

# Developing an Enhanced Sense of Community: An Overview

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# Community & University



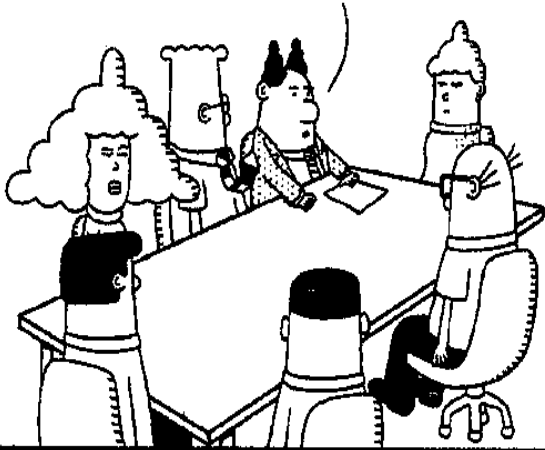


**THANK YOU**

**Thanks to:  
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and  
Brooke White**

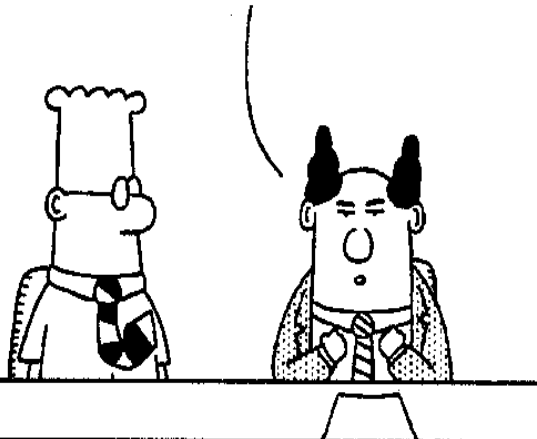
# DILBERT

WE NEED TO  
COMMUNICATE  
LESS WITH OTHER  
DEPARTMENTS.



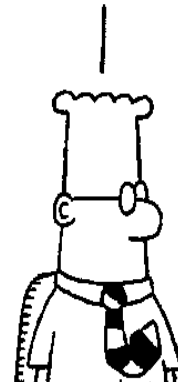
Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

THE MORE THEY  
KNOW ABOUT US, THE  
MORE THEY CRITICIZE  
WHAT WE DO.



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IS THIS  
PART OF  
YOUR LARGER  
WAR ON  
KNOWLEDGE?



THAT  
WAS THE  
LAST  
THING  
I'LL EVER  
TELL YOU.



# From our Student Surveys

- One-third do not experience a sense of community at the university
- 28% do not feel a sense of community within their faculty
- 39% of first year students are dissatisfied with the concern shown to them by the university
- One-third of first year students disagree that professors treat them as individuals

# From our Recent Student Surveys (Cont'd)

- Over half (58%) spend no time in co-curricular activities, including campus groups, clubs, student government, sports and social activities
- More than half (52%) of first year students have no success becoming involved in campus activities
- One quarter said “the university should work to provide a better social environment for students” as key to improving their educational experience

# From our Recent Student Surveys (Cont'd)

- 19% of first year students are dissatisfied with their decision to attend the University
- Only 82% of first year students say their UWindsor experience so far has met (68%) or exceeded (14%) their expectations
- 18% of undergraduates are dissatisfied with the overall quality of education at the University

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...with lots of variety by Faculty

# Deans' Council NSSE Working Group

- Recommendation #1: we focus university-wide attention on developing an enhanced sense of community.



# Community is...

“a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people participate in common activities, depend on one another, and make decisions together. In addition, group members identify themselves as something larger than the sum of their individual relationships, and are willing to commit themselves for the long term to the group’s well-being.”

-Shaffer & Anudsen, 1993, p. 10

# 2 Key Ingredients

1. Sense of belonging by its members
2. Fidelity or commitment to community

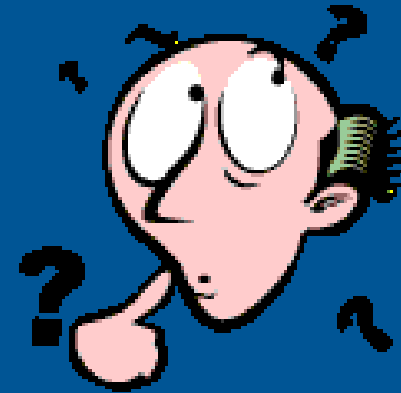


# Our Challenge

- The “Competitive World View” (Astin)
- Notion of the “Multiversity” (Kerr)

Traditional approaches to teaching, testing, grading, promotion and tenure, student recruitment, allocation of resources, and relations with other institutions involve and promote competition.

The multiversity is “a series of faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking.”



-Kerr, 2001, p. 15

# Too Important to Relinquish

- At a time when social bonds are tenuous, students...should discover the reality of their **dependence** on each other
- They must understand what it means to **share and sustain** traditions
- Community must be built

-Boyer, 1987, p. 195

# Key Factors in Developing Community

1. Active interaction
2. Sharing of resources among students
3. Collaborative learning
4. Socially constructed meaning
5. Expressions of encouragement and support

-Palloff, Pratt & Stockley, 2001

“Social interaction is the most essential, pervasive, and persistent feature of community”



-Bridge & Alter, 2006, p. 167

# Some Literature Findings

- Students:
  - Sense of belonging
  - Intrinsic motivation
  - Self-belief
  - Working autonomously
  - Enjoying relationships with each other
  - Living in residence



-Zepke & Leach, 2010; Rodger & Johnson, 2005;  
Morris, Finnegan & Wu, 2005

# Some Literature Findings (Cont`d)

- Students:
  - Female students at the University of Windsor have a stronger sense of bonding to the campus community when related to lower dropout proneness

-Hart et al, 2011



# Some Literature Findings (Cont`d)

- Institutional Environment:
  - Social activism and community orientation
  - Positive perception of the Administration
  - Percentage of students majoring in the humanities
  - Perceived academic competence of students
  - Extent to which students interact with peers and faculty members

-Astin, 1993

# Some Literature Findings (Cont`d)

- In the classroom:
  - Student motivation is higher when students perceived a sense of community in the classroom
  - Sense of community is enhanced when most students in a class **work toward the same goal** and there is a **desire to collectively achieve desired outcomes**

-Summers & Syinicki, 2007

# Some Literature Findings (Cont`d)

- Academic focus:
  - More engaged with their program
  - Spent more time on their studies



-Canadian Council on Learning, 2009

# From the Field...a Few Examples

- UBC sought to increase the number of students in on-campus housing by building more residences (UBC, 2010)
- Development of more suite style residence availability at Western (Rodger & Johnson, 2005)



# Some Considerations

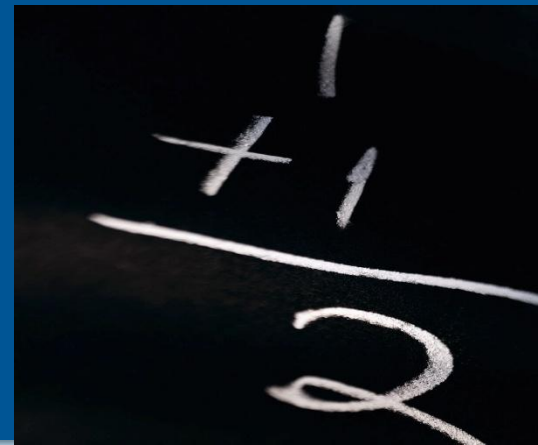
- Institutions should develop their own student learning centred service orientation and cultural competence across the organization
- Support targeted student groups in transitioning in and through their student experience
- Put student needs and student learning at the centre of institutional operations and decision-making

-Wallace-Hulecki, 2009

# Toward Community: Some Options

1. Explore enhancing community in our micro-communities
2. Explore how we might work toward the creation of a stronger university-wide community

...or we could do both!



# Questions & Comments

