

**A Learning Community for the Future:
Strategic Directions**



*Individuals at the center
of their own learning
within a rich intellectual environment
characterized by choice*

September 2004

Foreword

A Learning Community for the Future: Strategic Directions is the result of approximately two years of study and discussions by the faculty of The College of Education. It is a statement that describes the establishment of a learning paradigm within the College.

This plan is unusual for a strategic planning document. In addition to the statements of mission, vision and values that are found in most strategic plans, *A Learning Community for the Future: Strategic Directions* has a foundational philosophical underpinning that has driven the development of the plan. As we developed the plan at The University of Toledo College of Education, we soon realized that a common philosophical framework was driving our work. That philosophical framework is best seen in the vision statement adopted by the college. That statement reads: **Individuals at the center of their own learning in a rich intellectual environment characterized by choice.** The entire framework is included as Appendix A: *Toward a Learning Paradigm -- the Philosophical Foundations of the University of Toledo College of Education's Strategic Directions Document.*

This strategic plan contains five major strategies consisting of a learning-centered paradigm, engagement, diversity, assessment and evaluation and technology. Each strategy is described and examples of potential strategic college, unit or departmental goals are provided. The context of *A Learning Community for the Future: Strategic Directions* is:

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A Learning Community for the Future: Strategic Directions

*Individuals at the center
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The College of Education at The University of Toledo is noted for excellence in teacher and administrator preparation and for the quality of its faculty. Degrees range from the bachelors to the Ph.D. The College is committed to quality teaching, to the enhancement of knowledge and skills, and to service to its metropolitan community. In fulfilling this mission, the College of Education plays a role in preserving, protecting, and advancing our democracy.

Introduction

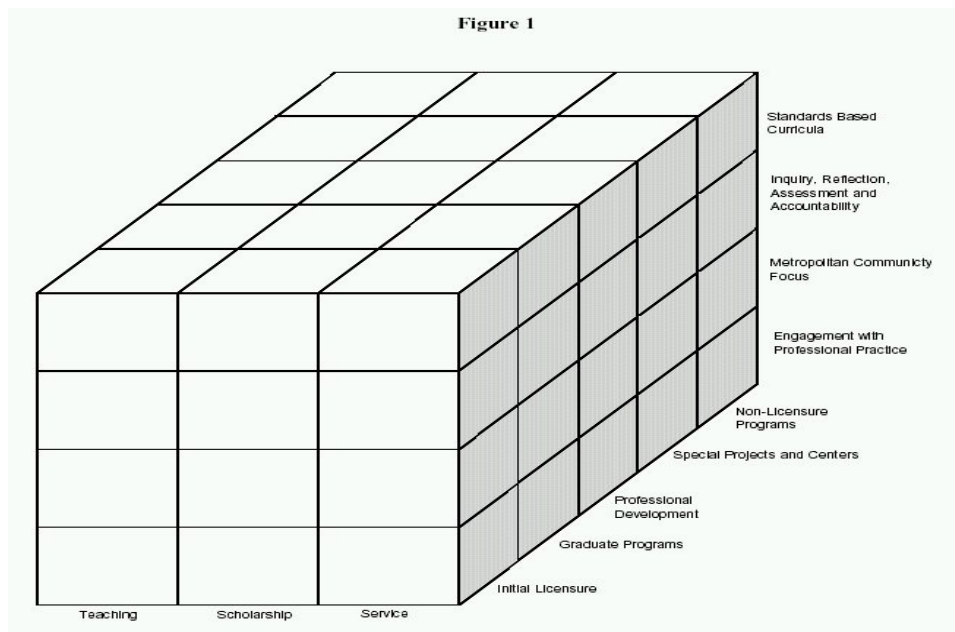
The College of Education began a strategic planning process in February 2003 with the appointment of a twenty-six (26) member committee by Dean Thomas Switzer. The committee met frequently during the course of the Spring Semester. It conducted both an internal and external environmental scan of various demographic and core factors that are or will be influencing the College. The committee assessment included a review of: student admissions, enrollment, and graduation data; input gathered at a faculty focus group luncheon; faculty, staff and student perceptions of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the College of Education; and budgetary data provided by the Office of Academic Budget and Planning. The *Strategic Plan 2001-2006* and the *Conceptual Framework* of the College of Education were examined. Additional information reviewed by the committee included an environmental scan conducted in 2001 by the University of Toledo, a university telephone market analysis of the Toledo community, “*The Future of the University of Toledo: A Vision of Promise*” (State of the University Address, President Johnson, 2003), *Strategic Direction for the Next Decade- The University of Toledo*, and *Teacher Supply and Demand in Ohio* (June, 2002) a report by the Ohio Department of Education. Several professional publications were influential resources for the committee. The committee found an article from *Change Magazine* entitled “*From teaching to learning--A new paradigm for undergraduate education*” by Robert Barr and John Tagg to be particularly useful.

Of particular interest to the committee were the professional commitments and performance expectations described and illustrated in the *Conceptual Framework* of the College of Education. These assurances are described in the following narrative.

Figure 1 illustrates the interrelationship of three sets of elements, or attributes that distinguish the integrity and fidelity of the professional education unit at The University of Toledo.

Professional education programs at The University of Toledo are categorized as follows: (a) Undergraduate programs for the initial preparation of teachers and/or to provide a foundation for graduate level professional preparations; (b) Graduate programs for both the initial and advanced preparation of teachers and other educational personnel; (c) Professional development programs designed specifically for education personnel; (d) Special projects and centers with programs dedicated to specific areas of education; (e) Programs for professionals in educational or clinical settings requiring neither certification nor licensure in education.

The College of Education at The University of Toledo maintains that both faculty and candidates must model exemplary professional practice in *teaching, scholarship, and service*. Thus by example and program design, college faculty are committed to preparing candidates who are well grounded in both the content and pedagogy of their respective disciplines and who are also disposed to assessing and improving their own practice in these three defining areas of professional education. The College of Education is further defined by four distinctive but interrelated elements: (a) standards-based curriculum; (b) inquiry, reflection, assessment and accountability; (c) metropolitan focus; (d) engagement with professional practice.



A paradigm shift is occurring in every aspect of society, and education is no exception. In fact, education is experiencing numerous shifts in public expectations as it attempts to meet the future needs of a rapidly changing society. As the role of education expands,

this strategic plan embraces the development of educational professionals committed to the enrichment of the learning environment of their schools, districts, agencies and workplaces. The committee has designed this document to provide a guide for the College to become a learning environment that places individuals at the center of their own learning. The committee believes that over the next ten years, as the College embraces a learning community, it will become the educational choice in Ohio for future teachers and educational professionals. This document, *A Learning Community for the Future*, has been organized around a driving vision for the College, recognized values that lead to its mission and subsequent core strategies. It was approved by the Strategic Planning Committee in August 2003 and endorsed by the faculty in September 2003. During the 2003-04 academic year, the following vision statement was studied by three separate faculty groups. Their reports enriched this document and focused this strategic plan to enable the College of Education to achieve its vision, embrace its values, accomplish its mission, and insure student success.

Vision

The intent of the College of Education is to provide **learning opportunities that place individuals at the center of their own learning**. To achieve this, the College **provides students with rich intellectual learning experiences characterized by choice**.

The phrase “*individuals at the center of their own learning*” signifies a shift in orientation toward a learning-centered educational philosophy – a shift from an instructional to a learning paradigm. At the core of this shift is a movement away from understanding education as the delivery of instruction to conceiving it as the production or facilitation of student learning. The former focuses on inputs, the latter on outcomes. In the learning paradigm the central educational practice is the construction of learning environments within which students can grow and learn. Rather than the education being primarily conceived as the delivery of instruction, the learning paradigm conceives it as the facilitation of student learning and growth.

A rich intellectual environment means several things for our learning paradigm. First and foremost the learning paradigm in a college of education with a rich intellectual environment is characterized by programs with well integrated, high quality curricula, students, teachers, and tools. Learning requires a rich intellectual environment within which students and faculty can both grow and learn. In a rich intellectual environment, learning becomes a working partnership between students and faculty.

At first blush, adherence to standards (professional, state, NCATE) might seem to be contrary to giving students more *choice*, but the two are compatible. In fact, offering *choice* in specific areas will assist the college to articulate the features of our programs and help to differentiate requirements from options. The table below identifies six major areas in which *Choice* is manifested in the College of Education.

CHOICE Six Areas and Examples	
Area	Example
Degrees	The college of education will offer a full range of degree options. These degrees will vary from a single subject area bachelor's degree to a doctorate.
Programs	Developing the undergraduate single degree option will give students two options leading to teacher certification. In addition, some programs offer the choice of a cohort.
Courses or emphases	An option to pursue an "urban emphasis" or an "international focus" will be provided as additional opportunities for program direction.
Field Experience	Students will have an option to do a portion of their student teaching overseas, in other states, or in a location where they will eventually seek employment.
Assignments within courses	Faculty will create courses to insure that students have choices in assignments.

This vision focuses on creating a College of Education that produces, places, and sustains well-prepared educators capable of making decisions and crafting rich educational experiences for students in their charge. These competent professional educators will have the knowledge base, skills, and experiences to participate fully in creating educational systems that respond to the needs of citizens in diverse situations, including the metropolitan community we serve.

This vision requires the College to adopt a *paradigm shift* that calls into question the basic assumptions of higher education as an instructional delivery system, as well as the university's traditional model of knowledge production. The faculty of the college believes that *we are prepared to examine and change the basic structures of the College and University to implement this vision.*

This vision incorporates the following specific key value orientations.

Value Orientations

- ❖ **Transformation.** This orientation aims at transformative learning – the enlargement of the student's understanding and capacity for it. It aims at the liberation of the student's potential, which entails a pedagogical process of drawing out (education as *educare*) rather than solely putting in. In particular, this orientation implies an enlargement of one's capacity for independent thought and judgment.

- ❖ **Value.** This orientation is premised upon the recognition of the intrinsic value of both knowledge and students.
- ❖ **Responsibility.** This orientation asserts that students are, in part, responsible for their own learning and growth, a responsibility they share in concert with their professors.
- ❖ **Holistic.** This orientation views the student as a multidimensional, multifaceted being with intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, physical dimensions entailing both individual and group diversity and plurality.
- ❖ **Active Learning.** This orientation suggests that learning and growth are not passive but active and dynamic processes.

Mission

The mission of the College of Education is to develop highly skilled, knowledgeable, and creative teachers and other educational leaders through high quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional development programs. These programs are grounded in professional standards of excellence and contemporary research reflecting experimentation, innovation, accountability, and are informed by the wisdom of professional practice. The College of Education is committed to continuous improvement through assessment, inquiry, reflection, and lifelong learning. The College's mission is consistent with the University's student-centered mission that promotes integrated learning, discovery and engagement, celebration of human diversity, a disposition of respect for individuals, freedom of expression, and community engagement.

Strategies for a Learning Community for the Future

Within the next five years, the College of Education will design a comprehensive academic environment that enables faculty, in cooperation with community partners, to design and implement a learning model that places students at the center of their learning. Supported by committed scholars and practitioners advancing knowledge and delivery systems, students will be prepared to assume successful professional roles in a diverse and changing society. The College of Education will replace its teacher- or faculty-centered model of education with a **learning-centered paradigm**. In addition, the College will actively **engage** the community to build responsive community partnerships to insure integrated service, research, and learning. The College of Education will continue to embrace and celebrate the **diversity** of its learning community. In particular, it is committed to achieve greater representation of faculty, staff, and students of color within the College. **Assessment and Evaluation** will ensure that the College meets and exceeds standards as it positions itself on the path to become a great college of education. Lastly, **technology** will drive and facilitate every aspect of the learning environment. The following framework provides an overview of these strategic perspectives.

Learning Paradigm

The College of Education will design a comprehensive academic environment that enables faculty and community partners to design and implement a learning model that places students at the center of their learning.

- *Students will be at the center of their own learning.* Students will be active collaborators in creating their own educational environment and participate in the planning process. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Faculty will facilitate student research/projects and support students by sponsoring periodic college-wide presentations or publications. These activities should be faculty sponsored but student led and organized around different themes such as urban education or civic engagement.
 2. Faculty will develop a more holistic approach toward learning so that students from different backgrounds can find themselves or something about their interest areas in our programs. This would encourage and support students toward more active learning and acceptance of responsibility for their own learning.

- *Faculty will design and implement the learning model.* Faculty and clinical practitioners will design learning methods and environments to foster student responsibility and offer rich educational opportunities. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Increasing the communication and dialog in the college
 2. Faculty will share work that they are doing and engage the community of their peers in reflection on their work. Specific activities include: rotating brown bag lunches in the departments, monthly Saturday seminars, a 20-minute faculty research spot at College meetings, and a college-wide professional development series of workshops with invited speakers.
 3. Support and encouragement for team teaching and other true collaborative classroom efforts that cross departmental and program boundaries will be provided.

Examples of Potential Strategic College, Unit or Departmental Goals

- The College of Education FYE course will be structured to create a template of learning objectives for students' educational careers.
 - a. The spring semester 2005 will be used to pilot this activity
 - b. The fall semester 2006 will begin this activity for all College of Education FYE courses.

- The Department of Educational Leadership will initiate the inaugural graduate student research symposium. This symposium will be held in May 2005 and will include graduate student course projects, theses, and other research activities that would be appropriate. The following year the other departments will make this a college-wide activity by expanding the symposium to include undergraduate

research initiatives.

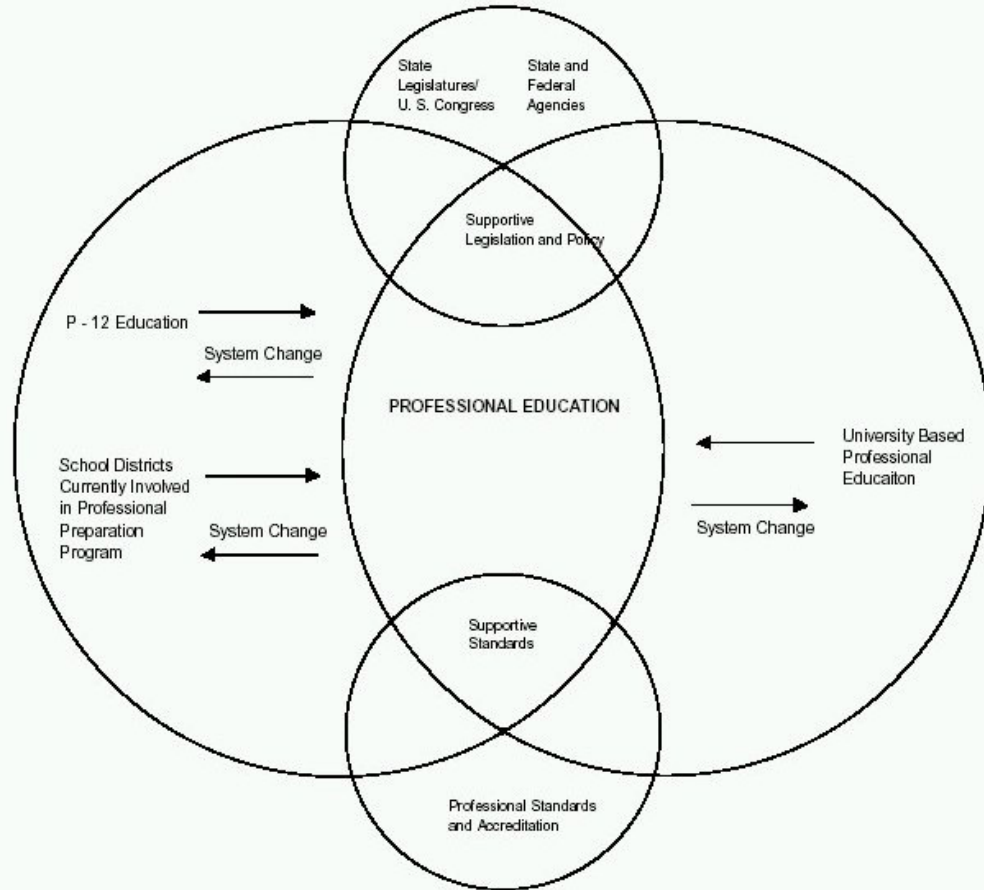
- A College of Education working conference on the topic of “The Learning Paradigm” will be held in April 2005. The result of this conference will be a monograph publication of conference papers. This conference will become an annual event focused on issues critical to professional and teacher education.
- The agenda of each College of Education faculty meeting will include time for a 20-minute faculty summary of individual research or other professional activity.
- By 2008, 20 members of the faculty of the College of Education will be classified as Clinical Faculty.
- Education faculty and staff from other area colleges and universities will be invited to participate in activities to build awareness and understanding of the College’s learning paradigm.
- Beginning in 2005-06 academic year, the College of Education will host annual activities for its partners to build awareness and understanding of the College’s learning paradigm.
- During the 2004-05 academic year, the College of Education will begin to develop a faculty rewards program that will recognize and reward faculty for implementation of the College’s vision in their own professional work.

Engagement

Figure 3 illustrates that engagement is an imperative for a learning environment committed to creating the best scholarship, research, and teaching to serve our students and our community. The engagement of the College will be characterized by its responsiveness, collaboration, respect for its partners, coordination, accessibility, and integration. It will tailor its delivery to meet individual, agency, and community needs. The idea of engagement challenges the College of Education to develop programs that:

- Provide academically challenging programs of study
- Facilitate active and collaborative learning
- Encourage student-faculty interaction
- Provide enriching experiences
- Foster a supportive campus environment
- Form learning communities
- Give special attention to disengaged students (e.g. transfer students)
- Foster a sense of social responsibility
- Engage students and faculty in community service
- Provide mentorship to students and colleagues

Figure 2



Imig, D. G. & Switzer, T.J. (1996). "Changing teacher education programs: Restructuring collegiate based teacher education." In J. Sikula, T. Buttery & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: A project of the Association of Teacher Educators*, (2nd.ed.) (pp. 213-226). New York: Macmillan Library Reference.

- *Students engaged in community- centered learning.* The off-campus learning opportunities for student development maximize professional training as well as growth in thoughtful and concerned citizenship. Specific goals for implementation include:
 1. Building service learning options into courses and programs.
 2. Hosting conferences and workshops conducted by community partners, students, and faculty could be targeted to local and regional community interests and needs.
 3. Giving special attention to disengaged and alienated students to facilitate engagement with the university. Careful consideration should be given to non-traditional, transfer, and under-represented students.
- *Faculty engaged in responsive collaboration.* A hallmark of the College will be its respect for its partners exhibited through active collaboration, coordination, accessibility and integration. Specific goals for implementation include:
 1. Create partnerships with other educational institutions and governmental agencies focused on defined community problems, such as children's health, disadvantaged student development, early childhood intervention,

technological development of current teachers, mentoring, and tutoring relationships.

2. Developing an Expert Network Exchange. The college has taken several steps in this direction but it is especially important to promote the areas of expertise of new faculty to insure that they become community resources.

Examples of Potential Strategic College, Unit or Departmental Goals

- The College of Education will engage with its partners by actively soliciting their input, suggestions and participation in ongoing program development and review.
- The College of Education will engage with its partners by offering the college's resources and expertise to support the partners' continuous improvement efforts.
- The College of Education will engage with its partners in early intervention programs to help identify and prepare potential students.
- The College of Education will engage with its colleagues across college and departmental lines within the University of Toledo.
- The College of Education will engage with potential college partners by working toward greater ease of meaningful transfer.
- The College of Education will engage with potentially disengaged students by identifying multiple or alternative points of entry into teacher training, professional training, and graduate programs.
- The College of Education faculty will engage in current research and will engage students in cooperative research projects.
- The College of Education will identify and promote opportunities for students to engage in community-centered learning, including service learning, off-campus, and international experiences.
- College of Education students will take informed, active roles in organizing their own programs of study.
- College of Education students will participate in service or community-centered learning experiences.
- College of Education students, both undergraduate and graduate, will participate in workshops and applied research projects targeted to local and regional community interest and needs.
- College of Education advanced students will assist with mentoring new students.

Diversity

The College of Education embraces, works to develop, and celebrates the diversity of its learning community. We conceive diversity in terms of values, process, and goals, entailing Self-Reflection, Dialogue (active listening, narratives, personal experiences), and Active Learning (observation, action research, exposure to and participation in diverse communities). In a pluralistic democratic society, the issue of diversity includes:

- (1) Teaching individuals from all socio-cultural backgrounds,

- (2) Teaching about people from different socio-cultural backgrounds, and
- (3) Teaching how to critically analyze socio-cultural differences that affect schools and society.

The dignity and worth of each individual will be recognized within a spirit of community that nourishes and develops itself through celebrating the uniqueness of individual learning. In addition, it is important to do whatever is necessary to achieve greater representation of faculty, staff and students of color within the College.

- *Individuals will be challenged by personal and professional growth experiences in a diverse and global community.* Students will experience different social and cultural settings and ways of thinking to promote respect and appreciation for other traditions and ethnicities and to promote self-exploration and personal growth. They will explore and develop a pluralistic worldview as well as an understanding of the global community.
- *The College will create learning opportunities and experiences that will be developed for students to support:*
 - a. learning about how gender, social class, and ethnicity have influenced their own educational experiences.
 - b. experiencing different people and environments within their programs of study and within their course work.
 - c. integrating knowledge of how American society, our history, our schools, and our culture have been shaped by multicultural and pluralistic influences.
- *Faculty will affect student learning through a culture of risk-taking and exploration in a diverse, global community.* The faculty will facilitate a dynamic curriculum that explores the boundaries of growth and learning in a global context, embracing socio-cultural and ethnic differences. The dignity and worth of each individual will be recognized within a spirit of community that celebrates the uniqueness of individual learning through:
 - a. exploration of how diversity influences our own teaching and interaction with students.
 - b. recognition of the communalities in the human condition.
 - c. an updated look at our own social and educational identities.
 - d. an investigation of how our individual identities are related to the composition of our college faculty, staff, and students.
 - e. the creation of lines of communication within the college and within the institution so that ideas can be shared in an environment of respect and safety.
 - f. encouragement of faculty and students to listen to others as the first step in this process.

Examples of Potential Strategic College, Unit or Departmental Goals

To increase the number of under-represented groups in the College of Educations teacher education programs, the College will work with Toledo Public Schools to create a “grow our own” program beginning with junior high school students that actively recruits and supports students from under-represented groups to become teachers and education professionals and to enroll in our College programs. During 2004-05 a group will be formed to develop this program and make contacts with our PK-12 partners.

During 2004-5 the College will develop partnerships with existing University programs like EXCEL and Latino Initiatives that recruit and support under-represented students in meeting their higher educational goals at the University.

The College will work with other educational institutions in the Northwest Ohio region to recruit increased numbers of under-represented groups into graduate programs in the College.

As part of the review of graduate education at the college in 2004-5, options for the delivery of graduate education will be explored and developed to support and meet the needs of more diverse groups of graduate students.

During 2004-5 the College of Education will review its hiring procedures to increase the number of under-represented groups in all positions, all categories of faculty, staff, and administrative. Search committees for positions will include members of past committees who have been successful at bringing under-represented group members to the College.

The Camp Adventure program will continue to be supported with the goal of increasing the numbers of students placed in international summer placements.

Student teaching opportunities in various socio-cultural settings will be developed for example in Hispanic or Native American communities.

International experiences for students and faculty will be developed. The College has committed \$10,000 to support international/intercultural research and professional development by faculty.

The Foundations of Education Department has made commitments to send a faculty member to teach for a semester in one of the University Studies Abroad Consortium countries for the 2004-05 and the 2005-06 academic years.

During the 2004-05 year, the College will develop a faculty interest group of faculty members interested in international or intercultural teaching and learning experiences. Special funding opportunities that support international and intercultural experiences will be explored by this group. In addition, international /intercultural faculty efforts should be supported and recognized as meritorious.

The importance of second language learning will be stressed for students and for faculty in the College.

Assessment and Evaluation

As the College of Education implements its learning paradigm, assessment will become more important to both faculty and students. Students designing their own learning will increasingly need to demonstrate that they have met or exceeded the criteria that demonstrate achievement. Assessment data will be used to evaluate College success, quality, and goal accomplishment. In accordance with the imperatives of the College's learning paradigm, assessment should be understood in terms of self-improvement for students, faculty, and the institution. The primary focus of all assessment activities will be on formative evaluation.

- *Students will assess and evaluate their learning plan and success.* Students will demonstrate that they met or exceeded program criteria and achieved the specific learning and developmental outcomes of their individual plans of study. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Students will develop individual goals to actively engage in using on-going assessment for self-evaluation purposes. They will engage in continuous self-monitoring and improvement.
 2. Student assessment and evaluation will include development of basic numerical and information skills along with a focus on conceptual understanding of the contents and processes of evaluation and assessment.
 3. Students will develop an awareness of their own individual differences in style and areas of expertise, reflection, and how to seek assistance.

- *Faculty will assesses and evaluate learning.* Faculty will design processes that drive quality, learner success, and outcome measures that demonstrate College quality and effectiveness. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Faculty will create and utilize multifaceted ongoing assessment and evaluation of individuals, departments, programs, and curricula. The focus of assessment will be on its formative nature. It will provide faculty with the data to take responsibility for program and student outcomes.
 2. Assessment and evaluation will be done in a non-threatening supportive environment for colleagues and students. This includes material and time support for reflection, risk taking, and thought.

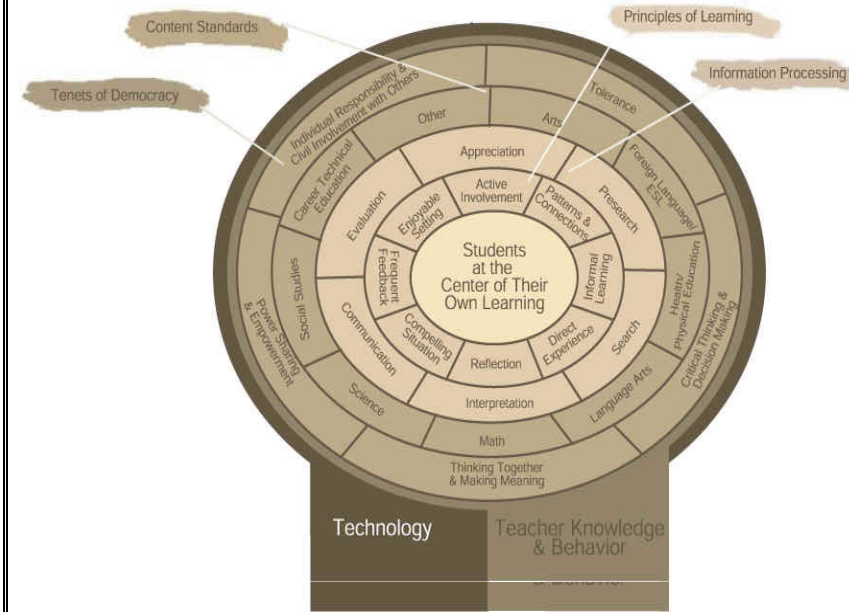
Examples of Potential Strategic College, Unit or Departmental Goals

- All programs in the college will use the Electronic Assessment System (EAS) to document student learning outcomes and professional dispositions in their respective program areas.
- The College will assess the level of preparation of their upper division students in the core areas of reading, math, and science reasoning through periodic administration of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP test)
- The College will also assess the level of preparation of their upper division students in the core areas of reading, mathematics, and writing using the Praxis I: Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST).
- The College will assess student content knowledge through the administration of the Praxis II Specialty Area Tests and the Principles of Learning and Teaching Test (PLT).
- The College will assess beginning teachers' classroom performance assessment through the administration of the Praxis III: Classroom Performance Assessment Test.
- The college assessment coordinator will gather periodic data on undergraduate and graduate student satisfaction and involvement, and retention and job placement rates.
- The College will produce yearly assessment reports that document student learning within the college and in each of its programs and that detail the changes that have been made to curricula and services to facilitate student learning and faculty learning.
- College administrators will use assessment data in planning and resource allocation decisions.

Technology

As figure 3 illustrates, information technology is a facilitator of quality education. Technology is conceived as a means of enabling and facilitating student learning and development. It is a tool for active learning, inquiry, and self-reflection. The College of Education will create a technology rich environment that enables students and faculty to optimize learning and integrate technology throughout the curriculum.

Figure 3



Switzer, T., Callahan, W & Quinn, L. (March, 1999). *Technology as facilitator of quality education: An unfinished model*. Paper presented at Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education. Retrieved June 14, 2003, from <http://www.intime.uni.edu/model/modelpaper.html>

- *Student learning will be enhanced by technology.* Students will benefit from a teaching environment that exploits the power of technology as a vital learning tool and process in support of the learning paradigm. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Students will develop and master basic information processing skills with a focus on how technology can facilitate learning-centered educational experiences.
 2. Courses and programs will provide time for student exploration and examination of these new tools.
 3. Students will be given the option of experiencing a full range of technological frameworks in their academic work.
 4. Faculty will provide a supportive and facilitating environment for students to explore and develop their technological skills.

- *Faculty will create a technologically rich learning environment.* Faculty will leverage technology as a foundational resource in their learning environment. Specific implementation goals include:
 1. Faculty and college administrators will develop a supportive environment for colleagues and students. This includes material support. Each department will designate a technology "expert" or someone proficient in technology who is available to advise faculty and to answer questions.
 2. Faculty will systematically infuse and integrate technology throughout the College's academic programs.
 3. Faculty will ensure that the learning environment incorporates a critical awareness of technology. The potential of both positive and negative impacts of technology will be included. It is a critical tool for learning but

- it may exclude, shroud, distort, etc., in the human and learning experience.
4. Technology will be developed to provide students with drills and practice software to help them pass licensing tests so that class work can focus more on analytical work and critical thinking.
 5. Faculty will use technology to link students involved in different types of classroom environments. Linking College of Education classes with classes in other countries would enable students and faculty to see different perspectives on how classrooms are organized and different roles that teachers and students play in classrooms.

Examples of Potential Strategic College, Unit or Departmental Goals

- All methods professors and department chairs will receive training in the InTime program and instructors will test its application in their classroom. Each methods professor will become competent in helping students learn how to integrate technology into their teaching and their discipline.
- All methods professors will become competent in the use of information technology appropriate to their discipline and will demonstrate and require student use of such technology during the methods course.
- All student teaching supervisors will assess the use of technology in their evaluations of the student teacher.
- A yearly computer grant program will be established for faculty proposals to upgrade their computer technology.
- The Carver Center will be refocused to deal more with the use of information technology by students and faculty and to serve as a support facility for students and faculty.
- Part of the Carver Center will contain the most current and innovative technologies as a demonstration site for use by faculty, students, and the community.
- Students will be required to demonstrate in their teaching portfolio their effectiveness in using technology in the classroom.
- Students in our administrator preparation will learn how to facilitate and support teacher use of technology in the school setting
- By 2007, 50% of classroom in Gillham Hall will be fully equipped with appropriate technology to promote quality teaching and student learning. By 2010, all classrooms will be so equipped.
- By the fall of 2006, basic instructional skills in the use of appropriate technology will be taught through the use of self contained instructional modules and assessed through performance testing.
- The COE will support the development of on-line courses and programs as appropriate to serve the non-traditional student
- When Gillham is remodeled, two classrooms will be created with technology necessary for two-way interaction using the Ohio fiber optics network.

Appendix A
Toward a Learning Paradigm --
The Philosophical Foundations of the University of Toledo
College of Education's Strategic Directions Document*

It is rather unusual for strategic directions documents to have, as a companion piece, a statement of the philosophical underpinnings that have driven the development of the plan. At The University of Toledo College of Education, as we developed the plan, we soon realized that a common philosophical framework was driving our work. That philosophical framework is best seen in the vision statement adopted by the college. That statement reads:

**Individuals at the center of their own learning in a rich intellectual environment
characterized by choice**

We decided to craft our strategic directions around the vision statement.

This vision statement has become the SIGNATURE statement for The University of Toledo College of Education. The statement itself is an interconnected, seamless concept. It can, however, be explored in its distinctive parts, while keeping in mind its basic unity.

Students at the center of their own learning

The basic premise of the signature statement is the presupposition that human beings possess **free will**. We are **meaning-makers**. We are not passive products of our environment; we engage in the active construction of the meaning of our experience and possess the capacity to transform the environment in accordance with meaning. We quite literally need to make sense of the world, to construct meaning of our experience (Popper, 1979). Therefore, we are predisposed to make choices.

From this perspective, students do not passively adopt or conform to what they are presented in the instructional environment. Students exercise free will; they choose to learn what is relevant and meaningful. They may momentarily conform to some idea that is meaningless to them as a means to an end that they do find meaningful, like “cramming” for a test in order to achieve a grade that they judge as relevant to their

*The original version of this concept paper was written by Dr. Dale Snauwaert, Professor and Chair of the Department of Foundations of Education in the College of Education at The University of Toledo. His original concept paper has been shortened and edited to serve as the philosophical underpinnings of the Strategic Directions document prepared by the College of Education. The College of Education expresses its appreciation to Dr. Snauwaert for allowing us to modify his document. The original document prepared by Dr. Snauwaert can be found on the home page of the College of Education under Resources. People interested in a more complete statement of the underpinnings of the vision statement are encouraged to read the full version of the text by Dr. Snauwaert.

future success. From this perspective, no one ever seeks to understand that which they find irrelevant and meaningless. To learn is to make sense of the world, to construct meaning. Thus, education can be conceived as a process of the enlargement of both one's understanding and one's capacity for it. It is what John Dewey, for example, referred to as growth (Dewey, 1916). For growth to occur the educational experience must be centered in the student's interests, experience, meaning-making.

Within a rich intellectual environment . . .

The above perspective calls for a shift from an instruction to a learning paradigm. At the core of this shift is a movement away from thinking about education as the delivery of instruction to conceiving it as the production or facilitation of student learning. The former focuses on inputs, the latter on outcomes. In the learning paradigm the central educational practice is the construction of learning environments within which students can grow and learn (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

The key, then, for what characterizes a rich educational and intellectual environment is the linkage between the student's own interest and constructed experience, and the disciplines of knowledge.

If we are meaning-makers, then education should provide us with the skills and understandings necessary to more readily and richly make sense of the world. Human beings have invented the disciplines of knowledge as a means to that end. From this perspective, education is a process of exploring the **logical structure of the disciplines of knowledge** (Bruner, 1965; Gardner, 2000). The structure of a discipline constitutes its basic logic in terms of the questions it asks, the methods of inquiry it employs, and its standards of validity.

Through exposure to the structure of a variety of disciplines, one acquires the frameworks of representations that each discipline employs to make sense of the world and the ways of thinking that inhere in the logical structure of the discipline (Bruner, 1965; Gardner, 2000). To undergo education is then "to learn to see, to experience the world in a way otherwise unknown, and thereby to have a mind in a fuller sense (Hirst, 1973, p. 98)." Thus, from this perspective, a rich intellectual environment is one wherein the student engages in the disciplines as structures of thought and understanding. They are lenses through which we understand and interpret the world.

At the core of an education based in the logical structure of the disciplines is **inquiry**. Student participation in the processes of inquiry central to the structure of a discipline is necessary for the understanding of that structure. This approach suggests that student learning is best produced through active investigation and exploration of questions and problems framed by the logical structure of the discipline(s).

A crucial, often overlooked, form of inquiry is moral discourse. Such inquiry is essential, especially for those who will assume leadership positions in the society.

Democracy is not merely a political system; in its broadest meaning it constitutes an ethic. Democracy is a system of rights premised upon the *logic of equality* (Dahl, 2000). Its core is a fundamental belief in moral equality, a belief that *all* human beings possess an equal inherent dignity or worth.

The two basic rights of a democracy are: liberty and political self-determination. The right to liberty entails the freedom to conceive and pursue one's own conception of the good life (consistent with the equal rights of others). The right to self-determination entails government by consent, which involves the right to political and legal equality (including the right to representation) and concomitant rights, such as rights to freedom of expression, association, due process, etc. As moral equals, the democratic ethic requires that we are tolerant and respectful of the rights of others. This imperative requires students to understand the rights and duties inherent in democracy and be capable of making inquiry-based judgments concerning those rights and duties (Dahl, 2000; Freire, 1998; Gutmann, 1999; Held, 1987; Snauwaert, 1992).

Another aspect of developing a rich intellectual environment is experience outside the college classroom. The richness of the educational experience is a function of the degree to which the student can directly experience what they are abstractly exploring in the disciplines. A deep and extensive interconnection between the college and the world is called for. A dynamic interchange, running in both directions, between direct experience and disciplinary exploration is a key factor in enlivening the learning experience.

In addition, given economic, cultural, and political globalization and the multicultural fabric of the social world, a rich intellectual environment will also incorporate both understanding and experience of cultural diversity as well as the emerging nature of a transnational society. We live in a world characterized by complex political, economic, and cultural interdependence. The educational environment must reflect the international and transnational character of the world we now live in (Berger, 2002; Boulding, 1988; Held, 1995, 1999; Hertz, 2001; Huntington, 1996; Nussbaum, 1997; Reardon, 1988).

In summary, a rich intellectual environment is one characterized by disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding integrated with opportunities for meaningful experience.

Characterized by choice.

The disciplines entail learning how to make educated choices. One such choice is what to study: what questions to ask, what methods to use in order to investigate the question, what background knowledge is necessary to pursue the question. The same is true for experience outside the college. A rich array of potential experiences connected to the student's intellectual and professional interests must be made available in the environment outside the study of the disciplines. The richer the range of choices for study and experience made available to the student, the richer the educational environment.

Thus, how the student navigates the intellectual landscape is based upon choice, but one structured by the logic of the disciplines and the nature of the problems and interests that define the disciplines. Student choice is thereby structured in the nature of knowledge itself. (Hadot, 2002; Hadot & Davidson, 1995; Jaeger, 1943; Marrou, [1948] 1982)

Educational Purpose and the Democratic ideal

The signature statement does not explicitly articulate educational purposes; however, such purposes are implicit in it. These aims can be broadly understood as democratic. The educational purpose consistent with the ideal of democracy is *liberation*. The democratic ideal rejects education as a means of shaping or molding in favor of an education that liberates the mind of the student. The aim of a democratic education is to empower the hearts and minds of students so that they are able to think critically; engage in independent inquiry and judgment informed by knowledge and understanding; and tolerant and respectful of the rights of others. At the core of this ideal is the mental capacity and disposition of rationality. The basic capacity to be developed in a democracy therefore is rational judgment. This ideal in turn is consistent with the best of the liberal education tradition (Arendt, 1961, 1963, 1992, 1994; Chomsky & Otero, 2002; Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1999; Jaeger, 1943, 1953; Maritain, 1943; Scheffler, 1981; Snauwaert, 1992, 1993, 2001). Thus, student choice becomes a logical part of our vision statement.

Conclusion

It is our hope that this brief explanation of the thinking behind our Strategic Directions document, will provide you with some grounding for the recommendations made in the document itself. The two documents need to be read as companion pieces to fully understand the belief structures that drive the UT College of Education. A Strategic Directions document is, of course, never completed. It is our intent to review the document each year and make decisions about the directions the college is going, how successful we have been in achieving our goals, and how do we need to change in responses to an ever changing social, political, and economic environments.

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Appendix B
College of Education
Strategic Planning Committee

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Dr.	Thomas	Dunn	Professor, Ed. Psych
Dr.	Mary Ellen	Edwards	Professor, Theory and Social Foundations
Ms.	Peggy	Fritz	Interim Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies
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Dr.	Virginia	Keil	Interim Associate Dean
Ms.	Brenda	Lanclos	Director, CORE
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Dr.	Sakui	Malakpa	Professor, Special Education
Mr.	David	McClellan	Toledo Association of Administrative Personnel, TPS
Dr.	David	Meabon	Committee Chair, Assoc. Prof., Higher Education
Dr.	Gail	Mirrow	Superintendent, Ottawa Hills Schools
Ms.	Mary	Morrison	Director, Institutional Development
Ms.	Amy	Morrow	Undergraduate Student
Dr.	Ron	Opp	Chair, Ed. Leadership
Dr.	Ruslan	Slutsky	Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education
Dr.	Marcia	Suter	Interim Assistant Dean & Chair, University Libraries
Dr.	Thomas	Switzer	Dean, College of Education
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