

FROM THE DEAN



Dean Gary Sandefur

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Giving Back By Leading

university. To lead requires continuous learning, forming and reforming opinions, and acting on these opinions.

These thoughts were based on my belief that one of the most important things we do at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is to train the future leaders of our communities, professions, nation, and world. A very small fraction of the world's population gets the opportunity to obtain a college education at a world-class university. From this very small fraction come almost all of the leaders in the world. Anyone who has the good fortune to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison has the responsibility to give back to the world by being the best leader she can be in whatever setting she finds herself, whether it be a family, a circle of friends, a large multinational corporation, or a country.

Letters & Science TODAY regularly carries features that show our graduates' roles in shaping and reshaping the world. In this issue, we learn about graduates who have gone on to: advocate for their community in the state legislature; bring reading and education resources to Wisconsin students; help students to get a UW–Madison education; and lead efforts to commemorate 9/11 in New York City. These are just a few examples of how investment in a Letters & Science education provides major benefits to individ-

ual students and to society at large.

Many of the programs that we offer to undergraduate students in the College of Letters and Science prepare them to be leaders. The Writing Fellows Program, for example, provides juniors and seniors with the opportunity to provide feedback to other students on

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their writing. Providing feedback is a small but important step on the path to being a leader. The Undergraduate Research Scholars program uses junior and senior peer mentors to provide advice and role models for younger students who are trying to learn more about research and how to do it.

Each of these programs is supported in part by the gifts of alumni and friends of the college.

We also use discretionary funds provided by donors to support student involvement in activities that transcend the boundaries of our and other campuses, such as the Model United Nations, which gives students opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills.

I often joked with my students that I had selfish reasons for wanting them to be great leaders. At some point in the distant future, I would tell them, I plan to retire. My retirement will be much more relaxing if I am confident that whoever is running my community, country, and world at the time are people who excelled at leadership.

More seriously, all of us who are part of the Letters & Science community must remember that we are training the future leaders of the world. It is our responsibility to provide them with the tools that they need to be effective leaders and to insist that when the time comes, they accept their roles as leaders not reluctantly but with great enthusiasm and with a strong commitment to give back to the world by being the best leaders that they can be.

During my years as a professor I had the opportunity to teach thousands of students in my classes and to reinforce the importance of giving back to the world in return for the good fortune they had experienced. On the last day of each class I would talk with my students about the key elements of what they had learned in class and what I hoped they would do with what they had learned.

Toward the end of the last class, I would ask them to do three things after they left the university: 1) Continue to learn, especially about the critical issues facing our country and the world; 2) Form opinions on these critical issues; and, 3) Act on these opinions. I told them that no matter where they were on the various political spectra that one could envision, it was their responsibility to lead since they had been granted the privilege to obtain an education at a great

ALUMNI WEEKEND 2006

Celebrating Chemistry

The College of Letters and Science is focusing its 2006 Alumni Weekend events on the Department of Chemistry, featuring Open House Activities on Saturday, May 6, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.



UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

DRILL & KILL?

It Isn't the Language Lab that You Remember!

In September 2005, Letters & Science Learning Support Services (LSS) celebrated fifty years of service and technological evolution. LSS has been directed by Read Gilgen since 1981. The purple-clad Timothy “Bruno” Browning (MA '90, PhD '89, Slavic languages and literature) is associate director.

If you are having trouble placing LSS, think back to the language labs where you practiced the foreign language you were studying, hoping that your pronunciation was better than it sounded to your ears. Think back to the 16 mm films, slides, and videos that you watched in world language and culture classes. If you are of a more recent generation, think about the interactive CD-ROMs, Web sites, and other multimedia tools that were available in Van Hise Hall. All of these things, and more, are LSS.

Gilgen says that the technology assisting language learning alone has grown exponentially in just the last decade. “Instead of coming to a lab to listen to language tapes, students can download lesson materials and play them on their computers or portable MP3 players and iPods. The vast resources of the World Wide Web provide nearly limitless opportunities for instructors, who can use them in increasingly innovative ways. Today some of our language departments have hundreds of videos and DVDs. When I worked at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill in the 1970s, we had one copy of *Hawaii Five-O* dubbed in French!”

Advances in technology have changed the way that people teach, according to Gilgen. “Instead of spending time in a lab listening and repeating — students do that on their own now — they create PowerPoint presentations using video, audio and photos from all over the world. Students can chat online with native speakers in other countries. Wikis (server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser) and blogs help them learn collaboratively.”

To learn more, go to: <http://babel.lss.wisc.edu/>.

Undergraduate Ted Glomski, a third-year Chinese student, practices writing Chinese characters on a tablet PC computer.