

Curricular Pathways Working Group

Report to the General Faculty Planning Committee

Mar. 1, 2006

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Introduction

This working group was charged with making recommendations in such curricular areas as: verticality and achievement; the credit system; interconnections across the curriculum; collaboration among A&S, the Conservatory, and the Museum; campus greening; and internationalization.

Roughly, these areas divide up in two sections. One section is related to students' individual pathways through the Oberlin curriculum—the road taken across the Oberlin map. The other is related to the overall structure of that curriculum: the map itself.

After analyzing the problems and challenges at hand, the working group decided on a set of general strategies. For some of these, it developed concrete proposals for change. For others, it developed statements of purpose or advisory tools to help make faculty and students aware of the need for more coherence, verticality, achievement, etc. What follows below is the general framework of the discussion, with references to the specific proposals attached.

The working group is aware that one of the implications of its charge is rethinking the entire credit system. But while we have discussed it at some length, we do not feel ready to revamp the credit system as a whole in our proposals.

Our working group has not dealt in any detail with the curricular implications of greening the campus, nor with internationalization, since these seemed more the province of other working groups; we believe that some of our proposals, however, will have implications and possibilities for those aspects of our charge.

A. *Students' Individual Pathways*

We interpreted the term “curricular pathway” as the **set of courses** any given student takes during their four (or five) years at Oberlin, concentrating in particular on

- the **composition** of that set of courses (in terms of breadth and depth, and in terms of knowledge and skills acquired),
- the **order** in which those courses were taken, and
- the **coherence** among those courses—i.e., whether the resulting pathway is more than the sum of its parts.

There are currently two main structures in place to guide students on their pathway through the curriculum:

- general graduation requirements (112 credits, 9/9/9, 84- and 56-hour rule, WT, residency, WP, QP, CD, etc.);
- major requirements.

At one of its first meetings the working group analyzed a relatively broad set of randomly selected transcripts. Many of our proposals are meant to help remedy the problems we saw in those transcripts. We noticed in particular:

- that some students' pathways lack coherence among courses taken;
- that some students' pathways do not display the order of courses that would seem ideal; basic elements such as distribution requirements or writing proficiency are sometimes not fulfilled until the third or fourth year;
- that some students' transcripts suggest a senior year that lacks a continuing upward curve or a culminating quality.

In light of these problems, the Working Group devised the following two strategies and related proposals. Some of these proposals are briefly indicated here only; for others, please refer to documents following this summary, as indicated below.

1. Encourage more verticality, intentionality, and coherence in students' course selections; bring more clarity to a student's four or five-years at Oberlin as an upward trajectory or "arc".

Strategies and proposals related to verticality, intentionality, and coherence:

1. **Create more clarity about the function or "spirit" of each of a student's four years at Oberlin;** design a curricular **Road Map** as a tool for students, advisors, and parents, while still allowing for the possibility of different meaningful "scenarios" to move through the four years (see "**Road Map**" draft document).
2. **Devise ways to encourage students to reflect more actively on their Oberlin career:** their own intellectual development, the courses they have taken and the way these interconnect; etc. Consider introducing a pilot program in which students design online "**e-Portfolios**" as a way for them to show, and reflect on, the overall structure of their pathway, and to track their development and achievements.
3. **Strongly encourage all students to engage in some kind of senior experience,** conceived as a culmination of their college career and an opportunity to develop, integrate and display their knowledge and skills (see "**Senior Experience**" document).
4. **Use the new, searchable on-line catalog to increase the quantity and quality of information available about courses,** and make explicit any potential interconnections. Consider introducing a course classification system (a "Database of the Curriculum") that would include entries such as a course's disciplinary orientation; thematic keywords; courses recommended to take *before, after, or together* with a certain course; etc.

2. Revisit the graduation requirements:

1. Study the effectiveness of the current general graduation requirements (see "Other Questions to Consider" below);
2. Consider modifying the existing requirements;
3. Consider encouraging the fulfillment of certain requirements at particular moments (e.g., "the distribution requirement has to be fulfilled by the end of the sophomore year");

4. Work toward a greater integration of requirements (e.g., think about ways in which general requirements interact with major requirements; or make certain requirements “built-in” aspects of particular programs, in the same way that the FYSP has incorporated both Writing Proficiency and Information Literacy);
5. Encourage departments and programs to think about the ways in which other elements that are desirable but not currently required (such as foreign language proficiency or information literacy) might be integrated into the major requirements.

Proposal related to revisiting the graduation requirements:

1. Redesign the distribution requirement to establish a stronger foundation in learning across the divisions of the college (see “**Distributional Depth**” document)

Other questions to consider about verticality, intentionality, and coherence:

1. What are our current graduation requirements meant to achieve? Do they still represent those elements that Oberlin as an institution believes indispensable to a liberal arts education? Does their current formulation and enforcement achieve this objective? We believe that a review of the various graduation requirements (CD, WR, etc.) is in order, but we have not gone beyond a preliminary discussion of these issues.
2. Are there other elements that we believe to be indispensable but that are currently *not* represented in the requirement structure? How about proficiencies such as Information Literacy, “visual literacy,” or “aural literacy”? Or communication skills, foreign language, or a senior experience?
3. Is our present credit system the best instrument for focusing the student’s educational experience? How are credits formulated? What should a standard course load be?

B. The Structure of Oberlin’s Curriculum

Oberlin’s curriculum is broad and rich; but it is not as coherent as it could be. Some potential interconnections go undiscovered by students, or are discovered when it’s too late to take advantage of them. The College, the Conservatory, and the Museum do not rely on each other as much as they could, and students could get more out of Oberlin’s musical, artistic, and intellectual wealth.

Strategies and Proposals related to the structure of the curriculum:

1. **Create explicit “theme years”** to link courses and faculty together in such a way that students are encouraged to combine courses in a meaningful way, both horizontally and vertically. (See “**Interdisciplinary Theme Years,**” below.)
2. **Encourage more collaboration between the College and Conservatory.** (See “**The Conservatory and the Liberal Arts,**” below.)
3. Encourage more collaboration between the College, Conservatory, and Museum. (See “**The Allen Art Museum and the Liberal Arts,**” below.)

Document 1: Road Map (Draft)

Academic Learning Objectives: A Road Map for Advising and Planning Four Years at Oberlin in the College of Arts and Sciences

Charge: to encourage and strengthen a culture of achievement and curricular verticality.

Challenge: The Oberlin curriculum is a complicated and rich entity. Students are not well-positioned to make their way through what can be a confusing or even daunting variety of options and requirements. Even experienced advisers can become distracted by the contingencies of student situations and the complications of requirements and desiderata. If we want students to be aware of their achievements, to look ahead to further opportunities for achievement, and to succeed in a vertically-designed curriculum, we need to map out as explicitly as possible the various milestones we expect students to mark and advisers to advise about. In doing so, however, we should not presume that there is any one prescribed course through the Oberlin education, so this roadmap is presented only as a rough guide for advising and planning.

Status: This is an advising tool; it is not a set of requirements. It is hoped that in combination with a vigorous advising and portfolio system, students and faculty can benefit from its reminders of milestones in the academic experience. It may be useful to collate this with objectives for student life as well. The intention is to provide opportunities for intentionality and dialog among students and advisors about planning and reflection around the BA degree. It should be seen as one of several proposals designed to create a culture of verticality and intentionality within the curriculum (including the Senior Experience and e-portfolio). Going perhaps beyond our charge, we envision this “Road Map” in its maturity as a color-coded, 11x17 “poster” for faculty bulletin boards.

	First Year	Sophomore Year	Junior Year	Senior Year
Intellectual milestones	<p>Begin to understand how knowledge is organized; develop epistemological self-awareness</p> <p>Test interests and talents against reality of college curriculum; try many disciplines</p>	<p>Finish pre-major exploration of the disciplines</p> <p>Get enough experience in a field to be confident about committing to it as a major</p> <p>Explore interdisciplinary learning</p> <p>Begin to plan for life after Oberlin</p>	<p>Acquire depth in the major in both content and skills in the discipline</p> <p>Develop intellectual independence</p> <p>Plan for life after Oberlin</p>	<p>Solidify skills in communication, analysis</p> <p>Achieve mastery of the major field</p> <p>Reflect on the meaning of the disciplines, their major, the nature of liberal arts breadth and depth</p> <p>Explore how achievements at Oberlin will relate to the larger world, whether career, graduate school, or lifelong learning</p>
Curricular milestones	<p>Use distribution requirements (9-9-9, etc) to guide exploration in unfamiliar or scary disciplines</p> <p>Study a language</p> <p>Take courses that will help strengthen skills:</p>	<p>Finish distribution requirements (or nearly)</p> <p>Declare a major: attend departmental meetings about the major, find a major advisor, understand the structure of the</p>	<p>Study abroad</p> <p>Take course(s) on theory and method in the major</p> <p>Take courses in the content of the major</p> <p>Plan ahead for capstone experience:</p>	<p>Check with advisor about graduation requirements (999, etc, as well as major requirements)</p> <p>Take advanced courses in the major and in associated fields</p> <p>Pursue a capstone experience in the major – research,</p>

	<p>writing, speaking, analysis, creativity, quantitative</p>	<p>major, make a plan of courses</p> <p>Prepare for study away next year (take a language, finish requirements, get a head start on the major)</p> <p>Plan non-major courses that supplement the major and broaden skills</p> <p>Visit Career Services for a career advising session</p>	<p>study research skills as appropriate to the discipline; become acquainted with the work of the faculty in the discipline</p> <p>Follow up with Career Services,</p> <p>Attend a department career advising session; find out about fellowship opportunities for after college</p>	<p>honors, seminar, etc.</p> <p>Pursue last chance for elective courses</p> <p>Follow-up with Career Services, alumni networks, fellowships; prepare resume; ask for letters of recommendation</p>
Winter Term	<p>Intensive language study/travel</p> <p>On campus group project</p> <p>Off-campus directed project</p> <p>Volunteer service learning project</p>	<p>Intensive language study/travels</p> <p>Visit fellowship office and career office</p>	<p>Career internship</p> <p>Travel</p> <p>On-campus performance or creative arts</p>	<p>Research</p> <p>Honors work, capstone work</p> <p>Career internship</p>
Issues for students / Concerns for advisors	<p>Don't understand disciplines and thus don't try things</p> <p>Come in with credits that shape what they do</p> <p>Have pressure (from outside) to commit to a major too early</p> <p>Are scared of college and therefore may only take courses in familiar fields</p> <p>Need guidance to try areas that might have been boring in high school but may be exciting in college</p>	<p>May need direction and sense of achievement (against the anomie of sophomore slump)</p> <p>Think they have all the time in the world: need to be given a sense of immediate goals: finish requirements and declare major</p>	<p>Going abroad can be incompatible with desire to gain theory and methods or go deep in major unless you plan ahead</p> <p>Some may finish major early and feel adrift: need a sense of what to look forward to in senior year</p>	<p>Some finish major early and can explore other areas, but need to stay connected with discipline</p> <p>Capstone not institutionalized across the board; may need considerable student attention</p> <p>Students will put off thinking about post-Oberlin as long as possible unless pushed</p> <p>Need to look back on OC career as well as looking ahead</p>

Document 2: The Senior Experience

Challenge: For some students, especially honor students, the senior year represents the climax of their stay, as they reach their highest level of achievement and engage in sustained projects that allow them to tie together things they have learned over the past four years. For some students, however, their stay at Oberlin ends in an anticlimax, as they spend their senior year wrapping up some general requirements, or taking a couple of courses they didn't have a chance to take earlier.

Proposal: That all students be explicitly encouraged to engage in some kind of culminating senior experience that draws on their education thus far, allows them to expand their knowledge and refine their skills (both related to their major and beyond) and sends them out in the wider world, connecting them to it.

Here are the characteristics that we imagine a senior experience should have in order to qualify as such:

- It should involve a **sustained intellectual effort**—either individual or team-work—centered on a particular topic or issue, allowing students to refine their research skills (including Information Literacy Skills), as well as their awareness of the nature of different forms of inquiry;
- It should allow them to **synthesize the knowledge** gained in the past years and apply it creatively.
- It should **extend the student's learning**.
- It should present an opportunity to **further a student's communication skills**, perhaps involving one or more forms of presentation (written, visual, or oral).

We agreed that a one-size-fits all senior experience was not desirable for OC students -- that while one might do honors in her major field, another might benefit from an internship. This is not a senior thesis requirement per se, though theses will certainly be one way of engaging in the senior experience. Nor is it a requirement that each department create a capstone course.

We also agreed that there are students who would not necessarily be in a position to participate in a senior experience (e.g., those who have schedules that are filled with requirements for graduation). Therefore, students would be encouraged, not required, to participate (in other words, this is not proposed as a new requirement for graduation).

Different approaches to the senior experience will, we expect, be followed by different students, even those within the same major. In the same light, we imagine that different approaches will be taken by various departments to plan and advise (and require) students to complete a senior experience. One department may require a seminar; another may require a methodology course; a third may suggest a number of tracks toward the senior experience, including perhaps a research experience, a public presentation and poster board, a reading, etc. Within a given major, students will of course need to fulfill the requirements of the major, but may choose different ways of filling out those requirements to make a senior experience that is central to their particular goals: one may combine a seminar experience with a practicum and concentrated work with Career Services; another may supplement a senior thesis with a portfolio of study away experiences; and so on.

Some Oberlin students come to one of their majors – or sometimes, their single final major—very late in their career, declaring the major as late as senior year. That makes planning difficult for a senior experience that would pertain directly to that major, though of course even such a late-declaring student needs to fulfill the departmental requirements for the major. For the purposes of this senior experience proposal, however, such a student (like all OC students) would need to have begun planning a senior experience late in junior year, based on his/her plans at the time – but it may not be the senior

experience common to others in the student's final choice of major. The fact of changing or adding a major in senior year would complement and extend the senior experience that had been planned earlier, but not invalidate it. In other words, we see the senior experience as drawing on the student's major(s), including any departmental major requirements for seminars, etc., but not limited to that: it is a process by which a senior might act intentionally to integrate multiple majors, minors, concentrations, and other curricular pathways.

In general, we see these various senior experiences as falling into 3 main categories of experience:

- one goes deeper inside a major,
- another uses the major to support interdisciplinary study
- a third involves practical/applied experience.

Some general considerations:

- Students and their advisers should decide on, and begin preparing, their senior experience in the spring of the junior year, and make use of the summer between the junior and senior year and winter term of their senior year
- The senior year and/or senior experience should offer the opportunity to incorporate experiences, knowledge, and skills from study abroad (see Internationalizing Working Group)
- We saw the need for group advising sessions for seniors.
- We considered the idea that a senior experience project should connect knowledge to skills and thus could be supported by various services such as Rhetoric and Comp, Theater, Career Service, CSL, the library's Reference/Info Lit staff, and CIT. (If coordinated well, these support services could significantly reduce the faculty workload in overseeing senior projects.) See also the proposal to create a Center for Experiential Learning (Curricular Support Working Group).
- In order for a senior experience to work, students must have finished most of their graduation requirements before senior year. Intentionality, if executed well, can help plan towards the senior experience

Considerations of cost:

We acknowledge that a college-wide senior experience will have costs in terms of faculty time in advising, teaching, and evaluating. In the long term, such costs should be faced directly through a concerted plan to add faculty positions (as was done to create the First Year Seminar program). In the short term, we believe that, at not too much cost in faculty time and resources, a number of specific actions could be taken.

Some of the costs of such a program might include:

- Released time for a coordinator of the Senior Year Experience, a position we imagine as parallel to the director of the First Year Seminar program. A coordinator would serve as a pedagogical resource for faculty development around senior experiences, would conduct workshops in the various forms of senior experience pedagogy, would consult with faculty and students on appropriate ways of planning, implementing, and assessing the experiences, and would aid in the use of e-portfolios as part of the senior experience.
- Adjustments of the curriculum in some departments, as appropriate, to free up courses to serve the senior experience. We do not envision this as a requirement for every department, however; in particular, we are aware of the extra burden such a requirement would put on small departments and programs where the few resources are consumed by an already tight

curriculum. Departments will be encouraged to think how senior experiences for their majors can be opportunities for better assessment activities for the department.

- Some funds might need to be made available for student projects associated with the senior experience.
- Faculty advising time to help students create, plan, execute, and reflect on the senior experience. This is especially important, since the experience we envision here takes so many potential directions; students will need to be advised carefully during the planning and implementation of their experiences. This is probably the most important cost consideration of the proposal, and needs to be more thoroughly considered as the proposal goes further. We may need to count senior experience advising as part of the faculty teaching load.

Examples of senior experiences:

- Honors
- Tutorial in a major
- Interdisciplinary institute
- Academically Based Community service
- Teaching and/or tutoring
- Senior recital
- Senior show
- WT seminar
- Interdisciplinary writing seminar (across the disciplines)
- Performance
- Creating a symposium/conference
- Poster session
- Use convocations to create an interdisciplinary senior seminar
- Publication
- Independent group project
- Work abroad

Examples of how to promote a senior experience

- Create incentives for faculty to teach cross-disciplinary seminars
- Create opportunities for seniors to present their work to underclassmen
- Institute a culture in which students use e-portfolios to collect, communicate, and reflect on their academic achievements and growth.

Document 3: Distributional Depth

Challenge:

We are concerned that Oberlin's current distribution requirement (at least nine hours in each of three divisions) does not establish for students strong foundations in learning across the divisions of the college; we are unsure about whether our current requirements provide a framework that encourages enough depth in any field within the three divisions, and whether our students are positioned to use the methodologies, epistemologies, and contents of the selected fields of study effectively in their studies at Oberlin, and in their lives beyond.

The mission statement of Oberlin College includes among its aims for its students:

- To equip them with skills of creative thought, technique, and critical analysis which will enable them to use knowledge effectively;
- To acquaint them with the growing scope and substance of human thought.

Our requirements for graduation insure the *depth* of student knowledge in the major fields of study. Our current requirements are much less attentive to how students achieve *breadth* of knowledge, and whether the distribution of courses they pursue actually provide for them sufficient foundations upon which to build. Students are asked to complete 9 credit hours in at least two departments in each of the three divisions of the curriculum. The present requirements do not attempt to structure these credits, and they do not describe what students are expected to learn from them. As a result, students may acquire some exposure to new areas of knowledge without the ability to place this knowledge in the context of their overall education. While committed advisors and thoughtful students can and often do make excellent choices about the courses taken to acquire breadth in learning, we believe that students would benefit from greater intentionality in this portion of their program of study, thus bringing into their education enhanced understanding of the content and methods of various fields of study, thereby promoting learning that students can use to make connections both while students, and then throughout their intellectual lives.

Proposal:

To enhance acquaintance with content and methods in a variety of areas of study appropriate to students in a liberal arts curriculum, and to encourage courses that better serve as introductions to liberal learning in the arts and sciences, we propose refashioning the current 9-9-9 requirement into a requirement focused on what we call "divisional depth." We envision requiring completion of two substantial, well-focused, rigorous courses in each of the three divisions of the college (that is, courses that in the current system would amount to 4-credit courses). These courses, moreover, would be courses that particularly reflect the goals of the division for which they give credit. Students would be required to earn the eight credits within each division in courses specifically designated by that division as appropriate for individuals who do not intend to pursue majors in the field. We anticipate that these courses, many of which may be four-credit courses, will be self-reflective in providing epistemological, methodological, and/or content materials such as to constitute an appropriate grounding in the field of study relating to specific substantive knowledge in the field. We strongly encourage each division to establish a set of educational objectives for these courses comparable to the objectives that have been developed for courses that satisfy the Quantitative Proficiency, Writing Proficiency, or Cultural Diversity requirements.

We anticipate that further discussion in implementation of the strategic plan will address yet again the important question of student course load. In that light, we are loath to prescribe too precisely the exact nature of the credits that would accomplish this proposed change in the distributional requirement, beyond saying that we wish to focus the student's experience of divisional breadth by reducing the number of required courses (from a usual of three for the present system to two) and by increasing the intentionality of the courses that fulfill that requirement.

While we know that a variety of such rigorous and divisionally intentional courses currently exist, we envision (and recommend that funds be made available for) the creation of new courses, or revision of existing courses by departments and programs to build a substantial array of offerings, most presumably for four credits (reflecting the intellectual seriousness and rigor of such courses), by means of which students can explore a variety of fields of knowledge across the curriculum with enough focus and depth such that they will, in fact, become better acquainted with the growing scope and substance of human thought, and capable of using such knowledge effectively throughout their efforts at liberal learning in the arts and sciences, both while undergraduates at Oberlin, and in their continued intellectual growth throughout their lives.

Even as such courses introduce students to the fundamental ideas, contents, and methods of specific fields of study, they could, in fact, be taught by teams of faculty from different departments, and even different divisions. Such courses could explicitly compare and contrast methodologies, subjects, and substance from two perspectives, explaining how different questions suggest different objects of study and different modes of analysis. Courses taught by faculty within a single division could represent introductions to two different disciplines; and courses taught by faculty from different divisions could, in part, fulfill divisional credit in more than one division.

A further implication of this change would be to eliminate reliance on one- and two-credit courses for fulfilling general education requirements. Many of us believe that this reliance on one- and two- credit courses is not institutionally or pedagogically sound, as it creates curricular fragmentation.

Specific steps:

1. Ask divisional conveners to work with department representatives within divisions to establish educational objectives for each division and criteria for courses to fulfill the distribution goals. Establish a structure by which courses nominated to fulfill these goals are submitted to a divisional group for consideration.
2. Propose this change to EPPC and subsequently, if approved by EPPC, to College Faculty
3. Provide adequate funding and faculty support to develop new courses and to limit the core educational courses to 25 or fewer students per section to ensure focused attention. This would allow increased time for feedback on writing, lab work, etc.

We believe the steps outlined above would provide a firmer basis for student knowledge of a broad range of intellectual endeavors, and, at the same time, would decrease the fragmentation of the Oberlin student's educational experience.

Document 4: Interdisciplinary Theme Years

Challenge:

Studying Oberlin's curriculum--both as it exists in its entirety, and in the individual unique paths that students take through it--has lead us to two, related observations.

1. Oberlin's curriculum is connected in many ways. Many of these connections are not evident to students, faculty or staff. If students and faculty were aware of these connections, the students' educational experience, the faculty's teaching experience, and the quality of intellectual life on campus would be enriched. Effort on the part of faculty and staff to create themes that point out pathways and connecting routes through the curriculum would help all of us be more intentional about the many choices students make in creating their individual educations within a rich educational array.
2. Oberlin has a tremendous range of educational resources. These include (but are not limited to): the skills and knowledge of its faculty and professional staff; the interests, motivation, and creativity of its students; the musical riches of its Conservatory; the artistic riches of its Museum; the intellectual, artistic and musical riches of its libraries, especially in their special collections; and a very strong array of endowed lectureships. A great deal of effort goes into deploying these resources. However, most of these efforts are made in the relative isolation of departments, programs, and lecture committees, without much coordination or planning between them. Improved coordination and planning could lead to a savvier, more intentional use of our current resources.

Proposal:

That the College name a theme for each academic year (or perhaps only the fall semester) two years ahead of time. The theme should be intellectually rewarding and invite consideration and input from a diverse array of disciplines. It should provide a broad frame within which more specific work could take place. This theme would:

1. be directly addressed by four courses offered in the fall semester,
2. relate to a broader array of classes across the College and Conservatory,
3. provide the theme for a Winter Term symposium,
4. animate a great deal of the programming over the course of the entire year.

Some examples of themes that might work include: "Technology and Society," "Religion and Politics," "Memory," "Markets and Society," "The Book," "Evolution," "Lorain County." Recent Oberlin Winter Terms also suggest topics that might work this way: "Truth," "The Future," "Mozart." Some previous London programs also suggest what might work: "Art and Mathematics," "National Identity," "Culture and Interpretation."

Note: This proposal is partially inspired by four pre-existing programs, two at Oberlin (London and Winter Term) and two at other schools (the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities at Case Western [see <http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/bakernord/>] and Wesleyan's Center for the Humanities [see <http://www.wesleyan.edu/chum/>]). It is designed to be relatively modest, to maximize

resources without making many changes in how we do business. We are all too busy doing what we do, and cannot be asked to do more. But we could improve what we do by better coordination of our efforts. This proposal asks us to build intentionality and synergy into our work, without requiring many new resources (in terms of either time or money).

Designing and executing the Theme Year would be a six-stage process, spread out over three years, including two years of preparation prior to the Theme Year. The stages are listed briefly here, and with more concrete detail in a sample calendar in the section on “**Logistics**,” below.

Planning Stages:

1. Borrowing the method used by the London Program, small teams of faculty and/or staff (two or three people, preferably from different departments and divisions) would compete to design a year's Theme. Their competing proposals would be evaluated by a committee representing the Conservatory, all three divisions of the College, and the Museum. Proposals would be evaluated on their intrinsic significance, their match to Oberlin's resources, and their ability to stir broad interest. The selected team would be responsible for team-teaching a course addressing the theme, directing the Winter Term symposium on it, and helping to design the year's programming.
2. Once a theme had been chosen, two steps would be taken. First, proposals for three additional Themed Classes/Programming would be invited. These classes would address the theme directly; they might be team-taught, but would not have to be. Second, all groups and programs on campus would be encouraged to consider it in making their plans for that year.
3. After the three Theme Classes/Programming were selected, there would be an invitation to apply for Affiliated Class status. These applications would come from individual faculty members who wish to teach a course related to the year's theme. Very often, these would be classes that they have already taught. Alternatively, individual faculty members might recognize that there were latent aspects in their subjects related to the theme, and choose to give them more emphasis when they teach it in that year.
4. All participants in the program, from the designers to the teachers of Theme Courses/Programs and Affiliated Courses, would participate in a multi-day workshop on the theme. This workshop would allow them to meet each other, to discuss the theme in depth, perhaps with some common readings, to learn each other's plans, and to help plan the programming for the upcoming year, so they could build these events into their classes.

Execution Stages:

1. The program begins with a unifying experience, e.g. a mini-course that addresses the theme at the beginning of the fall semester, a workshop, a plenary lecture. The opening experience would help unify the variety of courses and programming conducted over the course of the semester.
2. A Winter Term devoted to the theme. This would be open both to students who had taken related classes in the fall, and to those who had not.

Outcomes:

The Theme Year should provide a deep and rich selection of courses across the College and Conservatory curriculum engaging a common theme, tied to a broad array of public programming related to the theme.

When the program was up and running, there would be:

- between 7 to 12 faculty members actively devoted to it;
- between 100-250 students a year pursuing work on a common theme;
- increased ties between the College's curriculum and its programming;
- an intellectual bridge from fall semester to Winter Term;
- and strengthened ties, communication and planning among all the programs at Oberlin College.

These achievements could significantly enrich the College's intellectual life in several ways:

creating and strengthening ties among entities of the College

- the Museum, Conservatory, and Theater and Dance might program performances or exhibitions related to it.¹
- the College's various lecture series—especially the Convocation Series--might feature one or more speakers that addressed the theme from a broad variety of standpoints, and directly or indirectly. Alternatively, individuals or departments asking for support from those series might be encouraged to devise proposals related to the theme. Departments with their own endowed lectures could tie them into the theme in order to reach a larger, more interested and more knowledgeable audience than they normally do, and will also have a built in way of publicizing the talk.
- the Library might design a show of its holdings relating to the theme.
- the theme might highlight an area of strength in the college that was not before apparent, and might spur the establishment of more permanent collaborative structures, as well as specific initiatives to fund those structures.
- Career Services might develop resources that show how the theme relates to potential careers; they might also seek WT or summer internships that were especially relevant to the theme.
- the Center for Service and Learning might indicate which of its programs relate to the year's theme.
- Sponsored Programs might find outside resources that would enhance programming for the year; or that would help faculty working on the theme.
- Faculty and staff working on the theme might have a symposium presenting their work. Faculty and staff working on the theme might give talks throughout the year.

enriching student learning and achievement

- incoming students might be given a book to read related to the year's theme.

¹ Their relation could be extensive: for example, if the theme were Religion and Politics, the Conservatory might program Poulenc's *The Dialogue of the Carmelites*. Or they might be smaller and less intensive; if the theme were Technology and Society, the Art Museum might write labels for the works already on display that addressed their technology (from bronze casting to oil painting to photography).

- seniors might choose to do an honors project related to theme.
- McNair and Mellon fellowship students might link their summer research projects to the theme; this would garner them a larger audience in the fall when they present their research.
- The year could end with a student symposium of work addressing the theme, based on their work during the academic year. A year end student symposium would build verticality into the curriculum by giving students a destination for their work beyond the horizon of the classroom.
- students might plan EXCO courses relating to the theme, courses which would benefit from the wide array of programming.

Costs to College: We anticipate that the costs to the college would include the following:

- Chair of program gets a course release
- designers of theme get one course release each, which they could take either prior to or concurrent with their course; perhaps also a stipend for the workshop
- designers of additional three Theme Courses/Programs get a stipend to attend a 2-3 day workshop for faculty and staff participants (see “**Logistics**” below)
- designers of affiliate courses get a stipend to attend a 2-3 day workshop for faculty and staff participants?

question:

- what rewards/incentives can be given to staff (particularly in the Museum) to design programming that will work with the theme year?

Logistics of the Interdisciplinary Theme Year:

Core requirements:

Two faculty to lead the year

Coordinate programming and team-teach a course tied to theme

Three additional Theme courses/Programs intimately tied to the year’s theme

Maybe team-taught, maybe not

Should count on building some of the year's programming into their course

(4 x 25 students = 100)

A larger number of courses affiliated with the year’s theme. (5 courses at 30 students each would equal 150 enrolled; 10 courses would equal 300)

Should count on building some of the year's events into their course

Public lectures/performances/exhibitions/readings on the theme by:

Visiting scholars/speakers/artists/writers/performers

Convocation/Commencement speakers

Participants in the program

The Museum, Conservatory, Theater and Dance, Creative Writing

Theme Year Committee:

Chair: The chair's duties would be similar to those of the chair of the First Year Seminar

Program: recruiting proposals and participants, advertising opportunities, coordinating invited

scholars/speakers/performers, applying for grants to support the program. Would serve as chair for three or four years, and get a course-release each year.

Membership: to be determined by the Chair, with the goal of getting representation from all three divisions of the College and the Conservatory. Eventually the Committee could be constituted much like the London Program Committee, which draws much of its membership from past participants in the program. **Ex officio members:** Dean of College, Dean of Conservatory, Director of Museum, President of the College.

Questions:

Do we want someone from Dean of Residential Education, someone from Academic Affairs, someone from Career Services?

How do we get student involvement?

With two-year lead time (see below), a student's senior year theme would be picked when s/he was a sophomore

Could the faculty leaders involve students in the spring semester before the theme got under way?

Calendar:

Requires a two-year lead time; if you're going to have the theme start in Sept 2008, then you need to start in September 2006.

Stage 1:

Sept 2006: put out call for theme proposal, with a deadline two months later [Note: sophomores will be seniors the year the theme is in effect]

Nov 2006/two months later: proposals for theme are submitted

Dec 2006/ 1 month later: announce selected theme for 2008

Stage 2:

Dec 2006: invite proposals for three Theme Courses/Programming to be due at the end of Spring Break

Jan 2007: begin to compile list of potential visiting speakers

March 2007: proposals submitted to teach Theme Courses/Programming; Reviewed by whole committee, plus the leaders of the theme year

April 2007: one month later: winning proposals selected

Stage 3:

May 2007: Begin to contact most important potential visiting speakers

Sept 2007: proposals for Affiliated Classes/Programs (aim for 5 - 10?); Reviewed by whole committee, plus the leaders of the theme year

Oct 2007: Announcement of Affiliated Classes

By November 2007, there will be 4 Theme Classes directly engaging the theme, and a larger number of Affiliated Classes related to it, ready to go into the course catalog for the following year. It would be good to publish them separately as well, to publicly define the theme's scope and participants.

Stage 4:

Winter Term 2008 (or Summer 2008): 2-3 day seminar/workshop for all faculty and staff participants in the program

Spring 2008: one of the theme year leaders gets a course release to plan upcoming events?

August 2008: publish course catalog and calendar of year's events related to the Theme

Stage 5:

Sept 2008: program starts

1 hour Mini-course open to all: required of students in Theme Courses? Affiliated Courses?

Winter Term 2009: An on-campus group project devoted to the year's theme, directed by Theme leaders

Question:

is two years enough time for the museum, conservatory, and theater and dance to respond with related programming?

Possibilities to explore:

With two years lead time, many of the College and Conservatory's normal actions might be associated with the theme year, for example:

Mellon post-docs

Visiting faculty

Scholars/Artists-in-residence

Document 5: The Conservatory and the Liberal Arts

Charge: to improve curricular collaboration between Arts and Sciences and the Conservatory

The pairing of one of the nation's top music schools with one of its top liberal arts colleges is a major asset for Oberlin. While the Double Degree is a very important structural mechanism for engaging a select group of students in using both, there should be more ways in which students in one division (A&S or Con) can pursue curricular pathways in or related to the other division. A fruitful and collaborative synergy between the two divisions of Oberlin College will have good effects in admissions (for both divisions, the proximity of the other is a well-known draw), in student learning and retention, and in an improved sense (among faculty and students) of the unity of the college as a single educational entity.

Underlying this are two premises:

1. For A&S students, curricular experiences with music can broaden and deepen other liberal arts studies and the study of music (whether history, theory, performance, etc.) can directly strengthen other areas of study (other arts, culture, area studies, etc.).
2. For students in a pre-professional conservatory, the study of the liberal arts is a valuable experience, a tool for deepening the performance of music, sharpening the critical tools of the artist, and connecting knowledgeably with the cultures that create and depend upon music. This is the foundation of the 24-hour A&S requirement for Conservatory degree students.

Challenges

1. College students should have the option of a strong liberal arts music major that has a justification of its own within the model of other college majors, and allows serious college students of music to draw on the resources of the conservatory. The present College Music major is too complicated and too much modeled on the Conservatory degree requirements to be an appropriate liberal arts major. As a result, it offers an experience that may seem like a watered-down version of a conservatory degree, making College Music majors feel like second-class citizens.
2. Qualified college students should be encouraged to study and perform in Conservatory studios and ensembles within reason; too often, talented or at least proficient musicians in the college are disappointed in what is seen as limited access to lessons and ensembles.
3. The study of music should be broadly integrated into college courses, where appropriate. Many college courses have subjects in which music history, analysis or performance might be appropriate (we are thinking of courses in Theater, literature, area studies, historical and cultural studies, for example), but more could take advantage of these opportunities. Furthermore, some way should be found to document what is being done and to develop further possibilities.
4. Conservatory students should have information as to which are the most appropriate college courses for them, and how to access college courses so that they can make the best and most intentional choices for successful liberal arts study.

5. First-year Conservatory students and international Conservatory students may need more deliberate advising about how to fulfill their A&S hours in order to achieve success and minimize fail rates from over-ambitious course choices.

Proposals:

1. Encourage the college Music major committee to develop the “College Music” major as more of a liberal arts Music major, integrating courses in performance, music theory, music history, and other Conservatory subjects with college courses in cultural history, other arts, languages, etc.
2. Support the Conservatory in expanding key areas of importance to the liberal arts study of music (for example, the Music History, TIMARA, and Ethnomusicology programs). These key areas tend to be the easiest points of entrance for college students and the most desirable (as evidenced by enrollment requests). More staff in these areas could help these departments (divisions) serve Conservatory students at the same time as expanding the available courses for college students.
3. Support the development of more ensembles open to college performers at various levels.
4. Encourage the development of more interdisciplinary and/or team-taught courses, at the FYSP level and when appropriate at more advanced levels, that bridge College and Conservatory. Continue and expand the cross-disciplinary/cross-divisional curriculum development grants.
5. Create a readily accessible master events planning calendar across College and Con so that faculty planning courses in A&S can see ahead to musical events as far as possible, and Con faculty can see college events coming up (art exhibitions, lectures, plays, dance).
6. Create a working list of courses in A&S appropriate as starting points for Conservatory students, especially for first-year students or international students for which there may be language problems. If possible, gear the online catalog as an advising aid for this.
7. Use teaching development funds and other mechanisms to develop more A&S courses in which music and aural literacy are significant parts of the syllabus.
8. Create more opportunities for A&S faculty interested in teaching music-related subjects in courses to learn from each other and from Conservatory faculty. A center for teaching and scholarship could help in this.
9. Develop a plan for advising first-year Conservatory students about appropriate choices and plans for fulfilling their A&S requirements. (The Associate Deans in the Conservatory are already working on such a plan).
10. Consider whether the Luce Professorship in the Emerging Arts, currently unfilled, might be a resource for better collaboration in this area.

Document 6: The Allen Art Museum and the Liberal Arts

Charge: to improve curricular collaboration with Allen Art Museum

Challenge:

The Oberlin College Art Museum is an exceptional resource for emphasizing the importance of visual literacy and for supporting students' learning in this area. While the museum is well used by the Art Department, there is enormous potential for broader use of the museum in the liberal arts curriculum needs. The resources of the Art Museum can enhance the teaching of a variety of courses and serve as an important vehicle for cross-disciplinary, liberal arts approaches to diverse topics.

Proposals:

1. Reinstate the museum's position of Curator of Academic Programs. [This position was filled only briefly and eliminated.] This person would be responsible for outreach from the museum to the general campus, especially in curriculum, perhaps teaching course(s) designed to increase visual literacy and art awareness across campus.
2. Encourage the College and the Museum to fill other curatorial positions in areas and historical periods (e.g., Asian Art, Contemporary Art), as these are potentially important resources for curricular collaboration.
3. Use other staffing opportunities to link the museum's collection and the curriculum, such as the Mellon Post-Doc in Asian Art recently awarded jointly to the Art Department and the museum.
4. Develop resource lists and databases (perhaps using the online catalog) of courses and faculty that are engaged in the study of visual imagery in general, and art in particular.
5. Make funding available for faculty study groups, in collaboration with Art faculty and museum staff, to enable more faculty outside of the Art Department and the museum to learn about the collections and to share methods of incorporating the collection into teaching. This should include faculty and courses that are traditionally NOT considered close to art, e.g. the natural sciences and some social sciences. A center for teaching and scholarship could promote such work.
6. Support more team-taught courses that would pair non-art faculty with art faculty, perhaps around periods (medieval, baroque, modern...) or areas (North Africa, England...).
7. The Luce Professorship in the Emerging Arts, currently unfilled, might be a resource for better collaboration in this area.

Curricular Support Working Group
Final Report to GFPC, March 1, 2006
Kathryn Stuart and Denny Smith, co-chairs

This report includes recommendations in each of the areas we examined. A document that includes background information and estimated costs will follow.

1. Fully integrate and enhance student advising

Recommendations:

- a. Assemble a self-selected group of faculty and administrative and professional staff members who are interested in specializing in advising first- and second-year students who have not decided on a major. The Office of the Dean of Studies would coordinate special training for this group of advisors and help implement an extra layer of “programming” to positively influence the development of advisor/advisee relationships. This program would encourage more frequent contact between advisor and advisee (especially desirable for first and second-year students) including allowing advisors to have a meal or two a month in a dining hall with advisees (in addition to the currently available opportunities to take first-year advisees for lunch in the Rath and to entertain students in their homes).

Rationale. In the past two years, the Office of the Dean of Studies has assigned about one third of the students in each first-year seminar to be advised by the instructor; these students report a significantly more satisfactory relationship with their advisor than those who have an advisor who is not their seminar instructor. Other first-year students request a particular advisor or an advisor in a specific field; we honor these request as much as we are able. For those students who are not drawn to a particular field and are not assigned to their first-year seminar instructor, we want a group of advisors who will be willing to get to know these students. Many students and members of the faculty and staff enjoy the chance to meet and talk in a causal environment; such opportunities enhance the quality of communication between them. For advisors who would prefer dining with students on campus, we are enthusiastic about the option described above.

- b. Enhance and grow the existing Student Academic Ambassador Program to include about 30 upper division students, nominated by their departments, to serve as peer mentors for new students from the time the new students arrive on campus through the middle of the first semester. (If this is successful, consider lengthening the program as necessary.)

Rationale. The consultants we worked with about student success and persistence to graduation (in 2001-2002) encouraged us to develop such a program, based on the success of similar programs at our competitor schools and on the information they received from talking with our students. The consultants’ conclusion was that students seek advice frequently from their peers, and by enhancing our current program (put in place for new-student registration beginning in 2003), we will be able to train students to do this work. The results will be a stronger advising system.

- c. Reorganize advising for new students at orientation so that a student's first meeting with his or her advisor would be in a small group with all of the advisor's first-year students. Then after the student's initial registration time, he or she would have an individual appointment with the advisor.

Rationale. A meeting including the advisor and all his or her new advisees before they register would allow students to discuss their proposed schedules with the advisor and peers, and encourage community building among these students. We know that a number of students have trouble registering for a schedule that meets their expectations and they need help in deciding how to proceed after their initial registration. If the individual advising appointments follow registration, advisors will know what courses the advisees have selected and can advise them on alternative choices should that be necessary.

2. Help students explore, understand and focus appropriately upon careers; enhance opportunities for... internships

Recommendations:

- a. Establish a Center for Experiential Education that would consist of the Office of Career Services, the Center for Service and Learning, Office of Undergraduate Research, and the Winter Term Office. Such a Center could:
 - Provide a means for a more coordinated, intentional approach to experiential education program development resulting in more opportunities for students;
 - Provide a channel for a more coordinated approach to funding and development of collaborative student/faculty research;
 - Allow for collaboration across departments.
- b. Develop additional Scholars programs modeled after the Business Scholars Program;
- c. Increase funding for students (in the form of stipends or grants) to enable students to pursue unpaid internships or student/faculty collaborative research;
- d. Winter Term should have more of an experiential focus so that students engage in projects that help them "clarify and integrate their intellectual strengths and interests, social commitments, and vocational aspirations" (Strategic Plan, Mission). While we believe that all meaningful projects should result in personal growth for students, we recommend that the category of "personal growth" projects, currently differentiated from "academic" and "field experience" be eliminated and that the other two categories be combined into one called "experiential education" defined broadly. Further, provide incentives and funds to departments/faculty to develop collaborative student/faculty research projects and experientially-based winter term programs, such as the Congressional Internship Program;
- e. Appoint additional staff members in Career Services and in the Office of Undergraduate Research to allow implementation of these recommendations.

Rationale. Student response to winter term (and summer) internships (coordinated by Career Services and also offered by the Center for Service and Learning) is consistently positive; such experiences enable students to choose a major, test out possible career fields, and learn about the potential for post-Oberlin life. In most cases, students gain focus that they may subsequently apply to their coursework.

Further, mentored or collaborative research with faculty allows students to gain “greater exposure to the primary literature; ...opportunities to articulate and test hypotheses and intellectual models; and...contextualize and communicate objectives, approaches, analyses, and conclusions” (Undergraduate Research Experiences: Synergies between Scholarship and Teaching by Tim Elgren and Nancy Hensel, “peerReview,” Winter 2006). We note that the Curricular Pathways Group has been discussing the idea of a capstone project; support of students and faculty for projects such as this can be supported through the office of Undergraduate Research.

For us to enhance our programming for students toward the goal of encouraging “curricular and co-curricular developments aimed at helping students explore, understand, and focus appropriately upon careers” (Strategic Plan, Strengthen the Educational Experience, Strategies) the Office of Career Services will need additional staffing. The most pressing unmet needs currently include working to increase funding for students pursuing unpaid internships and managing the distribution of these funds; developing additional Scholars programs; accommodating an increased number of student referrals to Career Services; developing information and programs to support the teaching-career aspirations of our undergraduates; and increasing the number of experiential opportunities available to students during winter term.

3. Enhance opportunities for community service, service learning, and internships **Recommendations:**

- a. Increase the quantity and quality of community service and/or community-based learning opportunities for both College and Conservatory of Music students, so that every student who wishes to participate in both curricular and co-curricular community service may have the opportunity;
- b. Continue to build and support diverse educational and community partnerships at local, national and international levels;
- c. Make all advisors aware of opportunities for civic engagement at Oberlin and enable them to ask students a set of relevant questions about civic responsibility, ethics, vocation and/or how students wish to apply knowledge;
- d. Provide funding to sustain programs (and positions) currently led by staff members supported by soft money.

Rationale. Community-based learning and community-based research opportunities allow students to “integrate and apply their learning” (Strategic Plan, Strengthen the Educational Experience, Rationale) through supervised experiential opportunities. Research indicates that service learning programs have “significant positive effects on grade point average, writing skills, and critical thinking skills, as well as ... self-efficacy and leadership ability (from Astin, Sax, Ikeda, and Yee, 2000 in Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont Stephens, *Educating Citizens*, 2003).

4. Find ways to help students deal thoughtfully with disagreement and difference **Recommendations:**

- a. Enhance communication and coordination of efforts among offices – Multicultural Resource Center, Ombudsperson, Residential Education, Religious and Spiritual Life, Edmonia Lewis Center, along with academic departments and individual faculty members – that work most directly on issues of disagreement and difference;

- b. Explore the possibility of developing a set of principles that guide students and set expectations in the areas of disagreement and difference, introduced when students enter the Oberlin community;
- c. Revitalize the Standing Committee on Pluralism and Equality with the goal of providing a forum for ongoing discussion and evaluation of these efforts.

5. Create opportunities for meaningful international study for every student who wants it.

The Curricular support working group endorsed the idea in the Strategic Plan “that each student who wants to study abroad should be able to do so” as an important part of an Oberlin education. The plans for implementation of this should be considered by the “Internationalize Oberlin” working group.

6. Build the Oberlin Public Schools-Oberlin Community partnership (from Support and Build the Faculty)

Recommendations:

- a. Work with the Center for Service and Learning to expand and enhance programs designed to assist students in the Oberlin public schools;
- b. Career Services, in consultation with the Graduate Teaching and Education Program Committee, should continue to develop information and programs to support the teaching career aspirations and interests of undergraduate students.;
- c. Provide an opportunity for the superintendent of the Oberlin Public Schools to have a formal appointment or other appropriate role in coordinating the Graduate Teacher Education Program with the operation of the Oberlin Public Schools.

7. Enhanced technology.

Fully implement an integrated, authenticated, on-line system that would give students, faculty and administrators easy, but appropriate, access to student and institutional information. Such a system would allow students and advisors to have the ability to access all information relevant to a student’s academic progress. It would also allow administrative offices to share and integrate institutional data. Within the context of such a system, explore the feasibility of creating an opportunity for students to develop ePortfolios. Such a system would make it possible for students to store examples of their academic work and other accomplishments. Potentially, the information in the ePortfolios would be of use to students seeking employment or entry to graduate school and might be useful to departments in the assessment process.

Build and Support the Faculty Working Group

Final Report to the GFPC

February 28, 2006

The Build and Support the Faculty Working Group (“the Group”) interpreted its mission to be to develop recommendations that would allow Oberlin to strengthen its faculty recruiting efforts; to improve faculty retention; and to enable existing faculty members to be more effective as teachers, and more productive as scholars and artists. The proposals contained in this report outline a number of concrete steps which, in the Group’s view, would further these goals. The Group acknowledges that much work remains to be done: some areas will require further study, and many important details have been left unspecified. Moreover, financial considerations will, of course, determine the speed and scope of implementation. The Group is nonetheless unanimous in its view that all of the proposals would help to “build and support” the faculty—and especially that the ambitious proposals of rationalizing and reducing faculty workload and improving compensation should be essential long-run goals for the institution.

1. Rationalize and reduce faculty workload

Background. The Group identified faculty workload as the paramount issue facing Oberlin’s faculty at the present time. The issue is a complicated one, with many interrelated dimensions. One aspect is the inequality (or at least the *perception* of inequality) in the distribution of courseloads across faculty members and departments; closely related to this is the lack of explicit standards for determining what counts as a “course” towards the five-course requirement. A second problem has to do with uncertainty about expectations for one-on-one work with students, and how this relates to the teaching of “conventional” lecture/seminar courses. Third, there is at least a perception that service is distributed unequally among faculty; again, this has a lot to do with a lack of uniform standards for assigning committee work, and a mechanism for allocating that work more equitably. Overall, Oberlin’s teaching and service load is perceived to be heavy, relative to most comparable liberal arts colleges. Data made available to the Group show that many of these concerns are well-founded in fact.

In order to assess the distribution of teaching loads in the College, the Group examined data provided by the Dean’s Office and the Office of Institutional Research on the actual number of courses taught by full-time Oberlin Arts and Sciences faculty. The analysis of teaching data is of course fraught with difficulties: e.g., sorting out cross-registered courses, dealing with co-taught courses, accounting for “attached” labs, controlling for course releases, etc. Taking these factors into account as fully as possible, the data nonetheless confirm that *de facto* teaching loads do indeed vary across departments and individuals; and that, on average, actual loads are somewhat below the five-course nominal requirement. While it lacked the resources for a deeper analysis of these data, the Group’s sense is that some of this variation can be explained by various *ad hoc* course releases arranged at the department level. While many of these releases are surely justifiable on the basis of one-on-one teaching or other curricular activities, the lack of transparency in their allocation undoubtedly contributes to the perception of inequality in course assignments—a perception that can only have negative effects on faculty morale and collegiality.

Table 1: Arts & Sciences Courseload and Sabbatical Policies

		Courseload	
		4 courses/year	5 courses/year
Years to sabbatical	5		Swarthmore Vassar Hamilton
	6	Williams Amherst Wellesley Mt. Holyoke	Oberlin Grinnell Macalester Bates

Leaving aside the issue of courseload disparities, the Group also found support for the view that Oberlin’s teaching loads (defined broadly to include courses per year *and* frequency of sabbatical leave) are heavy. Table 1 summarizes the courseload requirements and sabbatical policies of a selection of comparable institutions. Policies vary: some colleges require five courses per year, with a sabbatical after five years; others require four courses, but grant sabbaticals after only six years. A third group of colleges, which includes Oberlin, has a five-course load *and* the longer sabbatical interval. On these dimensions, therefore, there is some truth to the perception that greater teaching demands are placed on Oberlin faculty relative to many (but not all) comparable institutions. While not onerous, this high level of teaching creates a tension between it and the College’s increasing expectations for research and other external scholarly and artistic activities. Continued success on these dimensions will, in the Group’s view, require an adjustment towards a more realistic teaching schedule.

The situation in the Conservatory differs somewhat from that in Arts and Sciences. While there is more uniformity in terms of assigned courseloads (they are administered centrally by the Dean’s office), Conservatory faculty face similarly intense pressures for both teaching and scholarly or artistic output. It should be noted that the standard Conservatory teaching load for academic faculty is six courses per year, and that the Conservatory’s core academic curriculum provides little room for reduction in courses offerings, since the current schema is based on service to major departments and baseline requirements for accreditation. Other measures will have to be considered in order to provide Conservatory faculty with the same kinds of opportunities with which to carry out their scholarly and artistic pursuits, and these need to be considered carefully in order to provide an equitable solution for all faculty at Oberlin.

Finally, it almost goes without saying that Oberlin faculty members are called upon to perform a great deal of service for the College, usually *in addition to* the already high expectations for teaching and scholarship. This is evident not only in the unusually large number of faculty committees at Oberlin, but also in the time-intensive nature of some of the key elected committees.¹

Recommendations. The Group believes that a top priority for the College should be to increase the transparency with which courseloads are assigned, and to work towards a modest reduction

¹ There are currently approximately 350 faculty slots on Oberlin’s elected and non-elected committees.

in teaching load—either through an adjustment to the five-course load, or through more frequent sabbatical leaves. These two objectives are not mutually exclusive, of course, but clarifying the assignment of courseloads is a necessary precursor to an equitable reduction in those loads.

As specific steps to make courseloads in Arts and Sciences more manageable, the Group recommends that the College either:

- a) Retain the five-course load but develop a system so that faculty can substitute one-on-one educational work for one of their five “normal” courses at appropriate intervals, or
- b) Eventually move towards a four-and-one-half or four-course teaching load for Arts and Science faculty.

In this context, the Group believes it will also be important to:

- Move to a rationalized, four-course load for students—especially if faculty teaching loads are to be reduced, as in (b).
- Create a uniform policy for reckoning teaching load, and establish a transparent accounting system for faculty work.

As separate initiatives (relevant in varying degrees to both the Conservatory and the Arts and Sciences division), the Group also recommends:

- Reducing the time between sabbaticals to five years, especially if the five-course load is retained.
- Moving towards longer-range curricular planning, both within and across departments and programs.
- Making available more support in the form of summer secretarial assistance, lab assistance, etc.
- Developing a uniform and explicit policy for course release, possibly extending to CFC and EPPC membership.
- Establishing procedures to ensure a more equitable assignment of committee work.
- Streamlining the operations and reducing the number of faculty committees.

Next steps. Some of the measures proposed above, such as longer-range curricular planning, or streamlining the committee structure, are obviously self-contained and relatively easy to implement. Others are not so simple: clearly any significant adjustments to the College’s courseload or sabbatical policies will have far-reaching curricular and/or financial implications—issues that the working group was not equipped to address with the time or resources at its disposal. Similarly, devising a uniform courseload accounting system for faculty work will require grappling with a number of complex issues, such as the appropriate level of detail (e.g., whether to “count” each individual private reading), and the extent to which it should allow tradeoffs between teaching and service.

It is clear that any serious effort to address these issues will require a great deal of further study. The Group believes that an important component of this research will be a detailed investigation into all aspects of faculty members’ existing teaching commitments: including not only conventional classes, but also labs, fieldwork, and one-on-one work including (but not limited to) thesis advising. While it may be possible to glean some of this information from PIRs and other sources, a survey of teaching and advising activities may be necessary to provide sufficiently detailed data. The same survey could also be used to elicit faculty members’ preferences over various options for workload reorganization/reduction. While daunting, the task is not

impossible: other institutions have gone through similar transitions in recent years, and their work should be used to inform the planning process at Oberlin. The report prepared by faculty and administrators at Willamette University in Oregon, for example, should serve as a useful blueprint for the kind of work that would have to be done here.²

2. Improve competitiveness of faculty compensation

Background. Compensation is the second key problem area identified by the Group. One aspect—but not the *only* aspect—is the level of salaries *per se*. Just as important are a number of perceived anomalies and inequities in Oberlin’s salary structure—many of which could be eliminated with relatively little expenditure. While the Group did not undertake a systematic study of the impact of salary problems on recruiting and retention, anecdotal evidence suggests that it has sometimes been an impediment to attracting good faculty.

The compensation issue is not new. For most of the 1970s and well into the mid-1980s, Oberlin’s salaries remained firmly in the “middle of the pack” relative to those of its peer institutions—even while declining in *real* terms as the rate of increase in consumer prices outstripped salary increases. Salaries of full and associate professors began to lag behind those of other colleges in the late 1980s and 1990s, however. While associate professors’ salaries regained much of the lost ground in the late 1990s, Oberlin’s full professor salaries remain at or near the bottom of its comparison groups.³ This is not an issue of Oberlin not recruiting “superstars” with super-sized salaries—the salary gap is actually the largest for those at or near the median of the salary range. The story differs somewhat at the assistant professor level; here, Oberlin remained competitive until the early 1990s, when salaries fell sharply in real terms. Subsequent upward adjustments in the late 1990s have brought assistant professors’ salaries back towards (but not quite all the way to) the middle of the salary distribution for our peers.⁴

In the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Oberlin’s extraordinarily generous benefits offset its relatively less competitive salary structure; in fact, as late as 1990, Oberlin had one of the highest benefit levels (relative to salary) among its peer institutions. This is no longer true, however: with the reduction in benefits levels in the late 1990s, Oberlin’s benefits are now more or less on par with those of its peer institutions.

At the same time, Oberlin’s procedures for career review and merit raises are widely perceived as burdensome, and grudging in their outcomes. One reason for this is the small size and capricious variability in the pool of funds available for raises. Depending on the portion allocated to cost-of-living adjustments, and the fluctuating financial health of the college, often very little is left for those requesting merit or career review raises. As a result of the small merit raises ultimately granted, the complex merit review process is widely viewed as more trouble than it is worth. Moreover, because of the influence of year-specific factors, a faculty member may receive unequal treatment simply because of the year in which he or she comes up for review.

² Willamette’s report is available here: www.willamette.edu/dept/ir/WorkloadReportdraft.pdf.

³ In real, inflation-adjusted terms, the average salary of Oberlin’s full professors has increased less than 11 percent in the past 34 years—or less than 0.3 percent per year.

⁴ The “peer institutions” referred to here are other selective liberal arts colleges. While Oberlin’s exact ranking relative to its peers depends to some extent on how the comparison group is selected, the overall conclusions do not.

Oberlin is also unusual in not routinely awarding a pay increase at the time of promotion or tenure; requiring a career review in addition to the tenure or promotion process is understandably viewed by many as an unnecessary and arbitrary obstacle to a justly-earned raise.

A final important issue for some junior faculty is the fact their salaries can lag behind those of newly-hired assistant professors—a phenomenon that arises when the “market” salary rises faster than Oberlin’s combined cost-of-living and merit pay increases.⁵

To resolve some of these salary and compensation issues, the Group recommends that the College:

- Earmark a specific (and stable) portion of the budget for merit and career review raises.
- Increase the funds allocated to the merit pool.
- Grant raises automatically upon promotion and tenure, rather than wait for a career review.
- To prevent “leapfrogging,” index incumbent assistant professors’ salaries to match the benchmark salary for newly-hired assistant professors.
- Grant a one-time salary adjustment to full professors in order to (partially) close the “gap” between Oberlin and its peer institutions.
- Monitor Oberlin’s benefit portfolio to ensure that the College remains competitive on that dimension.
- Make re-establishing salary competitiveness an integral part of the capital campaign.

Next steps. Several of the measures itemized above can (and should) be implemented quickly, and with relatively little budget impact: the indexation of assistant professors’ salaries, for example; and the automatic granting of raises on promotion and tenure. Others, such as the increase in the merit pool and the one-time salary adjustment for full professors, will have significant budgetary implications; consequently, not all may be feasible in the near term. Nonetheless, the Group believes that addressing these salary issues should be one of the College’s top medium-term priorities.

3. Establish a center for faculty development

Background. Over the years, a number of initiatives have been launched in attempts to address issues of faculty support and development; but these efforts have been sporadic, inconsistent, and hampered by a lack of resources. Examples include the Committee on Teaching, and the “brown bags” organized by the Dean’s Office—both of which appear to be dormant at present. Assessment and pedagogical resources are dispersed, and many faculty members complain of a lack of communication across departments and divisions.

In order to sustain support and development activities in a coherent and coordinated way, the Group believes it will be necessary to establish a permanent center for faculty development as a focal point for such efforts. A faculty center could also serve such valuable functions as promoting interdepartmental and interdisciplinary work, and giving emeritus faculty a way to remain engaged in academic life. Such a center would serve as place for faculty and emeriti to gather and exchange ideas, and also as a resource center for information relating to grant writing,

⁵ This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “compression,” although a better term for it would probably be “leapfrogging.”

sabbatical support, career balance issues, and assessment tools. It could also have a social function, e.g., as a venue for Friday-afternoon happy hours and for hosting visiting guests. In short, a faculty center could contribute to building and supporting the faculty in a wide variety of innovative ways. (It is worth emphasizing, however, that a center will not on its own resolve other pressing issues, such as compensation and workload.)

Recommendations. Several liberal arts colleges have already established faculty centers along the lines of what the Group envisions for Oberlin.⁶ While we would naturally strive to make our center distinctive, other colleges' centers should serve as useful models for our own efforts. A successful center could include some or all of the following functions:

- Information exchange. The Center would host “brown bag” sessions, workshops, invited lectures and presentations aimed at promoting interdepartmental and interdisciplinary teaching and research.
- Pedagogical assistance. The Center would offer informal course evaluations by other faculty or students, videotaping services, midterm assessments, advice on syllabus design, and discussion of pedagogical best practices. The Center would thus provide a structure into which the activities of the Committee on Teaching would be absorbed.
- Library resources. The Center would provide a physical space with books and other media, and/or a virtual space with links for faculty grants, assessment tools, teaching tips, etc.
- Mentoring activities. The Center's staff would be instrumental in voluntary matching of junior to senior faculty, orientation for new faculty, and facilitating faculty reading groups.

Next steps. The resources required to start up a faculty center would be relatively modest: some on-campus space (perhaps a remodeled college-owned house) plus salary (or release time) for a director/coordinator and an assistant. Existing Mellon Foundation funds may be available to help launch the center. Given the wide range of functions a faculty center could serve, some could clearly be met more easily than others. The College could therefore identify the functions that are most easily met, what would be required to meet them, identify space on or near campus appropriate for those purposes, and open an embryonic faculty center in short order. To assist in the process, a few Oberlin faculty members could be designated to gather data on the organizational structure and physical layout of successful centers at equivalent institutions, such as those of Macalester and Wesleyan. Once established, the faculty center could then expand steadily (but prudently) as time and opportunity allowed. In addition, staff members of the faculty center could assume responsibility for maintaining a website that would consolidate information pertinent to faculty development that is currently dispersed across a number of different offices.

4. Develop “family-friendly” recruiting and retention strategies

With joint career and location issues becoming increasingly important, the Group believes the College would benefit greatly from more systematic efforts to help prospective faculty members address these issues. In addition, while finding affordable housing is not nearly as much of a barrier in Oberlin than it is in (say) New York City, there is some scope for the College to

⁶ Examples include Macalester's Center for Scholarship and Teaching (see <http://www.macalester.edu/cst/>) and Wesleyan's Center for Faculty Career Development (see <http://www.wesleyan.edu/cfcd/>).

increase its appeal in this regard. Finally, although it is not in a position of offering detailed proposals in this area, the Group recognizes the critical importance of improving the quality of Oberlin's public schools and ensuring the availability of affordable child care in the community. Specifically, the Group recommends that the College:

- Retain a consultant or placement firm to identify job opportunities for spouses/partners of prospective faculty members. Oberlin should seek to develop a cooperative relationship with other area colleges (e.g., the Ohio Five) in this effort.
- Clarify and more effectively publicize College rental policies; renovate existing rental units.
- Investigate ways to reducing the financial hurdle faced by first-time home buyers interested in living in Oberlin, possibly in partnership with local financial institutions.
- Work with the OECC and (especially) the Oberlin Public Schools to improve both the availability and the quality of locally-provided childcare and education.

5. Other initiatives

- *Promote minority recruitment.* The Group's sense is that a more competitive salary structure (item 2 above) should greatly improve our ability to attract qualified minority faculty members. To see whether this is the case, and to determine what additional steps are necessary, the Group recommends the collection of data on and the establishment of benchmarks for minority recruitment.
- *Consolidate and expand research and development funding.* The Group recommends that the College replace the array of special-purpose funds available to faculty members (e.g., conference travel funding) with an expanded, general-purpose, unrestricted research and development fund of (say) \$1500 per person per year. This will allow greater flexibility in the allocation of funds, although all expenditures would have to be accounted for, of course; it would also reduce the bureaucratic burden of those currently charged with awarding and administering existing funds (e.g., the R&D committee).
- *Phased-in retirement.* Allow faculty nearing retirement to teach part time at a reduced salary. Similar arrangements are sometimes made on an ad-hoc basis; regularizing and extending this practice could increase department's flexibility in planning for retirements, and ensure greater continuity as new faculty members come on board.

Submitted by the "Build and Support the Faculty" Working Group: Harry Hirsch and Kenneth Kuttner (co-chairs), Brian Alegant, Ben Lee, Pablo Mitchell, Bruce Simonson, David Stull, Sandy Zagarell, and Janice Zinser (members).

Building Campus Community Working Group

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS--Spring 2006

I. Social and Community Space

Oberlin needs to upgrade its public and social spaces. Although elsewhere we recommend the building of new space (or spaces), here we gather ideas for the short term renovation/reconfiguration/redeployment of existing facilities with the goal of building campus community and increasing the general sense of well-being at Oberlin. There are suggestions here for a range of campus spaces, but the preponderance of these recommendations, and the ones we put first, concern Wilder, which we regard as the heart of the Oberlin campus.

The Rathskeller

The Rathskellar is a wonderful space but seriously under-utilized. Currently, it serves a cash lunch program *only*. Students would like to see this space open from 8 AM – 1 AM to be used as “hang out” space and be available for programming.

Comfortable chairs/couches can be placed at one end leaving tables and chairs at the other end for the food operation. The central concept here is to create a space similar to the now defunct, but formerly wildly popular cafe, Oberlin Music downtown.

The DeCafe

The current seating configuration in the DeCafe does not work. This space needs to be a more welcoming and warm—not simply a cafeteria.

Specifically: the corner tables are under-used and occupy too much space. The walls isolating them should be removed and the long table currently centrally located should be broken up and re-arranged for small groups. We also recommend more comfortable seats: some couches, for example, and/or bars and stools. This space can also be improved by making a portion into a cyber-café with walk up email stations.

An exciting possibility is that the seating area remain open even when the DeCafe is closed.

All Night Study Space

Oberlin has no all-night study space, a lack that some students feel very keenly. A number of areas on campus could become such a facility. One possibility that we particularly like is keeping the basement of Wilder open even when the upper floors are closed. Both a renovated or reconfigured Rathskeller and the DeCafé would make suitable study spaces.

Wilder Lobby

The lobby of Wilder once stretched all the way from the fire place in Wilder 109 to the one in 110. We suggest re-opening up the lobby by removing one or both of the walls that currently create the rooms 109 and 110 but which also close off the fireplaces from the lobby. If necessary, just the one wall to Wilder 110 could be removed creating a lobby running from the info desk to a fireplace. With the addition of comfortable furniture, the Wilder lobby would become a warm, welcoming space rather than remain as crowded and uninviting as it is now.

Some General Recommendations for Wilder

Students would like more computers here: either a cyber café, or another computer room. We also recommend that all facilities in Wilder be equipped to take Obie Dollars.

Philips Gym

Since moving the main entrance to Philips to the North Lobby, the South Lobby has been turned into a quiet study/meeting area, but the lobby is desperately in need of more and better furniture. Currently it has three small wobbly tables with rickety chairs -- furniture that was being thrown away by some other department when Betsy Bruce rescued it and put it in the South Lobby to test her idea. Bad as the furniture is, the idea worked, and the area is used every day: for player-coach meetings; as a work space for collating projects and mailings; by study groups; for individual study time; and by various patrons of the gym who often eat lunch here after working out on their lunch hour. By upgrading with some newer, nicer tables and chairs, and a few stuffed easy chairs around a coffee table, this Lobby could be even more inviting and useful as a community space.

South Hall

South Hall has a large lobby. This is another under-used space. Small spaces can be created here that Residential Education and others could program: meeting spaces and small performance spaces. It may even be possible to put a real student theater here with seating, lighting, curtains, etc.

Alternatively, if building a campus hub proves infeasible, South can become a smaller social/study space, the equivalent of the Science Center atrium on south campus including a food and a coffee cart.

Tappan Square

The fire pit in Tappan Square is used throughout the year for bonfires. There is currently no seating here, making it uncomfortable to remain for an extended period of time. We recommend creation of a mini-Stonehenge, that is, scattering rocks for seating around the pit.

Wilder Bowl

We recommend adding more outdoor seating, similar to the furniture currently deployed only on Wilder's porch. The porch itself might be invigorated by the installation of a swing set at either end.

For the area under the Mudd entrance ramp, we suggest the installation of a Zen sand garden to be re-worked spontaneously by passers-by, or perhaps organized as a study break.

Programming Ideas

We strongly recommend a vigorous program of performances by Conservatory students and other musicians in the reconfigured Rathskeller and/or DeCafé, as well as the Science Center atrium and other venues—for ambience.

In the same spirit, we recommend for fun sponsoring in an occasional novelty on Friday afternoons— a caricature artist, say, or a carnival ride or a dunking booth—as a week's end celebration.

Currently the College has only two all-campus picnics, one around Orientation, one at graduation. We recommend closing the dining halls for picnics and /or barbecues more often. We suggest that at least one such additional event be in the fall in the Arboretum (another under-utilized space!). Another can be held in the spring in conjunction with a 'Field Day', featuring sack races, dodge ball and other games in which student organizations, residence halls and departments would enter teams. Events like these would involve not only planning by Student Union staff but also by Athletics and Residential Education.

We strongly recommend commissioning more student art for campus public spaces and the vigorous re-circulation of such art works.

II. Diversity and Admissions

We are working closely with Admissions in this area, an area filled with issues that are important to Oberlin's view of itself. The Admissions Office is considering a number of programs such as Posse and Questbridge that help identify and attract targeted populations. The offices of the Multicultural Resource Center, Student Academic Services, and Residential Education are also making connections with Admissions to support efforts to increase diversity.

In this report we are only making only a few suggestions of short term actions aimed at enhancing our attractiveness to students of color.

Is Oberlin a 'Ticket' School?

We recommend that Alumni Relations and/or Career Services develop a piece of literature presenting a sample of recent jobs our graduates have landed. We need to make more of the actual paid positions our graduates occupy, not just our excellent rate of graduate school acceptance. Of course this brochure, which need only consist of a single folded piece of 8.5x11" paper, will carefully include the accomplishments in this area of some of our students of color, low income and first generation students. In summary, we need to create and use at least one communication tool that focuses on the message that Oberlin can be a 'ticket' school. This publication would of course need to reflect the overall marketing strategy and plan to broaden Oberlin's appeal.

EFC Calculator

Some schools put a link to an EFC (Expected Family Contribution) calculator on the front page of the admissions web site. "How much will YOU have to pay to go to Oberlin? – click here!" Discussion centered on financial fears that may deter many low-income students, students of color, international students and the parents of all of the above from even *considering* Oberlin. This is a complex issue and should be discussed at length but it is an idea that some members of the group supported.

Take Oberlin Home

We recommend providing travel stipends to low-income students so that they can participate in the "Take Oberlin Home" program.

Advertise Contingency Funds

We recommend better advertising for the College's "contingency funds" that assist low-income students cover emergency costs falling outside normal tuition & fees. These funds are coordinated by the Dean of Students Office and other campus offices should be better informed about these funds.

III. Campus Communication

Oberlin needs better and more uniform means of informing people, on and off campus, about events on campus. We also need to find ways to foster campus discussion. Here are some short-term recommendations to further these goals.

Oberlin Community Guide

We recommend the creation of a handbook for newcomers to Oberlin. We envision this as some kind of combination of the old "blue book" which for a while was maintained by students and which highlighted around-Oberlin-type items (restaurants, area attractions, etc.) and another old publication which was called the red tape cutter.

This is a project that can be implemented and maintained by student interns in, for example, the Office of College Relations.

Master Calendar

We recommend that the college purchase the Master Calendar component of the EMS scheduling package. This will allow large screen TV monitors to serve as a visual messaging system, displaying events happening on campus, academic deadlines. Use of the EMS Master Calendar pulls the information from our existing scheduling package, eliminating the need to enter things twice.

Our hope is that the presence of these monitors in a few high traffic areas will not only serve to inform us of events but will be seen by sponsors of events as an advertising venue that they must use. The result will be that our online calendars will be much more complete and up-to-date.

Faculty/Staff/Dining Halls

We recommend beginning to design a program to encourage faculty and staff eating in dining halls with students. This could take the form simply of a meal plan that a college staff person could purchase. Or it could be more elaborate like the Faculty Associate Program of old. The important thing is to start. The next few years we can experiment on a small scale with a couple of options.

Uniform Website Design

We recommend the imposition of some selection of standard ideas for departmental and office web sites.

Internationalize Oberlin Working Group
Final Report
March 1, 2006

Internationalizing Oberlin – Recommendations for Action

While there are certainly areas in which Oberlin can become a more global college, and we have included these in our recommendations below, it is worth noting that there is already much in the way of international activity to be built upon. Programs provided by Shansi and OCREECAS, strength in our foreign language programs, a curriculum with significant international course offerings in certain areas, area studies programs with an international focus, a thriving study away offering, a significant population of international students, and a percentage of faculty with international interests all provide a strong structure from which we can move the internationalizing effort forward.

The final six recommendations approved by the Internationalizing Oberlin Working Group are listed below. In addition, we have provided a list of these same recommendations divided into three categories: 1) Recommendations that require major new sources of funding; 2) Recommendations that can be implemented through current structures with additional funding; 3) Recommendations that can be accomplished within the current structure with minimal increases in funding.

Recommendations:

Establish the Oberlin Center for International Education

In order to more fully integrate and expand our international focus, we must have an administrative structure that will create and implement new international offerings, as well as coordinate, expand and support our current international components—both curricular and co-curricular. While the Working Group has not yet defined the structure and staffing of the Oberlin Center for International Education, we propose that the Center be responsible for the following, in consultation with appropriate faculty and staff:

- The development of faculty and student exchange opportunities with targeted foreign educational and cultural institutions (see item below);
- The development, implementation and management of the Global Scholars program (see item below);
- Increased external funding for international programs;
- Increased numbers of faculty-led international Winter Term projects and increased student participation in international winter term projects;
- Establishing current benchmarks for each strategic area and defining long-range goals for the increased internationalization of campus;
- Increased, coordinated on-campus programming of multi-disciplinary contemporary topics in internationalism, including international guests, campus-wide workshops and appropriate events;
- Assisting Shansi with stronger integration into campus international activities and events;
- Establishing a residential area that would become the physical center for international events and housing the Global Scholars program in the residential center.

Establish the Global Scholars Program

The Global Scholars program at Oberlin will build on our current international offerings and bring together the on-campus and off-campus experiences of a select group of students in an integrated, planned and cohesive program for global education. Highlights of the program include application and admissions in the sophomore year, required foreign language study, semester- or year-long study abroad experience, and advanced-level course work integrating the off-campus study in a culminating academic project. See appendix for a complete project proposal.

Develop collaborative relationships with strategic international institutions

Building on the long-standing and important models developed by Shansi, OCREECAS, and recent Conservatory outreach, Oberlin College must develop real partnerships with strategically identified foreign educational and cultural institutions. In particular, Oberlin College should build on the strength of our East Asian Studies department, our relationship with Shansi and Shansi's strong connections to develop and expand programs in China and Japan. These partnerships will include:

- Faculty and student exchanges;
- Increased semester- and year-long study abroad opportunities;
- Winter term and summer projects;
- Performance and other artistic exchanges;
- Summer or winter term internships.

Increase the number of Oberlin students who participate in language study

The study and working knowledge of a foreign language is a key component to the in-depth understanding of and integration into other cultures. Oberlin is fortunate to have great strength in its language departments. In order to insure that our students have a true understanding of another culture through language study, we recommend the following:

- Increase the number of departments and programs who recommend or require at least two semesters of foreign language study;
- Working with the Modern Languages Advisory Committee and the appropriate curricular committees, reduce the credit hours for introductory language courses from 5 to 4 so that there will be easier access to these classes for students from all disciplines;
- Further expand and promote the current winter term introductory, intensive language offerings and encourage continuation of semester-long language study for participating winter term students;
- Encourage earlier participation in language study for eligibility into study away programs;
- Refine our list of study away programs to include more affiliated programs at an advanced language level;
- Develop or expand language instruction in key areas, for example, Arabic and Korean;
- Consider support for the study of lesser-taught languages such as Italian, African or South Asian languages;
- Develop a revenue-generating summer English as a Second Language (ESL) program;

- Offer intensive summer language study for high school students with a focus on Asian languages.

Further emphasize study away at all levels in our curriculum by:

- Establishing a numeric goal for a percentage of Oberlin graduates who will have at least a semester-long study away experience and continuing to work towards achieving this goal;
- Developing a study away mission statement;
- Developing Oberlin, consortial, or exchange programs (such as the Puebla program) in areas that relate to prioritized curricular needs;
- Developing relationships with study-away providers that feature academically-based internships with businesses, governmental agencies and NGOs;
- Continuing to develop Winter Term and summer study away opportunities for first and second year students through faculty-led study tours;
- Continuing to review and refine our list of Affiliated programs in terms of agreed upon educational characteristics.

Increase the population of international students enrolled on campus

The campus community must establish a renewed emphasis on the recruitment of international students. As we seek to build a diverse and tolerant community, students from broadly different backgrounds are an invaluable part of a “world” college. To be effective at increasing the enrollment of international students we must:

- Complete a long-term strategic plan for recruitment of four-year degree-seeking candidates;
- Devote additional financial resources to financial aid for international students;
- Enhance Oberlin’s ability to attract international transfer students;
- Explore exchange relationships with foreign institutions;
- Establish a revenue-generating intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) Program;
- Establish a summer academic program drawing on Oberlin’s curricular strengths to bring rising international high school seniors to Oberlin to earn academic credit.

Final Recommendations Organized by Implementation Category

Recommendations that require major new sources of funding

- Establish the Oberlin Center for International Education;
- The development, implementation and management of the Global Scholars program;
- Increased numbers of faculty-led international Winter Term projects and increased student participation in international winter term projects;
- Establishing a residential area that would become the physical center for international events and consider housing the Global Scholars program in the residential center;
- Develop or expand language instruction in key areas, for example, Arabic and Korean;
- Consider support for the study or lesser-taught languages such as Italian, African or South Asian languages;
- Offer intensive summer language study for high school students with a focus on Asian languages;
- Establish a summer academic program drawing on Oberlin's curricular strengths to bring rising international high school seniors to Oberlin to earn academic credit.

Recommendations that can be implemented through current structures with additional funding

- Increase the number of departments and programs who recommend explicitly or require at least two semesters of foreign language study;
- Working with the Modern Languages Advisory Committee and the appropriate curricular committees, reduce the credit hours for introductory language courses from 5 to 4 so that there will be easier access to these classes for students from all disciplines;
- Encourage earlier participation in language study for eligibility into study away programs;
- Refine our list of study away programs to include more affiliated programs at an advanced language level;
- Establish a numeric goal for a percentage of Oberlin graduates who will have at least a semester-long study away experience and continue to work towards achieving the established goal;
- Develop a study away mission statement;
- Develop Oberlin, consortial, or exchange programs (such as the Puebla program) in areas that relate to prioritized curricular needs;
- Develop relationships with study away providers that feature academically-based internships with businesses, governmental agencies and NGOs;
- Continue to review and refine our list of Affiliated programs in terms of agreed upon educational characteristics;
- Complete a long-term strategic plan for recruitment of four-year degree-seeking candidates;
- Enhance Oberlin's ability to attract international transfer students;
- Explore exchange relationships with foreign institutions.

Recommendations that can be accomplished within the current structure with minimal increases in funding

- The development of faculty and student exchange opportunities with targeted foreign educational and cultural institutions;
- Increased external funding for international programs;
- Establishing current benchmarks for each strategic area and defining long-range goals for the increased internationalization of campus;
- Increased, coordinated on-campus programming of multi-disciplinary contemporary topics in internationalism, including international guests, campus-wide workshops and appropriate events;
- Assisting Shansi with stronger integration into campus international activities and events;
- Develop a revenue-generating summer English as a Second Language (ESL) program;
- Develop collaborative relationships with strategic international institutions;
- Further expand and promote the current winter term introductory, intensive language offerings and encourage continuation of semester-long language study for participating winter term students;
- Devote additional financial resources to financial aid for international students;
- Enhance Oberlin's ability to attract international transfer students.

Rationale and Background Information

In Spring 2005, Oberlin College approved a strategic plan designed to continue to assess our current strengths and to take action to enhance the already strong education and educational values that are unique to Oberlin. Contained in the list of principles outlined in the strategic plan is the concept of internationalism. Specifically, the plan charges us to:

Open the world to its students and develop in them the skills and knowledge they will need to engage with and navigate in highly diverse communities and in a global society.

Graduate individuals who are humane, thoughtful, and influential actors in the world who will provide leadership in their communities and professions and in the arts, politics, education, international relations, public service, science, business and communications (from Strategic Plan, Mission)

The plan also outlines a rationale and a specific set of strategies by which internationalism at Oberlin might be achieved.

***Rationale:** Oberlin should play a leading role in American higher education by making itself a world college. Oberlin's capacity for international education is more important than ever. The major challenges that will face current and future generations of Oberlin students, such as climate change, the AIDS pandemic, racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural conflict, social inequality, and economic development must be understood and addressed in a global context. Oberlin is well situated to address these challenges by building upon its international curricular offerings and its cosmopolitan campus.*

Strategies:

1. *Build on the strengths of our area studies programs and other international curricular offerings to make our curriculum richly global.*

2. *Emphasize the study of foreign languages and cultures.*
3. *Enhance the recruitment of international students.*
4. *Create opportunities for meaningful international study and research for every student, regardless of academic major, who desires such experience.*
5. *Establish relationships and collaborations with international institutions of higher education and with business, governmental, non-governmental, and other organizations in the interest of creating educational exchanges for students and faculty and creating additional opportunities for international study and internships.*
6. *Consider using Winter Term and the summer months for international programs abroad and on campus.*

Internationalize Oberlin Working Group

The Internationalize Oberlin Working Group met throughout the Fall 2005 semester in order to develop specific actions towards internationalizing Oberlin. We have followed our charge as given to us by the General Faculty Planning Committee.

to analyze the current situation, consult as appropriate, and make recommendations in such areas as: develop policy regarding aims, structure, budgeting, and funding of Oberlin's study-away programs; establish relationships and collaborations with international institutions of higher education and with business, governmental, non-governmental, and other organizations to create more opportunities for international study and internships for students; enhance the recruitment of international students; consider using Winter Term and the summer months for international programs abroad and on campus; consult with the Curricular Pathways Working Group on ways to globalize the curriculum; collaborate more with Shansi; communicate regularly the progress of your working group to appropriate local audiences -- students, faculty, and staff.

Several other Working Groups have charges that contain international components. These are:

Curricular Pathways: build on the strengths of existing area studies programs and other international curricular offerings to make Oberlin's curriculum richly global; encourage foreign language study, and create educational exchanges for students and faculty

Curricular Support: create opportunities for meaningful international study for every student who wants it

Members of the Internationalize Working Group include

Co-Chairs: Tim Scholl, Ellen Sayles	
Name	Dept
Champagne, Salvatore	Associate Professor of Singing
Cleeton, David	Professor of Economics/Associate Provost
Fisher, Mike	Danforth Professor of History
Grim, Charles	Senior Administrator for International Development
Hamilton, Elizabeth	Assistant Professor of German
Kalyn, Andrea	Conservatory Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Kelley, David	Associate Professor of History
Rosen, Mike	Professor of Percussions
Sandberg, Eve	Associate Professor of Politics
Sayles, Ellen	Associate Dean of Studies
Scholl, Tim	Associate Professor of Russian
Gemici, Ozlem	Student

Mains, Oliver	Student
Diallo, Assiatou	Student

Internationalizing Oberlin – Definition and Analysis

In June 2005, the American Council on Education (ACE) published a series of documents about internationalizing higher education in the United States. In “Measuring Internationalization at Liberal Arts Colleges”, authors Madeline Greene and Laura Saiya outline six key components to an “internationalizing index.” These components are:

- Articulated commitment
- Academic offerings
- Organizational infrastructure
- External funding
- Institutional investment in faculty
- International students and student programs

The Internationalizing Working Group attempted to collect data and analyze the current status of international offerings in two ways—by gathering as much relevant data as possible and by discussing current efforts with appropriate constituencies. Specific data collected is contained in the attached appendices. The Working Group heard reports from Carl Jacobson, Executive Director of Shansi, and Tim Scholl in his role director of the Oberlin Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (OCREECAS). In addition, we reviewed information from the Office of Sponsored Research, the Study Away Office, and the chair of the International Studies Concentration. The co-chairs of the Working Group met separately with Ross Peacock from the Office of Institutional Research, Carl Jacobson (Executive Director of Oberlin Shansi) and Michel Fischer (vice-chair of Oberlin Shansi Board) and with members of the Modern Languages Advisory Committee. Finally, we relied on the Course Catalog to describe current curriculum and regulations.

TO: President Nancy Dye
Provost Al MacKay
Members of the General Faculty Planning Committee

FROM: Al Porterfield, Sustainability Working Group Co-Chair

RE: Sustainability Working Group recommendations for “immediate implementation”

DATE: February 28, 2006

1. We recommend, and will soon move before the General Faculty, that Oberlin College establish a *Committee on Environmental Sustainability* (CES) as a standing committee of the General Faculty. CES membership will comprise the Sustainability Coordinator and faculty from across the College and Conservatory, members of the Academic and Professional Staff, and representatives appointed by the Student Senate, each in numbers yet to be determined. CES will also include *ex officio* members from the administration and A&PS as appropriate, and will seek representation from the Board of Trustees as well. CES's principal charges will be to plan and promote implementation the *Oberlin College Environmental Policy*, as set forth by the President's *Environmental Policy Advisory Committee* (EPAC) in August of 2003 and approved by the Board of Trustees in March of 2004, and to oversee and facilitate progress in implementation of this and of future directives.

A critical first task for the CES will be to translate the existing environmental policy into a prioritized set of specific goals and strategies, and to establish mechanisms for monitoring these against established timetables and budgets. Although such planning is necessarily an ongoing process, we hope that a meaningful “first draft” can be completed rapidly so that already-existing and time-sensitive opportunities to further “green” the campus are not missed.

The CES will also serve as an advocate for College efforts to publicize its role as a leader in campus sustainability and environmental citizenship in general. As such, it would be charged with ensuring, to the extent possible, that the other recommendations in this document are followed and that the campus and outside world are educated about the progress Oberlin is making towards a green campus.

The authority of the CES would derive from its status as a standing committee of the General Faculty; and as such it would report to the GF periodically on the progress made towards sustainability objectives.

EPAC, whose members served at the pleasure of the President, delivered admirably on its charge to develop a comprehensive environmental policy for Oberlin College. What is sorely needed now is standing committee whose members are equally dedicated to the charge of *promoting the implementation of that policy*, and who possess the technical, administrative, and budgetary expertise to advance that agenda effectively. We recommend that EPAC cease to exist once the CES has been established so as to avoid unnecessary confusion over roles and responsibilities. At that point, EPAC's responsibility for evaluating the performance of the Sustainability Coordinator (as stipulated in the Coordinator's job description) will pass to the CES.

2. We recommend that the President establish an Oberlin College Green Fund¹ which is earmarked to support institution-wide sustainability initiatives. This Green Fund should be widely advertised as a donation option and made an integral part of the capital campaign that Oberlin is about to launch.

¹ The University of Connecticut provides an example of such a fund (<http://www.ecohusky.uconn.edu/greencampusfund.htm>).

We believe that the availability of such a fund will both draw donations from individuals who are otherwise unlikely to give to Oberlin and reinforce giving in other areas. A Green Fund may also be particularly attractive to recent graduates, a group not known for enthusiastic giving. Donor support for sustainability efforts will also help to foster the broader institutional goal of long-term financial sustainability by reducing operating costs for fuel, electricity, and water. Finally, a visible investment in environmental sustainability will reinforce and renew Oberlin's reputation for commitment to pressing social issues and serve as a beacon to students who are looking for an institution characterized by such commitment.

3. We recommend that Oberlin College commit (as specified in the Board-approved Environmental Policy Statement) to achieving the highest possible LEED-NC rating in new construction and major building renovation and to eventual LEED-EB certification for all campus buildings on a phased schedule. Careful planning and coordination among architects, consultants, contractors, on-campus professionals and interested parties (particularly the proposed College Committee on Environmental Sustainability and the Sustainability Coordinator) will place even higher levels of LEED certification easily within our grasp; but under no circumstances should the College settle for less than a LEED Silver qualification for near-term construction and renovation tasks. The Phase II student housing project, for which a request for proposals is already in circulation, and the upcoming renovations of Severance and the Asia House complex present immediate opportunities to demonstrate our dedication to greening the campus.
4. We recommend that Oberlin College reaffirm its commitment to the permanence of the Sustainability Coordinator position. Sustainability Working Group members are somewhat unclear as to the administration's view of the position's long-term status. We are united, however, in regarding a permanent, salaried Sustainability Coordinator as essential to successful implementation of Oberlin's current environmental policies and in reacting to sustainability issues which might emerge in the future.

Members of the Environmental Sustainability Working Group:

- Dennis Hubbard
- Travis Grout
- Dani Levine
- Eric McMillion (Co-Chair)
- David Orr
- John Petersen
- Morgan Pitts
- Al Porterfield (Co-Chair)
- Karen Sutton
- Molly Tyson

DRAFT

12/06/05

OBERLIN COLLEGE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

I. OBERLIN'S STRATEGIC PLAN & THE CONSERVATORY

As a conservatory of music, Oberlin is committed to professional education at the highest level. Specifically, we provide an experience that allows students to reach their greatest potential as musicians, as individuals, and as aspiring artists in the field of professional music. We cultivate skills that are conducive to long-term success in both music and other disciplines, and we seek to graduate future leaders who prosper in the years following their Oberlin careers. The faculty and students of the Conservatory are committed to the pursuit and the achievement of excellence.¹

Indeed, this focus on excellence girds the Conservatory's implementation of Oberlin's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan articulates two central goals: the primary goal, "to enhance the value—and the perception of value—of an Oberlin education in ways that strengthen Oberlin's appeal to current and prospective students, serve its mission and values, and strengthen its leadership position and reputation,"² is pursued within the context of financial sustainability. The Conservatory's implementation plan affirms the ethos of educational quality within a financially responsible construct.

The details of the Conservatory's plan directly address the principal strategic directions identified within Oberlin's primary educational goal of focusing and strengthening the educational experience. Residencies in piano, strings, voice, and conducting, by guest artists of the stature of Marilyn Horne and Simon Rattle, will "augment the professional training of Conservatory students,"³ as well as further Oberlin's reputation for excellence as these artists are exposed to the quality of our students and faculty. By identifying, supporting, and promoting key performances each year, the Conservatory will further enrich the educational experiences of our students and develop opportunities for outreach and development. The Conservatory will continue to connect curricular areas, such as performance and analysis, and reshape degree programs such as Music Education to enhance their professional relevance. The Conservatory will explore ways to enhance the educations of all Oberlin students by developing new courses designed specifically for Arts and Sciences students.

¹ "A Strategic Plan for Oberlin College," 5 March 2005: 3-4.

² Strategic Plan: 5.

³ Strategic Plan: 6.

The Conservatory's implementation plan seeks no less to support and build the faculty. By continuing to support their artistic and scholarly work, and by increasing support for performances, touring, and recording, the Conservatory will maintain its ability to draw and retain the highest level of faculty, as well as to recruit and train the very best students.

II. KEY ACADEMIC PRIORITIES WITHIN THE CONSERVATORY

From the goals and strategies identified in Oberlin's Strategic Plan, the Conservatory has derived key academic priorities within each division. The list that follows is not exhaustive, but rather representative of the Conservatory's strategic initiatives. The examples cited below serve both Oberlin's educational and financial objectives.

CONDUCTING AND ENSEMBLES:

- The ensemble program will develop yearly flagship events, such as the Oberlin Orchestra's performances at Severance Hall, which both serve the educational mission of the school and promote to a larger public its reputation of excellence.
- Series of guest conductors will parallel Artists in Residence to augment student learning through exposure to highly accomplished musicians outside of Oberlin, and to enhance the pursuit of the highest standards of musical performance.
- Through collaboration with the First-Year Seminar Program, as well as through newly developed courses for Arts and Sciences students, the ensemble program will extend opportunities to students from across Oberlin College to experience and investigate music, thereby enriching the entire student experience as well as furthering the mission of the Conservatory.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC:

- Oberlin will continue to highlight the central role within the Conservatory of the Contemporary Music Division (Composition, Jazz Studies, and Technology in the Music and Related Arts) with annual flagship performances such as the winter-term tours of the Oberlin Jazz Septet, collaborations between the Composition Department and the Contemporary Music Ensemble, TIMARA Department appearances at the Florida Electronic Music Festival, and ongoing New York Performances at Merkin Concert Hall and The Miller Theater. These events not only will continue to provide students with challenging and rewarding performance experience, but the opportunity to engage directly with composers and new music.

- Aligning the Composition and TIMARA departments more closely will benefit students from both programs as the curricula of each informs and enriches the other. Such coordination will offer students a broader context for their work, and greater flexibility in their study at Oberlin, as well as in their careers beyond.
- Building a jazz facility will address many of the strategic directions outlined in Oberlin's Strategic Plan. It unquestionably will strengthen the educational experience of jazz students and support the work of the faculty by providing appropriate teaching and rehearsal space, but it will also mark overtly the significance of the jazz program within Oberlin College. Building such a facility near other Conservatory buildings, furthermore, will build the campus community by drawing the jazz program directly into the general life of the school.
- Increasing the production of recordings of jazz students and faculty will augment the profile of Oberlin's jazz program while providing students with intensive performance opportunities and supporting the faculty's work as performers.
- Continuing to support the divisional CD project will underscore the Conservatory's commitment to the creation and performance of contemporary music. The Conservatory will also launch a record label exclusively on iTunes.
- The Division of Contemporary Music will explore options for conservatory-wide courses in new media, including module courses focusing on hardware and software technology relevant for musicians.
- The Division will continue to explore opportunities for meaningful cross-divisional collaborations, including co-taught courses, artistic collaborations, and future Luce projects.

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE:

- Establishing the student baroque orchestra as an ongoing ensemble with a regular rehearsal time will acknowledge the orchestra's place within the Conservatory's ensemble program.
- Increasing support for high-profile performances and touring by faculty and students will expand the visibility of the Historical Performance Division both within Oberlin and beyond.
- Outreach and publicity will build on the program's strong reputation to promote recruitment of outstanding students.

- The Division will continue to explore new ways to enrich the experience of students throughout the Conservatory, and so enhance the distinctiveness of an Oberlin education.

KEYBOARD STUDIES:

- In order to enhance the quality of its program, the Piano Department will limit enrollment to students of the highest caliber. This reduction in enrollment, paralleled by a reduction in faculty through retirements, in addition to reallocation of faculty lines, will allow for the direction of resources towards hiring additional professional staff accompanists and hosting an annual guest Artist in Residence.⁴ Although these guest artists will benefit piano students most immediately, and so in turn support the recruitment of extremely gifted pianists, students throughout the Conservatory will value exposure to great musicians beyond the faculty ranks.
- Increasing the number of professional collaborative pianists on staff will alleviate the current burden of student accompanying responsibilities. This change will enable the Piano Department to streamline curricular requirements towards intensive, focused study of solo repertoire and chamber music, as well as provide a more consistent level of accompanying support for the studios that rely on it. Here again, educational goals meet financial efficiency most effectively: the Conservatory will explore the possibility of forging rotational partnerships with peer institutions to meet professional accompanying needs.

MUSIC EDUCATION:

- Oberlin's Music Education Division boasts a long and distinguished history. Because the program is small, however, the school's larger performance focus often overshadows it. Reshaping the undergraduate curriculum towards a five-year integrated undergraduate-master's degree will create a program that complements and draws most effectively on the Conservatory's performance degree programs. Moving the point of acceptance into the music education program to the junior or senior years will ensure within the department a more consistent musical quality and commitment to teaching. Expanding the curricular focus of the undergraduate program beyond public-school education to include increased exposure to community music programs and studio teaching, furthermore, will attract to the program a broader range of Oberlin students.

⁴Guest artists will provide masterclasses as well as perform on the Artist Recital Series, thereby freeing up money in turn within the ARS budget and strengthening the overall quality of the series.

- Expanding and reshaping the graduate music education program will benefit the division in a variety of ways. The graduate students will serve as models for the less experienced undergraduate students, and the higher academic level of their work will affirm the standards of excellence held across the division. This will improve the perception of music education students by their colleagues, which in turn will positively impact recruitment to both the undergraduate and graduate programs. In light of the change by many states to requiring teachers to have Graduate degrees sooner in their tenure, a Masters program will better prepare our students to enter into their careers without the immediate necessity of returning to school.
- Offering three schedules for completing the graduate music education program will afford the division increased flexibility and expand its applicant base, thereby simultaneously strengthening the quality of the program and ensuring its financial viability by generating substantially more revenue. A fifth-year certification program will attract rising juniors from within the Conservatory, while a summer-year-summer certification schedule will appeal to students from Oberlin and beyond who wish to complement their undergraduate degree with a master's degree and teacher licensure. Graduate course offerings in the summer will draw licensed teachers seeking continuing education units (CEUs) or a master's degree. Such summer offerings will be financially self-sustainable, and so will offer unprecedented flexibility to the music education faculty, who might choose periodically to exchange their traditional teaching schedules for summer teaching.

MUSIC THEORY:

- The Division of Music Theory will continue to explore connections between musical performance and analysis in all levels of theory and aural skills courses. Courses designed specifically for this purpose will be integrated more deliberately into the Conservatory's performance programs.
- The Division of Music Theory will continue to explore ways in which it can enhance the liberal arts educations of College students. With appropriate faculty resources, this could include serving Arts and Sciences students for whom the rigorous sequence of Conservatory music theory courses is appropriate, increasing the number of interdisciplinary upper-level courses, and creating new introductory courses designed specifically for liberal arts students.

MUSICOLOGY:

- The Division of Musicology already draws to its courses a broad range of students in both the Conservatory and College, and will continue to develop courses accordingly.
- Courses in ethnomusicology and courses cross-listed with other college departments encourage students to develop global perspectives. The Division of Musicology will explore ways of further supporting Oberlin's goal of internationalization.
- Along with the Division of Music Theory, Musicology will explore ways in which it can contribute towards new courses for college students designed to enhance their liberal arts educations and foster a lifelong enjoyment and appreciation of music.

STRINGS:

- Oberlin's String Division will enhance its program by intensifying the chamber music program and integrating it more deliberately into the entire Conservatory curriculum. Key to this endeavor will be the reallocation of a faculty position charged primarily with overseeing and coaching within the chamber music program. This position, further, will create a bridge to the chamber music programs in the piano and wind departments, and encourage increased communication and collaboration between these departments.
- As it seeks to highlight the role of chamber music within the curriculum, the Conservatory will need to consider the appropriate allocation of faculty resources within the String Division, and to ensure that faculty resources and studio loads in the division are appropriate to its goals for both the chamber music and large ensemble programs.

VOCAL STUDIES:

- As in the piano department, the students within the Division of Vocal Studies, and indeed the across the Conservatory, will benefit significantly from the addition of an Artist in Residence in Voice, who will both teach students and perform in the Artist Recital Series. The newly forged relationship with the Marilyn Horne Foundation will complement the Artist-in-Residence program in that the Artist Recital Series in alternate years will feature a Foundation fellow. Oberlin will fulfill its mission hence not only in exposing our students to exquisite musical talent, but in affirming through these young artists standards of excellence to the broader community, and forging vital relationships with young artists of promise.
- The Vocal Division already has achieved considerable success in sending students to the country's leading opera training programs. Adding a vocal

coach to the faculty will facilitate the division's ability to teach and produce opera at the highest level, and hence to recruit extremely gifted students.

- Continue to strengthen and enhance our alliance with the Cleveland Orchestra to create even greater opportunities for singers and choral ensembles.

WINDS, BRASS, PERCUSSION:

- Connecting large ensembles more deliberately and specifically to departmental curricula will enhance the educational quality of those programs, as well as more directly inform the recruitment strategies and admissions decisions within the Winds/Brass/Percussion Division. Coordinating orchestral repertoire courses with the large ensemble program not only will create an immediate relevancy and context for students enrolled in those courses, but will have a very direct and positive impact on the quality of ensemble performances.
- The Division of Winds, Brass, and Percussion has in place already a graduated chamber music curriculum that shepherds inexperienced students towards increasingly independent work. Creating increased opportunities for auditioned groups to tour during winter term will underscore the centrality of ensemble performance within the curriculum, and foster the development of groups working at extremely high artistic levels.
- The division will continue to invite frequent guest artists to Oberlin for performances and masterclasses as a means of broadening and enriching the educational experiences of its students.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS:

- The Conservatory Faculty Council has requested that applied departments examine the benefits of adding graduate programs in areas that would not substantially impact performance opportunities for undergraduates, and yet enhance the overall quality of the program for both students and faculty. The potential total number of students in such a program would not exceed 30, and it would be seen as a replacement in large part to the existing Artist Diploma program. The Conservatory would undertake this initiative within the defined Strategic and Financial plan for Oberlin College.

BEYOND THE CORE:

- As part of the ongoing planning for the Conservatory, there are a number of curricular experiences that will be conjoined with professional development initiatives for our students, and with institutional objectives for both admissions and development. Specifically, Winter Term provides a tremendous opportunity for our students to gain professional experience as chamber musicians, teachers, and advocates for music, as well as representing the school in admissions and development functions. In addition, students will be involved in planning these tours, as well as applying for grants to assist in funding them. Many of these activities will be undertaken in existing professional development courses.

CONCLUSION:

- There are a number of ongoing discussions in regard to the planning effort in the Conservatory, and it should be noted that this is a draft of a living document that will certainly evolve over time.