Nearly one year ago, the OSU Faculty Senate approved the Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs). These learning goals have yet to be fully operationalized and assessed throughout the curriculum and the co-curriculum but the process has begun and the conversations are happening. In 2005 the Division of Student Affairs adopted “Learning in The Division of Student Affairs” (http://oregonstate.edu/studentaffairs/sites/default/files/docs/Learning_In_Student_Affairs.pdf). These were a set of learning areas that we believed to be important for student learning. And, in the absence of a university-wide approach to student learning goals served us well.

However, as OSU has moved forward and has established a set of learning goals for graduates, it is time for the Division of Student Affairs to begin to align our educational efforts with these goals and to articulate a set of learning outcomes that we will measure and that can document the degree to which students achieve these outcomes. Additionally, it is increasingly important that we provide pathways for students to engage in increasingly challenging co-curricular experiences in order to increase the depth and breadth of experiential learning that student affairs has practiced for years.

This will call upon us all to continue to be creative, collaborative, and generous with our areas of expertise. It will further call upon us to more closely work with teaching faculty and to offer ways in which we can support them and their need to increase high impact pedagogical practices like service learning, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities.

As the OSU Learning Goals for Graduates begins to be better publicized and integrated into orientation programs, the curriculum, news and communication, etc., it will be incumbent upon us to visibly support this effort.

The following are the OSU Learning Goals for Graduates:

1. **Competency and Knowledge in Multiple Fields** - As an OSU graduate, you will show a depth of knowledge in one or more majors as it relates to its history, problems, strategic thinking processes and ways of knowing, and vocabulary. You will also show a breadth of knowledge across the disciplines, which include the humanities and arts, science, social science and mathematics, from both technical and critical orientations.

2. **Critical Thinking** - As an OSU graduate, you will evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources and perspectives to make informed decisions and solve problems; you will exhibit intellectual curiosity, including the disposition and ability to engage in evidence-based reasoning and critical thinking.

3. **Pluralism and Cultural Legacies** - As an OSU graduate, you will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of human cultural, historical and social experiences, and be able to reflect on how your individual life experience relates to the complex nature of human conditions in other places and times.
Bridge to College.  
Bridge to Success.

The September Scholars is a new and successful program designed to assist students in making the transition to college life. September Scholars earn college credit and experience what academic life and studying feels like firsthand prior to the start of fall term.

Participants include first generation students, students from small high schools, and students from rurally isolated areas. Potential participants are issued an invitation and can elect to enroll in the program.

The September Scholars program was started in Fall, 2009 and thus far the results of study show promising results in helping students to be successful at OSU. In 2009 a pilot group of 20 students participated in the program. Compared to a cohort of similar students, the Scholars posted an average GTA that was .14 grade points higher over the course of their first year. 80% returned to OSU for their second year, compared to 60% of the comparator cohort of similar students. Only four Scholars left OSU and they transferred to other colleges and universities in order to be closer to home.

Figure 1 contains information on the differences in mean GPA between the 2009 Scholars in their first year and the comparator group. In each case the Scholars’ average GPA exceeded that of the comparator group.

Because of the initial success of this program, the Fall 2010 program was extended to 58 incoming students. Additionally the Scholars now enroll Fall term in a 2-credit academic success class, meet regularly with an academic counselor and can be involved in study tables, study groups, and reunion events during the fall term. This added level of support was recommended by the 2009 September Scholars cohort.

Of the 58 Fall 2010 participants about 50% were men and 50% were women. Over half were students of color and about 60% responded positively to first generation status; however 19 students did not answer this question—likely the percentage of first generation students in the cohort is closer to 90%.

While first year retention rates for the 2010 Scholars are not available yet, GPAs for this group suggest that they too are exceeding their comparator group of students (i.e., those who were invited to attend and declined). See Figure 2 for the differences between the mean GPA for September Scholars and the comparator cohort.

Additionally, September Scholars also maintained much better academic standing than the cohort group. At the end of the Winter Term, 72% of the Scholars were in good academic standing while only 59% of the comparator group remained in good academic standing.

Figure 2
BEST (Bridge Encouraging Successful Transition) Program is a rigorous, highly structured, day and evening, program designed to help new student athletes adapt successfully to the college environment. Begun in 2005, a total of 243 student athletes have attended the program representing 14 sports.

This program was born out of a concern for the welfare and successful integration of student athletes into academics and Division I sports. In order to comply with NCAA requirements, the BEST program includes a three credit baccalaureate core class and three additional credits which focus on academic skills, identity development, and orientation to the university.

Used in 2005 included 16 football players and one men’s basketball player. Eighty-two percent of the football players have successfully graduated from Oregon State. Three of the football players left OSU after a couple of years with one returning for winter term, 2011 after completing a church mission. The basketball player graduated in spring 2011. At least three football players in this cohort are continuing at OSU in graduate programs. As this program continues to expand and serve more athletes, the impact on academic standing and graduation rates will continue to be monitored.

The response from student athletes who participate in BEST have been generally positive as they have seen others who participated be successful both in sport and academics. Some comments from BEST partici-
The **OSU Perspective** was developed to provide assessment and other information about our students and programs. We hope that by making this information available to OSU faculty and staff, we can stimulate conversation that helps keep students and student learning at our core.

The **Perspective** is published quarterly both in print and on the web: [http://oregonstate.edu/student_affairs/research/perspective.html](http://oregonstate.edu/student_affairs/research/perspective.html)

Ideas and suggestions for subsequent OSU **Perspective** publications are welcomed.

Please contact Rebecca Sanderson, Ph.D., Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Office, 102 Buxton Hall, 541-737-8738, or email: rebecca.sanderson@oregonstate.edu. Editorial assistance by Jodi Nelson, OSU, Division of Student Affairs Masthead designed by Judy Burks, OSU College of Science.

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**Learning Goals for Graduates** (Continued from Page 1)

4. **Collaboration** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.

5. **Social Responsibility and Sustainability** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the capacity to construct an engaged, contributing life, and to engage in actions that reflect an understanding of the values of service, citizenship, social responsibility and demonstrate global competence by understanding the interdependent nature of local and global communities.

6. **Communication** - As an OSU graduate, you will be able to present and evaluate information, as well as to devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.

7. **Self-Awareness and Life-Long Learning** - As an OSU graduate, you will develop awareness of and appreciation for your personal strengths, values, and challenges, and you will cultivate the ability to use that knowledge to guide your future learning and development.

*Approved by the OSU Faculty Senate, June, 2010*

As we begin to plan for the programs and services that we will offer to students in the coming fall term, we encourage you to consider your work in relation to the LGGs. Ask yourself and your staffs:

- Where will you contribute to the educational mission of the university?
- What programs and services do you provide that will assist students in achieving these learning goals?
- How will you operationalize the learning goals so that you can articulate the outcomes that you want students to achieve as a result of your programs/experiences?
- And, how will you construct and deliver the experiences that you believe will help students to achieve those outcomes?

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**September Scholars** (continued from Page 2)

The link between first term grades and retention has been known for some time at OSU. Further recent study has also confirmed the link between academic warning after the first term and lack of persistence at OSU.

As this program expands and develops, more students will be invited to participate in this effective retention program at OSU.

For more information about the September Scholars Bridge program and how you might use the strategies in your department or college to increase first year retention contact:
Clare Creighton, Program Coordinator at 541-737-7971, OSU Academic Success Center or clare.creighton@oregonstate.edu

For further information, please contact Rebecca Sanderson at the Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Office, Oregon State University, 102 Buxton Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331, 541.737.8738, rebecca.sanderson@oregonstate.edu