of 1999,” she says. “They helped me with research and prepared me for graduate school.”

Geniusz recently completed her Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota, after graduating summa cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in English and American Indian Studies. Today, Geniusz is an assistant professor of American Multicultural Studies at Minnesota State University-Moorhead and is on track for tenure.

During their time in the program, McNair Scholars like Geniusz are given opportunities to travel to conferences, graduate schools, professional meetings, and forums, where mentors and students present research findings. The program even assists students in publishing their work.

Scottie Posey, a current McNair Scholar, is grateful for this support. The McNair Program “has provided me with detailed insight into current research methods and applications,” he says. Posey is a graduate student in the Educational Policy and Community Studies Department at UWM and a program assistant with McNair.

After graduating cum laude from Livingston College with a bachelor’s degree in English, Posey found his interests changing. “I began to focus more on research and finding specific teaching and learning solutions that could cater to urban youth,” he says. His involvement with the McNair Program has opened doors for Posey to pursue these interests. “I have attended a plethora of educational-related workshops and conferences dealing with such issues as school reform, classroom management, multicultural education, and the importance of content and pedagogy,” he says.

In addition to valuable workshops and conferences, the program provides tutoring, academic advising, and career counseling for juniors and seniors. Selected juniors and seniors receive research internships and stipends.

Alice Muehlbauer was chosen for one of these internships and spent the summer working with an architecture mentor, “covering principles in urban design for cities.” Muehlbauer also participates in UWM’s Life Impact Program, and she is an accomplished writer who won first place in the Virginia Burke Writing Contest in spring 2007. Her submission asked the question, “Does language reveal your identity?”

Muehlbauer and her husband, Aldo, have a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Alicia Garcia, so life is certainly busy. “I have to schedule everything out,” she laughs. On top of it all, Muehlbauer is spending this year studying in Mexico.

Scottie Posey sums up the experience of many McNair Scholars: “My [passion] for learning has motivated me to focus my energies toward helping those who have not been exposed to the opportunities that have been rendered to me,” he says.

The McNair Program has helped create these opportunities for Posey, Geniusz, and Muehlbauer, and in turn, they are creating new opportunities for themselves, their families, and the students who will follow in their footsteps.
Clarence Garrett
By Kristin E. Catalano

Clarence Garrett was first profiled in the 2006 issue of Myriad. We wanted to know how he is doing and asked Kristin Catalano to give us an update on his life story.

"You can hardly blink your eyes, and it’s over," he shakes his head with the kind of sorrow that is expressed at an unforeseen funeral. But Clarence Garrett, the normally enthusiastic 86-year-old UWM student you might see shuffling around campus, wasn’t speaking of death; rather he was reflecting on his numbered school days.

In spring 2006, Garrett finished his first returning semester as a junior with a 3.2 GPA, even after being hospitalized with a life-threatening illness at the end of the term. And while his summer school plans vanished like good Milwaukee weather, Garrett’s rehabilitation involved anticipating his course selections for his second semester of college.

Continuing to march like the 36-year U.S. Army veteran that he is, Garrett enrolled in 15 Africology credits in fall 2006, with his favorite class having an unusually profound effect on his psyche: a course fittingly entitled, Rites of Passage.

“When that class ended, I just felt so lost. I’ve liked all my classes so far — they’re all outstanding, just simply beautiful — but for some reason that Rites of Passage class… I don’t know... I just looked forward to going there every Wednesday night. I’m really gonna miss it.”

With the arthritis in his back getting progressively worse and the unexpected balance issues he acquired from his recent surgery, you wouldn’t think Garrett could make it from Bolton to Holton in the midst of a December blizzard, but with a weatherproof cane and a good pair of insoles, he gave Mother Nature something to talk about. “I hobble around all right. My back lets me know it’s there, that’s for sure!”

Shining even brighter than the 3.8 GPA he earned at the end of his second semester was the nomination Garrett received for the Outstanding Non-Traditional Student Award, which he proudly accepted on November 6, 2006. But his journey didn’t stop there. Now a senior, he took on another 15 credits of Africology courses in spring 2007, and went above the 3-point GPA marker once again.

While most college students can’t wait to graduate and be done with all the constraints of studying and classes — long days of reading, missing meals, and finding a place to park on campus — Garrett is saddened by his December 2007 graduation date.

“I don’t know what I’m gonna do once it’s all over. I was thinking, maybe I’ll go for my master’s.” At the mere thought of continuing his education, a newfound glimmer appears in Garrett’s eyes and a smile spreads across his face.

“I told Mr. Garrett that he needs to graduate before I retire, and he’s well on his way,” comments his immensely supportive advisor, Susan Fields.

For his final semester at UWM, Garrett is enrolled in Beginning Guitar. “I tried my hand at the guitar when I was in the army, but I could never tune the darn thing. I think it’s about time I give it another go.” And if you think the arthritis in his fingers will stop him from meeting his goal, think again.

“I’ve liked all my classes so far — they’re all outstanding, just simply beautiful…”
For Sergio Piceno, the definition of diversity and inclusion has a personal meaning. It's much more than opening up a dictionary and copying down the words. Instead, his actions speak for themselves. Piceno is a leader by example as he tediously works as a student advocate for diversity and inclusion. One of his priorities is to encourage all students, faculty, and staff to embrace the various cultures and communities that exist on campus. This is reflective of a life consumed with service and hard work.

Originally from Chicago, Piceno moved to Milwaukee with his family at the tender age of 10. After graduating from an all-boys boarding school in Mount Cavalry, Wisconsin, he began his studies at UWM in fall 2004. A full-time student with a double major in International Studies and Foreign Languages & Linguistics, Piceno carefully balances his 24-hour day with attending classes, working on campus, volunteering as much as his schedule allows, and resting. However, with limited time available, Piceno still enjoys at least one of his hobbies each day: photography, reading, writing poetry, running, or listening to music.

As the assistant director of LINKS (Leading and Inspiring New and Knowledgeable Students) Peer Outreach and Mentoring Center, a program funded by student segregated fees, Piceno helps with supervising the mentors, providing resources and materials, and planning programs and events. “Most importantly, I am constantly making sure that the office is being utilized for the purpose of its creation,” he says.

When he is not at work, Piceno sits on the Chancellor’s Council on Inclusion, and is now promoted to the position of student chair. The Council on Inclusion is a committee comprised of UWM administrators, faculty, staff, and students that helps the campus in its diversity efforts. Among his other committee appointments last year, Piceno served as one of the student representatives on the Multicultural Student Center Committee, advocating for student issues and needs.

Piceno’s vast leadership experience includes his past term as the diversity director for the UWM Student Association in 2006-07, where he supervised student coordinators in the areas of women’s, LGBT, and multicultural affairs. “In that position, I encountered many issues that I didn’t know existed. As a former senator for the UWM Student Association, I helped alleviate some of these issues, and pushed hard for a more united and progressive student body,” he says.

Piceno encourages students to speak up and ask for what they need. He truly believes that “UWM thrives from its student body because we are hard working and we get things done.” Piceno also maintains that a lot of resources are available and are accessible to students. “They need to just ask for whatever is necessary and advocate for keeping the resources,” he says.

When asked what programs and events at UWM are most attractive to him, Piceno replies, “I like events and activities that help students make connections to their majors. I also like a variety of events such as the African Student Association Diversity Night, cultural film festivals, LINKSFEST, speed meet, and most importantly, all the career fairs that are provided for students.” He encourages students to never give up on their search for resources, activities, and events that supplement their education.

As a leader, mentor, supervisor, and advocate, Piceno provides lots of help to students and offers the following advice: “Strive for whatever it is that you believe in. This place is for all of us. Take advantage of everything you can, and enjoy your college experience to the fullest... .”
Pa Der and Pa Chee Ly
By Jim Loew

Pa Der and Pa Chee Ly, both 19, have more in common than just a sisterly connection. They are not twins, but are two of a set of triplets. As sophomores this semester at UWM, they also share a strong desire to help people. This is reflected in their educational plans where Pa Der is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Nursing, while her sister is after a bachelor’s in Education, with intentions of tackling a master’s degree after that.

Pa Chee has intentions of becoming a teacher, which came from working as a teacher’s aid. “I worked with second graders, and I enjoyed helping them,” she says. “I would like to go into teaching K through 5.”

While many college students spent their last spring break somewhere on a beach, Pa Der volunteered hers to build houses in Loveland, Colorado for Habitat for Humanity. “For a typical day, we worked from about 8:00 a.m. until about 3:30 p.m.,” she explains. “As a team, we helped with sidings, paintings, roofing, and any house-building related work.”

For Pa Der, there were many rewards in spending her spring break in this manner, one of which was the opportunity to see who the inhabitants of the houses would be. “We were given the chance to meet some of the homeowners, which was quite exciting,” she says. “I really hope to do something like this again because it taught me a lot about those who are suffering just to live another day,” she continues. “This was such a great experience and I really had a great time helping with the project.”

Although there are other members of the Ly family attending UWM and able to offer a helping hand, the sisters are no different from a lot of other students. That is, along with school comes the need to work. During the school year, Pa Chee devotes about 18 hours a week to her job at the Terrace Café in the Union. Pa Der also works in the Union, putting in about 20 hours per week at the Flour Shop.

With school and work occupying a lot of their time, establishing some sort of balance is essential for the two. “I try to make a schedule and set aside times to make sure I can do all that I want to do,” says Pa Der. Her sister, too, has her priorities in line. “I balance everything by working in the morning and having classes in the afternoon,” says Pa Chee. “After all my classes, I study and do my homework.” she adds, “Fridays are the days when I can actually go out and have fun. If I were to go out every day, it would distract me from my school work.”

Now that they know what to expect in college, the two sisters have some advice for incoming freshmen. “Live each day with an open eye and be true to yourself,” says Pa Der. “Try your best to keep your life in balance among school, family, friends, and any extra activities,” she adds. Pa Chee has similar advice. “I would have to say that you should balance your fun and your study time.”

“Live each day with an open eye and be true to yourself.”
— Pa Der Ly

“...balance your fun and your study time.”
— Pa Chee Ly
The more time we spend together on campus, the more time we have to spend at home with our son.”

– Ralph Williams

Ralph III and Marlina Williams are a typical student family, balancing the demands of marriage and parenthood with the rigors of education and work. Ralph, a UWM alumnus, is currently pursuing a graduate degree through the UWM-MPS Internship Program, and Marlina is an undergraduate student in the College of Engineering and Applied Science. Together or alone, the couple can often be found on campus attending classes, dining, working, or studying.

Ralph met Marlina when both were students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. By all accounts, on a campus of 40,000 students, their paths never should have crossed. At the time, Ralph was a politically minded, socially active, multi-talented junior majoring in Theatre and Drama. Marlina was a devout Christian and a shy, but determined, freshman. Ralph, a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, was also the president of Black Student Union, a student playwright, and an accomplished percussionist. Marlina was more content keeping a low profile. With such different personalities, schedules, and interests, Ralph and Marlina could only have met by chance and circumstance.

But chance and circumstance did indeed conspire during the summer of 2001 to guide two soulmates to each other. It started when Ralph accepted an internship with a community-based organization. He could not have anticipated that through this internship he would meet and eventually marry a program volunteer named Marlina Wiggins.

Although the pair began as just friends, Ralph quickly discovered that Marlina “got him.” She understood his ambition and drive, and his life “was better with her than without her.” Shortly after they began dating, however, real life interrupted their fairytale. When Ralph’s grandmother became gravely ill, he moved home and transferred to UWM. One year later, Marlina followed suit. “It just made practical sense,” Marlina says of transferring to UWM. “We knew that we would soon marry and, depending on our academic choices and Ralph’s familial obligations, the UWM environment was more student-family friendly.” The transfer to UWM also kept them close to Ralph’s extremely large and supportive family, as well as Marlina’s twin sister.

In May 2003, Ralph graduated from UWM’s Peck School of the Arts with honors. The following December, he and Marlina married in a small civil service ceremony. Again, Marlina says, “It just made practical sense.” He founded his current band, Closed Caption. She began taking cooking classes and cultivating other interests. And starting last year, he quietly began pursuing academic credits toward teaching certification, and both began working on campus — Ralph in the Multicultural Student Center and Marlina in the Materials Engineering Department. Ralph adds, “The more time we spend together on campus, the more time we have to spend at home with our son,” three-year-old Jayden.

While they are grateful for the support they have received at UWM, the Williams family hopes that as the university grows and changes, it will consider extending hours to more campus services for evening students.

In the future, Ralph will continue to multitask and looks forward to receiving his teaching certification and a master’s degree. Marlina plans to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering, and intends to seek the licenses necessary to work within a government agency.

Although students with families are faced with endless challenges and hurdles, many of them are proving that they can balance their families, work, and studies. For Ralph and Marlina Williams, family comes first, but achieving academic success is also extremely important to them.

How do they do it all? Simply put, “Planning, praying, patience, and paying dues.”
Kate Erickson
By Marla Hyder

Kate Erickson is a force to be reckoned with.
In a recent conversation, she matter-of-factly warned her former high school principal that if he reinstated the school’s Indian mascot for a “throwback” day, “I’ll have no problem going to the TV stations and newspapers. I have a lot of friends. I know a lot of people.”

It’s not an empty threat. During her time at UWM, Erickson has formed relationships with influential people while being interviewed by NPR and local television stations and newspapers, attending national conferences, and serving two terms as president of UWM’s American Indian Student Association.

Erickson wasn’t always so intrepid. “I came from a small town — 8,000 people,” she says, “so moving to Milwaukee was a serious culture shock.” In some ways, however, it was also a relief. At her public high school, Erickson saw how badly American Indian students were treated and she learned to blend in with the non-Indian students.

When she arrived at UWM, Erickson didn’t have to hide any longer. Although American Indians are still “the minority of the minority on campus” — with just over 200 enrolled this semester — Erickson finds that her classmates are willing to listen and learn.

“The majority of the students in my Native history classes were non-Native,” she says. “Some came from small towns like I did and had some stereotypes…. Once they learned what was true and wasn’t true, they started to form their own opinions.” Many changed their minds about issues such as Indian mascots by the end of the semester.

Erickson didn’t let her professors off the hook, either. “Non-Native pros sometimes left out the Native perspective. I pulled them aside and said, ‘You have to teach the whole story, not just what’s convenient to teach.’”

Erickson’s “home away from home” at UWM has been the American Indian Student Services (AISS) in Bolton Hall. The AISS advisors, she says, understand cultural dilemmas, such as time conflicts between classes and traditional ceremonies. They help Native students adjust to UWM, choose classes, apply for scholarships, connect with other American Indians, and share their heritage through such events as the Annual Autumn Pow Wow. “And they have food!” she’s quick to add.

With the financial support of her tribe and the moral support of AISS, Erickson graduated with honors in May. She walked across the stage sporting a cap covered in white satin with a purple-beaded turtle to represent her clan — a gift from her AISS advisor.

Now that she holds a B.A. in American Indian Studies, Erickson is staying at UWM and has begun a master’s degree in Public History this semester. She hopes eventually to use her expertise to serve the Oneida Nation Museum near Green Bay while teaching Native history at a technical or junior college, where she can “work with the tribe and still outreach to other students.”

Kate Erickson is a force to be reckoned with, but that doesn’t mean she is angry or bitter. She recounts stories of injustice and misinformation about her people with a patient smile. She even finds humor in the fact that when her friend’s Ho-Chunk tribe was forcibly removed from its land twice, both times they walked back to their land. “We can’t get rid of you,” she teases.

So how does she stay positive while working for change? “You have to understand that a lot of people just don’t know the true history about American Indians,” she says. “You have to be able to calmly talk about it in an educated way.”

“So many generations of my ancestors have just been irate. Being angry doesn’t help. If I get two schools to change their [mascot] name and get a few students to think a different way, then I’ve been successful.”

“You have to understand that a lot of people just don’t know the true history about American Indians. You have to be able to calmly talk about it in an educated way.”
Dedication and perseverance characterize Herb Morrow, who has tutored hundreds of students at the Tutoring and Academic Resource Center (TARC), helping them master their chemistry and math courses.

A UWM student for the past 10 years, Morrow earned his B.A. in Africology in December 2001. He then decided to pursue a B.S. in Chemistry and plans to graduate in May 2008.

Now 27, Morrow first came to UWM as a junior from North Division High School when he was selected to participate in a summer cancer research project in the Chemistry Department. "Being in that environment really showed me that I needed to pick up the pace on what I needed to know to be a chemist," he says.

Morrow is the oldest of five children. One sister, Deirdre, 21, is a pre-med major in her junior year at UWM. His mother, Yvette, is a nurse.

On the advice of a friend, Coleman Young, who was a math tutor at the time, Morrow started tutoring in January 2001. "I applied online, was called in for an interview, and got the job." He has worked at TARC ever since.

Perhaps part of his ability to help make chemistry understandable came from his father, a special education teacher. A year after his father died of pancreatic cancer, Morrow found himself, at age 16, researching cancer at UWM and starting a path toward a career as a professor and cancer researcher. Although the path has taken longer than most, he willingly shares his experiences with others.

"In my freshman year, I studied so hard. I was spending a lot of time and hours, but not doing the right thing. I didn’t know how to study," says Morrow. "I thought more hours would do it, but sometimes, you actually don’t know what you don’t know until you get to the test," he explains.

Once he becomes a tutor, Morrow realizes that a tutor can help save a lot of time. He credits the tutoring center for not only helping him solidify the basics of chemistry, physics, and math, but also for helping him gain new techniques for note-taking and studying.

Morrow makes sure his students understand the materials. "Since I struggled initially, I can actually see how they are thinking about problems the wrong way," he says. "I can identify the source of the problem and help them understand it backward, forward, and upside down."

He does not only tutor and mentor students, he also has a tutor in physics. "Anthony Rick really reached out to me, and genuinely wanted to help," he adds.

Morrow’s second bit of advice for students is, “Go to all your classes.” He pays his own tuition, which is an extra incentive for not missing classes. Even though stretching it out has been a financial hardship, he didn’t want to take shortcuts.

Experiences learned from his Africology courses have motivated Morrow academically. "Reading a lot of stories about African Americans doing amazing things under extreme conditions always makes me feel guilty about complaining," says Morrow. Especially after reading about Booker T. Washington walking 500 miles to go to college, “I can certainly make to my 9 a.m. class!”

Another of Morrow’s advice — find a reason higher than yourself to continue in your major — also comes from personal experience. "If I was just interested in chemistry, I probably would have switched; but for me, I think of my dad so I am not going to give up on him," he says. "If there is a higher motive, then use that as a motivation to continue.”

Morrow’s friendship with Kamisha Lowe, who passed away from lupus a year ago, was also an inspiration to him. Lowe graduated from UWM in May 2002 in Psychology. She was diagnosed with lupus while working 40 hours a week, going to school, and raising her son. “There were times when she was doing her homework in the hospital bed,” says Morrow. “She even completed a statistics final in the hospital.”

Lowe also suffered from arthritis. Her legs locked one time when she and Morrow left a class. After noticing her inability to walk, he asked, “You just want me to carry you, don’t you?” She simply smiled as he carried her to her car.

And he has been carrying students toward academic success for almost seven years. His philosophy? “In life, no matter what cards you are dealt, don’t make any excuses. Just do it.”
When Associate Professor Portia Cobb received a call from her colleague, Lane Hall, saying he wanted to nominate her for the UW System’s Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award, she told her daughter, “I don’t think that’s such a good idea.”

“The year before, I had a really rough academic year,” explains Cobb. But her 28-year-old daughter encouraged her to go ahead with it. When she filled out the required questionnaire, Cobb encountered a surprise: “They started asking about mentoring, and I began to realize that I was still in touch with students I’d worked with years before — students of color. I had never thought of that as mentoring.”

Indeed, Cobb is a mentor. She tells of a former student who went on to be a Fulbright Scholar and work for the BBC, and another who recently began a career as a professor. With equal pride, she shares stories and pictures of students who overcame great odds just to graduate from UWM.

Cobb’s influence extends far beyond the walls of UWM. Through the Community Media Project, which she has directed for nearly 15 years, Cobb partners with schools and community organizations to reach out to Milwaukee’s youth through film festivals, producer’s forums, and workshops.

“I was so scared when I started,” she recalls. “I would wake up on Saturday mornings thinking, ‘I gotta face these kids!’ But I have no anxiety about that anymore. I must have an imprint on my forehead that reads, ‘Works with teens,’ because now anywhere I go, teens just talk to me.”

Cobb believes her mentoring role is enhanced by her own struggles, past and present. “When I was in film school,” she says, “I didn’t have an African American mentor, but I had a woman mentor and that made a difference because I felt she was receptive to my ideas and to my vision.” Her advice for overcoming the challenges? “I just think that it takes vision. As they say, ‘If you’re going through hell, don’t stop. Keep going.’ The persistence is what pays off.”

It took persistence for Cobb to make it through her own undergraduate education, which she began at age 30 with a five-year-old daughter in tow. While at Mills College, she decided to attend film school at San Francisco State University, rather than buying a radio station, as she had originally intended. Since then, she has made a number of short “experimental” films — conceptual pieces meant to be seen in galleries and at festivals.

Cobb is currently working on two longer documentaries. The first explores her family history from the perspective of the South Carolina land to which she is an heiress. The deeper she delves into the problem of “land loss,” the broader the scope of her project becomes. “My film has grown from my family story into a community story,” she says.

The second documentary has an even wider lens: Filmed in three West African countries and in five languages, it focuses on traditional music. She has already been invited to screen her film at The Bouki Blues Festival in Dakar, Senegal.

Closer to home, Cobb has recently taught an Ethnography course and is pioneering two new classes: Black Radical Film, which explores films inspired by social propaganda; and Community Action Video, in which students are producing a documentary about “Payday Loan” stores in Milwaukee’s disenfranchised communities.

Cobb is looking forward to these classes with renewed vigor since winning the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award. “Winning was a pleasant surprise,” she says. “It gave me more energy, made me more positive.” It celebrated a difficult but fruitful year of soul-searching and growth. “I feel like I’m riding the wave.”
Chia Youyee Vang
By Marla Hyder

Chia Youyee Vang was just eight years old when she fled Laos on foot in 1979. It had been four years since the country fell apart in the wake of the Vietnam War, but only when their village was bombed did Vang’s father finally consent to leaving his home and herds of cattle for the uncertainties of life as a refugee.

Vang’s family traversed the Laotian jungle at night and hid during the day. When they reached the Mekong River, they hired a guide to take them across, hoping he wouldn’t flip the boat in the deep water — a deadly scam that killed thousands of Hmong migrants.

But Vang did arrive safely at Ban Vinai, the largest United Nations-sponsored Hmong refugee camp in Thailand. After six months in the camp, she boarded an airplane for Minnesota and began her new life as a Hmong American.

When she arrived in St. Paul, Vang didn’t know how to read or write Hmong, which had been primarily an oral language until the 1950s. While she learned her own written language, she was also learning English. “It wasn’t until eighth grade that I felt I could compete academically, that I made the honor roll,” she says.

That was just the beginning of Vang’s outstanding academic career. She went on to earn a B.A. in Political Science/International Relations and French from Gustavus Adolphus College (including a year of study in France), and a M.A. in Social Policy/U.S. Foreign Policy and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota. While pursuing her degrees, she also founded her own research consulting firm.

Vang chose the field of American Studies because it helped her pursue the questions, What is the “American Experience”? and What does it mean to be an American? Naturally, her own history informed her perspectives. “Studying Hmong migration is studying the American Experience,” she says. She looks at the factors that contribute to whether people become “successful migration stories” — factors such as identity, networks, immigration policy, and war.

This is one of the reasons Vang teaches a Hmong history course at UWM. “Few Hmong really have a deep or even surface understanding of their history,” she says. “There is a lot of misinformation. In my classes, they get to explore their identity in what I hope is a safe environment.” She loves to see Hmong American students begin to “put the pieces together,” and she also welcomes non-Hmong students into the class.

Vang is UWM’s first Hmong American tenured-track faculty member and was hired as part of the Hmong American Studies Initiative. In addition to teaching a full load of courses in History and Comparative Ethnic Studies, Vang is working to develop a Hmong American Studies certificate program. Although she just began teaching at UWM in Spring 2007, she is already in high demand among departments across campus. “The interest in Hmong American studies is broad,” she says.

Vang knows it is important to remain connected to her own community and history. She recently traveled to Vietnam, where she had an extraordinary encounter with a Hmong woman from the highlands. “Our lives are separated by one hundred years of migration,” Vang reflects. “We are so different, yet so similar. She was like a long-lost family member. She held my hand almost the whole time.” (See page 7 for Vang’s reflections on the trip.)

As a teacher, Vang tries to help her Hmong students cherish their heritage. “Don’t forget who you are and where you come from, and the sacrifices your parents made for you. It’s a burden to be a resource for your parents and your community, but I encourage students to see that as an opportunity.”

Vang clearly has taken her own advice and is a model for everyone — whether they are Hmong American or not — at UWM.
Upon entering the doors of Bolton Hall, you are likely to be greeted by one of the brightest smiles and friendliest faces UWM has to offer. Throughout the day, you will hear knowledgeable commentary on issues ranging from politics and sports to religion and pop culture from Cedric Humphrey, a custodian at UWM for the past year. Without neglecting a dirty classroom, a spotty floor, a full garbage can, or an empty human soul, Humphrey greets and engages those who work and study in Bolton Hall each day.

Despite the endless trail of unwanted scraps of paper, tracks of mud, and who-knows-what, Humphrey smiles and maintains that his current job is a “break.” Really! Anyone else would consider eating a Snickers Bar as being on a “break.” But coming from Humphrey, a 27-year career Marine, it sounds just about right.

During his time in the U.S. Marine Corps, Humphrey reached the level of Master Gunnery Sergeant. “I was in charge of controlling fixed wing and rotary wing aircrafts. We used situational (paper) maps and LCD maps with 50- to 60-inch screens,” he explains. This means that Humphrey was the person who directed which helicopter went where and at what time. Humphrey was also a Marine Corps district recruiter and a substance abuse control officer. His secondary responsibilities were to control access and inventory of his entire unit’s classified materials. It appears that, with such rank and responsibility, there isn’t much Humphrey has not seen or done.

Since his military career afforded him the opportunity to travel quite extensively, Humphrey has been to over 13 countries in Europe, the Middle and Far East, the North American continent, and “a bunch of other places I can’t remember right now,” he says.

Humphrey, 47, has two sons and one daughter. “I have been married for 26 years to the same woman. I say it like that because military deployments can be extremely hard on marriages,” he clarifies.

Humphrey enjoys his job at UWM and considers himself to be an example of what is good about UWM and America as a whole. A dedicated worker, he puts as much of himself into his current job as he did into his military career. He is so busy that this interview was conducted in five-minute intervals over the span of a week as his schedule allowed.

Why does Humphrey smile so much? “You have to smile daily. It is the easiest way to disarm a person. When you walk around with a smile, you will find a lot of people smiling right back,” he answers with a big, friendly smile.

Cedric Humphrey
By Ralph Williams

Cedric Humphrey (second from the left) in his full dress uniform at the Marine Air Support Squadron-1 Birthday Ball in November 2005

Cedric Humphrey has a biting sense of humor, coupled with a razor sharp wit that he uses to express his views on all types of subjects. Following are his succinct, honest answers (A) to a list of one-word topics (T), which reflect his secret to happiness or key to satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: Work</th>
<th>A: Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Family</td>
<td>A: What you live for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Youth</td>
<td>A: A wonderful time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Justice</td>
<td>A: Fickle in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Strength</td>
<td>A: Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Business</td>
<td>A: Take care of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Milwaukee</td>
<td>A: We got issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nicole Stroobants, director of LINKS Peer Outreach and Mentoring Center and interim director of the newly established First Year Center, speaks these words of advice with an energy that is contagious. Stroobants first heard these words years ago from Donald Asher, a nationally-recognized educator and speaker, at a McNair Program event.

Stroobants believes that good advice from successful people must be recycled and reused so students will make the most of their college experience. LINKS is an acronym for Leading and Inspiring New and Knowledgeable Students. It operates concurrently with the First Year Center as a student-to-student resource that encourages healthy academic and social development.

“Never self-select out!”

Stroobants, working in middle school, and continued in high school through UW-Green Bay’s Upward Bound program. While participating in that program, Stroobants met Ruth Russell, now the director of UWM’s Academic Opportunity Center. Stroobants credits that program and Russell for peaking her interest in attending UWM.

While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Stroobants met Sharon Stricklin, former director of LINKS. “I was working as a waitress in a restaurant that was about to close,” she explains. “One day, Sharon came into the restaurant and asked what my plans were after the restaurant closed, and asked if I wanted to apply for a job as a peer mentor.” That was in 2000.

Stroobants has been with LINKS ever since.

“I’ve been blessed to have had so many people support and encourage me,” says Stroobants. “There have been several faculty and staff members who made a difference, along with my supportive family.” Becoming a LINKS peer mentor was almost as rewarding to Stroobants as it was valuable to the students with whom she shared her experiences and advice. “I began to connect my academic career with building a life and fulfilling my dreams,” she adds. Academically, her grades skyrocketed from a 2.3 to a 4.0, and she became a McNair Scholar.

“McNair created a world of support and opportunity for me,” says Stroobants. “It was one of the best things I ever did, and I wouldn’t be in graduate school today without having had the McNair experience.” She is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Administrative Leadership.

While both LINKS and the First Year Center are open and available to all students, Stroobants says that she plans to focus on the underrepresented population at LINKS. She adds that even though UWM draws a lot of first-generation and low-income students of color, there are still not enough services in place to meet the specific needs of this population.

“Often, these students are not aware that maintaining a decent grade point average is not just dependent on attending classes, studying, and passing tests,” says Stroobants. “It is also dependent on being able to do those things effectively when crisis strikes, when life becomes confusing, or when career focus changes. “Having a place to go and someone to talk with about difficult situations and life-changing decisions is what LINKS and the First Year Center are all about.”
Sandra Martell
By Marla Hyder

When Sandra Martell takes her 18-month-old daughter to the Betty Brinn Children’s Museum, she has to work a little harder than the rest of us to enjoy herself. Not because she doesn’t like museums. Quite the contrary: Martell likes museums so much that she worked as a museum educator for over ten years, cultivating an expertise that is hard to turn off during family outings.

Unlike her daughter, Martell didn’t go to museums when she was a child growing up in a low-income area of The Bronx. Her Puerto Rican family didn’t even know about El Museo del Barrio, a New York museum devoted to the art and culture of Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os. “It just wasn’t on the radar,” Martell says.

Through a program for inner-city youth, Martell began attending elite private schools in seventh grade and eventually landed at Cornell University, where she studied sculpture and art history and became a practicing artist. It was at Cornell that she took her first museum job as a volunteer guide, conducting tours in Spanish. An ensuing flurry of artist residencies, job offers, and graduate studies led her to positions in such museums as the Studio Museum in Harlem, El Museo del Barrio, The National Museum of the American Indian/Smithsonian Institution, and the Seattle Art Museum.

It was during her tenure as curator of education at The Jersey City Museum that Martell realized museum education was where she belonged. But she also recognized that something was missing. “I was following the models designed by others, but they weren’t designed for the populations I was working with,” especially people of color, she says. “For example, I worked with 3,000 eighth graders, focusing on immigration issues, but I didn’t know enough about the students and their needs and how to meet their needs. I realized I needed to study how people learn.”

So that’s exactly what she did. After obtaining an M.A. in museum professions from Seton Hall University, she pursued a doctorate in educational psychology at the University of Washington, writing her dissertation on how children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds learn in museums. In fall 2005, this work led her to UWM where she teaches Introduction to Museum Education, Psychology of Race and Ethnicity, and Introduction to Learning and Development.

Martell also organized the very successful “What It Means to Be Latina/o Symposium” in March 2007 with fellow faculty member René Antrop-González. More than 500 people participated in panel sessions and enjoyed spoken word poetry, Afro-Caribbean jazz, and an address by artist/educator/activist Judith Baca. Most importantly, according to Martell, the symposium opened up a dialogue about Latina/o identity, in conjunction with the recent Milwaukee Public Museum exhibition, “Chicano Now!”

“I think there’s a need for people to have some kind of venue to talk about identity issues and think about identity in terms of all parts of life — art, music, cultural expression, gender, mental health, etc.,” she says. She believes that ethnically-specific museums, such as America’s Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, are valuable places where “issues of identity are explored over and over again.”

As an assistant professor in Educational Psychology, Martell is now embarking on an exciting new research project. Partnering with other UWM faculty and several community organizations, she is studying how 500 Milwaukee Latina/o children and their families learn. “I think [the study] could really help practitioners like I was. You’re doing it day-to-day, but you don’t know how to access the research. Our goal is not only to distribute our research to academics but also to practitioners, to those working with Latina/o groups.”

With so much going on, does Martell still have time to create her own art? “That’s what retirement is for,” she says with a smile.
Congratulations to the following African American, American Indian, Latina/o, and Southeast Asian students who graduated in May 2007!

Alberto Adame
BBA: Accounting

Leah R. Adeniji
MBA: Business Administration

Angela Maria Adger
MS: Educational Psychology

Gideon Ibukun Afolayan
BSE: Electrical Engineering

Anayo Emmanuel Agwoeme
MS: Administrative Leadership

Maria L. Alamo
BS: Criminal Justice

Aminta Iliaana Aldape
BS: Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Martha Ali
BA: Committee Interdisciplinary

Cori L. Altman
BS: Political Science

Gloria Dolores Analla
BBA: Accounting

Ali Arciniega
BA: Geography Minor: Spanish

Daniel R. Armstrong
BBA: Accounting

Katie Jo Arnold
BS: Communication Sciences & Disorders

Faythe Arredondo
MLIS: Library Information Science

James N. Aryeetey
MBA: Executive MBA

Kwabena Asamoah
MHRLR: Human Resources & Labor Relations

Joseph Albert Atkinson
BBA: Management Information Systems

Hermance Attoumbre
BS: Biological Sciences

Omorinsola Comfort Awosika
BA: Political Science

Daniel Craig Ayala
BS: Architectural Studies

Christian E. Bakemeyer
MA: English

Brittany Lauren Becerra
BA: Psychology

Mary D. Berrios
MSW: Social Work

Amber Dawn Boardman
BA: English

Angelleque Michelle Bogan
BA: Sociology

Henry Bordas-Murphy
BA: Biological Sciences

Ellelean Nicole Bridges
BS: Nursing

Travis Le’ Von Brown, Sr.
BS: Kinesiology Minor: General Business

Citlali Elvira Bump
BS: Information Resources

Jeanine Launa Burrell
BS: Health Care Administration Minor: General Business

Ike Lavin Butler
BSE: Electrical Engineering Minor: Computer Science

Dorleatha Irene Campbell II
BS: Criminal Justice

Keli Latrice Carr
BS: Criminal Justice

Damian Ernesto Carrasco-Zanini
BBA: Marketing

Silvino Jose Castillo
BS: Architectural Studies

Sydney Nong Chang
MS: Educational Psychology

Eduardo Chenhalls
BA: Communication

Lisa M. Clifford
MS: Psychology

Marshall D. Craig
BBA: Finance

Devin Danielle Crawford
BA: Psychology, Sociology

Ahicar Cruz
BS: Architectural Studies

Steven M. Cumby
BS: Criminal Justice

Julie Ann Darrough
BS: Education

Tracy Vannette Davis-Wright
BS: Criminal Justice

Luis A. Diaz
BS: Social Work

Pamela Jean Diaz
BS: Educational Studies

Alcira Rene Dockery
BA: Communication

Jose L. Dominguez, Jr.
MARCH: Architecture

April Florine Drake
MS: Curriculum & Instruction

Trinh K. Duong
BA: Pre-Medicine, Psychology

Kate Lindsey Erickson
BA: Committee Interdisciplinary Minor: History

Wendel Cory Eskridge
MS: Exceptional Education

Latrice Antionette Everette-Robinson
BFA: Music Education

Jeunesse Forchin
BS: Nursing Parkside

Sarah V. Fouse
PHD: Nursing

Jorge Luis Garces
BA: Communication

Abby Marie Garcia
BS: Criminal Justice

Alfred J. Gomez
MBA: Executive MBA

Jesse Nathan Gonzalez
BBA: Accounting

Moranda R. Goss
BS: Social Work

Angela Gray
BS: Criminal Justice

Anthony Louis Hale
BS: Nursing Collaborative

Corryne Michelle Hammer
BS: Criminal Justice

Joo Hang
BS: Criminal Justice

Nikiya Q. Harris
MS: Administrative Leadership

Nekia Marie Harwell
BBA: Human Resources

Lisa Renee Hayden
BA: Communication, Sociology

Mildred Lucille Henry
BS: Nursing Collaborative

Melissa H. Her
MSW: Social Work

Seng Her
BBA: Finance

Oniel Hernandez
MS: Nursing

Amy Lynn Hessefort
BS: Recreation

Dane Loren Hilmer
BA: History

Chuckson D. Holloway
PHD: Urban Studies

Julia Cennora Hooper
MS: Exceptional Education

Tanisha Shana Hooper
BA: Psychology

Maria Cristina Huyke
BA: Anthropology Minor: History

Adolfo Rafael Jimenez
BS: Architectural Studies

Brandi Jeanette Johnson
BS: Social Work

Tamara Renay Jones
BBA: Finance

Tanika Chantel Jones
BA: Economics

Tatiana Jones
MS: Curriculum & Instruction

Edgar Jordan
PHD: Urban Education

Alexander George Jorgensen
BA: English

Daryl David Knox
MS: Administrative Leadership

Stephen E Kreuzinski
BBA: Finance

Brian Scott Kurzynski
BA: Music

Donald Lantario Laster
BS: Criminal Justice

Ronald Keith Lawson
BS: Health Care Administration Minor: General Business

Jasmin Ledesma
BA: Psychology

Bridget Renee Lee
BBA: Finance

Richard Lee
BBA: Management Information Systems

Scott Lee
BBA: Management Information Systems

Shee Tong Yue Lee
BSE: Electrical Engineering

Xiong Lee
BBA: Marketing

Rosalyn L. Lehman
PHD: Urban Education

Cory M. LeMieux
BBA: Marketing

Corey Mack Livingston
BS: Information Resources

Catherine E. Lopez
BS: Education

Latoya S. Love
MS: Cultural Foundations of Education

Tamokia Renee Malone
BA: Psychology

Carlos Manrique
BS: Social Work Minor: Spanish

Diana V. Martinez
BS: Biological Sciences, Pre-Medicine

Rosamaria R. Martinez
MBA: Business Administration

Joel Abel Mauricio
BFA: Music

Dennis Lee Maxberry
BS: Information Resources
Congratulations to the following new freshmen who are recipients of the Multicultural Scholarship Program:

Jody Bauer (Wind Lake, WI)
Royal and Myra Taxman Scholarship &
Multicultural Academic Achievement Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Undecided

Terence Campbell (Franklin, WI)
Botts Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Film

Tiawanda Garrett (Milwaukee, WI)
Multicultural Academic Achievement Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Undecided

Ashley Knight (Madison, WI)
Ambuel Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Undecided

Karlton Lattimore (Milwaukee, WI)
Multicultural Academic Achievement Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Architectural Studies

Derek Leo (Hartland, WI)
Multicultural Academic Achievement Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Psychology

Jasmine Nichols (Milwaukee, WI)
Jack F. and Corrine V. Reichert Scholarship
Current Plan/Major: Nursing

Note: This list does not include the many multicultural students who received other scholarships. Information provided by the Department of Financial Aid.
Selected photos from the Multicultural Student Graduation Program and Reception on May 9, 2007.