



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

## THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON ACCESS

### Final Report & Recommendations

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

Dr. Axworthy

We, the members of the Task Force on Access, are pleased to present to you this final report and recommendations. The issue of improving accessibility to post secondary education is a complex one. Our research and discussions have been enlightening, and we thank you for the opportunity we have been given to help the University find new ways to improve access. In addition, we are very pleased that some of our earlier ideas have already been incorporated into the new Opportunity Fund., which was launched in January.

Following the release of the committee's Interim Report in March, we conducted a series of broader discussions with local community partners, students, and university faculty and staff. Many suggestions, collected from this consultation phase, have been incorporated into our list of recommendations.

As you read through the report, you will note that the recommendations list is quite specific with a defined time period for completion. The recommendations are action-oriented and also carry a weight of accountability. Upon future reviews, it is our hope that we will realize measurable progress in creating greater access at the University of Winnipeg.

Yours truly,

Kelly Brown  
Co-chair

Gerry Munt  
Co-chair

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2006, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy posed a pair of questions to his management team: how does The University of Winnipeg become an agent for change and what barriers can be removed to increase participation among populations traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education - such as people from low socio-economic status (SES), Aboriginal, new Canadian or rural backgrounds? He then established a task force of students, faculty, and administrators who were given the responsibility to provide a strategy to improve access for students of lower socio-economic status. After examining the issue for five months, the Task Force solicited broader discussion and commentary from both within and outside the University. An interim report was published to stimulate this discussion.

The overall reaction to our approach was positive. People generally recognized that access was important and that our overall understanding of the issue was sound. There was also a sense that we should be action-focused. People were generally aware of the issues but wanted us to focus on real and immediate solutions rather than a long-term blueprint. This was in keeping with our original mandate from Dr. Axworthy so the committee, at its first meeting following the consultations, decided that our final report should not be merely a collection of recommendations. Rather, we should distill, from the work leading up to our Interim Report and the comments received in our consultations, a few key themes on which we could act immediately, and then provide an action plan and accountability structure for the next 18-24 months to implement the major recommendations. As a result, this final report is designed to jump-start activities rather than to identify all, or even most, of the ways in which the current system could be changed to provide an access focus.

The four questions the Task Force posed in its Interim Report were:

1. How can we best help students in the primary and secondary school system to see university as a viable option for their post-secondary career?
2. How can the University best engage with current and future community programs to help adults return to university?
3. How can we ensure that students who enter The University of Winnipeg have every opportunity to succeed?
4. What are the major financial and social barriers to post-secondary education and how can the University of Winnipeg mitigate these barriers?

The Task Force response was, first, to identify key initiatives for each question that were both possible and affordable for the University of Winnipeg and second, to build an action plan based on those initiatives. The initiatives are focused on each question. The full set of initiatives is below. The action plans for each initiative are in the text of the report.

## Summary of Initiatives

- We will help students in the primary and secondary school system to see the University of Winnipeg as a viable option by:
  - Creating an Opportunity Fund so that we can provide seed money to give students a “tap on the shoulder”
  - Establishing a deferred tuition credit program and integrating it with the community programs in our Innovative Learning Centre
  - Expanding our own Wii Chiwaakanak Learning Centre, which acts as a bridge to inner city youth and addresses the digital divide and graduation gap.
  - Expanding our partnership programs such as College and University Bound and Career Trek
  - Establishing partnerships with the provincial and Federal Government to enhance the impact of our Opportunity fund
- We will help adults return to University by
  - Making it possible to achieve a University degree without ever setting foot on campus between 8:30 and 4:30.
  - Through the new College for Adult Learning developing new and innovative ways to bring university courses to the community, work with existing community programs, and recognize the knowledge that adult learners already have.
  - Experiment with new approaches to academic programs, such as the new Urban and Inner-city studies major, so that they are more accessible to non-traditional students
- We will ensure that students who enter The University of Winnipeg have every opportunity to succeed by
  - Creating a Transition Year Program designed to help first year students achieve a successful transition to University.
  - Adapting pedagogy and introducing new teaching skills and models so that the University can offer multiple approaches to learning.
  - Enhancing the role of colleges including, for example, the Global College, the Richardson College for the Environment, the Aboriginal College, and the College for Adult Learners.
  - Enhancing academic counseling and more directly involving faculty members in advising
  - Enhancing the student’s “sense of belonging” through the establishment of facilities that foster on-campus communities
- We will mitigate the major financial and social barriers by
  - Enhancing our current program of student financial support with bursaries from the Opportunity Fund
  - Providing affordable and appropriate childcare.
  - Providing transportation subsidies
  - Providing housing subsidies
  - Providing a safe and secure environment

## HISTORY

In October 2006, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy posed a pair of questions to his management team: how does The University of Winnipeg become an agent for change and what barriers can be removed to increase participation among populations traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education - such as people from low socio-economic status (SES), Aboriginal, new Canadian or rural backgrounds? He then established a task force of students, faculty, and administrators who were given the responsibility to provide a strategy to improve access for students of lower socio-economic status. After examining the issue for five months, the Task Force solicited broader discussion and commentary from both within and outside the University. An interim report was published to stimulate this discussion.

As part of this consultation the Task Force held two general forums, individual members held several meetings with both individuals and groups, and a number of individuals— both within and outside the University – provided written comments. The overall reaction to our approach was positive. People generally recognized that access was important and that our overall understanding of the issue was sound. There was also a sense that we should be action-focused. People were generally aware of the issues but wanted us to focus on real and immediate solutions rather than a long-term blueprint. This was in keeping with our original mandate from Dr. Axworthy so the committee, at its first meeting following the consultations, decided that our final report should not be merely a collection of recommendations. Rather, we should distill, from the work leading up to our Interim Report and the comments received in our consultations, a few key themes on which we could act immediately, and then provide an action plan and accountability structure for the next 18-24 months to implement the major recommendations. As a result, this final report is designed to jump-start activities rather than to identify all, or even most, of the ways in which the current system could be changed to provide an access focus.

The Task Force has always been aware that we were providing a plan for the University of Winnipeg. All members of society share the consequences, of a system in which university education is disproportionately available to those of greater means. Our provincial government has introduced a number of initiatives, and funded others introduced by Manitoba's universities, as part of its clear and abiding commitment to access. For the University of Winnipeg, however, this is not merely a societal issue of which we are a part. It is a central issue that relates to our own place in the fabric of the City of Winnipeg. We are located in the centre of the city. The families we are referring to are our neighbours. The schools from which the students do not graduate are in our inner city neighborhoods. Access is now, and must always be, at the core of the University's mission and sense of self. This report reflects that mission. It is concerned with how the University of Winnipeg can improve access. Certainly

society can do much and may do more. Regardless, the University of Winnipeg must be actively involved. This report describes the manner in which we may proceed.

One issue left open by this approach is the question of how best to incorporate the issues and analysis provided in the Interim Report. It was decided to incorporate the relevant material in the Interim Report in two ways. First, we have incorporated the Interim Report as an attachment to this report. Second, the material that helps to describe solutions has been used to build the action plan that is the basis for the main body of the report.

## THE PRIMARY GOAL

In keeping with the action-oriented approach described above, the Task Force has adopted the following goal:

***“We will ensure that the percentage of persons from low SES neighbourhoods who graduate from The University of Winnipeg will be the same as their percentage of the overall population.”***

## ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to achieve that goal the Task Force has accepted two intermediate targets:

1. To increase the number of students by 55% from low SES neighborhoods who first register in the University of Winnipeg from 230 to 357 over the next five years.
2. The graduation rate for these students will be equal to or better than the graduation rate for all students.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Low SES w/ 18-20 yrs	110	122	135	146	158	171
Low SES w/ age 21+	120	133	146	160	173	186
TOTAL	230	255	281	306	331	357

The first target will bring the number of first year students from low SES neighborhoods very close to their proportion of the overall society. The second will ensure that the students who enter the university graduate. If we achieve both of these targets, then over time we will have achieved our goal. We have



chosen geographic location as our identifier because the University does not now, and does not intend in future, to ask our students the kind of personal information that would mean we would be able to use individual identifiers to meet our goals. At the same time we recognize the weaknesses of purely geographic data. Therefore we will be constantly reanalyzing and restructuring our analysis to ensure that we are, in fact, improving access as we improve our score. Each year the University of Winnipeg will provide a report on our movements towards these targets.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Develop registration and retention scores based on postal code data and organized by SES	Annual Report	June each year
Conduct an evaluation of Postal Code data and ensure codes reflect actual SES experience	Report tied to each census	2008
Develop a crosscheck so that students moving into residences or the Inner-city to attend U of W do not distort the results.		Ongoing

A second and equally important part of ensuring accountability is the establishment of a monitoring structure. The members of the Task Force believe that such a sweeping set of initiatives will only become part of the ongoing activities of the University if, in the early stages, there is a system established to both track our progress (from the section above) and monitor our actions as described in the remainder of this report. It is recommended that the current co-chairs prepare a quarterly report on the progress of our action plan and present this report to the VP (Academic). In addition, there will be an annual report, commencing in October 2008. The members of the Task Force will be provided a copy of the Annual Report and will meet again to review the first year's annual report. The report will be used as part of the annual budget planning process.

## THE KEY STRATEGIES

The Interim Report asked four questions:

1. How can we best help students in the primary and secondary school system to see university as a viable option for their post-secondary career?
2. How can the University best engage with current and future community programs to help adults return to university?
3. How can we ensure that students who enter The University of Winnipeg have every opportunity to succeed?
4. What are the major financial and social barriers to post-secondary education and how can the University of Winnipeg mitigate these barriers?

These four questions acted as our terms of reference and became the basis for our consultation. More importantly, however, the answers to these four questions became our strategies. In this section, we will present the group of strategies as a whole so that one can view the overall approach.

- We will help students in the primary and secondary school system to see the University of Winnipeg as a viable option by:
  - Creating an Opportunity Fund so that we can provide seed money to give students a “tap on the shoulder”
  - Establishing a deferred tuition credit program and integrating it with the community programs in our Innovative Learning Centre
  - Expanding the work of our own Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, which acts as a bridge to youth in the inner city community and addresses the digital divide and the graduation gap.
  - Expanding our partnership programs such as College and University Bound and Career Trek
  - Establishing partnerships with the provincial and Federal Government to enhance the impact of our Opportunity fund
- We will help adults return to University by
  - Making it possible to achieve a University degree without ever setting foot on campus between 8:30 and 4:30.
  - Through the new College for Adult Learning developing new and innovative ways to bring university courses to the community, work with existing community programs, and recognize the knowledge that adult learners already have.
  - Experiment with new approaches to academic programs, such as the new Urban and Inner-city studies major, so that they are more accessible to non-traditional students

- We will ensure that students who enter The University of Winnipeg have every opportunity to succeed by
  - Creating a Transition Year Program designed to help first year students achieve a successful transition to University.
  - Adapting pedagogy and introducing new teaching skills and models so that the University can offer multiple approaches to learning.
  - Enhancing the role of colleges including, for example, the Global College, the Richardson College for the Environment, the Aboriginal College, and the College for Adult Learners.
  - Enhancing academic counseling and more directly involving faculty members in advising
  - Enhancing the student's "sense of belonging" through the establishment of facilities that foster on-campus communities
- We will mitigate the major financial and social barriers by
  - Enhancing our current program of student financial support with bursaries from the Opportunity Fund
  - Providing affordable and appropriate childcare.
  - Providing transportation subsidies
  - Providing housing subsidies
  - Providing a safe and secure environment

In total, we have identified 16 initiatives that will allow us to respond to the four questions raised above in a timely and meaningful way. Each of these initiatives is, we believe, reasonable and affordable. Actions on each of them can be begun within 18 months. Several of them have financial implications so there will be a short financial commentary on the major ones. With this in mind let us turn to the initiatives. We will, once again, look at them from the point of view of the original questions.

## UNIVERSITY AS A VIABLE OPTION

### Critical Question #1

***“How can we best help students in the primary and secondary school system to see University as a viable option for their post-secondary career?”***

### Strategic Response

The strategic response for this aspect of the access issue is clear. A key recognition in our initial report was the fact that if we are to get more students to come from high school we must get them thinking about university at a far younger age. The year of high school graduation is far too late. We must, in fact, get children thinking about university in grades 4, 5 and 6 and give them the expectation that university is an achievable possibility in the early years of high school.

The breakthrough idea came from an early consultation. One of our task force members discussed, with her class, the question of what made the difference. The response was very simple and very clear. The dominant determinant can best be described as a “Tap on the Shoulder.” Someone, somewhere, got them to think of a university education as a viable option and gave them the confidence that they could make it. Our program design and recommendations were based on this simple idea. We have to find more ways to give more young students the tap on the shoulder and then find ways to ensure the initial tap becomes a steady hand.

This concept has met with overwhelming support in our consultations and we are already moving on it. Beginning in 2008, we will be offering a new form of deferred scholarship to elementary and secondary school students. Students will be able to “earn” credits towards future tuition beginning as early as grade 4.

It has become the dominant idea behind the proposed new Opportunity Fund. This new fund was recently launched by Dr. Lloyd Axworthy at a benefit concert provided by Chantal Kreviazuk and will, we hope, become the cornerstone of our accessibility thrust.

Our primary concern at this point is in ensuring a successful launch within an affordable long-term program. Current plans are to establish a pilot program focused around the already-existing Eco-Kids and Enviro Tech programs.<sup>1</sup> In addition we must identify one or two high schools in the Winnipeg School District and provide a program that will allow the students in those schools to benefit at an early date.

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<sup>1</sup> For some personal examples of the impact of the Eco-Kids and Envirotech program please refer to Attachment C

## Key Initiatives

There are four major initiatives associated with this strategic response. They are:

1. To raise the funds, through the Opportunity Fund<sup>2</sup>, that will provide long-term sustainable financing necessary to establish and maintain this program.
2. To develop a system of tuition credits that will be applicable initially to students in the Eco-Kids and Envirotech programs and at least one pilot high school, and then expand, as resources permit, to include other inner-city high schools, other targeted programs and federal and provincial government programs.
3. To enhance and expand the programming of our Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre to help bridge the graduation gap.
4. To enhance the current CUB and Career Trek initiatives and incorporate within the overall “tap on the shoulder” umbrella.

## Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Completion Date
Opportunity Fund Campaign	\$10 M to be raised of which 4.5 M is for tuition credits	Sept. 09
Establish actuarial basis and administrative system for tuition credits.	Development of a complete administrative structure for tracking students and forecasting tuition liability	June 08
Identify initial population from Envirotech and Eco-Kids for pilot project and inform students. Establish system for maintaining contact with students over time.	List of students involved with credits earned. Student informed annually.	Ongoing
Identify one high school for pilot project and work with Winnipeg School District to establish a system for tracking and monitoring students.	School named	As soon as resources permit

<sup>2</sup> The Opportunity Fund is a key component of two different strategies. It is mentioned here specifically for the portion associated with the tuition credit scheme.

Create a communications strategy so that students are aware of the existence of the program and of their earned credits.	Information is communicated to students	Sept. 08
Review CUB and Career Trek with a focus on enhancements	New action plans for CUB and Career Trek.	Sept. 08
Review Wii ChiiWaakanak Learning Centre and look for enhancement opportunities	Additional programming and expanded participation	Sept 08
Work with the Federal and Provincial governments to enhance the impact of the Opportunity Fund through partnerships	Agreements	Ongoing

### **Financial/Budgetary Analysis**

The expectation is that this program will be self-sustaining and self-funding through the development of the Opportunity Fund. The initial goal for the Opportunity Fund is for a capitalization of \$4.5 million for this program. Allowing for a little less than 5% per year income this would mean about \$200,000 per year available for new commitments. A full actuarial study is required to determine the total cost but it seems reasonable to assume, for now, that the average payout would be about \$1,500 to \$2000 per enrolled student. At maturity this would mean enough funds to enrol about 100 to 125 new students per year in the program. The Task recommends an initial 2 to 3 year pilot program. The pilot could easily enrol more than 100 provided that new students could not be added until the evaluation was complete. At the same time, the initial high school pilot could enrol more because of the expectation that the fund will have less impact on enrolment patterns for older students than for the younger ones. Overall, the program is affordable but must be carefully monitored in the early years to be sure The University of Winnipeg understands and can fund the future commitments it is making.

## ADULTS RETURNING TO UNIVERSITY

### Critical Question #2

***“How can the University best engage with current and future community programs to help adults return to university?”***

### Strategic Response

This section was of particular importance during the consultation. It inspired discussion in a number of forums. It was generally recognized that The University of Winnipeg has, during the past few years, introduced a number of new initiatives designed to help the university reach out to adult learners. At the same time we were reminded, more than once, that these initiatives would be much more effective if there were a focal point that allowed them to expand and cross-fertilize each other. As a result the Task Force is recommending the establishment of a College for Adult Learning that is dedicated to improving the opportunities for adult learners to achieve a university degree.

The Task Force is both aware and proud of the base already available. We currently have courses available on-line or televised through the Center for Distributed Distance Learning (CDDL). We have an active Adult Learner Office implementing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). We have always offered evening courses and recently returned to Saturday courses. We offer courses off-site through several Manitoba high schools and this year established a special relationship in Steinbach.

The important role that the Division of Continuing Education and our other adult learner supports can play has recently been brought to light in a most effective way. For example, the Division of Continuing Education (DCE) has just introduced a new course, Introduction to University, to give students the confidence and skill to try university. The student can get university credit upon successful completion of this course. It has become clear that the university now has a significant infrastructure oriented to adult learners that can be applied to meeting this new task.

The discussion that arose from the Interim Report has already had an influence on our base. There are now four departments (Sociology, History, Psychology, and Conflict Resolution) in which the department has guaranteed that their course selection will enable a student to complete a B.A. in that major without ever taking a class between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Students will be able to get the necessary courses either after 4:30, on Saturday or through the Centre for Distance and Distributed Learning (CDDL). Core or required courses will be available through one of these venues at least once every four years. It should be noted that these changes are designed to increase choices rather than provide a different stream. Students who choose to take some or all of their

courses through these alternative vehicles will, of course, still be given credit for courses taken during the 8:30 to 4:30 slot. The Faculty of Arts has clearly decided to make a major commitment to supporting adult learners.

The College for Adult Learning will build upon three current initiatives already active in the University. First, the college will have access to a large variety of courses available in various times, places and formats. These include off-site courses, courses offered on-line or by television through CDDL, Saturday and evening courses, and short duration courses such as those currently offered in our summer institutes. Second, the College will be able to build on the excellent work done by the Department of Continuing Education in the past few years to make the University of Winnipeg synonymous with life-long learning. A major part of this interconnection is the new Introduction to University course provided by DCE and available in a variety of venues. The University has a pre-existing infrastructure with a commitment to adult learner services through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition and the Adult Learner Office.

The college will have, from the beginning, a strong infrastructure as the two positions currently in the Adult Learner Office and a portion of the Division of Continuing Education will be placed under its aegis. At the same time it will require that a strong relationship be developed with CDDL. CDDL is at the center of the university's distance learning initiative but it has also become a very important option for current students. The Principal of the College should be a respected member of the academic community. The college should not originally provide courses of its own but rather work with existing academic departments to ensure that the adult learners who wish to return to the University of Winnipeg have the opportunities to acquire a degree in their chosen area of interest.

### **Key Initiatives**

The major initiative in this section is the establishment of a new college for Adult Learning. Within this overall approach, however, there are three initiatives that are necessary for the Adult Learner College approach to work. These are:

1. Incorporate, under the College for Adult Learning, the University's supports ensuring that older students will have an integrated approach to their educational experience. This first step is designed to significantly expand the opportunities for students to take courses in non-traditional times, places and media.
2. The new Principal of the College for Adult Learning will work with the current faculties and departments to provide as broad a range of program choices and degrees as possible without duplicating or diluting the current academic programs. While the College will not restrict students from getting a degree, it will, from the beginning, be able to ensure that



- students can gain a degree in any of four majors without setting foot on campus between 8:30 and 4:30.
3. Reduce the fear component that many adults might feel when contemplating a university course primarily by working with existing agencies in Winnipeg and expanding the outreach commitment that is implicit in the DCE business model.

### Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Completion Date
Create a College for Adult Learning	College Established	Sept. 1 2007
Assign some former DCE courses into this new portfolio. Ensure that courses and certificates are recognized and can be easily transferred for those seeking degrees.	DCE programs transferred	Sept. 1, 2007
Establish a strong working relationship with the Centre for Distributed/Distance Learning	Clear relationship defined	Sept. 1, 2007
Transfer the Adult Learner services staff currently under the Registrar to this new agency while maintaining a functional relationship between them and advising.	Responsibility transferred	Sept. 1, 2007
Recruit a Principal, who has academic qualifications and authority for this new college.	Principal appointed	Jan 1 to July 1, 2008
Through the direction of this new college, expand the number of degrees that can be achieved outside of the traditional 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM hours.	College for Adult Learning sub-calendar with description of degrees available	Ongoing. First inclusion in 2008-09 calendar
Expand offerings off-site in co-operation with DCE and other Winnipeg social agencies	New offerings available off-site	Ongoing

## **Financial/Budgetary Analysis**

The majority of the resources that the college needs are currently available. However, a new position, Principal, is contemplated. Generally a new position requires office space, administrative support and so forth. However, because of the other resources that might be transferred under that position, it is likely that some of the requirements will be available through reassignment. For 2007-08 an additional \$50,000 is required for start-up costs, which may include a partial year salary for the proposed Principal. Costs for future years will be included in the 2008-09 budget planning process.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS**

### **Critical Question #3**

***“How can we ensure that students who enter the University of Winnipeg have every opportunity to succeed?”***

### **Strategic Response**

It is not an accident that the Task Force has defined success as graduation. This was the most important piece of advice given to us in our early consultations. If we focus merely on recruiting new students as part of our access program, there is a real danger that the result will be a revolving door through which more people enter but the same number graduate. Access, to the Task Force, does not mean access to the University, but access to the advantages that a university education can provide.

The problem is multi-faceted. Some students have great difficulty making the academic transition in that first year. Others find that they have difficulty adjusting to a setting, and a pedagogy, that was originally designed to meet the needs of recent high school graduates. Some find that individualized support and counseling are needed to help them navigate the conflicting demands of school and home life. Finally, many find themselves isolated and without a sense of belonging.

The Task Force is very much aware that student retention is inextricably linked with student success. Therefore the focus of our programs and supports should be to enhance student success rather than merely to increase student retention. Improving student success can best be accomplished if the focus is on the student as a whole? This approach recognizes that cultural and other non-academic issues are a significant part of student success. Students from lower SES backgrounds, including particularly new Canadians, rural students, and aboriginal students are very much more likely to find that the academic pressures are compounded by cultural isolation.

Based on consultation, The Task Force believes that initiatives for students from lower SES backgrounds are more likely to result in student success if they meet two tests. First, the initiative must integrate into our academic programs and our pedagogy. The components of this approach are already being developed. The first example is the development of “indigenous science” as part of the Richardson College for the Environment. The second example is the new major in Urban and Inner-City Studies. This proposed major incorporates a number of new initiatives designed to make the program more meaningful and more accessible to inner-city residents. A third example is the development of the College system. This approach to academia, recently expanded at the University of Winnipeg, is still in its infancy but will provide, in its various aspects, the opportunity for the University to focus its academic mission on a clear student sub-community. The Aboriginal College, for example, could address both the issues of access that have been the focus of the Task Force and the development of an academic focus that Aboriginal students find inviting and challenging. This new Aboriginal College should be part of our initiatives in this area. Finally, the expansion of the role of the Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning, will also offer an opportunity for the integration of the access initiative into the academic programming and pedagogy of the University. .

The second test is that the program or service enhances the student’s sense of belonging and provides any additional supports needed to successfully navigate the first year. Students from low SES backgrounds are more likely to feel alone, and less likely to have their own communities, than other students. As a result a program that offers them the opportunity to become part of the university community or to meet with others will, the Task Force believes, be very successful.

Of the initiatives or ideas that were first presented in our Interim Report, the Transition Year Program meets both of our tests. It combines a modular approach to course development with a cohort approach to enrolment. The initiative on pedagogy tied to the changing student population; combined with the enhanced role of colleges, speak to the first test.

### **Key Initiatives**

- Create a Transition Year Program designed to help first year students survive the transition to University.
- Adapt pedagogy and introduce new teaching skills and models so that the University can offer multiple approaches to learning.
- Enhance the role of colleges including, for example, the Global College, the Richardson College for the Environment, the Aboriginal College, and the College for Adult Learners
- Enhance academic counseling and more direct involve faculty members in counseling activities
- Enhance the “sense of belonging” through the establishment of facilities that foster on-campus communities

## Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Completion Date
Demonstrate and communicate diversity of our students, and campus faculty and staff	Annual report on campus diversity with targeted improvements	April 2008
Create a special Transition Year Program: Establishment of a TYP Coordinator	TYP Coordinator Appointed	April 1, 2008
Supplement program with mentors who are returning students/or who participated in TYP the year before.	Mentorship program up and running	Pilot Sept., 2007. Full Program Sept. 2009
Create a cohort concept among first year non-traditional students.	Cohort-based 1 <sup>st</sup> year program established	Sept., 2009
Identify and/or develop courses to include in the TYP so the cohort concept develops beyond just the social aspect.	Programs ready for 1 <sup>st</sup> year program	
Develop faculty training programs oriented to multiple learning approaches	Training programs established	Sept. 2008
Involve Faculty in the academic advising process.	Faculty service recognition established for active counseling	Sept. 2008
Introduce an interactive counseling worksheet so students first self identify their academic needs and then discuss with a counselor. As part of this have the counselors present in various first year courses to promote. Be more proactive in promoting this service.	Interactive sheet is available and publicized	Sept. 2008
Identify students at risk (for example, first year students with GPAs below 70) and create a safety net for them with regular "check ups" to catch them before failure sets in.	Program established	Sept. 2008
Maintain or improve student-to-advisor ratio to provide	Ratio established and maintained	Ongoing

exceptional academic counseling service.		
Replicate concept of Aboriginal Student Service Centre lounge for adult learners.	Gathering place established.	
Improve existing lounge for international students	New Larger lounge open and active	Sept. 2008
Create an “International House” concept within campus housing		Sept. 2010

### Financial/Budgetary Analysis

The major budget items for this section are the transition year program and the student social spaces. A full cost analysis of these proposals has not been made for this report but will be developed as part of the 2008-09 budget process.

## ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS

### Critical Question #4

***“What are the major financial and social barriers to post-secondary education and how can the University of Winnipeg mitigate these barriers?”***

### Strategic Response

The Task Force is very much aware of the debilitating role that lack of funds can have on the individual's expectation for higher education. Our focus in this section, however, was in finding ways to remove or reduce immediate barriers for people who have already made the decision to investigate University. These barriers include, we believe, the extra income needed so that a working parent can survive a student's life while maintaining family and community responsibilities, affordable and appropriate child care, particularly for full-time students or for students who wish to take evening courses, transportation and the sense that the student is safe.

Our strategy is to attempt to mitigate these barriers within an overall framework that recognizes the unique set of issues a returning student faces as well as the specific strengths and weaknesses of the University of Winnipeg as a downtown University. We have focused our attempts on four initiatives – concerned with income, childcare, transportation and security.

## Initiatives

- Enhance our current program of student financial support with bursaries from the Opportunity Fund
- Provide affordable and appropriate childcare.
- Provide transportation subsidies
- Provide housing subsidies
- Provide a safe and secure environment

## Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Completion Date
Use Opportunity Fund to provide bursaries to meet a variety of financial needs for full and part-time students including students who do not have a high school diploma	New bursaries awarded	Sept. 2008
To lessen aversion to student loan debt, demonstrate and communicate the link between a university degree and increased future earnings upon graduation		Ongoing
Create additional child care spaces and reserve or hold a specific number of spots, including infant spaces, for children of student-parents	New child care facility as part of Science Building development	Sept. 2009
Provide extended hours for Child Care Centre for student-parents attending evening classes and hold spaces for one-off emergency child care needs.		
Offer supplement or discounted fees to student-parents with financial need	Child care funds available through new bursary scheme	Sept. 2008
Invest more into security on campus – staff, training, and equipment.	Staff training and development funds increased	Ongoing

Communicate security measures to students – and particularly to parents.	Students awareness of security services increased	Ongoing
Develop a housing subsidy program	Housing subsidy program established	Sept 2008
Develop a transportation subsidy program	Transportation subsidy program established	Sept. 2008

### **Financial/Budgetary Analysis**

The major initiative designed to fund these barrier removals is the proposed bursary program to be established as part of the Opportunity Fund. Therefore we will not be ready to develop the financial plans until the Opportunity Fund is fully launched.

## **CONCLUSION**

When the Task Force was originally formed, Dr. Axworthy's charge to the committee reflected two key principles. First, we should be action-oriented. Second, we should focus on the U of Winnipeg. Our solutions should be locally-based. This report represents our attempts to meet both of these expectations. First, the report is not simply a list of recommendations but is rather an action plan that itemizes key activities for the next 18-24 months. Second, the major initiatives mentioned in the report, including the Transition Year Program, the Tuition Credit, the enhanced bursaries, the Opportunity Fund, and the College of Adult Learning are all designed to blend into an overall U of W framework by establishing unique and innovative programs for the U of Winnipeg. It is our belief that this report has provided a roadmap for expanding access that is both affordable and achievable. We hope that the reader will agree.