

## **The MAL Program and the One College Initiative**

With its roots in the liberal arts and its commitment to developing and nurturing leaders for the community and the world, the MAL program stands firmly at the heart of the mission of Augsburg College. Through its concern for ethical leadership, its encouragement for its students to find their calling or vocation, and its rigorous standards, the program consistently seeks to live up to the central mission of Augsburg College. The program engages senior faculty teaching primarily in the day program to offer one or more courses in our program. Since its inception in 1987, the program has used full time senior faculty in the liberal arts as the core of its teaching efforts.

The MAL program is based on a liberal arts approach to leadership and thus the subject matter fully embraces the central curriculum of the college. Its interdisciplinary approach seeks to embody Augsburg's commitment to the liberal arts and its deep commitment to service, which is contained in the goals of fostering leaders who are ethical and committed to servant leadership and transformational leadership. It is a program in the tradition of liberal arts education that seeks to assist its students to become

seekers of knowledge and life long learners. A frequent comment that we receive from students who have completed the program is that they miss the lively classroom interaction and discussion.

The students in the program work in many occupations representing the full range of employers in Minnesota, especially in the Twin Cities. Many have responsible managerial and executive positions, enhancing Augsburg's reputation in the community. The MAL program fully engages the people who work in the community.

In addition, the ethnical and international make-up of the MAL student body advances Augsburg's goal of diversity. In a typical MAL class, one is likely to have students of diverse backgrounds who share their life experiences and also foster the College's commitment to diversity.

The concept of vocation or life calling is intrinsic to the very nature of the program, since students often come to explore further their future paths. Whether they are 25 or 45 or 55, they are asking: Where should I be? What is my calling? What should I be doing with my life? How can I serve?

A further link with the overall college is the fact that a number of students in the MAL come from the pool of alumni of the day program and the WEC program. It is not infrequent that someone will complete WEC at mid career and then transition into MAL.

At one time each new program, such as MAL, had to perform many services independently. That era is now past. With the development of an infrastructure that better accommodates non-traditional and graduate students, MAL has been mainstreamed into the recruitment and administrative structure of the overall college.

There are, however, the issues of culture and mindset which are at the heart of any organization. The structure of Augsburg remains wedded to the concept of a traditional age undergraduate institution even though in 2006 more non-traditional and graduate students graduated than undergraduates. To change the mindset and culture of an institution is difficult. Perhaps the biggest issue is that agendas are often defined so that everyone hears undergraduate agendas but not all are informed about the graduate agendas. At department chair meetings, for example, it is often the case that all issues or almost all issues pertain only to the undergraduate programs. The services also favor the undergraduate fulltime student even though he or she is no longer the major client.

Some would argue that Augsburg needs to be reorganized as a university with separate schools. Certainly many smaller institutions are divided into several schools. That issue may be less important than

changing the organizational culture so that the institution, regardless of whether it is a college or a university, is more inclusive of all programs.

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