The main focus of the Ohio Union during the 2002-2003 academic year was on the New Union Project. Beginning with the selection of the Feasibility team in October of 2002, key stakeholders and architecture and food service experts convened to explore the possibility of renovating or replacing the current union. The feasibility team met nine times to finalize a design concept for a new building based on information gathered from focus groups and surveys conducted with students, faculty, and staff. Once this information was gathered and a recommendation was sent forward to rebuild a new Ohio Union, staff from the Ohio Union and Student Affairs Facilities Planning and Support went out to present these ideas to student organizations, campus departments, and university committees. Support for a new Ohio Union was overwhelming, with consensus that a new student union is a necessity for university advancement of the Academic Plan (specifically to recruit higher ability students to the university).

While the process of visioning a new Ohio Union was occurring, we found it necessary to create and implement more programs to draw a more diverse student audience into the union. With more students attending programs at the Ohio Union, and exposing more people to the deteriorating building itself, we felt we would gain more support for a new building. New programs for graduate and professional students were created, as well as daytime programs for non-traditional and commuter students. The new programs for graduate and professional students were designed from feedback received that current programs were not meeting the needs of this group of students. New Place for Community Dialogue partnerships were developed with faculty members, as well as an increased number of late night programs offered in the Ohio Union. Overall, 88 total program initiatives were planned in the Ohio Union, with an estimated combined attendance of 8,270 students.

Since the Ohio Union/Student Activities manages both auxiliary and general funds, a new financial reporting system was established to better track finances. On the auxiliary side, the Ohio Union was able to profit in 2002-2003 from increased revenue and sales in the event services area. Over the course of the year, 9,279 events were held in the Union (336 student organizations hosted events in the building for a total of 5,511 events). The Ohio Union ballrooms alone were booked 237 times, for 1428 hours. These events, combined with increased conference business, enabled the Union to profit financially and exceed its sales goals for the year.

In the fraternity and sorority community, the Greek Life Standards of Excellence saw its second full year of implementation. As the culture begins to change for this community of students, we have seen in increase in academic performance. In spring 2003 alone, the
all-Greek grade point average was a 3.026 compared to the all Undergraduate average of a 2.952. Housing also became a focus, as the property management program was promoted through the success of the reorganization of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. Two additional fraternities, Phi Gamma Delta and Sigma Alpha Epsilon, signed on with the property management program this year. Students in the Greek community gained better understanding of diversity and their own prejudices when they attended the 1st Annual Vice President Bill Hall Greek Diversity retreat in February.

We made very good progress this year in strengthening our leadership and community service offerings. We enhanced existing relationships with community service agencies, and developed partnerships with agencies with whom we had not worked before. Project Community’s role in increasing agency and student use of the Community Connection Database has been instrumental in expanding our ability to connect students with direct service opportunities. A new alternative spring break program was met with overwhelming interest from students. While several new leadership development initiatives were instituted in 2002-2003 (QUEST emerging leaders program, student organization retreat package program, leadership training program for campus-wide committee chairs) we have also worked hard to lay groundwork for a large, integrated leadership institute that will take more form in 2003-2004.

A large amount of staff time was spent working with the Student Activities fee. As the student governments came forward with multiple proposals, members of our staff acted as consultants to assist with the creation of a proposal that met the needs of all three student governments. Its late approval in July of 2003 has provided a short timeline for implementation. Key stakeholders who will be affected by the activity fee implementation have already begun meeting to develop processes for allocation and to plan student events with fee money.