

DePauw Student Government Report
Enriching Intellectual Life at DePauw:
A Student Response to President Casey's Six Points of Intellectual Engagement
January 12, 2009

I. Introduction

This fall, the inauguration of President Brian Casey at DePauw University received a great deal of attention, as it was only the nineteenth time that the 170 year-old University welcomed a new president to campus. Behind the banners, large medallions, and ceremonies, however, there was something of even greater importance taking place. President Casey started a conversation, which asked the DePauw community to truthfully analyze itself as an effective institution of higher learning by posing six questions to the faculty at the annual faculty institute before the start of the 2008-2009 academic year. Later in the semester, the students decided to draft their own report, as it was soon apparent that student opinions did not necessarily align with the faculty's on all of the issues.

The student responses to each of the six questions posed by Dr. Casey are included in this report. While many of these issues have been addressed by past student governments, this is the first document to encompass all the issues. This report is the result of the efforts of the Student Government Executive Council as well as the Student Cabinet. Together, these twenty-one students were able to gather and analyze the opinions, critiques, ideas and suggestions of over 500 colleagues. Student opinion was gathered by hosting five open forum discussions, distributing surveys on the specific questions posed by President Casey, and facilitating small breakout groups to brainstorm proposals to consider as answers to the questions. For some of the questions that dealt with highly researched issues like Winter Term, for example, recently collected data (i.e. the 2007 Social Programming Task Force report and survey results on Winter Term) was used in conjunction with current student opinion to formulate suggestions for President Casey and the Board of Trustees to consider.

And while not all students are in agreement over the best possible course of action to take in response to all of the questions, the members of the DePauw Student Government Executive Council and Student Cabinet are confident that this report offers suggestions that represent the majority of student opinion.

The Charge

Though the students were never officially charged with addressing President Casey's six questions on intellectual engagement, the DePauw Student Government Executive Council and Student Cabinet felt that it was necessary to make the student voice separate and distinct from that of the faculty and staff of the University. Students, therefore, adopted the charge given to the faculty and formulated this report as a response to President Casey's six questions.

Future Direction and Action

The typical DePauw student is only a student of the University for four years. It is understood that many of the suggestions made in this report will not be implemented or materialized in one student's tenure at DePauw. But it is the hope of this 2008-2009 DePauw Student Government Executive Council and Student Cabinet that the suggestions offered in this report not lose credence in the years following our graduations.

It is our hope that the conversations that helped shape this report be followed by action. Talking about the issues is important, but most of the questions raised by President Casey in his charge to the faculty are not new ones. While future conversation is necessary to most successfully answer some of these questions, it is time to take action and start implementing the suggestions made in the reports.

It is also important to note that amidst all of the open forum discussions and survey results, a common sentiment among students is that DePauw's intellectual life is strong. Students are excited about the potential to improve this already strong academic foundation and will remain dedicated to this mission.

II. Reports on Specific Questions

Question 1: Liberal Arts versus Career Preparation

Major Themes

Most of the discussion of the idea of a liberal arts education versus career preparation at DePauw focuses on the Career Center and the five programs of distinction (PODs): Media Fellows, Management Fellows, Science Research Fellows, the Honor Scholar Program and the Information Technology Associates Program (ITAP). Students identify these campus entities as highly valued career/post-graduate preparation hubs working within the framework of a broader liberal arts education environment. Both students enrolled in the programs and those who are not enrolled agree that each of the PODs offer benefits to not only the students enrolled in them, but to the University at large. Many students cite their acceptance into one of the PODs as a deciding factor in their college selection process and their decision to attend DePauw. Students recognize, however, that the PODs are not all the same and a discussion of their merits must recognize these differences. More generally, students make it clear that the knowledge and experience gained from internships and career preparation opportunities held during their undergraduate tenure are invaluable supplements to the more traditional classroom education. But there is some discontent from students not enrolled in any of the programs about a lack of advertisement of the programs to prospective students and the rarity of allowing lateral entries into the programs once students arrive at DePauw and learn more about each of the programs. In addition, most of the students not enrolled in one of the PODs opine that the internship, networking, and career finding resources made available to students in programs like Media Fellows, Management Fellows and Science Research

Fellows far exceed those offered by the Career Center. This has the potential to put those students enrolled in one of these PODs at a distinct advantage in comparison to their peers not enrolled in these programs. All students agree that the resources provided by the Career Center in helping both students enrolled in the PODs and those who are not find top tier internships and jobs at reputable companies need to be addressed immediately as they are currently inadequate. Students also report that the services provided to students looking to attend post-graduate professional schools such as law, medical and dentistry school do not fully meet students' needs. Some students mention that because of this disparity of post-graduate and internship resources and opportunities created by some of the PODs vis-à-vis the Career Center, it seems as though the University is saying that students enrolled in certain PODs are the only ones consciously preparing for "life after DePauw."

Strengths of the Career Preparation

As stated earlier, there is a clear admissions advantage in offering the PODs as many students cite acceptance into one of the programs as a main reason in their decision to attend the University. Students enrolled in the PODs make it clear that because of the educational, research, and internship experiences offered by the programs throughout their undergraduate tenure, they have a distinct advantage in securing post graduation employment and educational opportunities in comparison to applicants from other universities. At DePauw, students express the sentiment that the competitive atmosphere created by the PODs as honorary programs allow students enrolled in them to establish a group of friends outside of their core group, which in turn provides for a richer educational and social experience. This distinction also allows students to "tell a story" in interviews for various post-graduate positions which seems to catch the attention of potential employers and graduate schools. Students in the PODs also cited the value of having a focus or area of study outside of their major that is not otherwise offered by the DePauw curriculum. Most importantly, students highly value being able to apply what they learn in the classroom to "the real world," through their career preparation and internship experiences. Likewise, students cite the importance of being able to take what they learned from their internship and career preparation experiences and apply it to class discussion and learning. Many students identify times in which they were able to gain valuable insight during class discussion because of the comments made by a classmate who had hands-on experience in the topic of study. Students identify this link between the real world and the classroom as an important and enriching supplement to the overall mission of providing a well-rounded education to students attending a liberal arts institution.

Problems with the Career Preparation

The original charge issued by President Casey identified the potential problem associated with students "considering professional aspirations before they have had a true chance to explore all their intellectual options." Yet, from the discussions, it seems that the process of considering professional aspirations and exploring intellectual options is a simultaneous and supplementary one in a DePauw student's educational experience. In

fact, students express a strong desire for further career preparation resources to be made available as they cite the inability of the Career Center to meet students' needs in their search for competitive and desirable post-graduate opportunities as a major concern. All students notice the disparity in internships and job opportunities offered to students in the PODs compared to the opportunities offered by the Career Center. Students who are not in the programs of distinction did not necessarily express a desire to be a part of them; however, they did express a great need for more resources to help them find and focus on their future careers.

The current procedure of admitting students to PODs before students arrive at DePauw allows for the potential to place some students in programs that are not necessarily the right fit. This has led to low retention rates in some of the PODs as well as the exclusion of students who are not made aware of the programs' existence prior to arriving at DePauw.

Proposals to Consider

1. Defer admittance into the PODs for a majority of students until the second semester of freshman year or the first semester of sophomore year. This would alleviate the problems with the current lateral entry procedures and would allow ALL students to become better informed on what each program offers and demands. This in turn would allow for higher retention rates in the PODs.
2. Make the internship and career resources offered by certain PODs equally available to all students, regardless of their enrollment in a Program of Distinction. This can be most effectively achieved by revamping and revitalizing the Career Center.
3. Revamp/Revitalize the Career Center. Many of its current services, like the job fairs and post-graduate fairs are cited as ineffective in helping students achieve their post-graduate goals. More resources and information on a wider variety of reputable post-graduate career options are desired. Currently, student groups like pre-law, pre-med, and pre-dental seek funding for graduate school visits, etc. from Student Government. Services like these should be provided by the Career Center, not the student activity fee.

Question 2: Winter Term

Major Themes

Before the students held their first open forum meetings, it was widely known that a majority of the faculty considered the current Winter Term (WT) format with on-campus courses, off-campus study and service, and independent study and internships as incompatible with the intellectual mission of the University. Many students were also aware of the faculty's frustration with WT in what many of them considered a three-week period that lacked consensus and common goals. Indeed, these sentiments were made official in the faculty's parallel report on the state of intellectual life at DePauw. Students, however, overwhelmingly disagree with the faculty's position. In fact, it was out of fear

of the potential elimination of WT that inspired students to call for the writing of their own report on the state of intellectual life of the University. Over the course of five weeks, which included three open forums and the analysis of past surveys, information was gathered from students for this section of the report. Some common sentiments concerning WT arose from the students who participated. Students viewed WT as a reflection of DePauw's serious commitment to non-traditional and experiential learning. In general, students agreed with the definition of WT as it appears on the DePauw website under *Introduction to DePauw's Winter Term* as "a time of adventurous, intellectual exploration in an atmosphere with a reduced emphasis on grades."¹ The same webpage also identifies ten broad goals of WT that the faculty have for its students.

Through our discussions, it is clear that the students share these goals for WT:

1. Students may study or work intensively on a specific problem or on a topic of significant personal interest and educational merit.
2. Explore a new subject.
3. Work collaboratively on a project with faculty members or professionals who have similar interests.
4. Study a problem or topic from a cross-disciplinary perspective.
5. Learn and practice a new skill
6. Participate in a valuable group experience in a work, performance, or educational setting.
7. Explore a potential career or experience a field of work related or unrelated to one's field of study.
8. Learn about oneself in relation to potential majors.
9. Work and live with others while providing a community service
10. Participate in an alternative community experience

It is the students' belief that these goals are by and large achieved, but it is also clear that WT in its current form is not perfect in its structure or implementation. In order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of WT accurately, however, we have divided this section into the areas corresponding with the current WT structure: 1.) on-campus courses and 2.) off-campus study and service, independent study and internships.

Strengths and weaknesses of on-campus courses

Surveys were separately administered in March of 2007 to upperclass and first-year students. One-hundred and thirty-seven upperclass students completed the survey in addition to 117 first-year students. Sixty-six percent of upperclassmen either agree or strongly agree that their first on-campus WT course was a valuable learning experience in conjunction with 78 percent of first-years. Sixty-four percent of upperclassmen feel that their WT course "provided intellectual exploration through experiential learning" despite the fact that only 35 percent of upperclassmen believe that their on-campus WT course challenged them academically. Comparably, 41 percent of first-year students believe that their on-campus WT course challenged them academically.

¹ <http://www.depauw.edu/admin/winterterm/>

In survey results and discussions, students acknowledge the increased role that alcohol plays during WT, which may be attributed to the decreased academic rigor of offering solely pass/fail, not-for-credit on-campus courses. On the other hand, the decreased academic stress during WT, compared to the fall and spring semesters, allows for increased student interaction and personal growth. Students indicate that the educational and developmental opportunities offered during WT are highly valued and have significantly impacted their overall college experience both inside and outside of the classroom. While most students agree that WT on-campus courses seem to be unregulated in terms of difficulty and intellectual engagement, all believe that these courses should be standardized and reviewed prior to being offered.

Not one student who participated in the open forums advocates for the complete elimination of on-campus WT.

Many students in the open forum discussions indicated that the unique experiential and educational opportunities provided by WT were deciding factors in their college decision-making process. Many students perceive WT as an indispensable opportunity to study and experience outside of their major or area of focus.

Strengths and weaknesses of internships, off-campus and independent study

While the Off-Campus Study department distributes surveys to all students who have participated in internships, off-campus and independent study, access to the results is limited. Through the open-forum discussions, however, we were able to gather opinions from the approximate 150 people who attended the forums. Students highly value and support internships, off-campus, and independent study as well as WT's overall mission to introduce students to "the world outside the DePauw bubble." The experiences that are gained from these opportunities positively impact the diversity and depth of intellectual discussions and engagement inside and outside of the classroom.

Students indicated that the ability to study and have an internship during WT is a major recruitment tool that persuaded many to come to DePauw.

Proposals to Consider

- 1.) **Keep Off-Campus Study, Independent Study, and Internships.** Off-campus study, independent study, and internships during WT must remain in its current form. Students who are unable to study abroad or participate in an independent study/internship for a semester/summer cite WT as their only opportunity to do so. All three experiential learning offerings are highly valued and considered irreplaceable elements of the DePauw experience.
- 2.) **Keep WT in January.** Some discussion focused on the possibility of WT being moved from the month of January to May. While some students noted that this would allow for them to enter the job/internship market at an earlier date, most

students agreed that a May term would only make student/professor burnout and lack of intellectual enthusiasm increase for the on-campus courses.

- 3.) **Give Course Credit for On-Campus Courses.** Changing on-campus WT courses from a pass/fail, not-for-credit system to a letter grade and credit system would likely address the issues of alcohol consumption and perceived lack of intellectual enthusiasm. While students acknowledge that professors value WT as a time to teach something that appeals to them, students recommended having some of the on-campus professors offer intensive for-credit courses as an additional option. These intensive courses would count as both WT and regular credit toward graduation. Courses that fulfill language, competency and group requirements are highly desired. This change in policy would also ease the issues associated with the numerous course requirements needed for graduation.
- 4.) **Standardize On-Campus Courses.** A common issue that was addressed in the open-forums and survey results was the fact that the WT on-campus courses are not held to consistent academic standards. The variability in difficulty and academic rigor creates an atmosphere of intellectual disengagement for some students placed in the less rigorous courses. The students recommend that all courses be reviewed more thoroughly by the registrar prior to being offered to students. Students feel that WT courses should be held to the same standard to which their semester courses are held.
- 5.) **Bring WT to the Community.** WT is a unique educational experience. Students consider offering classes outside of the traditional liberal arts selection as beneficial and something that sets DePauw apart from similar universities, which corresponds with President Casey's goal to make DePauw "one of the most vibrant intellectual and creative environments in the nation." Though students recognize that the University offers activities and co-curriculars outside of the classroom, we recommended that the work done during class time be shared with students and the community not in that class. Sharing student work and projects through required student-led presentations, workshops or exhibits at the end of WT is a way to broaden the intellectual engagement that DePauw strives to achieve.

Question 3: Creating a Common Experience

Major Themes

In his charge to the DePauw community, President Casey addresses the issue of common experiences and the potential of using the depauw.year1 program as a model for cultivating academic and social relations among upperclass students. After several open-forum discussions with students from a variety of academic and social backgrounds, it is clear that the phenomenon of decreased involvement in a shared intellectual experience does indeed exist as students progress beyond their first-year.

Strengths of First-Year Seminars and depauw.year1 in Cultivating Common Experiences

Upperclassmen and first-year students alike speak highly of the first-year seminar program and the corresponding depauw.year1 mentor program, asserting that such small group interactions make the daunting transition from high school to collegiate life more manageable. There can be no doubt that such programming has been successful in cultivating an intimate community among first-year students who are not yet familiar with DePauw and as it introduces them to a variety of intellectual and social communities. Furthermore, the engaging and unique first-year seminars provide students with a rare opportunity for unadulterated intellectual exploration; students participating in our discussions value the fact that the first-year seminars are, for the most part, independently chosen and not assigned.

Problems Extending Common Experiences beyond the First-Year

Upperclassmen, particularly sophomore students, speak of the difficult transition from the sheltered nature of the first-year community into the subsequent years. Many sophomores recognize newly developed feelings of isolation from classmates within their own year and unfamiliarity with students from other grade levels. The bonds cultivated within mentor groups break down after students' first-year as such interactions are no longer facilitated by mentors. Students also mention feeling preoccupied by academic constraints and concerns, such as selecting a primary course of study in their second year. Furthermore, many sophomores mention feeling significantly pressured to commit to an academic major when they felt altogether underexposed to the variety of paths and options available to them. The majority of students participating in our discussions cite the sophomore experience as one of the most disjointed within their collegiate careers.

Proposals to Consider

Strengthen the Foundation

1. Change the mentor program after the first semester to cultivate a more personalized (ideally one-on-one) mentorship with upperclass students during the second semester to discuss both academic concerns and address issues pertaining to DePauw's social life. Couple first-year students with upperclass students based on similar interests, for example, their extracurricular activities or major. Such partnerships would expand the first-years' network of interactions with upperclassmen and promote rapport between grade levels.
2. Hold retreats for each class each year organized by the color of the mentor group. (Each first-year mentor group is divided into one of six "color groups" upon arrival at orientation). While this may be somewhat idealistic, the concept of rekindling mentor group bonds after students have transitioned out of the First-Year Program indicates that there is interest in maintaining the mentor communities students so highly value during their first year at DePauw.
3. Junior and senior students joined together in voicing concern regarding the discontinuation of the first generation, posse scholar, ITAP, etc. seminars that

used to be held one week before the general student body returned to campus. All of the upperclass students interviewed cite this weeklong session as a central period of bonding — a rare opportunity to engage with their peers without distractions in the form of academic and extracurricular demands. Suggestions include reinstating these weeklong seminars, or even extending first-year orientation by inviting the entire first-year class to participate in such an endeavor before upperclassmen arrived on campus. Such programming would allow first-years to interact as a cohesive unit, bonding with others beyond the confines of small seminar groups.

4. *All-Academic Student Council.* Senior Julie Theibert is in the process of implementing a new program called All-Academic Student Council, which if successful, could develop into a unifying and common experience for DePauw students.

The All-Academic Student Council would act as a representative body of the students, coordinated by each major. Each discipline would elect 2-4 student representatives, with one of those students acting as the student department chair. All student department chair meeting would occur once a month to discuss general student concerns and ways to improve academic life.

All-Academic Student Council representatives would act as the liaisons between students and faculty/staff. They would also be a tangible student voice and opinion that could sit on certain committees based on the department's discretion. Not only would these representatives work alongside faculty and staff, they are responsible for the exposure of the major, listening and communicating student concerns (professors, time banks, suggestions for improvement, mobilizing student ideas), and planning interdisciplinary events. Within the current structure, there is no organized body to act solely on the academic concerns of student life, and this council would fulfill this need.

Other Suggestions

Regarding attempts to resolve the loss of class unity, second year students suggested the Sophomore Class Leadership Initiative, which is currently being run by the Leadership Interns, be expanded to allow more sophomores to take part and stay connected to their class. Such program expansion would also ensure that the class leadership initiative would continue year after year, rather than simply falling by the wayside when the current Leadership Interns vacate their positions.

Finally, senior participants strongly urged that DePauw University institute a summer reading program similar to the one currently executed by the University of Dayton. All first-year students enrolled at Dayton are assigned a book to read during the summer before they enter the undergraduate program. Throughout the year, the first-year students attend forums to discuss the selected book. Such a program could potentially be introduced to students beyond the first year, with each class being assigned a summer

reading. This unexpected proposal truly holds a great deal of potential to cultivate a “common experience” within each grade level. Professors could opt to incorporate the selected book into their own subject matter, tying their own course material to the discussions students would be engaging in out of class and encouraging intellectual engagement beyond the confines of the classroom walls.

Question 4: Group Requirements

Major Themes

There was a general consensus among students that the way in which graduation requirements are currently structured with the six groups and the W, Q and S competencies contributes to the academic exploration of DePauw students in conjunction with the University’s mission as a liberal arts institution. For many students, the breadth of the area requirements and the overall structure of the curriculum played a crucial role in their college decision-making process. Yet, once enrolled at the University, students feel that there are too many requirements. Students cite a “check-the-box” mentality as being more prevalent among the students than the feeling of taking classes in order to explore intellectually.

Additional Observations

- Students highly value the opportunity to double major despite having a difficult time completing all of the graduation requirements. Many students who double major or who have attempted to double major see the group requirements/competencies as an obstacle to academic exploration.
- Students who study the sciences feel as though the groups allow them the opportunity to “take a break” from their area of study to explore something different.
- Given the increased diversity on campus, many students feel as though a humanities requirement would be most beneficial in preparing students for real world experiences.
- Students find it hard to get into classes needed for them to complete their major or minors because students outside of the area of study are enrolling in high numbers to fulfill a graduation requirement.
- Group requirements force students to explore different academic areas that most find to be interesting and at times encourage some students to change majors/minors.
- Most students see a lack of consistency in the assigning of classes as Q, W or S courses. Most students do not see the need to maintain the Q, W, and S competencies.

Proposals to Consider

1. Keep all six groups and Q, W, and S competencies, but instead of requiring two courses to be completed in each group, require one course within each group to give students more freedom in their academic exploration — or — Eliminate the Q, W, and S competencies and encourage professors to incorporate the academic standard associated with these requirements in all of their courses.
2. Consider implementing a humanities course requirement (i.e. women, Asian, Black, gender studies course) to prepare students for a diverse world and workplace.

Question 5: Spaces for Intellectual and Creative Activities

Major Themes

The majority of students surveyed believe that the current offerings of social venues at DePauw University is inadequate in regards to providing all students with a non-greek environment in which they can congregate for both relaxation and intellectual engagement. While there are currently locations such as the greek houses, the Union Building, the Fluttering Duck, the Walden Inn, the Roy O. Café, and the Den that do offer a social atmosphere for students, the age discrepancies, locations, and physical layouts of these venues across campus makes socializing difficult for many students. Therefore, the student body advocates for the creation of a new centrally located social space on campus using the current structure of the Union Building or renovating other buildings on campus and building a new restaurant/café.

Strengths of Current Social Spaces on Campus

Students use the current social spaces on campus, which include the Duck, the Walden, Roy O. Café, the Den, the Hub, and the greek houses, on a regular basis. Other social spaces that are recognized by students are the common areas in dormitories with couches and televisions, along with the areas in buildings such as Julian that are dedicated to students of a specific major. Roy O. West is a popular venue that allows students to get coffee, food or drink, in an intellectually engaged atmosphere. The Fluttering Duck offers students a casual restaurant type atmosphere to go and watch television with friends. It does, however, close later in the evenings to the majority of the student body when it becomes 21 and over. The Walden Inn offers students a venue to rent and use for events like informal dances and speakers. The Den has some seating to allow students to study and purchase food. The Hub offers a large volume of seating, which allows students to have discussions during meals between classes and work. The fraternities and sororities offer a location for students to come and socialize with each other on a regular basis, oftentimes with a themed party for students. The strengths of these areas vary and each venue is used for different needs by different groups of students; however, one distinct feature they all incorporate is comfort. Each of these atmospheres is popular because of some degree of comfort that students find here, be it conversing with friends, the lighting, or comfortable seating.

Problems of Current Social Spaces on Campus

Students identified several concerns with the current distribution of social spaces on campus. The Union Building, which is the most central building on campus, offers little to no actual social venues. Currently there are areas to get food and to sit and eat, but at meal times this area is so congested and busy it is difficult to socialize. Popular social events like the Fluttering Duck close their doors to students under the age of 21 at a particular time, excluding a large part of the student body. Another main issue that students have with current social spaces is the lack of a centralized location on campus for gathering and hanging out with students, faculty and members of the community. The greek houses are home to the majority of large social gatherings, yet students are still calling for an additional social space where anyone can host an event/do homework/hang out regardless of greek affiliation. There are currently no locations on campus where this kind of interaction takes place. The largest social space for students to gather is the Walden Inn venue, but students feel that it does not provide for an atmosphere conducive to the kinds of events students look to host. Currently, the social spaces on campus do not allow for a central venue that would allow a large number of students to congregate at any time in a comfortable area for socializing or engaging in academic pursuits.

Proposals to Consider

There is a wide range of proposals that can be made depending on the amount of time, effort, and money DePauw University is willing to put into changes in the current social spaces on campus.

1. Create a new social space using existing structures on campus. Many students called for the renovation of the Union Building, because of its central location on campus and its current lack of student-oriented activities/offerings. Because students report only visiting the bookstore a few times a year, they recommend that the University move the bookstore currently located in the basement of the UB to the Walden Inn. There is a good deal of underutilized space in the Walden Inn Conference Center. Furthermore, students believe that the bookstore is most frequented by students when they are accompanied by their parents, who often stay in the Walden Inn. The Walden Inn's proximity to the Office of Admissions would allow for easier access by prospective students who visit the campus through the Office of Admissions. The vacated location in the Hub would then be the site of the new social space. Students made a variety of recommendations for this new space, the most prominent being some sort of small coffee shop or chain restaurant with comfortable seating, televisions, and a stage area that would provide for a variety of student events. Students also wanted an area that could be closed off for studying. Many students were vocal about the selling of alcohol here as well, but a similar number were against the same idea. This casual and adult atmosphere in a centrally located portion of campus would hopefully facilitate more relationships between students and faculty. Students also

mentioned that a new restaurant on campus, such as Buffalo Wild Wings, Panera Bread or Chipotle could fill this space.

2. Create a new social space through additional building and renovations on campus. The most popular recommendation was a Recreational Lounge/Café, which would serve as a meeting point for all students, greek and non-greek, upperclassmen and underclassmen, as well as staff and faculty and Greencastle community residents. There was concern that we do not have enough spaces for students to engage in the arts, *i.e.* spaces for poetry readings, art shows, musical showcases. Some students felt that this should be a new building, but many others felt that renovations to the Union Building or similar areas could be made to accommodate this lounge. Students advocate for the expansion of Roy O. West Café, to include new seating, a larger coffee and food vendor, and the removal of several of the book shelves for more seating/study space. Several students lobby for the creation of an outdoor social venue where the DePauw community could congregate for outdoor concerts and art events.

Question 6: Interaction- Time and Culture

Major Themes

Many students saw a relationship between this question on faculty-student interaction and the question concerning the student social space. Students report having the most positive class experiences when professors engage students both inside and outside of the classroom. In general, students note that the professors who live in Greencastle are more likely to engage their students outside of the classroom than their counterparts who commute. As stated in the report on the student social space, students feel that there are not adequate locations on campus for students and faculty to interact outside of class time.

It is clear from the open forum discussions and survey results that students value personal interactions with professors; however, students are wary about reducing the required faculty teaching load. Most students already believe that the course selection process is difficult enough to get desired/required courses. In addition, students report that the small class sizes are one of the main attractions that set DePauw apart from other universities. Students believe that a decreased faculty teaching load would result in increased class sizes and thus lower student-faculty interaction. Indeed, DePauw is a school built on a tradition and a standard of academic excellence facilitated by these very relationships. Students feel that if the faculty were to have a decreased teaching load, class sizes would increase and fewer professors would choose to live in Greencastle and thus decrease even further meaningful student-faculty interaction.

Proposals to Consider

1. On this issue students are almost entirely unanimous. Students advocate that the faculty continue with their current course load so as to maintain the academic rigor on which DePauw was established and to continue faculty involvement in the DePauw and Greencastle communities.
2. Students believe that if a suitable venue as outlined in the previous section were made available on campus, more student-faculty interaction would take place outside of the classroom.