Setting expectations, communicating values, promoting essential skills, and integrating new students into the campus community are critical factors in student success.

**Undergraduate Education**

I. Entry and Transition

**Introduction**

As the recent history of undergraduate education at The University of Iowa makes clear, UI planners understand how critical to student success and retention is the process of setting expectations, communicating values, equipping students with essential learning skills, and integrating them into the campus community—that is, the transition process that begins with recruitment and extends through the student’s first year (Kuh et al., 2005a).

The University’s strategic plan, *The Iowa Promise*, also demonstrates an understanding of the importance of a successful transition process. In the plan, the first of four main strategies related to enhancing undergraduate education focuses on entry and transition:

*Recruit and retain a student population that can succeed at a comprehensive research university, and nurture their success, by:*

- Tailoring admission policies to ensure that admitted students demonstrate both strong preparation and motivation for college-level work;
- . . . Providing access through an appropriate blend of merit- and need-based financial aid and by increasing the amount of aid available;
- Easing the transition for new students . . . .

This strategy reflects, moreover, the University’s movement toward what former Executive Vice President and Provost Michael J. Hogan called “access to success”—that
is, policies and programs that keep a UI education accessible to motivated students, but also ensure that more of the students we admit are truly prepared to succeed at a nationally competitive, research-oriented university. The main tenet behind "access to success" is the idea that every student who drops out of college because he or she was unprepared to succeed represents a terrible waste of resources for the University, the state that supports us, and especially for the student and his or her family.

Scope

The self-study steering committee asked the subcommittee on Entry and Transition to study programs, policies, and practices that define students’ experiences as applicants and as first-year students at the University. It was intended that the inventory and investigation would include recruitment programs, the admissions process, orientation, and experiences and opportunities designed for first-year students.

The subcommittee identified and examined the administrative units responsible for guiding most new students from recruitment through admission and orientation, as well as programs that perform these services for special populations of students. Then they investigated units and programs that integrate students—including those from special populations—into University life, and guide them successfully through the first stage of their undergraduate careers.

Research Process

The Entry and Transition subcommittee members met, as a group and in small teams, with key individuals in relevant units across campus, including central administrators and representatives of University offices that actively recruit new students and help them transition to college life. The committee also requested and received information in writing from several relevant offices and academic units. See Appendix II-C for details about how the interviews were conducted.

In carrying out its investigations, this subcommittee also made use of the RISE report and relied on evaluative data gathered previously by many of the individual programs, as described below.

Summary of Findings

The University offers an impressive range of programs and services to attract well-prepared, diverse undergraduates and support all students during the first crucial year on campus—many of them the result of major improvement efforts since the last re-accreditation, as described above and in the report Best Practices in Student Retention at the Regent Universities.

Our strategic plan strongly supports efforts to enhance student success, and our academic administrative officers have demonstrated their commitment to ongoing and future student success initiatives. The year-old, broadly representative Student Success Team and the appointment of a director of student success initiatives demonstrate the University’s commitment to planning and action in this area.
Though constrained by state-mandated admission standards, the University has met with some success over the last ten years in recruiting students who are better prepared to succeed and to take advantage of what a research-oriented university such as Iowa has to offer than were incoming students in previous decades. High school GPA, ACT score, and class rank have gone up slightly. Recent changes to the admission standards, detailed below, could lead to further increases.

A theme for improvement that emerges from our study of entry and transition programs is the need to find more and better ways to instill in our students, early in their transition, a sense of what it means to be a successful member of the University community.

DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF OFFICES, PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND PROCESSES RELATED TO ENTRY AND TRANSITION

Recruitment and Admissions

Overview

In this part of our study, we focus on activities aimed at the recruitment and enrollment of new undergraduates.

Some of these activities—from sports camps to summer programs at the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development—focus on potential pool development, by introducing prospective students and their families to our campus. Other activities, such as those coordinated by the Admission Visitors Center, focus directly on student recruitment.

The goal of our recruitment efforts, as described above, is to keep a UI education accessible for motivated students while ensuring that more of the students we admit are truly prepared to succeed here. Of equal importance, in recruiting and enrolling students we hope to advance toward another of the five top-level goals in The Iowa Promise, “to promote excellence in education by increasing the diversity of . . . students.”

Why Students Select Iowa

Although we do not have extensive data about why students choose The University of Iowa over other institutions, we do have feedback from the RISE study interviews of first-year and senior students, who were asked why they chose to attend UI. Although there were as many different answers as there were respondents, in general the answers focused on location, cost, and majors.

Most students stated that they chose UI because of its proximity to or distance from home. Some said they wanted (or needed) to attend an in-state school, and many expressed a preference for UI over the other Regent institutions. Some students were attracted to Iowa City itself.

In-state tuition was an important factor for Iowa students. Nonresident students also noted that UI’s tuition is reasonable. Some students mentioned scholarship and financial aid packages as incentives.

Many students were influenced by Iowa’s “good reputation” in major areas of interest. This included “good faculty” and good prospects for employment after graduation. Other students chose UI because they were uncertain about their major or career interests. The University offers a reasonably-priced option for exploration for those students.
Admission Requirements

Many factors play into predicting student success in college. The predictors available to us at UI are dictated by the factors considered in our admission standards, which are set by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. The admission requirements adopted by the Board of Regents provide a high (and equal) degree of access to each of the three universities governed by the Board.

Admission requirements for entering first-year, transfer, and international undergraduate students are detailed in Appendix II-D or on the UI undergraduate admissions web page, and are summarized in Table II-2 and Table II-3, below. The Admission Index refers to the following calculation, used for students who have completed the course requirements but do not meet the class rank requirement:

\[
\text{Admission Index} = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + \text{high school rank}
\]

The admission standards have posed a challenge to The University of Iowa. Each year, we admit some resident students who have graduated in the top half of their high school classes, but who present other credentials (e.g., ACT scores) that suggest they may be underprepared to succeed at a university like The University of Iowa. In fact, students who graduate in the 50th to 59th percentile of their high school classes have only a 53.7% chance of graduating even in six years.

Figure II-1 illustrates that in comparison to our peer institutions, UI admits more students, realizes a lower yield on those admissions, and has lower one-year retention and six-year graduation rates. Student success at The University of Iowa falls below the peer median, in other words, because our admission standards are less selective than those of our peers. We do better than our peers, however, in actual graduation rate compared to predicted rate—that is, our six-year graduation rate is higher than a predicted rate based on the academic profile of our students.

![Figure II-1: University of Iowa Median ACT, 1-Year Retention Rate, 6-Year Graduation Rate, and Predicted vs. Actual Graduation Rate as Compared to Peers](source:2008 U.S. News & World Report)

In summer 2006 the Board of Regents appointed a team to conduct an in-depth study of admission requirements at the Regent universities. At its December 2006 meeting, having received the Admissions Study Team’s report, the Board approved a change to the requirements that will take effect for students applying to enroll in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) in fall 2009. The new standards use a calculation called the Regent Admissions Index (RAI), which takes into account ACT score, high
school rank, high school grade point average, and the number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas:

\[ RAI = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (1 \times \text{high school rank}) + (20 \times \text{high school grade-point average}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in core subject areas}) \]

For guaranteed admission to CLAS, Iowa residents will need an RAI of 245 or above; nonresidents will need an RAI of 255 or above.

The University welcomes the change. The factors combined in the RAI were identified by the Admissions Study Team as good predictors of academic success at Regent universities, and consistent with the Iowa Department of Education’s goal of encouraging students to challenge themselves with a rigorous high school curriculum. We believe this change might lead to somewhat better prepared first-year students.

Bringing our admissions policies and practices into closer alignment with the educational support and challenge that we provide at The University of Iowa is a high priority, and we are working on both sides of the problem. Our 2 Plus 2 program (described below), for example, lets some students begin their studies at a community college with—if they so choose—a clear pathway to a bachelor’s degree in a total of four years. The work of the Student Success Team, described in the institutional section of this self-study, concentrates on providing an educational environment that supports the success of admitted students.

| Table II-2: |
| Admission Requirements for Entering First-Year Students |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College*</th>
<th>High School Course Requirements</th>
<th>High School Rank/Admission Index</th>
<th>Minimum ACT Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (resident)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Current: Top 50% of high school class or Admission Index ≥ 95; Effective fall 2009: RAI ≥ 245</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAS (nonresident)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Current: Top 30% of high school class or Admission Index ≥ 100; Effective fall 2009: RAI ≥ 255</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Yes, plus a year of higher math</td>
<td>Top 30% of high school class</td>
<td>Math and composite score ≥ 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tippie College of Business (direct admission)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Admission Index ≥ 148; Effective fall 2008: Admission Index ≥ 140</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Nursing (early admission)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Admission Index ≥ 148</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*About 90% of first-year students entering The University of Iowa enroll in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). The College of Engineering also admits students directly in the first year (about 7% of the total entering student class, in recent years). A few very well prepared students are granted early admission as first-year students to the College of Nursing or the Tippie College of Business. In fall 2007, CLAS enrolled 3,875 first-year students; the College of Engineering enrolled 306; the College of Nursing enrolled 24; and the Tippie College of Business enrolled 82 first-year students (for a total of 4,287 entering first-year students).

Note: Admission requirements for entering first-year students who attended high school outside the U.S. include documented completion of upper secondary education; above-average grades in a university-preparatory program; completion of the high school course requirements (for CLAS or for Engineering, as appropriate); and ACT or SAT scores if applying to the College of Engineering. Applicants whose first language is not English must achieve acceptable scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or otherwise demonstrate proficiency in English.
### Table II-3:
**Admission Requirements for Transfer Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Course Requirements</th>
<th>Additional Prerequisite Courses</th>
<th>Minimum GPA</th>
<th>Minimum Test Score</th>
<th>Minimum Semester Hours Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLAS (non-AA degree holders)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAS (AA degree holders)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.0 (2.25 if from out of state)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAS (AS degree holders)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tippie College of Business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.75 cumulative, UI (if applicable), and prerequisite</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>Yes - must first be admitted to CLAS</td>
<td>10 hour volunteer experience</td>
<td>2.70 cumulative and UI</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Yes, plus a year of higher math</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Demonstrated success</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Nursing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (no grade lower than C)</td>
<td>2.7 cumulative, 2.0 prerequisite</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Applied Studies degree program</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>AS or AAS degree</td>
<td>2.0 (2.5 if from out of state)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Dentistry B.S. in Oral Health Science program</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>AAS degree</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver College of Medicine B.S. degree program in Clinical Laboratory Science</td>
<td>Yes - must first be admitted to CLAS</td>
<td>Yes (no grade lower than C-)</td>
<td>2.7 cumulative, 2.5 math and science courses</td>
<td>ACT score ≥ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver College of Medicine B.S. degree program in Nuclear Medicine Technology</td>
<td>Yes - must first be admitted to CLAS</td>
<td>Yes, including general education requirements</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver College of Medicine B.S. degree program in Radiation Sciences</td>
<td>Yes - must first be admitted to CLAS</td>
<td>Radiologic Technology Program</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>American Registry of Radiologic Technology national certification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** International transfer students must meet the same requirements as entering first-year international students, and have earned above-average grades in recognized university course work.

**Early/Direct Admission Programs**

The College of Nursing and the Tippie College of Business require most students to complete substantial relevant course work before admission, which allows students to
make better informed choices and helps those colleges maintain distinctive professional standards. Most undergraduates, therefore, enter the University via CLAS and are only later admitted to one of these colleges if they choose to apply. Both of these colleges do, however, admit a limited number of exceptionally promising first-year students directly. In fall 2007, the College of Nursing enrolled 24 students through its early admission program, and the Tippie College of Business enrolled 82 students through its direct admission program.

Recruitment and Admission Process

Role of the Office of Admissions

The University of Iowa’s recruitment and admissions functions, unlike at some institutions, are highly centralized.

The Office of Admissions manages the recruitment and admission of Iowa’s undergraduates (as well as most graduate and professional students). Its mission statement reads:

Through its programs and services, The Office of Admissions develops successful admission and orientation/transition strategies which serve the larger institutional objectives of teaching, research and service. A component of Enrollment Services in the Office of the Provost, Admissions works actively with central administrators, college deans, faculty, staff, students and alumni to attract and maintain a diverse, talented, multicultural student body of appropriate size and composition that will matriculate, persist, achieve academically and graduate from the University.

The Office has five divisions: Outreach Services, Pre-Enrollment Services, Admission Information Systems, Publications and Administrative Services, and New Student Orientation Services.

E-mail inquiries for the Office of Admissions as a whole reached 122,000 in 2006-07, an increase from approximately 6,000 in 1996. The office sends information to 3,500 high school counselors and educators several times a year via a newsletter. The office also seeks to ensure that information flows both ways: a 15-member board of high school counselors from across the state advises the office about how its members view trends in admissions.

The admissions process is the student’s gateway not only into the University, but also into the University’s system of academic records. The currently ongoing MAUI (“Made at The University of Iowa”) project, sponsored by the Office of the Provost, will replace the University’s 30-year-old home-grown, mainframe-based student information system with a new, integrated, web-based system. The new system will benefit students and administrators alike by integrating information about admissions, University academic records, progress toward graduation, registration, billing, and financial aid. The MAUI project is considered at somewhat greater length in the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this report.

Outreach Services and the Admission Visitors Center

Outreach Services, the administrative unit in Admissions primarily responsible for recruitment, educates a diverse group of prospective students about the University, its policies and procedures regarding admission and enrollment, and academic and co-curricular opportunities available to UI students. One of its principal operations is the
Admission Visitors Center (AVC), which conducts activities both on- and off-campus. AVC is housed on the first floor of the recently completed Pomerantz Center.

The AVC actively encourages campus visits to help prospective students determine whether The University of Iowa fits them well. On-campus activities include

- Daily information sessions, individual appointments, and campus tours
- Hawkeye Visit Days (full-day programs for prospective students)
- Transfer day programs
- An overnight visit program for high-ability high school seniors
- Special events with the Center for Diversity & Enrichment aimed at recruiting a diverse student population

Almost 10,000 prospective students visited campus in 2006-07, along with more than 10,000 friends and family members. About 90% were high school students, and just over 45% were Iowa residents. Admissions coordinated nearly 1,900 visits to academic departments over that period. Many trained student employees and volunteers facilitated the campus visits by serving as tour guides and campus hosts.

Off campus, the AVC conducts high school visits (529 in 2006-07), participates in college fairs, and makes “virtual visits” to high schools using the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), which allows them to reach a large number of students. Admissions staff and alumni volunteers participate in more than 250 college fairs around the country. Through the Hawkeye Hometown Visit Program, undergraduate volunteers represent the University within their communities during winter break.

Outreach Services also works directly with alumni groups, such as the Iowa Black Alumni Association and the Latino/a and Native American Alumni Alliance. The UI Alumni Association co-sponsors a program called Alumni Seeking Iowa Students (ASIST), which involves approximately 700 alumni volunteers who help extend the geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic range of recruitment efforts.

The AVC communicates with prospective students and their families via e-mail, online chats, instant messaging, and recruitment phone call projects. Taking all of its activities into account, the AVC contacted nearly 63,000 prospective students during 2006-07.

Pre-Enrollment Services

The division of Pre-Enrollment Services handles admission processes for most first-year undergraduates and transfer students (as well managing many aspects of graduate and professional admissions).

Pre-Enrollment Services processes a vast amount of data every year: over 38,000 applications and 167,000 transcripts and placement reports in 2006-07, in addition to answering 73,000 phone calls and more than 120,000 e-mails. Many University units send mailings to admitted students to provide additional information and to demonstrate the University’s interest in its newest undergraduates and their families; the division of Pre-Enrollment Services coordinates those mailings, ensuring a regular flow of information, minimal duplication, and a high quality and consistency of presentation.

Recent developments in information technology have forced change in this area. For
students entering in fall 2007, for example, more than 80% of first-year applications were submitted online—but, as in many admissions offices around the country, staff had to print them out and key the data into the UI student information system manually. Beginning in August 2007, the data from online applications have been loaded directly into the system. Because of the direct upload process the University has needed to hire fewer temporary and student workers. The hours that used to be spent by full-time staff on data entry are now being spent on imaging and indexing documents and on other tasks associated with the increasing need for holistic review of applications without a high school class rank.

In spring 2008, the University will implement new student relationship management software to track and manage communications with individual students. This new functionality will be incorporated into MAUI.

Role of the Undergraduate Colleges

All of the undergraduate colleges work in various cooperative roles with Admissions.

The College of Nursing works closely with the Admission Visitors Center (AVC). Nursing Student Services Program staff participate in on- and off-campus AVC outreach programming. In addition, Student Services staff attend events sponsored by various health care agencies, and engage in outreach activities with community colleges and hospitals in the state.

Tippie College of Business staff also participate in on-and off-campus AVC outreach programming, including AVC outreach to community colleges. The College participates in Hawkeye Visit Days, Transfer Days, and college fairs.

Because the College of Engineering is the only UI College besides Liberal Arts and Sciences that admits most of its students directly in the first year, it has its own director of admissions and outreach. The College hosts campus visits for prospective students. In 2005-06, about 375 students and their families met individually with the College’s admissions director. The College also hosts group visits, organized through programs such as Explore Engineering@Iowa!, Hawkeye Visit Days, and the Workplace Learning Connection. In 2005-06, about 850 students took advantage of one of these group visits.

A key component of the College of Engineering’s outreach, recruitment, and retention efforts is the Student Ambassadors, a group of student employees who work three to five hours a week and serve as a resource for current students as well as for prospective high school and transfer students.

The College coordinates its recruitment efforts related to diversity—both racial/ethnic and gender diversity—with the Office of Admissions. The Ethnic Inclusion Effort for Iowa Engineering, aimed primarily at recruitment and retention of diverse graduate students, helps with undergraduate recruitment as well—as does the College’s publication, Invent Your Future: Women and Minorities in Iowa’s College of Engineering. An engineering faculty and staff organization, Faculty and Staff Fostering Inclusion, works to evaluate and improve recruitment and retention of students.

Role of the Office of Student Financial Aid

The mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid—which supports both The Iowa Promise and the theme of “access to success”—is:

To address the financial needs of students in a way that enables student access to
The University of Iowa facilitates enrollment of a high-achieving, culturally diverse student body and encourages timely graduation rates. The office seeks to provide access to the University while minimizing the amount of debt incurred by students.

The director of the office is an assistant provost for enrollment services. Senior staff members meet regularly with the Financial Aid Advisory Committee (a UI charter committee), which consists of six faculty members, six students, and two staff members. Their charge is to advise the president regarding all forms of student financial aid and to assist the Office of Student Financial Aid in communicating relevant policies to the University community.

The total financial aid administered by the office has increased by 79% in the last 10 years, as illustrated in Table II-4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aid</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Aid</td>
<td>$96,514,115</td>
<td>$176,287,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid</td>
<td>$2,365,675</td>
<td>$2,394,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI and Private Student Aid</td>
<td>$89,207,824</td>
<td>$158,836,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Financial Aid</td>
<td>$188,087,614</td>
<td>$337,517,289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: UI tuition set aside allocations are included in these totals.

The University also has increased its internal tuition revenue set aside program. The actual percentage of tuition revenue set aside for University grants and scholarships has risen over the past ten years from 15% to more than 18% for FY 2008. In dollar figures, this represents a $30 million or 181% increase from approximately $17 million to approximately $48 million.

More than 80% of undergraduate tuition funds set aside for financial aid go to students who filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and demonstrated financial need.

Unlike many states, Iowa does not provide a substantial appropriation-funded student financial aid program for Iowans attending the Regent universities. According to a recent survey published by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, in FY 2006 93.7% of state-appropriated student aid dollars were only available to students attending private colleges and universities in Iowa, while only 6.3% was available to students attending public colleges and universities, including the Regent universities and all Iowa community colleges. The appropriation shared by these public institutions amounted to $3.4 million of the more than $53 million appropriated.

In addition to increasing the amount of tuition set aside, Student Financial Aid also undertook a major initiative for new scholarship and grant money through the UI Foundation’s comprehensive campaign. Several major initiatives directed toward “access for success” are being funded by substantial new commitments from the tuition set aside and campaign efforts.
The Office of Student Financial Aid works closely with the Office of Admissions to ensure that financial aid allocations support the goals of The Iowa Promise and “access to success.” The directors of the two offices conducted a systematic review of undergraduate aid programs with respect to these goals during 2005-06. This review led to the creation of new scholarship programs aimed at increasing the diversity of the student population (see below), as well as a restructuring of the University’s two largest competitive, merit-based scholarships—the Presidential and Old Gold Scholarships—in an effort to help recruit more top scholars. These new aid allocations are being financed by the increase in tuition set aside funds (Old Gold program) and new funding from the UI Foundation’s comprehensive campaign (Iowa Pathways Program). Available to the fall 2006 entering class, the newly restructured Presidential and Old Gold Scholarships, coupled with new initiatives for recruiting top scholars, appear to be effective.

Scholarships to Increase Diversity

The University offers grants and scholarships directed toward underrepresented students. For example:

The new Advantage Iowa Awards are given to well-prepared first-year students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and whose enrollment will contribute to a diverse learning environment (students eligible for Advantage Iowa Awards include racial and ethnic minorities and TRiO eligible students). The award is offered in three tiers based on Admission Index (\[2 \times \text{ACT composite score} + \text{high school rank}\]).

Several campus offices work to provide post-enrollment activities, both required and voluntary, that provide support and work to build a sense of community. The Center for Diversity & Enrichment (CDE) provides academic support in the form of mentoring, tutoring, mid-term progress reviews, supplemental instruction, and community-building activities for Advantage Iowa awardees. Recipients are required to enroll in either a first-year seminar or “The College Transition” course (described below) in their first semester at UI. For the award to be renewed each year the recipient must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA, complete 12 credit hours each semester, meet with his or her academic advisor three times each semester and with a CDE staff member at least once each semester, and attend a minimum of three programs sponsored or cosponsored by the CDE each academic year.

Iowa Pathways is an innovative program designed to serve economically disadvantaged students from Iowa who graduate in the top 10% of their class (or present an Admission Index of 136 or higher). It includes a four-year commitment to cover direct educational costs not met by federal, state, and University scholarships; requires that the student maintain a 3.0 GPA; and includes financial aid and financial management counseling sessions each year.

The Iowa Promise Scholarship, announced by President Mason in December 2007, will pay the second, third, and fourth year tuition and fees of students who come to UI with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission's new All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship (which covers one year of tuition and fees) if they maintain a 3.0 GPA. These are students who have done well in high school and who have demonstrated financial need.

The Iowa Minority Academic Grants for Economic Success (IMAGES) program offers need-based scholarships funded by tuition set-aside funds and awarded according to state guidelines.

The First Nations Resident Tuition Program allows members of tribes and nations
historic to Iowa to attend UI at resident rates, regardless of where they live.

The Halas-Sayers Scholarship recognizes academic achievement and community service among underrepresented students majoring in science who demonstrate financial need.

The Office of the Provost offers a scholarship to National Hispanic Scholars who enroll at UI.

The Iowa Pathways and new Advantage Iowa Awards, announced in December 2006 and offered for the first time to students entering the University in fall 2007, were developed as a result of the aid allocation review by Admissions and Student Financial Aid. Our fall 2007 enrollments indicate that these awards are making a difference. Table II-5 shows that we attracted 32.1% more first-year African-American students and 15.5% more first-year Latino(a) students in 2007 than in 2006.

Table II-5: Fall 2007 Entering First-Year Students, Undergraduate Transfers, and Total Undergraduate Enrollment by Ethnicity (Compared to Fall 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Latino(a)</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>No Report</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-Year Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2,144</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresident</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>4,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(End of 3rd Week 2006)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3,780</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>4,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% Change)</td>
<td>-25.0</td>
<td>+32.1</td>
<td>+15.5</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>+87.5</td>
<td>+69.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Undergraduate Transfers** |                 |                  |           |       |       |               |          |       |
| Resident            | 9               | 20               | 22        | 36    | 890   | 0            | 71       | 1,048 |
| Nonresident         | 2               | 12               | 10        | 14    | 247   | 121          | 79       | 485   |
| Total               | 11              | 32               | 32        | 50    | 1,137 | 121          | 150      | 1,533 |
| (End of 3rd Week 2006) | 6               | 35               | 32        | 43    | 1,139 | 122          | 102      | 1,479 |
| (% Change)          | +83.3           | -8.6             | -        | +16.3 | -0.2  | -0.8         | +47.1    | +3.7  |

| **Total Undergraduate Enrollment** |                 |                  |           |       |       |               |          |       |
| Resident            | 66              | 247              | 320       | 521   | 1,213 | 4            | 513      | 13,808 |
| Nonresident         | 32              | 218              | 224       | 226   | 5,692 | 400          | 307      | 7,099 |
| Total               | 98              | 465              | 544       | 747   | 17,829| 404          | 820      | 20,907 |
| (End of 3rd Week 2006) | 102             | 443              | 527       | 737   | 17,832| 380          | 717      | 20,738 |
| (% Change)          | -4.1%           | +4.7%            | +3.1%     | +1.3% | -     | +5.9%        | +12.6%   | +0.8% |
As another way to help gauge the Advantage Iowa program’s impact in its first year, the Office of Admissions applied the award criteria to the fall 2006 entering class for comparative purposes. As Table II-6 shows, the total number of students who were offered Advantage Iowa awards and enrolled was 225 in fall 2007, compared to 146 of the students who would have met the criteria for the award if it existed in fall 2006. The yield on offered awards was, in other words, 10% higher in 2007 than it would have been in 2006. The yield on the highest level of award (Admission Index of 130 or higher) was 44% in fall 2007, and would have been 28% for that group in 2006.

Table II-6:
Number of Fall 2007 Applicants Offered Advantage Iowa (AI) Awards Compared to the Number of Fall 2006 Applicants Meeting Current AI Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Range</th>
<th>Fall 2006</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met Advantage Iowa Criteria</td>
<td>Offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110-119</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120-129</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130+</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Merit-Based Scholarships

University of Iowa scholarship programs aimed at attracting academically gifted students include the Presidential Scholarship, the Old Gold Scholarship, the UI National Scholars Award, the Advantage Iowa Award, and the National Merit Scholarship. Each of these programs seeks to attract and support students who are well prepared to succeed at The University of Iowa. Even though these programs and other University merit scholarship programs do not have explicit need-based tests, they play an essential role in removing financial barriers to attending The University of Iowa. Overall, approximately 38% of all undergraduate merit scholarship dollars in FY 2007 were awarded to students with demonstrated financial need.

Individual colleges also offer scholarships (the College of Engineering offers the greatest number of them). These collegiate scholarships play a key role in recruiting stellar students—both by offsetting the cost of a college education and, sometimes more critically, by giving students recognition and a sense of how much the institution values them.

Conclusions—Recruitment and Admissions

Admission standards for most new undergraduates are set not by the University, but by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, which believes admission requirements for the three Regent institutions must be identical. The limits placed on the University by those standards have constrained progress toward our goal of raising the level of preparation of our incoming students—a goal that matters to us because better-prepared students are more likely to succeed, and more likely to take advantage of the opportunities available at a research-oriented university such as The University of Iowa.
Nonetheless, we have seen slight improvements over the last several years in average high school GPA and class rank, and mean ACT composite scores for entering first-year students are at their highest point (25.1) since 1974. These changes can be expected to lead to improved retention and graduation rates. The recent changes to the state admission standards—developed by a task force with representation from all three Regent universities—should lead to further improvement. More important, high school counselors have told us that they expect the adjusted Regent Admission Index (RAI) to help them motivate better preparation for college during high school.

UI sustains an active outreach and recruitment enterprise, and it works well. Our recruitment efforts are paying dividends in the form of increasing applications, larger entering classes, better-prepared students, and more diverse classes, as described in the conclusion to this section of the self-study.

**Building the Foundation for a Successful University Experience**

**Overview**

Not only do we want motivated students to come to The University of Iowa, we want them to succeed here. Because we understand the importance of setting expectations and integrating students into the University culture as early as possible, our goal is to promote engagement in educationally purposeful activities both in and out of the classroom at the very start of a student’s undergraduate career.

This part of our self-study discusses orientation, initial advising and academic planning, and early academic opportunities that help new undergraduate students learn about the University and develop skills that will help them succeed in their new environment.

**Orientation: Laying the Foundation**

**Orientation Services**

The mission of the Orientation Services division is to provide a “comprehensive introduction to the University” for incoming first-year, transfer, and international students.

All entering students must attend an orientation session. From winter 2005-06 through fall 2006, Orientation Services worked with 4,357 first-year students, 1,917 transfer students, and 6,348 parents and guests. Most first-year students and their guests attended one of nine two-day summer programs offered during June and July. A one-day program welcomes transfer students and the smaller number of first-year students who could not attend the two-day orientation session.

Focused primarily on academics, the first-year student orientation program is designed to educate students about academic expectations, the General Education Program, requirements for majors, course selection, and factors to consider in developing a schedule for their specific academic interest. Students use this information—with guidance from student and academic advisors—to create their first semester schedules and to register. In addition, the program introduces students to campus and to student organizations while highlighting issues related to social networking, residence hall living, and being independent. Parents, meanwhile, take part in a program designed to inform them about academics, campus support programs, and aspects of the transition ahead for their new college students.

The two-day orientation programs for first-year students and their families require
extensive coordination by Orientation Services and collaboration with other units. Some units offer information sessions for their affiliated students and their parents (e.g. the University of Iowa Honors Program, the Center for Diversity & Enrichment [CDE], Student Disability Services, the Office of Student Financial Aid, University Housing, the Office of Student Life, Information Technology Services); some conduct individual meetings (e.g. Athletic Student Services); and some host social events (e.g., “Night Games” in the Field House, sponsored by the Office of Residence Life and Recreational Services). In addition, Orientation Services and the Academic Advising Center (AAC) work closely together to ensure that students have the guidance they need to develop schedules appropriate for their programs, interests, and levels of academic preparation.

Orientation Services makes extensive use of undergraduate students as peer mentors (or Student Advisors) in their programming. First-year students attending Orientation are placed into small groups (according to their major interest) for the duration of the program. Orientation Student Advisors facilitate the orientation process for their small groups by helping students form new friendships, learn basic academic information (by partnering with professional academic advisors for the “Introduction to Academics” session), and build their course schedules. Student Advisors also present information and answer questions about being a college student and about the transition to college life.

Because staff who participate in orientation programs—including student staff—serve as University representatives and role models for new students, Orientation Services tries hard to ensure that students and families feel represented in that group by recruiting a diverse team of people who come from large and small towns all over the country and participate in a wide range of campus organizations and activities. Team members undergo extensive diversity training and are well informed about the variety of University programs and activities that support diversity. Staff from the Center for Diversity & Enrichment participate in the orientation process.

Student Disability Services participates in an information session as part of orientation for incoming students. The session covers information regarding registration for services at The University of Iowa and general information about academic accommodations available to students. All students and their parents are welcome to attend.

Orientation Services invites both students and parents/guests to evaluate the orientation experience, and many do. In the last cycle, nearly 4,000 students and more than 1,300 parents/guests submitted evaluations. The evaluation questions focus on staff qualities, program elements, knowledge gained, and whether the program has helped students/parents feel more prepared to attend UI. The questionnaire uses a four-step Likert scale.

The student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Student Advisors were friendly and approachable (98%), able to answer questions (96%), and organized (95%). They felt confident (somewhat confident, confident, or extremely confident) that they could use ISIS (the web-based student information system—92%), build a schedule (88%), contact their academic advisors (86%), and seek out University resources (73%). The most common concerns were that some felt the program spent too much time on schedule building, others felt there was too much “down time,” and some information was deemed repetitive.

More than 90% of parents and guests also found the staff friendly, approachable, and able to answer questions. They found all sessions valuable. The most common themes emerging from written comments included “too much down time after check-in,” a desire for students to see all of the parent program, more information on financial aid,
and more structure during the University Social. Parents/guests also reported feeling better informed, less overwhelmed, and more comfortable about sending their children to college after the orientation session.

**International Student Orientation**

The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) works closely with the Office of Admissions, the Iowa Intensive English Program, Orientation Services, Student Health Service, and others to offer a welcoming orientation program for incoming international students. The goals of the program include:

- To provide international students with opportunities to get to know each other and begin forming support systems
- To ensure that the University has obtained and recorded the legally required information related to their visa status
- To teach new students about their rights and responsibilities related to their F or J visa status as well as those of their accompanying dependents
- To provide them with information on adjusting to a new culture and academic system
- To assist Student Health Service in making sure that the students are given the required immunizations
- To advise them about resources available through OISS as well as elsewhere on campus

In addition, OISS offers a series of programs and workshops for first year international students called “Life in Iowa.” This ongoing orientation program provides students with continued support, timely information, and opportunities for reflection as they progress through the first year on campus and away from home. Program topics include local idioms and slang, relationships “American-style,” and preparing for Iowa’s four seasons.

Programs for fall 2007 international student orientation and for the 2007-08 “Life in Iowa” series will be available to the HLC consultant-evaluators in the University’s resource room.

**Integrating Students into University life: Building on the Foundation**

**Academic Options for First-Year Students**

The University has developed a number of formal academic options designed to integrate first-year students into academic life and to help them overcome some of the challenges of the transition from high school to college. Several of these—the college success initiatives courses, which includes the “College Success Seminar,” “The College Transition,” “Transfer Transition,” and “Online@Iowa”—are housed within the University College (the administrative umbrella for various credit-bearing programs, described in the institutional section of this self-study). The Academic Advising Center also administers Courses in Common. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences administers the University-wide first-year seminar program, to which the University of Iowa Honors Program has added a set of courses for honors students.

The opportunity to be part of a learning community also represents a valuable academic option for first-year students, as described below.
“The College Transition”

A two credit hour course designed to help students make a smooth and successful transition to the college environment, “The College Transition” (CT) is taught in small sections of 19 students with an emphasis on class discussion and small group activities. Assignments stress self-reflection and self-improvement, and build skills that students need in order to be successful at The University of Iowa. Topics include goal setting, study skills, time management, diversity, personal finances, and wellness, all addressed within the theme of developing personal responsibility—one of the key developmental challenges for new college students. Course sections are taught by University staff members from offices across campus. Enrollment in the course grew from 476 students in fall 2002 to 1,165 (27% of entering students) students in fall 2006. In end-of-semester evaluations, students rate the course very highly. More than 95% of respondents report that the course helps them feel more comfortable as new students at the University.

The course’s primary goal is to improve student persistence from the first to the second year. A recent retention study by the UI Center for Research on Undergraduate Education found, controlling for a host of background variables, that some students who enrolled in “The College Transition” were slightly more likely to return for their second year than those who did not. Among students with higher than average high school GPAs who completed CT, the probability of returning for the following fall was 4.7% greater than for students who did not complete the course. This holds true regardless of a student’s gender, race, ACT score, or spring 2006 cumulative GPA. Among students with lower than average high school GPAs, there was no statistically significant relationship between completing CT and returning for the following fall.

Another positive outcome of the course is that it has heightened instructors’ awareness of the first-year student experience, which in some cases is leading to enhanced services for students within departments.

“The College Transition” is administered by the Academic Advising Center; course development and instructor training are done collaboratively by AAC and Orientation Services. Eager to build on the success of the program, CT administrative staff have been working to define learning outcomes for the course, and have restructured course assignments to better assess achievement of those desired outcomes. Assessment also includes a portfolio learning project.

An issue of emerging concern is maintaining the instructor pool for “The College Transition.” A portion of the cohort of staff members who signed on to teach the course over its first several years are now moving on to other responsibilities, and fewer available instructors lead to diminished capacity. In fall 2007, CT enrollments dropped to 890 students. The University will consider involving faculty members in teaching the course among the options for addressing this problem.

“Transfer Transition”

Because the vast majority of transfer students live off campus, they can feel isolated and disconnected from campus life. The two credit hour “Transfer Transition” course, built on the success of the “College Transition” course and closely modeled on it, is designed to introduce transfer students to the University and help them make a smooth and successful transition to a new academic and social culture. Assignments and activities parallel the “College Transition” course, with a heavier emphasis on exploring majors and careers.
To date, enrollment in the “Transfer Transition” course has been very small, averaging about 60 students per semester since fall 2003. Students asked to evaluate the course in 2005 rated it highly. More than 98% said the course helped them feel more comfortable as new students at the University, and 95% said they felt more connected to the University as a result of the course.

“College Success Seminar”

The one credit hour “College Success Seminar” (CSS) helps first-year students who have been placed on academic probation to develop the skills, habits, and attitudes that are essential for college success. Topics include self-assessment, goal setting, problem solving, motivation, time management, study skills, test taking, and campus resources. Taught by academic advisors in small sections with an emphasis on discussion and small group activities, the course integrates probationary students into the University in part through assignments requiring interaction with faculty and staff.

Academic Advising Center tracking of CSS participants suggests that students who enroll in the course are more likely to return to the University for the second year than their peers who were on academic probation at the end of the first semester but did not enroll in the CSS (see Figure II-2). This study does not control for entering academic profile.

Figure II-2: College Success Seminar Persistence to Second Year

Of 101 respondents to a spring 2007 questionnaire, 90% said they would recommend CSS to a friend on academic probation. More than 90% said that as a result of the course they are better at setting achievable goals for themselves, are more resourceful in solving problems, and are more likely to seek help if they experience a problem at the University.

“Online@Iowa”

In fall 2007, nearly 2,700 students signed up for the one credit hour “Online@Iowa” course, which helps new undergraduates learn to navigate the University’s digital landscape. The online course includes lessons about library databases, web sites, course management systems, ISIS (the web-based student information system), e-mail, and the HawkID, and emphasizes responsible use of digital tools with topics such as e-mail etiquette, security, and plagiarism.
Of students who completed course evaluations in 2005 and 2006, 97% agreed that the course content was useful.

A spring 2007 study by the UI Center for Research on Undergraduate Education found that, controlling for gender, race, age, and ACT score, students who completed “Online@Iowa” were 2% more likely to return to UI the following fall than students who did not complete the course.

**Courses in Common**

Courses in Common (CIC) allows cohorts of 20 first-year students to take two or three required courses together. In fall 2007, more than 1,200 students enrolled in one of the 58 different CIC options. CIC helps participating students integrate more quickly into the University by quickly establishing social and academic connections with one another.

More than 92% of respondents to a fall 2005 online survey of CIC participants indicated they would recommend CIC to a friend. More than 80% of respondents reported that their CIC involvement was a good way to meet people, made it easier to participate in class discussions, and was one of the most positive experiences of their first semester at the University. Respondents to a survey of CIC instructors reported that their CIC students demonstrated better class participation and interaction with peers compared to first-year students in general.

The RISE study showed that, controlling for background characteristics, participation in CIC had a statistically significant positive effect for first-year students on three of the seven outcome measures: growth in general/liberal arts education, personal/interpersonal growth, and overall/composite growth.

**First-Year Seminars**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers first-year seminars designed to introduce new undergraduates to the intellectual life of the University and help them make the transition to college-level learning. Each seminar (offered for one credit hour) gives 15-16 students the chance to work closely with a faculty member on a topic related to his or her current research. Many departments offer the seminars, giving students a wide range of choices. Some of the seminars use upper-class students as peer mentors.

The College has not conducted an evaluation of the program, but has noted growing interest from both students and faculty. In 2006-07, 43 seminars enrolled 539 students. The College intends to increase the number of seminars to 50 per year, serving 750 students.

The RISE study showed that, controlling for background characteristics, participation in first-year seminars had a statistically significant positive effect for first-year students on four of the seven outcome measures: growth in general/liberal arts education, personal/interpersonal growth, growth in career/professional preparation, and overall/composite growth.

**Honors Seminars**

Beginning in spring 2006, the University of Iowa Honors Program has added to the first-year seminar program a series of sections reserved for honors students. The program has grown from three honors seminars in spring 2006 to nine in fall 2007, with topics such as “crafting electronic identities,” “doing good and doing well,” “Supreme Court cases that changed everything,” and “apes, earth, and the ethics of environmental citizenship.”
Residential Learning Communities

Residential learning communities—clusters of students with the same major or similar interests who live in a reserved section of a residence hall—are widely recognized as a critical means of integrating first-year students into university life. Research has demonstrated that students who participate in learning communities show an “increase in academic achievement, retention, motivation, intellectual development, learning, and involvement and community” (Kellogg, 1999).

The University currently has 12 learning communities, each focused on a theme or field of study:

- Art and design
- Citizenship, leadership, and service
- Explorations in computing, mathematics, and science
- Health sciences
- Honors
- International crossroads
- Iowa writers
- Leadership community in business and entrepreneurship
- Men in engineering
- Multicultural studies and leadership
- Performing arts
- Women in science and engineering

A 2006 study by the UI Center for Research on Undergraduate Education found that participation in a first-year living/learning program (17.5% of the sample, which included 1,357 students) increased the odds of persistence 2.84 times (284%).

Academic Advising for Entering Students

The Academic Advising Center and Entering Students

The Academic Advising Center (AAC), initially created in 1979 to advise open major or undecided students and pre-medical students, now advises almost all CLAS first-year students including: declared majors, open majors, pre-professional students (pre-med, pre-law, etc.), and special status non-degree seeking students. The Departments of Physics and Astronomy, Speech and Hearing Science, and Biochemistry are the only departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that advise their own first-year students. AAC also advises many entering transfer students. The AAC developed and implemented a number of the retention programs considered in this section of this self-study, including “The College Transition,” “Transfer Transition,” IowaLink, and Courses in Common.

Most students eventually are transferred to colleges and departments for advising according to timetables agreed upon by the center and academic departments, although some students remain with advisors in the AAC until graduation.

The AAC, in other words, plays a key role in helping students transition to college, but also advises a number of students all the way through their undergraduate careers. See the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study for detailed description and evaluation of the Academic Advising Center and its services for both entering and continuing students.
First-Year Advising in the Colleges and Transfer Student Advising

Although advisors in the Academic Advising Center advise almost all first-year College of Liberal Arts and Sciences students, first-year students in the other colleges are advised in those colleges.

The largest population of new first-year students outside of CLAS is in Engineering. From orientation until declaration of a major, new engineering students receive advising from professional staff in the College’s Student Development Center (SDC). Upon declaring a major, the student is assigned to a faculty advisor in that major. First-year engineering students must enroll in a one credit hour seminar taught by the associate dean for academic programs, with the assistance of SDC staff and advanced engineering students. The seminar covers knowledge of the field, success strategies, and personal goals.

The Tippie College of Business also admits a small number of first-year students, as described above. All first-year admits receive advising from professional staff in the College’s Undergraduate Program Office. In addition, students attend a weekly seminar throughout their first year to assist with their transition to college and selection of a major. Direct admit students are encouraged to form a relationship with a faculty mentor.

The executive associate dean in the College of Nursing advises all new undergraduates admitted directly to that college.

See the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study for additional information about academic advising at the University.

AlcoholEdu

As considered at greater length in the Environments and Resources for Learning section of this self-study, prevalence of binge drinking is a serious problem among UI students, and one of the University’s most significant challenges.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) report *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges* (2002) indicates that many students increase their alcohol consumption during the critical first six weeks of college, which contributes to difficulties with the college transition.

Beginning in fall 2006, the University joined several other colleges and universities in administering to all first-year students an online, science-based alcohol abuse education and prevention program called AlcoholEdu. The program, based on recommendations outlined in the NIAAA *A Call to Action* report, focuses on alcohol’s impact on the mind and body and gives students information and support they need to make smart decisions regarding alcohol use. In requiring first-year students to complete the course, the University hopes eventually to inculcate in all students a common understanding about alcohol as it relates to expectations for being a member of the UI community.

A survey of fall 2006 AlcoholEdu participants found that after completing the course, 77% knew more (in contrast to when they started) about blood alcohol concentration; 46% knew more about the ways in which alcohol affects someone’s ability to give consent for sex; and 76% knew more than a “moderate amount” about the effects of alcohol, as compared to only 39% before the course. Most also found the course a positive experience: 77% said it helped them feel more prepared to handle situations involving alcohol that might come up during college. This information is echoed.
student self-reports on high-risk behaviors as well as departmental statistics. The cohort that completed AlcoholEdu reported blackouts or hangovers at significantly lower rates than previous “untreated” cohorts. In addition, fewer first-year students were transported to the Emergency Treatment Center due to alcohol use than in previous fall semesters.

Like prior cohorts, this first AlcoholEdu cohort did experience an increase in the rate of drinking from the summer of the senior year to the fall of the freshman year at UI. When compared to prior cohorts, however, they experienced fewer negative consequences and a decrease in some risky behaviors.

Conclusions—Building the Foundation

We cannot overstate the importance of programs that introduce new students to the University and integrate them into what the 2000 Task Force on Persistence to Graduation described as UI’s “scholarly culture.” Current research about college impact leaves no doubt that starting off “on the right foot” can make a tremendous difference to a student’s ultimate success in college.

Orientation Services evaluations indicate that both students and parents/guests benefit from the current orientation program, and find it a positive and informative introduction to the University. Academic advising for first-year students (and beyond) is addressed at greater length in the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study, as are topics related to alcohol education. Requiring first-year students to enroll in the online AlcoholEdu course seems to be showing signs of success as a step in dealing with the critical problem of binge drinking.

UI’s college success courses and first-year seminars are the centerpiece of the University’s post-Task Force on Persistence to Graduation efforts to enhance transition programs for first-year students, and they have been very successful. The University will continue and build on these programs. Also, we will build on the success of our highly effective learning communities. We expect valuable guidance toward the latter goal from the work of the Task Force on Learning Communities (described in the conclusion to this self-study).

Recruitment, Admission, and Supporting the Transition of Selected Student Populations

Recruiting and Supporting the Transition of Underrepresented Students

The Iowa Promise recognizes that diversity is an integral component of the University’s goals for educational excellence. The plan identifies a diverse learning environment as a major strategic goal, and further identifies building a critical mass of students, faculty, and staff from communities underrepresented in higher education as one important strategy for advancing that goal. As noted in the institutional section of this self-study, a particular challenge for The University of Iowa is that Iowa has much less diversity in its population than many other states.

Like all recruitment efforts, the recruitment of underrepresented students involves a collaborative effort. Many offices and academic units on campus contribute to the effort to recruit and support the transition of underrepresented students—including the colleges, the Academic Advising Center, the Pomerantz Career Center, the Center for Diversity & Enrichment, the University of Iowa Honors Program, and the Office of Student Financial Aid. In addition, faculty from a wide range of disciplines contribute personally to the effort by participating in events intended to keep pre-college minority
students on track for higher education, and to support them once they transition to college. In 2007 the University initiated the Iowa FIRST (“faculty investing in recruiting student talent”) project, to provide structure, support, and recognition for faculty involved in student recruitment. The effort is co-sponsored by the vice provost and the special assistant to the president for equal opportunity and diversity and associate provost for diversity.

**The Center for Diversity & Enrichment and Pipeline Development**

The demographic challenge of Iowa’s relatively un-diverse population is compounded by the fact that in Iowa, as in other states, there is a gap between the numbers of college-prepared and college-going minority students and their majority counterparts. Pipeline development is therefore an important programming initiative for the University.

As part of a significant reorganization (described in the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study), in July 2006 two existing student diversity-focused units, Opportunity at Iowa and Support Service Programs, merged into the new **Center for Diversity & Enrichment (CDE)**. CDE provides leadership and coordination for outreach and service to historically underserved students, including students of color, first-generation students whose parents have not received a baccalaureate degree, and students from low-income families. The center sponsors individual programs and initiatives organized around three major purposes: 1) outreach and “pipeline development” of pre-college students, 2) enhancing the social and educational environment for students new to the University, and 3) academic support. The CDE and its role in supporting students who have enrolled at UI are described in detail in the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study.

The CDE’s pre-college “pipeline development” programs are not explicitly focused on recruiting minority students to Iowa, but are intended to increase the number of minority students who graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed in college. The UI Office of Admissions and the CDE do remain in contact with students who participate in “pipeline development” programs. CDE also reaches out to high school counselors and to teachers to identify prospective students.

Pre-college programs sponsored by the CDE range from programs for elementary students, such as the Pen Pal program, to programs for high school students, such as Upward Bound.

In the Pen Pal program, current University students correspond with fourth and fifth grade students, acting as positive role models and increasing the younger students’ motivation for academic success.

The federally supported TRiO program **Upward Bound** serves eight southeastern Iowa high schools. During the academic year, students enrolled in the Upward Bound program meet once a week at their local high schools to develop their academic skills, and visit UI and other colleges during scheduled “campus days” to learn about college and university life. They also participate in a summer residential program at the University, living in a residence hall and taking classes in math, science, and language as well as participating in sports and creative arts programs. Outcomes assessment for the 2005-06 academic year shows that Upward Bound students made considerable progress, and most (93%) achieved the target grade point average of at least 2.5 (see Appendix II-E). Eighty-six percent of participants continued in the program, and all graduating seniors enrolled in an institution of postsecondary education the fall after
graduating. The Upward Bound program supports economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students as well as minority students.

The CDE encourages high school students to attend special campus visits, and invites them to participate in a variety of minority-focused activities as well as the wide variety of opportunities the University offers to all prospective students. Examples of CDE-sponsored programs that help students become familiar with the University experience include:

- **Iowa First Nations Summer Program**—students pursue training in the life sciences, focusing on the environment, health sciences, and the relationship between science and Native American cultures
- **Life Science Summer Program**—students pursue laboratory training in biology

In addition, the CDE provides support to other summer programs to ensure participation by diverse students:

- **Secondary Student Training Program**—students work on an individual project with a faculty mentor
- **National Summer Institute in Forensics**
- **Iowa Summer Music Camp**
- **High School Journalism Workshops**
- **Iowa Young Writers Studio**

The **Iowa Talent Project**

The Connie Belin and Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development (the Belin-Blank Center, described in greater detail below) sponsors several programs that focus on academically gifted minority students, including the **Iowa Talent Project (ITP)**. A partnership between the Belin-Blank Center and the Des Moines School District, the program identifies talented minority and economically disadvantaged students from Des Moines, encourages them to make the most of their abilities, and familiarizes them with the University environment. Students take classes designed to improve their critical communication skills during a three-week summer residential program on campus, with costs covered by the University. A student who graduates from high school having successfully completed the ITP residential program, earned a grade of B or above in at least eight academic courses at the Des Moines Central Academy (a magnet school for top-performing students), and achieved a score of three or higher on at least three Advanced Placement exams will be awarded an ITP scholarship to attend UI. The student participates in the University of Iowa Honors Program, lives in the Honors House, and meets regularly with Belin-Blank staff. The student may also choose to participate in the Iowa Edge orientation program.

Six ITP students enrolled at UI in 2006-07. ITP’s success rate is impressive; 78% of ITP students graduate within six years.

The **Iowa Edge**

As part of its Iowa Diversity in Business Initiative, The Henry B. Tippie College of Business implemented **The Iowa Edge** in fall 2006. The program brings approximately
50 minority and first-generation students new to the University to campus for five
days, just before the opening of fall classes, for an extended orientation to campus.
Although the Tippie College of Business is the sponsor of this program, it is open to
students who have not identified business as a major. Students who participate move
into their dormitories early, at no charge. Lodging, meals, and program expenses for all
participants are paid by grants and donations.

The program gives students a chance to learn about the University—the campus and
its social and academic components—and to build community with one another. Many
University departments have collaborated to make this what we believe is and will be a
highly successful program; although it is too early in the program to have quantitative
data to illustrate its effectiveness as a retention and success tool, participants report
feeling connected to the University community and better informed about campus
support mechanisms.

**Iowa Biosciences Advantage**

The Iowa Biosciences Advantage (IBA) program identifies and supports talented,
underrepresented minority students interested in pursuing careers in research. The
five to 10 students selected yearly enjoy significant academic and transition support,
including participation in The Iowa Edge. They also receive long-range academic
planning and peer mentoring by older IBA students. A key component of the program
is connecting each IBA student with a faculty member and a research project, which
gives students a unique learning experience and the support and encouragement of a
faculty mentor.

Along with the Iowa Talent Project described earlier, this program provides an excellent
model for reaching out to minority students and encouraging their enrollment at UI,
where they have the opportunity to receive ongoing support toward their success. It
is important to note, however, that these programs serve a very limited number of
students.

**Role of the Office of Admissions in Recruiting and Admitting Underrepresented Students**

The Office of Admissions has the ultimate responsibility for our efforts to recruit
students from underrepresented communities to The University of Iowa. An assistant
director has direct responsibility for activities and strategies designed to increase
the population of minority students on campus. The Office of Admissions develops
targeted publications, plans strategic mailings, and makes visits to target schools and
community organizations.

**College of Education Diversity Committee**

Every December, the College of Education Diversity Committee makes a visit to an area
high school to meet with underrepresented sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The
committee then arranges with the local school counselor for the students to come to
campus for a tour, class visits, and meetings with Admissions staff.

In 2006-07 the committee visited the high school in West Liberty (a small community
in southeast Iowa with a large Latino/a population). From that senior class, a total of
17 students chose to come to UI—the largest group ever from one class. The group
includes 10 Advantage Iowa (AI) scholarship recipients.

To help ensure the success of the West Liberty AI students, the College worked with
the Office of the Provost and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity to create a
mentoring program for them, with formal and informal meetings throughout the fall 2007 semester. The program included meetings with and campus visits by teachers and administrators from the high school. The teachers, principal, and counselor have all indicated that these interactions have enhanced their knowledge of issues such as course requirements, the importance of taking college entrance exams sooner rather than later, and financial issues, and this has influenced how they advise students.

**Recruiting and Supporting the Transition of Top Scholars**

“Strengthening the honors program and other opportunities for high-achieving students” is another key strategy in *The Iowa Promise*. Highly motivated and well-prepared students set an example for their peers and enrich the intellectual life of the community.

Several offices play key roles in recruiting and enrolling academically gifted students, including the Office of Admissions, the University of Iowa Honors Program, the Office of Student Financial Aid (by administering merit-based scholarship funds), and the College of Engineering. Other offices play supporting roles, such as the Belin-Blank Center, which offers many activities for talented K-12 students; and the College of Nursing and Tippie College of Business, with their early/direct admissions programs. Some College of Liberal Arts and Sciences departments also play a role in recruiting academically gifted students by providing significant scholarships for top incoming undergraduate scholars (e.g., the Departments of Chemistry and Physics and Astronomy).

**Director of Scholar Recruitment**

The Office of Admissions employs a director of scholar recruitment who works closely with the Honors Program and coordinates many of the activities on campus for prospective “top scholar” students and is the primary personal contact for most. She meets with them individually during campus visits and communicates with them and their families throughout the recruiting year. Her goals include involving more alumni in recruiting top scholars and personalizing the recruitment experience for these stellar students. The director of scholar recruitment meets regularly with staff in the University of Iowa Honors Program to coordinate their joint efforts.

The Office of Admissions also develops targeted publications, plans strategic mailings, and makes visits to target schools and community organizations.

**The University of Iowa Honors Program**

The University of Iowa Honors Program has two primary goals: enrolling academically talented and well-prepared students at The University of Iowa, and creating an exceptional academic experience for those students.

Incoming students with an Admission Index of 148 or above are eligible to join the University of Iowa Honors Program. In fall 2007, 17% of the incoming first-year students—735 in all—will join the program.

Prospective students learn about the Honors Program through a variety of means, including the Admissions or Honors web sites, Admissions mailings, campus visits, admission counselors, or other students. Some students first learn about the Honors Program after admission, when they receive welcome letters from the director.
Honors Program staff respond to interest from prospective students by sending program summaries and hosting about 240 individualized visits per year. In an effort to engage in more active recruiting, the Honors Program has recently worked with Admissions to incorporate a 90-minute Honors presentation in the middle of each Hawkeye Visit Day. Also in partnership with Admissions, Honors this year inaugurated an overnight visit called Iowa Live! for prospective Old Gold Scholars. Honors and Admissions will kick off Presidential Days, a series of overnight events to bring candidates for Iowa’s top merit scholarship to campus, in 2008-09.

The University of Iowa Honors Program does not dictate a curriculum, but provides a collection of optional programs and experiences under the guidance of dedicated staff members and with the benefits of excellent facilities. Students can take Honors course sections, live in the Honors House, or participate in scholarship workshops, for example. The program connects students to one another from orientation onward, through peer mentoring, social events, a listserv, and so on. Every department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences designates an honors advisor. The Tippie College of Business and the Colleges of Engineering, Education, and Nursing each designate an honors advisor for the college.

The University of Iowa Honors Program is described in greater detail in the “Environments and Resources for Learning” section of this self-study.

The Belin-Blank Center interacts extensively with academically talented K-12 students. The center provides summer programs and year-round weekend activities for gifted students, as well as many resources for their teachers. Students who participate in Belin-Blank Center programs become familiar with the University, and many later choose to enroll here: from 1997 through 2007, between 31 and 76 Belin-Blank program participants enrolled at UI each fall, for an average of about 61 a year. Information about Belin-Blank participants is entered into the Admissions database so staff can maintain communication in these students’ pre-college years.

The Belin-Blank Center engages in a great deal of “pool development,” particularly through its Talent Search programs designed to identify students who can benefit from greater academic challenge. The center maintains a 50,000-name database of fourth to 11th grade students from Iowa, contiguous states, and Florida, and also purchases names from comparable programs at such universities as Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Northwestern.

The Blank Summer Institute (BSI) is a highly competitive summer program for seventh and eighth grade Iowa students nominated by their schools. The Belin-Blank Center chooses 80 to 130 participants from a pool of about 400. Participants are awarded a $1,000 scholarship if they decide to attend The University of Iowa after graduating from high school, and about a third of them do enroll.

The National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering (NAASE), in existence since 1999, offers very well prepared students (identified primarily through the Blank Summer Institute nomination process) the opportunity to begin their college studies early, enrolling at The University of Iowa after their junior year in high school. The student’s college credit transfers back to the high school, and the student graduates with his or her high school class, having already completed a year of college.
Participants in the highly competitive program live in the Honors House, have one-to-one meetings with Belin-Blank staff members, receive priority registration, attend a year-long first-year seminar, attend cultural events together, and receive guidance from older students, in addition to other benefits. Each also receives a $1,000 scholarship for the first year at the University, and becomes eligible for other University scholarships.

In 2006-07, nine new students enrolled at UI as participants in NAASE.

**Recruiting and Supporting the Transition of Student Athletes and Other “Recruited Students”**

Recruited students include student athletes, musicians, minority students, and first generation/low income students who are members of TRiO programs. These students have exceptional talents that are not necessarily reflected in their academic backgrounds, and they contribute to the diversity of the campus in many ways.

The admission of students who are recruited as part of the University’s Educational Opportunity Program or because of their exceptional achievement or skills related to University programs, performing groups, or other areas of institutional priority is addressed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policy on the Admission of Recruited Students (1994). Most recruited students meet the standards for regular admission to the University. The small numbers of recruited students (typically 36-42) who do not meet UI admission standards are admitted to the IowaLink program.

**IowaLink**

IowaLink is a year-long academic support program that helps students develop the skills necessary to succeed in college. Admission to the program is based on a holistic review by an admission committee. Applicants must have an overall record that contains reasonable evidence that they can earn a degree in five to six years if they effectively use available academic support and other services. All students admitted to IowaLink must meet College of Liberal Arts and Sciences standards for good standing and/or continuation of enrollment at the end of their first year.

Students admitted through the program work with an “academic support team” made up of student services and instructional staff. They enroll in a two-semester first-year seminar, participate in study groups, must complete specified general education courses in the first year, and receive supplemental instruction, as recommended by the Task Force on Persistence to Graduation.

IowaLink students persist at a much higher rate than their academic profiles (see Table II-7) would predict—in fact, they persist at about the same level as the regularly admitted student cohort (see Figure II-3).
Recruiting and Supporting the Transition of Transfer Students

The four-year graduation rate for transfer students who come to Iowa holding an associate of arts degree is significantly higher than for those who come without an associate’s degree. The four-year graduation rate for the 2002 cohort of AA-degree holders was 67.0%; for those with no associate’s degree, it was 56.8%.

In 2006 UI piloted a new program, the 2 Plus 2 Guaranteed Graduation Plan, designed for...
to streamline the transition for community college students who choose to pursue a UI four-year degree. The pilot program involved three community colleges. In fall 2007 the University completed the process of extending the program to the rest of Iowa’s community colleges.

Working in close collaboration with participating colleges, 2 Plus 2 Plan coordinators create “templates” for specified majors, outlining the courses students need to take to fulfill UI requirements and prepare themselves for additional study in their fields. Students who sign up for the program, if they meet specified graduation checkpoints, are guaranteed early registration at the University and guaranteed graduation within four years. In addition, participating students get guidance from UI admission counselors and academic advisors, a UI e-mail account, library privileges, access to the Pomerantz Career Center, and the opportunity to purchase discounted tickets to University cultural and athletic events. In short, the program helps students set goals, and then provides support to help them reach those goals.

Conclusions – Recruitment, Admission, and Supporting the Transition of Selected Student Populations

Recent developments in the effort to recruit students from selected populations are encouraging, particularly the Advantage Iowa Awards, the bolstering of the University of Iowa Honors Program, and the creation of the 2 Plus 2 Guaranteed Graduation Plan. All these initiatives are designed to support our movement toward “access to success.”

In fall 2006 the first-year honors class set a new record (15% of the class), and more minority students attended the University than ever. In fall 2007 we surpassed both records, with honors students comprising 17% of the entering class, and the total number of minority students (including graduate and professional students) increasing from 2,741 to 2,841 (an increase of 3.6%). The number of minority students among new undergraduates (first-year and transfer students) in fall 2007 grew by 8.2% over fall 2006. By ethnicity, the largest percentage increase was in African-American students—up 19.8% among first-year students and 4.7% among all undergraduates.

Summary and Conclusions—Entry and Transition

Signs of Success

The University has met with some success in moving toward the recruitment goals outlined in The Iowa Promise—for example, toward recruiting more students who are truly well prepared to succeed, and who can take advantage of a research-oriented university such as The University of Iowa. The number of first-year applications has increased by 35% in the last 10 years (from fall 1997 to fall 2007); during that same period, the number of entering students who have met all of the University’s high school course requirements has increased from 91.0% to 96.5%. We have ceased the practice of admitting some students with “core deficiencies” in math and science, have begun reviewing (and sometimes withdrawing) offers of admission for students who perform poorly during their final year of high school, and raised the Admission Index used for students who do not meet the class rank criterion (from 90 to 95). The last two fall semesters have seen record numbers of incoming first-year students, and record numbers of honors students among them. Overall high school GPA and class rank have edged up slightly, and mean ACT composite scores for entering first-year students are at their highest point in more than 30 years—even though state-mandated admission standards limit rapid progress on these measures. The recent change in
admission standards bodes well for further improvement.

Diversity among undergraduates continues to grow, albeit more slowly than we would like. In fall 2006 the University enrolled the largest total number of minority students ever. Fall 2007 set a new record for the number of minority undergraduates, and minority undergraduate enrollment as a percentage of total undergraduate enrollment increased to 8.9%. Among first-year students, 9.8% identified as members of minority groups in fall 2007, compared to 9.0% in fall 2006.

Some recent positive developments with potential for considerable impact in the near future are:

- Creation of the Center for Diversity & Enrichment, which will allow us to take advantage of synergies among various programs that work to recruit, enroll, and support underserved students
- Creation of the Student Success Team and appointment of the director of student success initiatives
- Strengthening of the University of Iowa Honors Program, including its move into the Blank Honors Center—which made UI the first university in the nation to offer programs, services, and support for academically talented students from kindergarten through college under one roof
- Revamping of our scholarship programs, including the creation of the Advantage Iowa and Iowa Pathways awards and the restructuring of the Old Gold and Presidential Scholarships
- Creation of the 2 Plus 2 Guaranteed Graduation Plan, a partnership with Iowa’s community colleges, which will ease the transition to UI for community college students who choose to pursue a four-year degree

We also expect the work of the Task Force on Learning Communities to help the University build on a highly successful program that bridges the gap between academic study and extracurricular life.

Moving Forward

Evidence from the last few years suggests that our recruitment efforts are having a positive effect, and we hope these successes will lead to some improvement in retention, as well. At the same time, however, our data show that retention has not improved as quickly as we would like in response to our efforts. We need to dedicate increased resources to student success initiatives that can make a real difference in helping students work successfully all the way through to graduation.

A theme for improvement that emerged during our study of entry and transition programs is the need to communicate to our students a consistent message about what it means to be a successful member of the University of Iowa community, and to do so early. Current research (Kuh et al., 2005a) and our own RISE study strongly reinforce our sense that we need to do a better job of creating appropriate expectations among new undergraduates. We must find new ways to teach what it means to become an Iowa student. What kinds of learning do we want them to seek? What kinds of relationships do we want them to build? What kinds of community do we want them to create?

One special concern related to this need is the problem of alcohol. We are struck by the
suggestion made by seniors interviewed for the RISE study who, according to the report, “asserted that Iowa’s ‘reputation as a party school’ was associated with its perceived lack of academic challenge; that is, if UI provided more academic challenges, students would not be able to spend so much time partying as they do.”

This compelling observation lends a sense of urgency to the goal of engaging students in the life of the University. It also spotlights the RISE study finding that about half the work faculty say they expect from students leads to a B average. That is, when students were asked to estimate how much time they spent preparing for class in a typical week, the modal response for first-year students and seniors was six to 10 hours per week; the mean GPA for seniors was 3.14 and for first-year students 3.02.