6 June 1996

To: Marilyn Miller, Secretary of the University

From: Alice Gillam, Academic Policy Committee Chair

Re: Annual Report of the Academic Policy Committee

During 1995-96, the Academic Policy Committee met nine times. The following policies were discussed and actions taken.

Policies Discussed:

1) In response to Vice Chancellor Ken Watters' request, the APC reviewed Recommendation #3 of the Credits-to-Degree Plan. The Committee issued a two-part response to Vice Chancellor Watters on January 9, 1996. (See attached memo.)

2) The committee also discussed the revised draft of the Academic Planning Committee's Strategic Plan at the request of the Vice Chancellor. A summary of the committee's response to this plan was sent to the Vice Chancellor on January 29, 1996. (See attached memo.)

3) At the request of student member, Keith Zielinski, the APC discussed changing the size and redesigning the format of the UWM Diploma to make it more suitable for framing. Mr. Zielinski has headed a subcommittee which has been investigating various possibilities with the assistance of Bronwyn Rhodes, public relations advisor to the College of Letters & Science.

4) At its final meeting, May 1, 1996, the committee discussed policies related to commencement honors in response to Chancellor Schroeder's request. The committee appointed a subcommittee to meet during the summer to consider these issues.

Actions Taken and Forwarded to the Faculty Senate:

1) The APC approved with revision the Teaching Evaluations Procedures originally forwarded to the committee by the Blue Ribbon Committee on Undergraduate Education. The committee sent the revised proposal to the Faculty Senate for approval. (See motion dated December 1, 1995.) The Senate approved this motion with additional revisions.

2) The APC approved and sent to the Faculty Senate the 1997-98 tentative Academic Calendar. The Senate approved the Calendar.
3) The APC approved with minor revisions and sent to the Faculty Senate the new Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures. (See April 1, 1996 memo to the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate.) The Senate approved these procedures.

4) At its final meeting, May 1, 1996, the APC approved the Honors Program proposal that Honors' students be given priority registration status. The APC added the condition that the policy be reviewed after two years to determine the effects of the policy and to decide whether or not it should become permanent. This recommendation was forwarded to George Baker, Chair of the University Committee, on May 30, 1996. The University Committee forwarded this proposal to the Senate, which will consider the proposal in the fall. (See June 5, 1996 memo from George Baker.)

1995-96 Academic Policy Committee Members:

James Blackburn, School of Social Welfare, ex officio
Sally Derrwaltt, College of Letters & Science, ex officio
Alice Gillam, Department of English & Comparative Literature
Marshall Goodman, College of Letters & Science, ex officio
Gary Grass, Student Association Representative
William Gump, Student Association Representative
Susan Heidrich, School of Nursing
Magda Kandil, Department of Economics
Jon Lenichok, Enrollment Services, ex officio
Winston Ring, Department of Business
Anthony Schnarsky, Department of Architecture
Mary Wierenga, Graduate School, ex officio
Lynn Worsham, Department of English & Comparative Literature
Keith Zielinski, Student Association Representative
9 January 1996

TO: Kenneth L. Watters
   Provost and Vice Chancellor

FROM: Academic Policy Committee

James Blackburn, School of Social Welfare
Sally Derrwaldt, College of Letters & Science
Alice Gillam, Chair, Department of English & Comparative Literature
Marshall Goodman, College of Letters & Science
Gary Grass, Student
William Gump, Student
Susan Heidrich, School of Nursing
Magda Kandil, Department of Economics
Jon Lenich, Enrollment Services
Winston Ring, Department of Business
Anthony Schnarsky, Department of Architecture
Mary Wierenga, Graduate School
Lynn Worsham, Department of English and Comparative Literature

RE: Credits-to-Degree Plan

At the November 15, 1995, meeting of the Academic Policy Committee, we discussed the Credit-to-Degree Plan. In particular, we talked at length about Recommendation #3, which recommends enforcing the repeat policy. Although the committee agrees that unnecessary repeats caused by poor advising and/or misinformation ought to be eliminated, a number of objections were raised concerning this recommendation. Students repeat courses for a variety of legitimate reasons—to raise grades in courses required for the major (e.g., Psych. 101, Elem. Logic) and to pass proficiency courses in which the student's skills are weak or rusty. To enforce the repeat policy would be a hardship for many students and would undoubtedly cause student attrition, thereby contributing further to UWM’s enrollment problems. One committee member suggested that students ought to be allowed an unlimited number of repeats but that each take should count in the overall grade for that course. Committee members also felt that the repeat policy should be liberalized so that students need not get permission from their Dean for a third take. No one spoke in favor of Recommendation #3.
The following statement was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved:

The current repeat policy should not be enforced, and students should be allowed to take courses a third time without special permission from their Dean.

Following approval of this statement, the committee discussed the proposal in general, and, again, many objections were raised. Committee members expressed concern about the whole thrust of the Credits-to-Degree Plan. Specifically, the Plan seems to value minimal credits to degree over students' broad educational goals. Not only do students earn "excess" credits because of a change in major, but also students earn "excess" credits because of intellectual curiosity and interest in a broad range of subjects. While it is desirable to enable students to graduate expeditiously if they wish by offering required courses regularly, advising students well, and avoiding unnecessary repetition of coursework, it is not desirable to focus obsessively on an optimal number of credits-to-degree in such a way that it discourages students from taking courses to broaden their education. Therefore, we urge you and others who are responsible for implementing this Plan to consider its long term effects and implications about the nature and purpose of a university education.

cc: Ruth Williams, Assistant Vice Chancellor
MEMORANDUM

TO: Kenneth L. Watters, Provost and Vice Chancellor
FROM: Alice Gillam, Chair, Academic Policy Committee
RE: Academic Planning Committee Revised Strategic Plan

At its meeting of January 24, 1996, the Academic Policy Committee members considered the revision of the Strategic Plan. The following comments and suggestions are offered:

1. Strategic Initiative #1 should be revised to indicate an improvement in UWM's position as a Research II university but not state that we will move into the upper half of Research II universities. In addition, there was some concern that, by implication, it may suggest relegating undergraduate teaching to a lower priority.

2. Strategic Initiative #5: The illustrative tactical strategy b appears to be in opposition to increasing student enrollment. It was suggested that the wording be changed to "reflect the diversity of Southeastern Wisconsin area" as the population served; not just the Milwaukee area. This revision is a more realistic and attainable goal. If left as the Milwaukee area, Great Milwaukee area would be better.

3. Strategic Initiative #7: The other APC would like to see this initiative addressed in less negative terms. We need to let the community know what a great place UWM is. Image is two areas; UWM and the Milwaukee community.

4. Strategic Initiative #8 should be added to deal with the environment.

In addition, the committee members thought that the revised Strategic Plan ignores the resource issue and continues an image of all things to all people without taking the opportunity to make the hard choices. The plan as described does not seem realistic.