Connecting the Dots...Using a Campus-Wide, Web-Based Referral System to Centralize Student Information for Assistance, Persistence, and Crisis Prevention

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It is well established that retention is not a one person or one office project, but a campus wide endeavor. Five years ago, ACU created SOS, a web based referral system to promote collaboration among various units and establish a campus wide strategy for students at risk. This system joins faculty, staff, parents, and peers in a united care-giving network where at risk students can be proactively identified and connected with the appropriate resources. Since our presentation at the national FYE conference last year, we now have additional retention data which supports the effectiveness of the program.

With the tragic events at Virginia Tech last spring, we have come to a greater realization of the importance of our campus being better connected concerning our students. One of the summary points in the Virginia Governor’s report stated “although various individuals and departments within the university knew (about the student)...no one knew all the information and no one connected all the dots”. We now realize that not only is this program beneficial in helping retain students, it has the potential to be a preventive measure in helping the university stay informed with regards to particular students who may be exhibiting behaviors that cause concern...in other words, allowing us to “connect the dots”. While the ensuing national conversation has centered primarily on crisis management, almost no discussion has been about what can be done to share student information across the campus silos for crisis prevention. Student privacy issues must be respected; however, this should be in balance with concern for the institution as a whole.

This presentation will briefly discuss SOS, review the retention data, identify the challenges to communicating student issues across units, and then involve interaction and feedback concerning the tension between privacy issues and the need to share information.

Supporting the Frontlines: A Core Element for Providing Care to Students

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A student needing assistance goes to a faculty member regarding a personal crisis. Both individuals are in need of assistance and support, but neither is sure where to receive it. This dilemma faces most universities. Students in need fall through the cracks despite the numerous campus resources available to them. This ineffective structure is detrimental to the college student and the university as a whole.

This presentation will focus on how these dilemmas are solved via the development of a proactive and collaborative referral program. The development of this program has spanned five years and is currently ensuring that struggling students receive the support and services they need. We knew that caring for students was everyone’s business; therefore we included the entire campus in a community of care. Those in direct contact (faculty and staff) with students are pivotal in assessing and providing care to struggling students. A supportive structure for this community of care was necessary in order to address their fears, doubts, time constraints and questions.

This presentation will offer insight into the process of developing a web-based application (SOS, patent pending) to aid in meeting the needs of at-risk students and the frontline of care (faculty, staff, peers and parents) that assists them. Valuable lessons were learned in the development of this program regarding effective training and support for the frontline of care to become valuable “watchdogs” for struggling students. This presentation will be practical and interactive in nature, allowing for feedback and comments to help take this system to the next level of efficiency and effectiveness.

Analytical data will be presented to illustrate the program’s effectiveness to assist struggling students and increase the university’s overall retention.

**A Hybrid Approach to Holistic Education**

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Jamie Wyatt
The conference panel will be composed of four people who will speak to distinct aspects of the University College Program:

Haig Mardirosian, Dean of Academic Affairs, will tender an overview of the strategic call for the University College as part of the goal of American University to foster student-centered undergraduate programming while still fulfilling its mission as a complex, doctoral research university. He will outline the formative planning and collaborative thought that resulted in the design and implementation of the Program, and will review the remarkable assessment data from the first three years of the pilot program that has led to the understanding of the University College as a major tool in student retention, success, and satisfaction.

Patrick Jackson, the Director of the General Education Program, will discuss faculty development. Although the University College’s main focus is on the students enrolled in the program, participation in the program can also hold benefits for the faculty. As he has been both an instructor in the program and the overall coordinator of the program, he will speak to his experiences with faculty development from both perspectives.

Jamie Wyatt, Assistant Director of the General Education Program, will review administrative processes for coordinating the University College courses and marketing the program to incoming freshman. Specifically, she will trace the timeline, which begins in the fall semester prior to students’ admission to the first-year class including the matters of course and staffing selection, communications with incoming students, online application, scheduling courses, providing for specific teaching needs, and developing non-traditional learning spaces in residence halls.

Tiffany Sanchez, Director of New Student Programs, will discuss the role of the student mentors called Program Associates, as well as how they are selected and trained for their positions. Ms. Sanchez is responsible for initiating and conducting the highly collaborative recruitment, selection, and hiring process for the University College Program Associates.

"Who me? Read a Book? During the SUMMER?: How to Create or Improve a Successful Summer Reading Program

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Appalachian State University has had a summer reading program since 1996 and has hosted such authors as Eli Wiesel (Night), Lee Smith (Oral History), Tim O'Brien (The Things They Carried), Ernest Gaines (A Lesson Before Dying), Stephen Dubner (Freakonomics) and Barbara Ehrenreich (Nickel and Dimed). Every year, Summer Reading personnel at Appalachian State University field calls from across the United States and Canada concerning our successful program. Questions range from how to structure a beginning program to how to expand an already successful summer reading experience.

This presentation will attempt to address a number of the questions that have been brought to us over the years including: how to assemble an inclusive summer reading committee, how to ensure campus wide faculty/staff buy-in of the program, how to create appropriate book selection criterion, how to create and maintain an economically self-sustaining program, how to expand summer reading into the community (tie-ins with community colleges, high schools, public libraries and the community at large), how to promote the program through the necessary public relations efforts to support it, how to produce related instructional materials, how to imbed the book into the curriculum, how to recruit volunteers and how to effectively evaluate your program.

Summer Reading at Appalachian has had a number of obvious benefits to students and faculty, but it has also had surprising and unexpected rewards in terms of faculty/staff relations, positive community/university relationships and collaborations with our community college and high school. This program will give concrete, clear-cut instructions on how to replicate a similar program on your campus.

Students with Learning Disabilities: An Emerging Success Story

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This presentation will begin with a discussion of the representation of students with learning disabilities in higher education, with particular attention given to the fact that this representation has been rapidly increasing in the last few years. I will include graphic and visual representations to help illustrate this nationwide trend.

The specific requirements for classification in the learning disability category will then be discussed, so that the audience has a clear understanding of the typical characteristics of students classified in this category.

Next, practices in K-12 education such as collaborative teaching, increased accountability regarding students with disabilities, and more inclusive K-12 practices will be discussed as possible
reasons for increased success in higher education by these students.

Finally, I will discuss typical approaches taken by colleges and universities in working with students with disabilities, including the process of providing accommodations for these students in class. I will discuss in detail specific techniques and practices which have been shown to be effective in helping students with learning disabilities succeed in college. I will provide the audience with handouts containing literature, useful websites, and contact information regarding these recommended techniques and approaches. In general, most of my presentation will be weighted toward providing the audience with useful, pragmatic suggestions for helping students with learning disabilities succeed in higher education.

I will use a highly transactional approach to this presentation, in which I actively encourage audience questions and participation, and I will reserve 15 minutes at the end of my presentation for audience questions and discussion.

Strengths-Based Approaches to the First-Year Seminar: Current Research and Implications for Practice

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This session will focus on the successful implementation of a strengths-based approach to the first-year seminar. The premise is that awareness of one’s strengths, along with the knowledge to develop and apply those strengths to new situations or to overcome obstacles, gives students a foundation for succeeding in college. This foundation is both affective and cognitive; strengths awareness has motivational properties that can lead to increased engagement with the academic environment and thus result in student success, but it also has the cognitive capacity to increase a student’s range of intellectual behaviors that can be applied to the academic arena.

The session will focus on the strengths philosophy and its implementation in two controlled studies that have been recently completed. One study was of 200 at-risk first-year students at a public university randomly assigned to either a strengths-based first-year seminar section or to a control group section. The second study utilized 500 first-year private university students randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (a) a strengths-based first-year seminar that emphasized becoming more aware of existing talents, (b) a strengths-based first-year seminar that emphasized strengths development and application—the investment of effort into acquiring the skills and knowledge that would enable the talent to develop into a strength, and (c) a control group that
received no strengths-based programming until after the posttests had been conducted. Connections will be made for the participants between the specific strengths-based approaches and the outcomes that were assessed: engaged learning, academic self-efficacy, hope, purpose in life, and goal orientation. The main focus of the session will be on the best ways of implementing a strengths-based approach in the first-year seminar. Participants will experience a sampling of the most effective strengths-based activities and will receive materials for use and adaptation on their own campuses.

Providing Effective Personal and Academic Support for a Rigorous First-Year Program

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Babson College’s curriculum is designed in the three levels, foundation, intermediate, and advanced. The foundation program, which is the first two semesters, lays the groundwork in a variety of disciplines. These include Rhetoric, Quantitative Methods, History and Society, Arts and Humanities, Business Law, Statistics and Financial Accounting. Additionally, all of the students launch a business (with a loan from the college) in the spring semester as part of a year long introduction to business course. This intense first year provides students with many important skills that are continually developed throughout the next two levels of the curriculum.

Aside from a demanding workload in the first year, students are also encouraged to maximize their college experience by participating in many of the rich extracurricular opportunities Babson has to offer. As a result, balancing a rigorous academic and co-curricular college lifestyle is often challenging for first year students, which is why Babson has implemented additional support mechanisms to ease this transition into college life.

Examples of this multifaceted support infrastructure may be seen on many different levels and involving numerous campus constituents. To begin, students are presented with an array of professional administrative staff members to guide them through both academic and personal matters; these professionals include their first year Class Dean, a First Year Team within the Office of Academic Services, and First Year Seminar instructors. In addition to the professional staff members, peers also play a key role in the daily support of first year students; peer mentors assist with Orientation, co-facilitate a First Year Seminar section, and provide guidance on navigating the curriculum through mentoring a first year business class. Lastly, faculty members also serve as support conduits, imparting “real world” vocational support through an experiential entrepreneurship course, and participation in the First Year Seminar program.
In summation, this session will provide a comprehensive look at Babson College’s first year program and support infrastructure, including information on: curriculum pedagogy, the rigorous workload, personal and academic support mechanisms, and assessment measures.

**Moving From Study to Sustained Action**

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The first presenter will describe Bakersfield College's Foundations of Excellence (FoE) campus study approach (done in collaboration with California State University Bakersfield). It led to seven thematic action plans. The next two presenters will explain the research-based collaborative process being used by faculty, staff, and others to move from the thematic action plans to actual change for students. The last two presenters will reflect on the value of this approach and continued research that can enhance its benefits and inform other colleges/universities.

Dr. Mildred Lovato, Vice President of Student Services and lead administrator for the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) campus study, will describe the general approach used for the FoE study and
selection of action themes.

Dr. Bonnie Suderman, Dean of Learning Resources and Information Technology and former Assessment Coordinator will describe the development and use of CLIPs (Communities of Learning, Inquiry, and Practice) on campus over the past three years. In her role as Assessment Coordinator she coordinated this effort on campus.

Dr. Helen Acosta, Communication Professor and Lead Faculty for the FoE implementation teams, will describe her experience as a CLIP member and why this approach is appropriate for FoE action teams. She will describe how the CLIP process is being adapted specifically for the FoE action teams.

Dr. Beverly Parsons, Executive Director of InSites and action researcher during development of the CLIP process under a National Science Foundation grant, will comment on the guiding principles of effective CLIPs. She will explain how other colleges can access online learning modules to set up CLIPs on their campus.

Dr. Betsy Barefoot will comment on the national value of the CLIP process to complement the current approach of the FoE campus study.

Each presentation will be 7 minutes, allowing 25 minutes for Q&A with session participants following the presentations.

**Implementing a Faculty Mentorship Program for Students With Disabilities**

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Realizing that faculty engagement and involvement are keys to student success in college, and also realizing that the transition to college can be especially difficult for students with disabilities, the presenters developed the Faculty Mentorship Program (FMP) for students with disabilities. The
The goal of the FMP is to enhance the learning experience for students with disabilities by assigning faculty mentors to each student participating in the program. These faculty mentors meet with students on a regular basis and assist students in dealing with the complexities of the academic experience at the university. This one-on-one involvement with faculty members gives students a sense of belonging to the university community and a better understanding of the academic expectations of students at the university.

Specifically, the FMP seeks to do four things for students involved in the program:
1. Personalize the university experience for students with disabilities;
2. Assist students in understanding and meeting the academic challenges and expectations of college students;
3. Connect the departmental major to future occupational goals; and
4. Inform students about requirements of students majoring in the faculty member’s department, as well as student clubs, organizations, and internships available to students with that major.

The presentation will focus on the reasons for the FMP, the process for beginning the FMP, and the benefits of the FMP for students with disabilities. By the end of this presentation, attendees will understand the need for such a program and know the personnel and resources involved in implementation. Additionally, the results of qualitative and quantitative research regarding the effectiveness of the program will be shared.

**Career Counseling as an Effective Element of First-Year Student Retention and Transition to College**

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During the 2006-2007 academic year, Baylor University’s Dept. of Career Counseling saw 806 students in 2,025 individual counseling sessions. Of those, over half were first-year students comprising 15 percent of the freshman class—at or above the rate of other comparable institutions. This presentation will address some defining characteristics of the student population we serve, a discussion of the career counseling process utilized at Baylor, and the ways in which this process can aid in student retention and transition to college. With their diverse, unique interests and experiences, it can be an overwhelming responsibility for students of the millennial generation to make decisions about their future. Career counseling provides the resources and structure necessary for students to begin making independent decisions.
Baylor’s process of career counseling begins with an intake session in which the student meets individually with a counselor to discuss his/her identifying needs, interests, personality, values, and strengths, laying the foundation for making lifelong career and personal life decisions. Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Newly Revised Strong Interest Inventory in the second session give students a tangible view of their personality and interests providing a range of options to research. During the third session, student and counselor discuss and develop a plan of action based on career and major areas the student has chosen to consider. Research indicates when first-year students participate in institutional programs and services designed to enhance their success, they are more likely to persist. Further, students’ satisfaction with such programs has been proven significant in their motivation to persist. Through an anonymous pre-test/post-test assessment, Baylor students have consistently indicated an increase in their confidence in returning for the following academic year as well as a decrease in stress and anxiety levels.

B.E.A.R.S. – A Transition Program for First-Semester College Students with Disabilities

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Several schools from around the country have instituted transition orientation programs for students with disabilities to attend prior to their first semester in college. In an effort to make lasting connections with students and help guide them through their first semester, the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation at Baylor University decided to begin the B.E.A.R.S. Program (Building Excellence, Advocacy, and Resilience for Success) for students with disabilities to take as a one hour elective course during their first semester at Baylor.

The main objective of this program is to help our students tackle many of the problems they will face as they begin their collegiate careers. Additionally, an effort is made for the students to get to know one another, as well as the OALA staff. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, course topics include disability office procedures, talking to professors about accommodations; learning styles; study skills; time management; career counseling; maneuvering campus technology; campus resources; stress management; registering for classes; self-determination; and preparing for final exams. The class meets for one hour, once a week, for the entire fall semester.

A pre-program survey was administered at the beginning of the semester, and a post-program survey will be given at the final class meeting, in an effort to assess change of student feelings, attitudes, and perceptions of skills over the course of the semester. Additionally, the GPAs of the participating students will be collected following each semester for the next three years and
compared to non-participating students. Therefore, this study will be longitudinal in nature and each fall semester a new cohort of students enrolled in the class will join the study.

Seemingly Unrelated Experiences: Integrating the First Year and Institutional Leaders

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Students often enter college believing the intersection of living and learning is a complex series of seemingly unrelated experiences. Our belief is to take a progressive approach to ensure this intersection and its components are intentional. Four years ago a new general education curriculum was introduced that challenges this assumption. With specific attention to the First Year Experience the general education program required courses in “ways of knowing”, First Year Writing, and a linked cohort learning community in the first two semesters. Common books, films, and research requirements created an atmosphere of engaged learners that persisted beyond the classroom. A unique partnership between new student programs and general education faculty further integrated students into this learning community. Orientation groups are formed based on First Year Seminar enrollment. The Welcome Week service project becomes a semester long service-learning initiative. Resident Assistants in the freshman halls are required to read the common book and complete programs related to the First Year Seminar.

The focus of this session will be to highlight the process of building dynamic partnerships to create an academically rigorous yet seamless first year experience. Specific learning outcomes will include first year course formation, opportunities for collaboration, and a brief discussion on the importance of co-curricular activities in the academic life of the institution. The presentation will be taught through the unique partnership of the faculty fellow who is chosen to consult the Office of New Student Programs on faculty issues and programmatic initiatives pertaining to new students. This unique collaboration combines relationships that connect the faculty to co-curricular decision-making, not only offering opportunities for collaboration, but a common discourse in new student interactions. This year’s fellow and his counterpart will present on the partnership and how it has enhanced the First Year Experience of their students and continued collaboration between the curricular and co-curricular.

Taking It to the Streets: Extending a First-Year Reading Program to the Community

Katherine Powell
Berry College has had a successful first-year reading program for many years, and we have seen that common reading and shared intellectual experiences build community and encourage learning. In the summer of 2006, we invited local educational institutions and civic organizations to join us in a community reading program. By working together we hoped to:

• extend the impact of our program to the wider community
• bring a writer of significant stature and recognition
• strengthen connections among our organizations and between our organizations and the greater community

The result was “One Book/Many Voices,” a community reading initiative designed to encourage reading, spark discussion and bring the community together. The book we chose was I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou. In September, Dr. Angelou addressed approximately 4,000 students from Berry, two other local colleges, a local independent school, public high schools and middle schools and citizens from all walks of life in the community.

In addition to Angelou’s lecture, a variety of events and programs were planned to encourage the community to read and talk about the book and the issues it raises, including a town hall meeting on race, an all-day read of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, and a book discussion, party and viewing of the film adaptation of the book. Our local newspaper sponsored a writing contest for high school students and members of the community.

In this session we will consider the costs and benefits of extending a college reading program beyond the college and outline the logistics of selecting community partners, gaining institutional support, securing funding and building momentum. We will also share the results of our assessment efforts within the community and at our school.
First-year students of color often face a unique set of circumstances when they begin their college experience. This presentation will identify some of the challenges (i.e., low-income, first-generation, under prepared students) that may hinder academic and personal success in the first year. Institutional perspectives from both public and private historically black institutions will be represented. These representatives will discuss the rationale, scope, and outcomes of specific campus initiatives they have implemented to improve first-year student retention and persistence. Some of these initiatives include:

• Freshman college- an academic unit that oversees general studies, academic advising, and collaborates with Student Affairs to provide first-year student activities.
• Early alert and rapid follow-up systems used in conjunction with communications management technology
• Academic coaching- focus on individual student transition issues
• Strategies for developing inclusive learning environments

10-15 minutes will be allocated for questions and group discussion concerning the first-year experience for students of color

First-Year Civic Engagement: Ideas and Programs

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Civic engagement brings first-year students into active participation in their new environment and provides opportunities to link learning goals across curricula and co-curricula, college and community, theories and experience. American institutions of higher education share a mission to educate citizens for democracy and must help students develop the core skills they will need to exercise their moral and civic responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.

This roundtable will engage participants in a discussion of ideas and programs for first-year civic engagement. The conversation will be chaired by Martha J. Labare, editor for "First-Year Civic Engagement: Sound Foundations for College, Citizenship and Democracy", a new monograph, co-published by The New York Times and The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. The monograph has chapters by national leaders in higher education (incl. John N. Gardner, Betsy O. Barefoot, and Thomas Ehrlich) and 33 case studies. Gardner proposes that civic engagement brings re-newed idealism to the FYE. At the roundtable, three case-study authors will give brief descriptions of their programs' structures and strategies, to begin the conversation.

The monograph will be distributed at the conference (complimentary copies).

The roundtable's three case-study authors will represent diverse institutions -- 2-year, 4-year, research university; public, private. Authors have October 31 to arrange their attendance and offer participate. Names and institutions will be submitted for the program Nov. 1.

The session is proposed as a roundtable because the opportunity for all participants to discuss their ideas and questions is an important complement to the monograph. They will receive the monograph and take away extensive information, but the monograph should inspire brainstorming, problem-solving, and shared stories. We hope that beginning these processes at a roundtable at the conference will create connections for attendees that lead to more shared resources and connections.
Commuter Students Connecting to the College Before Classes Commence

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This proposed program highlights how Student Affairs connects with Academic Affairs in providing services for pre-enrolled students at a commuter college. Too often Student and Academic Affairs operate as two entities, separate silos that focus on making a clear demarcation in how they will impact students’ learning. However, the students come to the institution as a whole person, and for the most part, do not know that there is a difference in the areas of the college that provide a given service. Therefore, internal to each college, there needs to be a change in culture - one in which both Student and Academic Affairs share accountability for students’ development. This change should put the students at the center of learning and development, not the divisions. This can only be achieved through collaboration between Student and Academic Affairs from the first day students are invited to the college.

The presenters will explain how students are connected to an institution prior to starting classes. They will outline the two-day event to which new students are invited prior to the start of the semester at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). Freshman Assembly (FA) is held on the first day and Freshman Year Experience (FYE) workshops are scheduled on the second day. The purpose of the FA is to introduce the new students to the college community by inviting them to the institution to spend time getting familiar with the campus environment, while the FYE workshops are designed to provide information to students in order to facilitate their orientation to college life. Furthermore, after the workshops end, the students are invited to a light lunch with the president, the deans and seasoned faculty and staff members. After lunch, the students are advised and registered.

STEM STARS: Supportive Teaching and Advising Builds Relationships for Success

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Boston University’s Science and Engineering Program (SEP) is a two-year transitional program that provides enhanced academic support to students who are interested in STEM but lack credentials for direct admission into these majors at our institution. SEP’s status as a referral program is unique because it is part of a highly competitive four year university and SEP students complete their STEM degree at BU.

SEP’s success in retaining students in STEM derives from its coupling of academic advising and STEM instruction. SEP’s dedicated team of faculty and staff work together to create a tight-knot community that fosters student achievement and positions students for success. SEP’s Academic Counselor teaches a required freshmen seminar course and students see the Academic Counselor as a faculty member. This builds credibility and allows the Academic Counselor to know SEP’s students in an academic milieu. SEP’s primary faculty members are outstanding teachers who share their passion for their fields with their students. Senior faculty members teach introductory courses to ensure that the classroom experiences are exemplary. SEP’s faculty members share observations about student performance with one another and with the Academic Counselor so that academic warnings or other interventions can be made as early as possible. SEP students benefit from extensive connections to University support services including disability services, free tutoring, and stress management. The SEP community gathers regularly for social events and SEP’s faculty members maintain extensive drop-in hours that are well utilized. SEP recently received a National Science Foundation grant from the Scholarships for STEM program to enable SEP students to focus on their studies rather than on extramural work commitments.

Retention in STEM is a major national challenge and SEP addresses this urgent need by providing integrated academic enrichment and support to help students who might otherwise abandon STEM for other non-technical majors.

**Retention of Summer Bridge Program Students**

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Bowie State University has offered the Summer Bridge Program (SBP) for the past three years under the umbrella of the Model Institutions for Excellence Initiative. The program is offered to students who did not meet the University’s admissions requirement but exhibited the potential to be successful. Potential may be defined by the participant’s high school transcript and/or SAT scores. Upon recommendation and guidelines established by the Office of Admissions, students in this category are invited to participate in a rigorous six-week residential program. The program is designed to enhance their skills in Mathematics, Reading, and English. Additionally, participants are provided with college skills workshops that include time management, study skills, and reading. Analysis of their first year performance indicates that they are even par or better than regularly admitted students. Approximately, 91% of the students are retained for the sophomore year. It has been determined, however that approximately 75% of the admitted SBP students have significant difficulty during the first semester of their sophomore year as indicated by their GPA. Data collected has prompted the need to implement a summer program that will specifically target and address the issues and needs of rising SBP sophomore students. Students will be given the opportunity to catch up or move ahead academically and participate in enrichment courses. The latter will be determined by the needs of the students.

**Transforming Library Research in a Web 2.0 World**

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A great deal of pressure rests on the teachers of first year students to establish a foundation of solid research and writing skills during the first year so that upper division faculty can build upon these skills. This can be a challenge on larger campuses or if there is not one class that reaches students across the board. Another significant challenge is how to get students excited, or even remotely interested in something as traditional as their academic library, when the web and all its glitzy offerings already has their attention.

Methods to map the first year curriculum will be shared along with strategies to strategically integrate meaningful and engaging research and information literacy experiences. This presentation will also explore a variety of approaches to teaching these research experiences. A mixture of traditional techniques along with techniques that utilize cutting edge Web 2.0 technologies will be demonstrated. All of the examples that are shared have active learning components that put the student in control of their learning. Instructional examples that utilize blogs, wikis, online tutorials, and group work will be taken from the following first year courses at BGSU: English composition,
a critical thinking course in honors, University Success, and BGeX (BGSU’s values course taken by all entering first year students).

Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and to brainstorm other possible applications of the examples presented. They will also come away from the presentation with a copy of an open source application that was created at BGSU and used to quickly and easily build an online tutorial.

1st Semester Board Game: An Innovative Tool

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The freshman year represents a stressful transition from high school to college. During this time freshman learn to manage multiple priorities.

Through using the researched based educational board game: 1st Semester, this workshop will provide participants the opportunity to experience the first semester through the eyes of current and former college students.

The 1st Semester Educational Board Game was designed with one objective in mind: to get students talking about their expectations, assumptions, and concerns about their first semester of college. We developed all of our scenarios, pitfalls, choices, and other content from our long experience of working with students as teachers, professors, advisors, administrators, and parents.

This workshop will offer the participants tips to facilitate conversations spurred by the play of the 1st Semester Educational Board Game.

Since every student’s experiences and circumstances are different, we do not expect facilitators or discussion leaders to have the “right” answers to questions our game poses. Rather, we hope that playing the game will open doors for participants to explore how their own understandings of what happens at college might affect their choices during their first semester. A growing body of research dedicated to student success in the first semester – and its predictive value on graduation from college – strongly suggests that students who make good choices in their first semester will have a much better chance of graduating on time. Although that may seem like common sense, the high rates of attrition at most US colleges and universities suggest that even students who are well prepared academically, may need more help in navigating the critical first semester.

Supporting First-Year Students in Creating a Healthy College Lifestyle

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As students enter their first semester, they redefine who they are and begin forming habits that will affect the rest of their college career as well as the rest of their lives. Recognizing this, colleges and universities have been implementing programs to educate students and prevent unwanted outcomes. However, most college students not only feel invincible, but they feel that programs are not designed appropriately to address their individual needs. They often wait until major consequences arise from their poor health choices before seeking help. This is not beneficial practice for students, since according to the Center for Disease Control the best type of prevention is primary prevention. This means implementing prevention methods before diseases begin rather than doing damage control after the disease has already set in. In accordance with this practice, preventative measures need to be taken before students begin forming habits that may be detrimental to their health and success.

According to Barnes et. al. (2000) there are specific health habits that are predictors of academic success. These include sleeping habits, eating habits, hours worked, etc. In response to this, Brigham Young University’s Freshman Academy has developed a course centered around health habits in all five areas of health (physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual) (Hawks, 1994) in relation to academic success. Freshman Academy has also developed a survey along with an analysis system to help students become more aware of their health habits and their effects on academic success. The survey has been administered initially and will be administered additionally throughout the semester to give students feedback and identify areas for attention. The data collected from these surveys will also be used to further research studying relations between health habits and academic success. This presentation will discuss the development, administration, and initial results of this survey.


Learning experiences in contemporary higher education must be designed in ways that require students to use what they learn in courses to examine their own lives and the communities in which they participate. When most freshmen enter the university they are self-focused, surface learning oriented, and interested in doing the minimum needed to get the A grade they expect. They doubt that the things they learn at the university will actually relate to the decisions they face in their daily life. These issues are addressed through a problem-based learning course whose purpose is to engage freshmen in using what they learn from their general education coursework, about themselves, and in service-learning experiences to respond to the pressing social issues of poverty, diversity, education, health, and families.

Shea & Green (2007) question whether today’s college students have the ability and willingness to respond productively to these issues. Since students are coming of age in a society where bridging and bonding social capital, both essential ingredients for a healthy democracy, continue to decline (Putnam, 2000).

To form a conceptual base for understanding community building, students are assigned to read
Paul Fleischman’s simple parable, Seedfolks. This story demonstrates how community begins as individuals act independently and collectively to address problems. Then, building on Putnam’s concepts of bridging and bonding social capital, students, working in groups, are asked to consider their living situations and what they can to do individually and collectively to improve community. Finally, students analyze the local community based on their experiences in a service-learning assignment, typically in a local school setting ongoing throughout the semester. Working in groups, they are asked to propose strategies for improving social capital in the community. Students wrote brief weekly reflections and a final comprehensive reflection from which the data for this study was gathered.

A Model Approach to Early Intervention and Integration into University Life

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Early intervention is often the surest way to help students have a successful freshman experience. In addition to the change in academic demands on their time, students often face difficulties in building a social life, creating good roommate relationships, connecting to faculty, and integrating into college life (Light, 2001). Unfortunately, students are often able to hide or ignore their
difficulties. When problems surface, it is often too late to help them change course or develop new skills.

Through the use of an outlier study, the NSSE and Learning Goals responses of students whose ACT scores would predict high success, but whose college GPA’s did not meet that prediction were compared with those whose ACT scores suggested they would struggle, but whose college GPA was higher than expected. Through an analysis of students’ responses, clear differences between the groups on a series of issues related to expectation and purpose were identified. The results of this study were presented to peer mentors who worked with these students. The peer mentors identified a set of key themes representative of the discriminating items. After using the themes to guide them in their exit interviews with freshman, the peer mentors changed the issues into discriminating questions (Esplin, 2005).

After developing key questions, peer mentors began using the model during introductory interviews to help students begin thinking about characteristics, skills, and attitudes that could potentially tip them to perform better or worse than expected. During introductory interviews, students were asked to identify and discuss with their mentor one area in which they felt confident and one area they felt less confident. Throughout the semester, peer mentors attempted to support the students in strengthening their identified area. The peer mentors used the model again during exit interviews asking students to reflect on their experiences during the semester.

The Impact of Nonnative English Speakers in the University Classroom

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University campuses across the nation are becoming increasingly diverse. Higher education institutions must be prepared for students who differ from the traditional college student in terms of academic preparation, socioeconomic status, and cultural, linguistic, and family backgrounds, all of which affect familiarity with university life and the ability to succeed. Institutions must do more than increase numbers of diverse students, but must assess institutional climate to improve educational policy and practice that supports diversity. Students’ success or failure may depend on the institution’s ability to support their needs.

A diverse student body has educational value, enabling students to increase their understanding of different lifestyles and points of views, and providing them with a competitive advantage in today’s global society. An aspect of diversity on the American university campus that is sometimes overlooked is international students, who play a critical role in helping American students see beyond their borders. International students contribute a variety of perspectives in class discussions, provide international research and networking opportunities for faculty and universities, and often become supporters of American views on their return home.
The presenter will share the development process and results of a survey administered to university instructors at an institution where 50% of the students are international students who speak English as a second language. The survey included questions related to instructors’ views of ESL students’ language abilities, the impact of having ESL students in their classes, their efforts to help ESL students improve their English, their interest in training related to ESL students’ needs, and their ideas for helping the institution strengthen ESL students’ English skills. Survey findings have implications for how institutions can better support a diverse student body, and in particular, address attitudes and needs among faculty so that the teaching and learning experience is positive for all.

**Team Teaching in Learning Communities for a Non-Traditional First-Year Student Body**

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Brooklyn College is a non-residential, liberal arts, state-supported college within New York City’s most populous borough. Our student body reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of Brooklyn, and the majority of Brooklyn College undergraduates are the first in their families to attend a university. This learning environment poses significant challenges to fostering a sense of campus community among freshman, the successful navigation of freshmen through the transition to the college learning environment, and the appreciation of the value of a liberal arts education. Freshman Learning Communities have been a cornerstone of Brooklyn College’s effort to overcome these challenges.

Since they were first instituted at Brooklyn College, Learning Communities (LC) have resulted in
increased student retention and credit accumulation compared with non-LC students. Most LCs at Brooklyn College have consisted of two required content courses and an introductory composition course between which there were little or no intentional curricular ties (Linked-Course LCs) due to limited resources available to support ongoing faculty cooperation within LCs.

We will report on a college initiative to increase the integration of content and activities within learning communities by bringing experienced faculty together, providing a venue for LC-related discussions, and providing reassigned time to faculty to allow for planning and monitoring of LC curricula and activities. The presentation will include a comparative perspective of faculty who have been involved with both Linked-Course LCs and Team-Designed LCs, a discussion of the design process in one example of a Team-Designed LC, and the impressions of the freshman experience from students who completed a Team-Designed LC compared with those who were enrolled in a corresponding courses in Linked-Course LCs. Particular focus will be given to the assessment of the benefits derived from the recent allocation of additional resources to LCs.

**Problem-Based Learning as a Method for Teaching Information Literacy**

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This presentation will provide an overview of the case study including the methodology, key findings, and practical implications of the research conducted on a first-year seminar course focusing on teaching information literacy skills using problem-based learning. The presentation will begin by involving the audience to reflect on key problems and issues encountered in engaging first-year students. Information literacy will be defined followed by a brief discussion and history of PBL and its application in various academic settings. Intentional and self-directed learning will also be explained, especially as these concepts pertain to PBL. A discussion will follow on tutorial groups, the role of tutors and facilitators, how PBL can be blended with traditional lectures, ways to assess PBL instruction and a look at the strengths and weaknesses of PBL. A brief overview will follow on the Millennial Generation, which comprises today’s first-year students. The presentation will then shift to the case study, reviewing the problem statement, research questions and methodology. Key findings will be reviewed, with an emphasis on how PBL impacted student learning of information competencies and the implications for lifelong learning. Attention will be focused on the qualitative data, in particular, the “voices of the first-year students” and how they defined engagement, self-directed learning and what this generation of students expects from their instructors and especially, how they describe engaging pedagogy. The presentation will conclude with practical recommendations for designing a first-year seminar incorporating PBL. Questions and discussion will follow.
Strengthening the Connection Between High School and College Through a Common Reader Program

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This presentation will document a pilot research project that sought to assist students at a small, rural California high school to more effectively and smoothly make the transition from high school to college, with the added goal of encouraging greater college-going rates and student persistence once in college. The program was developed to build off and complement the Runner Reader Program, a “common reader” program as part of the First-Year Experience program at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). The project extended the Runner Reader Program to include senior classes of high school students at Arvin High School, essentially moving the beginning of the transition from secondary education to higher education from the first year of college to the final year of high school. Senior high school students read, in conjunction with their collegiate counterparts, “When the Emperor was Divine” by Julie Otsuka. The high school students were also provided with the same study guides that were developed for FYE classes at CSUB. Students in the program were made to understand that they were expected to complete the same work as their collegiate counterparts. To foster a stronger connection between high school and college, students from Arvin High School were also invited to participate in on-campus activities in conjunction with the Runner Reader Program. The author then visited Arvin High School where she presented a speech, answered questions, and signed books. Overall survey results will be first be presented. This will be followed by more a detailed discussion of the results gleaned from follow-up focus groups. Faculty/staff reactions will also be discussed. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the proposed expansion during the following school year to include additional high schools from the local high school district.
First-Year Students in the Public Sphere: The CSU, Chico Town Hall Meeting

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This session focuses on the CSU, Chico Town Hall Meeting, a program providing students with meaningful reasons for doing research, collaborating with peers, and locating themselves at the possible intersections between scholarship and citizenship. The CSU, Chico Town Hall was developed as a culminating event for our first-year writing course. The course syllabus, Writing for the Public Sphere, aims to help students understand public issues, conduct extensive research into public issues of interest to them, and share their findings with campus and community members.

The culminating event in a first-year writing curriculum, the THM responds to our campus President’s call for civic education. Our presentation includes all of the following: a short film providing conference participants with a picture of the Town Hall; a discussion of the writing curriculum that supports students’ development as scholars, writers and citizens; a detailed look at how to produce a Town Hall Meeting (with a packet that includes programs, invitations, planning calendars, conceptual dialogues about the relationship between the event and writing pedagogy, assessment tools, assessment reports, and a record of revisions to the Town Hall based on assessments); a discussion of a range of public sphere events used by or under construction in FYE.

This presentation argues that public sphere events change students’ experiences of their first year in college by changing their view of themselves. Surveys and student interviews following the Town Hall show that: 1) students feel taken seriously by campus faculty and administrators; 2) students discover their own passion around public issues and feel empowered to address those issues with policymakers; 3) students engage in conversations they view as “adult”; 4) students begin to see knowledge and commitment as related and particularly valuable facets of adult life.

Stress Management and Prevention with First-Year Students
This program reviews the major sources of stress in a first-year student's life including those that are academic, interpersonal, and emotional, as well as those relating to developmental issues, crisis, trauma, addiction, poor lifestyle choices, fears of failure, and family conflict.

Stress and anxiety issues are best addressed when they are prevented through proactive strategies, rather than treated after they are out of control. Interviews with students talking about the struggles will be shown on video. Several effective strategies that can be incorporated into the classroom, or into first-year orientation programs, will be reviewed.

**Innovative First-Year Advising Programs**

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Background  
Over the past thirty years academic advising has shifted in focus, scope, and delivery. What once focused on academics and course selection has developed into a holistic developmental process based on theory and research (Gordon, Habley, et al., 2000). This evolution has led academic advising for first-year students to occur in a myriad of ways: first-year advising centers with professional advisors, faculty advisors in major departments, faculty advisors through freshman seminars, and centralized advising within an advising center.

Program Format  
With facilitators monitoring time on topic and balanced group participation, colleagues will share what programs are working, what ideas are brewing, and what challenges are faced by their respective offices/institutions. The group will brainstorm innovative ideas, and discuss practical implementation methods necessary to create and sustain effective first-year advising programs at their respective institutions.

Facilitators must be ready to lead the group in conversation by posing compelling questions:
- What constitutes an innovative advising program? What innovative programs have you developed?
- How has academic advising adapted to meet the needs of the millennial generation?
- How is your institution providing developmental academic advising?
- How are you maximizing collaborations between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs?
- What types of program assessments are you utilizing? How do you know that they are effective?
- Have you implemented an academic advising syllabus?
- How are you measuring student learning outcomes?

**Goals**
- Gain insight into the successes and challenges that institutions are facing in regard to academic advising
- Discuss ways that academic advising can be infused into first-year experience programs
- Participants will generate ideas and techniques for creating new or improving existing advising programs

**Relationship to Theme**
Academic advising is integral to the FYE, contributing positively to students’ connection to campus, academic performance, and persistence toward graduation.

**Transactional Distance: Closing the Communication and Psychological Gap**

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The theory of Transactional Distance is a psychological construct defined by the perceived communication and emotional gap that exists between faculty and students. It exists in both the traditional classroom and in the virtual course room. Literature suggests a relationship between that perceived gap and student satisfaction and persistence of degree completion.

A key to managing transactional distance is managing learner perception. Research has established a strong relationship between student’s perceptions of the quality and along with the quantity of their interactions with their perceived satisfaction and performance in an on-line course (Picciano, 2002). Research into the effects of three types of course interactions; academic, collaborative and social, indicated that increased interactions with instructors and a collaborative interaction with fellow learners enhanced learning and active participation in class and created the highest level of performance and learner satisfaction. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).
Adult learners are motivated to learn when they understand how learning will help satisfy a present need or interest. Learning is life-centered for adults, not subject-centered. Adults learn best with personal experience and they are independent learners. Individual differences among people increases with age, therefore accommodations need to be made for learning styles, time, place, and pace of learning. Recognizing and addressing these specific needs will help to reduce transactional distance.

Whether in the classroom or virtual courseroom, small groups enhance socialization and help meet the psychological needs of acceptance, belonging and harmony. There is something in the human nature cries out for clarity and simplicity when faced with complex situations or goals. The challenge for teachers of adult learners is to find a way to unravel that complexity by clearly defining the steps necessary to achieve the goal. This proposed presentation will further develop the construct of transactional distance and will offer a variety of approaches that can reduce the perceived gap.

**Sustaining a Successful Peer Mentor Program**

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The purpose of this concurrent session is to disseminate strategies for successful organization, implementation and assessment of peer mentoring programs that advance teaching and learning for both first-year and upper-class students. The session will engage participants in an exploration of practices for creating a peer-mentoring program as well as organizing an academic course for peer leaders. Specifically, the session will cover marketing and promotion, hiring processes (applications, reference checks, group processing, interviews), workshops, faculty partnerships, online learning modules, course syllabi, active and experiential learning, strategies for advancing an appreciation for diversity, public service, and undergraduate research. In addition, sample assignments, course syllabi, agendas, readings, and assessments will be provided. The session will allow for open dialogue between participants and faculty and undergraduate student presenters.
Face-Time: Millennial Perceptions of One-on-One CSI Meetings

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Each year, nearly 5000 students at a Midwest University complete the College Student Inventory (CSI). Students that complete the CSI then meet with first contact professionals (FYE instructors, Hall Directors, FYE mentors, counselors, etc.) in one on one or small group settings to receive their results and information on resources specific to the needs identified in the CSI. It is known that millennial students like to feel special, receive personal attention, and desire face-time with professional staff. The CSI follow-up meetings play in to these millennial traits, and allow for professional staff to build relationships with students, contributing to greater retention of the student population. It is not known, however, how students generally perceive these meetings and if they are indeed perceived as useful by students. This quantitative study looks at how first year students who completed the CSI in the Fall 2007 semester perceive their follow-up CSI meetings with professional staff and the perceived value and contribution to their overall college experience. From the data collected, we can better understand student perspectives about the usefulness of the meetings and meeting content. In addition, future CSI follow up meetings can be adapted to meet the needs of the millennial student population.

This quantitative study uses a multi-variable analysis based on student responses on a Lichert scale regarding their CSI meeting experience. Independent variables explored included enrollment in an FYE course, ‘high risk’ status, and housing arrangements.

First-Year Programs in Tight Budget Times

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In the increasingly constrained budgets of higher education institutions, particularly those in public higher education, the pressures to cut programs is an ever-present reality. How do we preserve the programs for first year students that we have built? How do we know whether they are worth preserving? How do we convince others who control the budgets? How do we promote changes
when they are needed?

This round table will focus on these questions, polling ideas and solutions, effective and ineffective, from those in attendance. The round table chair and co-chair will supplement attendees’ contributions with examples from CMU and other institutions of a variety of approaches, presenting them in enough detail that they could be adapted and adopted by others. Dr. Riordan will use her background in organizational development to frame the discussion and to stimulate thought surrounding additional strategies. An underlying theme will be the use of evidence and so a discussion of credible evidence and how to accumulate, analyze and communicate it will also be part of the roundtable discussion.

Our aspiration is to have participants come away with at least three new ways to evaluate or bolster administrative support for their first year programs. The exchange of business cards will be encouraged at the close and a handout of resources for the evaluation of and communications surrounding first year programs provided.

Service-Learning: A Key Component in First-Year Experience

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Freshman Experience and Service Learning initiatives began at Chattahoochee Technical College in the fall of 2005. FX, as it came to be known, includes a cohort of students taking four courses together in the fall: Freshman Composition I, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Microcomputers, and COL 101 College Orientation and Success. The cohorts have 25-30 students taught by a team of 4-5 instructors. Some of the group stay together in the winter quarter taking three courses: English Composition II, Sociology, and College Algebra. Instructors first predicted the college orientation course would be the necessary glue to create the bond among the students; however, service learning seems, in reality, to be a more compelling component for the students. Faculty implemented many hands-on activities with the students, including service learning. Two major projects included collecting canned food, organizing it in the College student center,
transporting it to the Marietta Civic Center, sorting it among the community's contributions, packaging it, and distributing to 1200 needy families for the Thanksgiving holiday. The second major project in the spring quarter included working with the College's main community partner to prepare for and carry out their annual fund raiser, an Oscar Night event at the Cobb Galleria. The students did everything from painting banner poles gold to writing descriptions for silent auction items to signing in guests to acting as paparazzi as special guests walked the red carpet. A variety of research methodologies have been engaged to assess the program including surveys, focus group discussions, questions posed which required responses through artwork, written journaling, photo journaling and more. Service Learning appears to have a myriad of positive effects on students, instructors, and the cohort itself.

Learning Communities: A Fresh Approach to the First-Year Seminar

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The Freshman Seminar, which is the heart of the Learning Community program at Baruch College, provides a new approach to orienting freshmen to the experience of urban college life. Moving away from the traditional 10-week class focusing on college and community resources, academic strategies, social guidance and career directions, the freshman seminar for learning community students is built on a project-based model that incorporates all of these topics into a problem-solving team activity. Ultimately, the goals of the freshman seminar are achieved in an experiential, interactive way that meets and exceeds the goals of the program.

The first part of the presentation will take conference participants through the origins of how the model was developed, based on specific goals and desired outcomes. A detailed description of each of the five project options, and the students' creative development of their chosen topic will be discussed. We are hoping to have a DVD of the final project presentation showcase available.

The second part of the presentation will focus on the student leaders and their training and development for leading their learning communities through to successful completion of the projects. For many reasons, this aspect of the model was most gratifying to observe the development of student leaders who ranged from sophomore to senior ranking. Their new insights into project management, problem-solving, dealing with conflict and challenging personalities, have become an important and in some ways unexpected outcome of the program.
Transformative Learning: Using Experiential Education for First-Year Success

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CU Out There is a collaborative program designed by multiple departments in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and an off-campus University Extension Center. The program requires thirty-one conditionally admitted freshmen enrolled in the Early Success Program at Clemson University to participate in a variety of teambuilding, experiential activities, diversity and academic skills training, and interactions with faculty and staff. CU Out There occurs at an off-campus site over a four-day period in the summer. The goals of the program are to facilitate students’ personal, academic and social success during transition to Clemson, resulting in higher retention rates among the group. The program objectives all center on a transformative learning experience, where academic learning and student development are integrated. It provides conditionally admitted freshmen with the opportunity to face and conquer personal and group challenges, form meaningful personal relationships with others, and become more aware of their own self-efficacy. The program also improves students’ self-confidence, strengthens their communication skills, and helps them overcome biases about others. One year of the program is now complete and has shown outstanding assessment results grounded in learning outcomes, student engagement, and student satisfaction. Our presentation includes photographs, a brief group exercise and lecture, and group discussions that will provide presentation attendees with the ability to identify programs on their own campuses that support experiential learning approaches. These approaches, which include processing and reflection with students, can then be used to assist students in becoming transformative learners. The learning outcomes and programmatic objectives that were set during the design of Clemson’s program were far surpassed based on post-experience measurement. Additional longitudinal studies on participants’ retention and actual GPAs versus predicted GPAs are anticipated to further support these results.

Partnering for First-Year Success: The Bridge to Clemson Program

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Admission to public research universities has become increasingly competitive for freshman applicants. To increase access to the four-year institution, partnerships are being developed with two-year colleges that facilitate a seamless transfer. The Bridge to Clemson (Bridge) is a partnership with Tri-County Technical College that provides students with both an intentional first-year experience and an ongoing Orientation program that addresses both first-year and transfer needs. Partnerships such as Bridge require leadership, visioning, planning and assessment from both institutions to create and sustain optimal conditions for first-year student success. Because the missions of technical and community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions are distinctly different, joining forces to create an integrated and intentional first-year program that both helps students make a successful transition from high school to college and a successful and seamless transfer to the four-year institution requires a commitment to real collaboration among academic and student affairs administrators within and among both institutions. Because the emphasis at Tri-County is on learning and teaching, students are provided with the opportunity to develop a strong foundation that will prepare them for success at Clemson University. Participants will learn how these emphasis areas, combined with Flaga’s (2006) Dimensions of Transfer Transition (Learning Resources, Connecting, Negotiating, Familiarity and Integration) inform the Orientation and academic advising programs that extend throughout the first two semesters and simultaneously focus on the needs and development of the first-year students while preparing them for the upcoming transfer transition process to Clemson University.

Campus-Wide E-Portfolios: Introducing LiveText to the Entire First-Year Class

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This session will detail the steps taken to introduce LiveText to the freshman class for two consecutive years. In fall 2006, 64 sections of the FYE course UNIV110 were offered to 1,500 incoming freshmen. Standard resume and portfolio templates were created along with shared rubrics. After the semester ended the program was evaluated and improvements suggested for future semesters. Issues needing attention included faculty and student training, improved training facilities, increased communication and faculty buy-in.

In spring 2007 only 8 sections of LiveText were offered and faculty and students had access to increased resources. This semester was used to test new training materials and methods of delivery. Faculty buy-in continued to be an area of concern.

Fall 2007 saw another year of record enrollment with 1,650 incoming freshman registered in 68 sections of UNIV110. Over the summer intense planning and preparation took place. The result included:
- A 3 hour LiveText hands on training session for all faculty teaching UNIV110
- The introduction of Peer Mentors for UNIV110 classes. Mentors were charged with training students in LiveText
- Expanded web resources including a weekly faculty update
- Coordination of student training in several labs across campus
- Improved procedures regarding LiveText license packet distribution
- Continuous improvement and updating the shared rubrics used in the course

Unlike previous semesters, faculty participation for fall 2007 in using LiveText is currently at 80%. Participation includes distributing the LiveText packets, assigning the resume, portfolio and capstone projects, providing student training and/or using the shared rubric. Faculty are receiving increased support from the campus LiveText Coordinator and this figure is expected to rise. LIVETEXT is a positive force in building community, a sense of place, and a standard way to assess skill sets that all FYE classes are designed to impart to the students.

**Building and Deploying Remotely Operated Vehicles in the First-Year Experience**

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Coastal Carolina University aims to improve retention in Mathematics and Science through a pilot program to engage first-year students in an applied, investigative project in FYE to build and deploy Remotely Operated Vehicles to collect and analyze temperature, light, plankton-level and other data. These ROV sections will elicit interest in technology by engaging students in a multi-stepped, interdisciplinary problem-solving experience; by instituting experiential learning; and by building a culture of active learners across traditional departmental boundaries. Student teams are building ROV’s based on the MIT Sea Perch design. Various accessories include temperature and light sensors, plankton nets, and underwater cameras. Two launch days are planned for October when secondary school teachers and students will observe. In November CCU students will give a demonstration of building and launching for regional secondary science teachers. Desired outcomes of the ROV for FYE classes are increased retention at postsecondary levels in mathematics and science; increased student confidence to persevere through difficult courses by seeing the application of scientific concepts; greater self-esteem through service learning by engaging secondary students in math and science. The innovative significance of the program is threefold: applying experiential learning through technology; integrating disciplines in a planned manner and with consistent syllabary delivery; and creating an environment conducive to success in a student's chosen discipline. Preliminary data comparing ROV sections with the control group will be included in the poster section. As well, pictures and a film of step-by-step construction and launching will be included for viewing. Two of the most successful student ROV builders/launchers will act as presenters. Their names are yet to be determined.

Improving Conversion and Retention Through an Intrusive Advising Model

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The Advising Model at CSU-Pueblo is intensive and intrusive. It intends to foster a positive relationship with the first-year student prior to matriculation and works in conjunction with the admissions department to infiltrate high schools that are feeders to the university. Admissions enters the high schools and completes that application process with the student. The First Year Programs advisors then complete a schedule for the student at the high school based upon major preference The advisors also establishes a contact person for the student and family should they have any questions prior to matriculation. Moreover, the advisor contacts the student during the summer to ensure that they are making sufficient progress towards completion of placement test, financial aid, residential living, and any other need that may become evident. During this phase, students and parents often work together with the advisor to ensure that the student is adequately prepared both logistically and emotionally for the transition. During the first semester, advisors conduct frequent check-ins with students and address Early Alert referrals and Grade Checks that assist scheduling for the spring semester. The same process is followed in the spring with the addition that advisors teach students how to become self-sufficient advisees and then transition
them to their respective academic department advisors so that they know where to go for assistance in the second year. This approach has increased our yield or conversion rate of applicants from 37% to 44% and has increased our first year retention rate from 59% to 62.5% in the first year as well.

Leadership in Action: Team Leaders Empowering Peer Mentors in Cultivating Academic Success

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The Center for Engaged Learning represents an intentional and strategic partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Through collaborative initiatives, the Center provides opportunities for students to bridge their own learning and living experiences during college, thereby enhancing their academic motivation and setting the stage for a lifetime of self-determination. Mentoring through the Center provides students with opportunities to begin building their educational foundations. STEMs serve as mentors and models of academic excellence to first-year and upper-class students who seek encouragement and inspiration for academic success in college. STEMs hold individual and group mentoring sessions, lead focus groups, and plan and publicize activities sponsored by the Center. The structure of the Center’s mentoring program is unique in that it is student-led. It is one way the Center, along with Columbia College, provides leadership education and places peer mentoring at the “center” of educational initiatives. This poster session will highlight the structure of the student directed peer mentoring program and showcase STEM program materials. Artifacts will include the STEM Resource Handbook, STEM Program Archives, and program development materials.

First-Year Convocation – Strategies for Planning, Implementing, and Assessing

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Freshman convocation has long been a rite of passage at many colleges and universities. For some institutions it may be a ceremony that celebrates the arrival of freshmen, welcomes them into a community of scholars, sets the tone for their first year of college, and embeds in their impressionable memories a college event in which they are the center of attention. For others it may be just one more meaningless program to attend, one more occasion to sit through an assembly and hear a lot of boring rhetoric, and one more event to take up precious time. However, at Columbus State University, a 7500-student public institution still transitioning from commuter to residential, establishing such a rite of passage was not an easy task. Buy-in from administrators, faculty, staff and students was paramount. If CSU’s freshman convocation planning committee had been provided with something as simple as a checklist, planning would have gone much smoother and several blunders may have been avoided. Its first convocation, which was held in August 2005, took over a year of planning. Student attendance and faculty participation were good and the planning committee was encouraged. The second convocation, held in 2006, was less than good -- for many reasons. The third convocation, which was held in August of 2007, took less than 5 months to plan and was more successful than the first two. In this session, the perceived reasons for its success will be shared. In addition, each attendee will be given several helpful samples: a checklist which may be used for planning, student invitations, student flyers, parent flyer, faculty letters, and printed programs. Assessment used by CSU will be discussed. At the end of the session, time will be devoted to allowing session attendees to share their freshman convocation experiences and to ask questions.

The Implementation and Impact of the First-Year Seminar at the Community College of Denver

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This session will focus on how the Community College of Denver implemented a first-year type seminar, AAA 101 College 101: The Student Experience, and how we have developed it in the last three years. Its development included creating a committee to propose a course curriculum guide to the school as well as to the community college system that exists in Colorado, known as the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) that oversees all 13 community colleges in the state. CCCS must approve all new courses before it is recognized. Once the class was approved, a
A Unified Orientation and FYE Program: Concordia's Critical Inquiry

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The faculty developed a new first-year experience program that included new curricula as well as an enhanced new student orientation experience. Key elements of the orientation experience include a required summer book read which is linked to the college’s annual fall academic conference, intentional linkages between academic and student affairs that reinforce the college’s educational philosophy and goals, and the integration of faculty mentors into the orientation experience, most of whom continue to be students’ professors in the first-year course. These courses, unique to each faculty member’s interests, share a common commitment to developing critical thinking and collegiate-level writing. Called critical inquiry courses, each was linked to an oral or written communications course.

We implemented a variety of assessment methods to determine the effectiveness of the first-year program. We wanted to learn how effectively the course, as well as the linkage, contributed to students’ learning and development. Implementation of a variety of assessment activities enabled us to explore the following issues:

- What was the impact of having the orientation club faculty mentor as a professor in either the Inquiry Seminar or communication class?
- To what extent did students perceive a linkage between the first-year courses and how did this linkage impact students’ learning?
- To what extent did students understand professors’ expectations regarding academic
requirements?
• What is the impact of the first-year experience program have on student retention to the sophomore year?

These assessment results have resulted in actions leading to improvements in the first-year experience program. In this session, we will describe how a similar approach to assessment could be applied to other institutions’ first-year experience initiative.

**Capitalizing on Strengths in Your First-Year Experience Classroom**

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In this session, my goal is to move beyond the conceptual discussion of strengths-based first year experience programs that have been a part of recent FYE conferences and rather focus on specific strategies by which first year experience faculty can incorporate strengths-based strategies in their classroom without displacing current content. This session will begin with an brief introduction to the strengths-based philosophy and on how it has been incorporated into first year experience programs at various colleges and universities. Second, and more primarily, attendees will be introduced to and participate in activities and exercises appropriate to the first year experience course so they can begin to understand the insight and power associated with the use of strengths-based strategies. All participants will receive a complementary book as well as a collection of resources including selected activities and exercises they can use almost immediately in their first year experience classrooms.

**Students with Learning Differences: Transition to the College Experience**

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This presentation includes a compilation of comments, suggestions, and questions from professors regarding thoughts, feelings, challenges, and strategies they experience working with students with learning differences in classes for first-year students, and first-year seminars. These comments will be a launching point for the roundtable discussion.

Many faculty relate that working with first-year students with learning disabilities is both extremely challenging and extremely rewarding. The challenges often involve complex issues, such as finding ways to fully engage students in the learning process. Then this must be accomplished with a broad
range of students’ academic ability (regardless of diagnosed disability). Further, it is often within a context in which the majority of students who seem to come to college often have little real interest in learning but consider it a means to an end; a job.

One professor said “perhaps the most difficult challenge comes in confronting students' defenses which serve to protect them from accepting their disabilities and often encourage them to do exactly what will not help them succeed. Getting them to recognize the importance of an education and changing their behaviors in order to develop and be proud of their accomplishments is extremely difficult.”

Another professor was concerned that “parents, professors, and friends, often give students unrealistic performance feedback which only serves to incapacitate them and stifle development and growth toward adulthood.” When do we stop enabling students toward learned-helplessness, and when/where do we set limits so students can grow interdependently? It seems that we may confuse the inherent wonderful uniqueness of all people, including necessary political and social equality, with the reality that all human beings are not the same and are not equally adept at all endeavors.

Perhaps listening to the voices of peers will inspire others to seek creative ways to work with diverse populations.

**Increase Student Persistence With a Comprehensive College Success Course**

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Participants will view the results of the latest Program Review which has shown increased student persistence, self-confidence and program satisfaction. Because of the positive student success outcomes, the course has high enrollment and a good reputation with students, faculty and the administration of the college as well as the local high school district.

Conference participants will learn about the comprehensive college success course offered at Cuyamaca Community College which includes topics from college, career and lifelong success. College success topics prepare students for lifelong learning including motivation, time management, exploration of learning style, memory techniques, note taking and test preparation.

Choice of a college major and career planning are some of the most important outcomes of the course. Career success topics begin with an assessment of personality types and related careers. Based on these personal assessments, students explore careers that match their personal strengths.

Lifelong success topics prepare students for future success in education, in the workplace and in their personal lives. Topics include communication and relationships, critical and creative
thinking, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, appreciation of diversity and understanding life stages.

Using technology in education is identified as a necessary college success skill and it is used extensively in teaching the course. The course is offered in various formats: online, blended and traditional face to face with online components. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how technology can be used to appeal to New Millennial Generation students.

One of the keys to success of this program is that community college students are motivated to enroll in a course that meets graduation requirements and can be transferred to a state university system to complete a bachelor's degree. This course is also appealing to high school students who are preparing for college or plan to attend a community college and transfer to a university. This program serves as a bridge from high school to community college and to the university. Conference participants will discuss requirements needed to design a college level transferable student success course.

**Signs of Life in the Classroom: Teaching Techniques That Influence First-Year Student Motivation**

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This presentation begins with a captivating hook in which participants view two very brief, yet humorous video clips of teachers in the classroom. In the first clip, students are engaged and seemingly motivated; in the second clip, they are not at all engaged. Session participants will be asked to contrast the very different techniques used by the two teachers. After the initial hook, an overview of the following four main issues that influence student motivation will be provided:

1. Building Rapport with Students  
2. Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning and Success  
3. Increasing Student Engagement  
4. Providing Relevance, Meaning, and Choice for Learners

1. Building Rapport with Students

In this section of the presentation, reference will be made to research which suggests that positive student-teacher rapport sets a foundation for motivating learners. Participants will be asked to reflect on their rapport with students by completing a self-assessment rapport checklist. Discussion regarding steps that individual participants might take in order to improve their rapport with students will then ensue.

2. Creating an Environment Conducive to Success
In this section of the presentation humorous cartoons, photos, and outrageous real road signs will be utilized to make key points evident in the literature and the presenter’s own research which suggests that student success is a critical motivator. Handouts which overview highlights from the literature regarding student success will be provided and discussed.

3. Creating an Environment Conducive to Success

In this section of the presentation participants will be asked to recollect from their own college experience which courses were most motivating and why. Video clips of student interviews and award winning teachers exhibiting best practices will also be provided as a means for supporting main ideas within the literature on student engagement.

4. Focus on Relevance, Meaning, and Choice

In this final section of the presentation participants will be asked to analyze the courses they teach in order to see how relevant and meaningful they are to the students within their courses. A small group brainstorming exercise will help participants to begin thinking of ways in which they can allow for more student choice and make their course materials and assignments more relevant and meaningful for the learners.

Student Success and Retention—IT Solution to Establish, Communicate, and Assess School-Prescribed Development Activities

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The richness of the college experience and the success of students’ transitions during and after college will be enhanced if students are provided a path to follow and tools that allow them to plan and document their progress. Likewise, colleges will improve their ability to mentor and retain students through transitions if institutions establish and communicate a developmental path and can assess students’ growth and compliance in following that path.

This presentation demonstrates Student180—an IT solution that allows schools to help students organize what they do in meaningful areas, and allows students to document their growth by inputting activities, skills, and portfolio archives while earmarking items to key developmental categories.
Once data is input, students may create e-resumes, e-portfolios, co-curricular transcripts, and self-assessment measures. In addition, they have access to a job-search management tool. Additional benefits include:

1. School-initiated processes that prompts students to input data each academic term, allowing students to keep updated and more complete information.
2. Institutional guidance to help focus students to appropriate developmental areas. Examples of activity areas include: leadership, professional development, and civic engagement.
3. Improved documentation (via resumes, portfolios and co-curricular transcripts) to support students success in their applications for grants, scholarships, graduate school, internships, and jobs.
4. Access to self-assessment reports on the number and type of development activities in which the student has been involved.
5. Focus on self-development, not just the number of activities. For example, students are prompted document more than they were in the History Club. Students are also asked to document what they did in the club and how they benefited from the experience.

Schools may create co-curricular transcripts and measures of the extent and types of student activities. Additional benefits include:

1. Formalized means of communicating a desired path for student growth and development.
3. Measures of students’ civic engagement and documentation of the institution’s status as an “engaged campus.”
4. Tool to improve engagement of students—thereby, improving student retention.

Part-Time Faculty Interactions With Students at Two-Year Colleges

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This presentation will examine the interaction between part-time instructors and students at the community college. It will give a brief overview of the community college and the shift from hiring full-time faculty to hiring part-time faculty, the new role of part-time faculty, as well as examine part-time faculty-student interactions. There will be time for participants to share their experiences, as part-time faculty, and to discuss ways to improve student interactions with part-time faculty, especially with the first-year student.

Character U - A Year in Review

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The Student Life staff of DeSales University is committed to the education of students both in and out of the classroom. Their bold, new initiative – Character U is evidence of the power and responsibility student life professionals can have in charting a course for student success and character development.

The goals of our presentation are:
- to illustrate how student life professionals can impact the course of character education on their campus.
- to demonstrate how character development can have transformational impact on institutional identity.
- to show how student mentors can significantly impact the campus culture.
- to demonstrate the significant student development that results from mentoring.
- to suggest how to build strategic alliances on and off campus.
- to engage other campus personnel in the pursuit of your character goals.
- to provide examples of building team unity among the immediate staff and principle participants.
- to share assessment procedures and results from the first year of our program.

Certainly, the goal of every University is to graduate successful students. At DeSales, we in Student Life, deeply believe that academic development without corresponding character development is like a powerful ship without a rudder. It is destined to crash. Great minds without conscience become menaces to society. We have chosen to create and orchestrate a significant amount of student development outside the classroom to compliment the academic development provided by our faculty.

Character U is structured in a unique fashion, providing each of the 400 first year students with a personal peer mentor. Each mentor is assigned ten first year students. Mentors are grouped into pods of five. There are a total of eight pods. Every pod is assigned two professional staff advisors and one advanced peer educator (PACER). PACER’s and advisors serve as resource persons to the mentors and conduct weekly group sessions with their pod of mentors. This structure provides multiple levels of support for charting a healthy course through troubled waters.

All forty mentors meet weekly with freshman. All first year students, advisors, PACER’s, mentors and the entire faculty were given books for summer reading. Speakers, workshops, seminars, movies, activities and events are programmed around various character traits. One Character trait is featured each month. The ten teams of first year students are engaged in friendly competition and earn points for attending events, and programs. Individuals, teams and pods who accumulate a critical number of points are eligible for prizes.
This multimedia/lecture/discussion presentation should leave participants with:

a. great hope for taking control of the rudders on their own campuses,
b. unique strategies for navigating through troubled waters
c. a map for building consensus among team members
d. power to launch their own great adventure.

**Standardizing the First-Year Experience in a Geographically Distributed University**

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New student academic success and persistence are issues faced by all higher education institutions. These concerns are intensified and rendered more challenging at an institution like DeVry University – a geographically distributed master’s-level university, with 22 campuses and some 85 learning centers across North America, along with a large and growing on-line operation. Physical sites are organized into metro clusters of one or more campuses and as many as 10 centers. Implementation of a comprehensive New Student Success Initiative across these metros has been impacted by factors such as these:

- A decentralized metro-based administration delivering a highly standardized curriculum
- A strong career orientation in DeVry’s programs and in student aspirations
- A majority of students enrolling with an intended major, but not always with knowledge of what the major requires
- A mixture of students enrolling with prior college credit or directly from high school
- A diversity of academic preparation levels and abilities – in the spectrum from Developmental
To establish a system wide common experience in the first three semesters for all new students, while addressing these complex and variable conditions, a major restructuring effort has been undertaken. The result is a program known as the University College.

DeVry’s University College is at once a curricular formation, an administrative structure, and a collaborative effort among faculty, academic administrators, and Student Services staff. It is a way of organizing the institution’s courses and services to build a culture of focused accountability on freshmen, where persistence is lowest. Key elements of the program include the following:

**Courses and Curriculum:**
- A common core for all programs – at least one common semester
- A Critical Thinking and Problem Solving course (COLL-148) providing self-assessment, academic support, learning strategies, collaborative processes, and links to academic support and advisement
- A three-semester roll out of courses students can depend on taking
- Major-field courses introducing their disciplines
- Early “theme” courses with career emphasis
- Social science, communications, math, and science courses
- A mix of on-site and on-line courses
- Developmental courses as needed
- Honors opportunities as appropriate

**Services:**
- Persistence generalists, or coaches, accountable for the persistence of assigned students
- Academic Support Centers providing tutoring and basic skills building
- Proactive orientation programs
- Personalized advisement
- Use of Career Services staff to reaffirm links between programs and careers
- Opportunity to re-declare major or program area without penalty

**Technology:**
- Use of technology to facilitate learning and program management
- Use of 21st century classroom technology
- Use of an on-line Program Resource Center to provide supplementary resources and enable student collaboration and communication
- Use of on-line tutoring and advisement services to reach remote students

In our presentation, we will share with the participants the development process, structure, and early results from a system wide University College. The session will allow discussion to share best practices and solicit feedback from participants to improve the plan.

**Teaching Academic Integrity With Audience Response Technology**
The dean of the first year program at Dickinson College sought the support of the library in addressing the component of the program relating to plagiarism. Beyond the information printed in the student handbook, and more consistently and concretely than that provided by individual faculty, a program that would incorporate basic information, institutional policy, and address consequences directly and frankly was needed. While it was not expected that this program would reduce the cases of plagiarism at the college, it was intended that this program would give all students the information they needed to make informed decisions about their academic behavior. It was also a goal that over the course of four years, all students at the college would have shared the experience of this presentation, and the message work become part of the common culture.

The librarians incorporated what is known of best practices in information literacy instruction into their approach. The sessions were to be required; students would attend with their classes (although in an evening session, rather than during class time); faculty would be asked to accompany their students. The groups would be a maximum of 45 to facilitate questions while maintaining the atmosphere of anonymity of responses. The sessions would take place early enough in the semester to be of use to students commencing their first college level work. Most importantly, an interactive technology would be employed to engage the students and to permit assessment (and the visible display of composite responses) throughout the sessions. A post test would require students to apply what they had learned to various scenarios.

The first step was to determine which elements and topics were most important to include in this fifty minute session. Assessments were also devised (including questions to be tallied by the computer program, a post test that asked students to apply what they learned, and an attitude survey) Next, the tone and the theme of the presentation were devised; "seven deadly sins" was selected because it suggested visual design and audio accompaniment to the presentation. The elements were storyboarded to assure the flow; for example, students would often be polled about their knowledge or experiences, following which a definition or information would be presented and then illustrated with examples. Students would be asked to vote (register responses with clickers) at several junctures; the clickers served to gather data AND to keep the students engaged. The presentation was tested on student workers, and refined. Librarians learned how to use the technology and rehearsed the timing and flow of the presentations to assure consistency and adhere to the time limits. Prior to the first implementation, all first year seminar faculty and administrators of the program also attended a special session of the presentation, and their feedback was incorporated. Following each student session, response cards were collected which provided
excellent qualitative feedback on how students felt about the experience. Students were overwhelmingly positive about the sessions, making comments such as "the clicky things rocked" and thanking us for using humor to convey serious information. However, many students suggested that the presentation be shortened.

For the second year, a group of librarians reviewed the program and the data. Problematic questions were eliminated, redundancy was removed, and some reordering of presentation was made. For example, information on the incidence of plagiarism cases at the college was brought to the beginning, to underscore the immediate relevance of the topic to the students in the room. Among the lessons learned was that this technology offers many advantages: it relies upon a PowerPoint design, already familiar to many of us. It gathers, organizes, and displays response data both for pedagogical value and for analytical purposes. And, it engages students through their participation and through the immediate feedback it provides.

After this, the second year, faculty and administration express satisfaction that the institution now has an effective mechanism to impart critical information to students about plagiarism and academic integrity.

**Not Just Librarians’ Concern: Information Literacy and First-Year Students**

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The dominance of librarians in the information literacy conversation has created a misperception that information literacy is largely a ‘librarian issue’ with no significant role for others to play in its development and implementation on college and university campuses. Is this misperception reinforced by the jealous guardianship of this role by librarians in some instances? Is the disinclination on the part of teaching faculty to spend valuable class time on what is considered a mechanical skill set to blame? Is a generalized ignorance about the importance of information literacy to student success the culprit? These are some of the crucial questions that need to be explored in order to clear the way for effective implementation of information literacy throughout the campus curriculum.

First year students’ ability to recognize their information needs and take the steps to satisfactorily address them is crucial to their success in the first year and beyond. Information literacy affects students’ ability to express themselves verbally and in writing, to conduct themselves ethically with regard to scholarly communication, to adhere to principles of academic honesty and to have confidence in their ability to succeed in their pursuit of higher education.

Roundtable participants are invited to suggest ways of fostering cooperation between librarians and non-librarians on campus that can ensure that first year students are information literate individuals.
capable of academic, professional and personal success.

**Focus on Student Success: A Key Strategy for a Support**

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The purpose of this presentation is to inform session participants of the results of research that assesses several variables on the academic performance of high-risk students from an equal opportunity program at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. The program provides support services for economically and educationally disadvantaged students enrolled in higher education institutions throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

The freshman year presents a unique challenge to adapting to the university environment and coping with the academic rigors required for persistence and degree completion. The freshman year is the foundation upon which higher education is built and therefore a top priority for higher educational institutions. These institutions offer an array of first-year programs ranging from pre-matriculation orientations to courses and enrichment opportunities that span the entire academic year and even beyond. Although various support programs and strategies have been instituted for high-risk students transitioning into college, little published research exist that links the variables mentioned above or that shows the impact of program components on student academic success. This study assessed variables including entry SAT scores, summer bridge programs grades, academic performance, students’ major fields of study, attendance and frequency of requested tutoring, academic performance, and measures of academic self-efficacy. This presentation will provide qualitative data that defined the effective components of support strategies and a practical guidance to designing and monitoring effective support strategies for high-risk students.

Because tutoring is an integral component of most equal opportunity programs, the results of this presentation should be most relevant and important to the field of tutoring in general and to conference participants in particular. Audience participation will be encouraged and solicited through questions and active discussion.

**Developing an Appreciation for Diversity in the First Year**

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It is important for students to understand that diversity comprises more than the obvious attributes such as race and gender. The first year of college may be the first opportunity many students have to truly experience diversity in motion. They are exposed to students from varying backgrounds in class, in extra-curricular activities, and during simple social interaction that occurs while studying or eating. Our society and college campuses are more diverse now than at any time in history. Furthermore, data shows that this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. Learning from diversity not only allows students to think at a higher level, it also assists them in career preparation, success, and social development. Research has shown that employers seek college graduates that have more than just an awareness of diversity; they want graduates who have experienced diversity. In a global economy that involves more international trading, multinational corporations, and world travel this is key to having a successful career. In addition, by expanding the social circle of individuals, all experiences are enriched by interacting with a variety of people. Imagine only relating to your own social group and its intricacies and attempting to be successful in the marketplace at this time in history. Students may not immediately recognize biases that exist but this does not mean they are not in place. How do we assist students in becoming aware of their own biases? Faculty and staff will learn techniques to assist students to take advantage of the richness society have to offer while fully embracing their college experience.

Keeping It Real: Community Learning in the First-Year Seminar

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Five years ago, Eastern Mennonite University implemented a new community learning program designed to promote community involvement as part of its institutional mission. Community learning designate courses were built into a recently revised general education curriculum, with the first critical experience lodged in the required first year seminar.

Last spring, the institution conducted a comprehensive review of the community learning program. A primary component of the evaluation focused on community learning in the first year seminar. Focus groups with first year students as well as seniors reflecting back upon their first year seminar produced rich responses. What emerged from these discussions surprised us.

We expected to hear mixed reviews reflecting the diversity of student preparation for college. Instead, several prominent themes led to significant shifts in the curriculum. In particular, students stressed that community involvement needs to be “real.” First year students who experienced community learning as an add-on were much less satisfied than students who viewed it as integral to the learning objectives. They also appreciated Kolb’s model as a theoretical platform. Seniors
suggested an affinity between community learning and cross-cultural experiences (a unique requirement in our general education curriculum), articulating similarities in crossing boundaries, learning outside the classroom, and cultivating a reflective awareness of self and other. These student voices prompted us to craft a local-global-local archetype of engaged learning corresponding to a developmental first year-middle year-senior year curricular approach.

Participants in this session will benefit in at least three ways. They will view examples of evaluation instruments and learn which types of questions elicited the most useful responses. They will experience focus group discussions and consider strategies for crafting real community involvement. Finally, participants will be challenged to view community learning in the first year seminar as a critical opportunity linking components across the curriculum.

**Not Just Smiling & Nodding: How to Utilize/Engage Student Members of First-Year Experience Committees**

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The voice of the student is important to any committee, but arguably First-Year Experience college committees require student representation. Students are the ones that such committees are in place to serve, and a student opinion, or three, will help ensure that the tasks of First-Year Experience committees will fix a legitimate student problem and will be received by the student body. However, it can be difficult to find a student willing to serve, and, once in the room, many students will find it challenging to voice their opinion, especially on a controversial issue.

As a student on many different committees at Edgewood College, I have had problems. Either I feel like I am being called upon to account for all the students, or I do not feel comfortable disagreeing with or even debating with my professors and superiors. So a student will sit silently at the table, thus becoming a "ghost representative."

This is an issue that plagues many schools; how can a committee find a student viewpoint that is intelligently formed, willingly shared, and effectively communicated? Having a roundtable discussion will allow many different opinions and anecdotes on this topic, and, as a student, I feel that I can share my own experiences, both good and bad, and some of the hang-ups I have in committee situations.

Because students have opinions that need to be conveyed and understood, this conversation is vital. Colleges across the country are forming First-Year Experience committees to look at the life of the first-year student, and who can better attest to this experience than a student? My goal for this session is to increase the level of student participation in these First-Year Experience committees, thereby validating the important work being done for these students.
MAP-Works: An Exciting Project to Help First-Year Students Succeed

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Assessing first year students is a complicated and time-consuming endeavor. Educational Benchmarking offers a number of national studies designed to evaluate the perceptions of first year students. Our latest project called MAP-Works is an exciting project that will help colleges and universities identify students who need intervention (either academically or socially). This project also provides reporting directly back to each first-year student on the areas they can focus on to be successful. Other first-year studies offered by EBI include the First-Year Initiative Assessment (FYI), developed in conjunction with The Policy Center on the First Year of College provides valuable information to guide program improvement. The next study, the ACUHO-I/EBI Resident Assessment, provides essential information on residence hall residents. Another study, the AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment, provides educators insight into the fraternity/sorority experience for first year students. In all studies, both descriptive and prescriptive reports are provided that help guide improvement and resource allocation. Benchmarking your data against other schools also provides valuable perspective. Come and learn about these studies, selected findings, and how your program can become involved in these studies.

The Community College First-Year Experience: a Catalyst for Change

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The FYE team will present detailed strategies on how as a start up program were able to increase the number of student participant by 650% in 6 years, include basic skills to honors students, and develop innovative strategies to promote student success. The areas we will focus on will be
learning communities, how we select, train, and scheduled classes. We will reference and share training materials and outlines. We will discuss how we started and developed supplemental instruction and increased our SI sessions by 300% in 5 years. We will demonstrate how to partnership with academic program administrators and faculty to identify courses, instructors and SI coaches. We will also highlight how we developed and piloted technology for campus wide use including email, on-line counseling, orientation, and assessments. Finally, we will feature some of our newest program concepts including our transfer academy.

**Road to Success: Small College's Approach to a Comprehensive First-Year Program**

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Elizabethtown College (approx. 2000 students) has created many paths for First Year students to travel that lead to success. This presentation will review the chronology of the FY program, beginning with the establishment of subject-based first year seminars in the 1990's and leading to the comprehensive program currently in place (a developmental orientation program, subject-based 3 cr. seminars, a 1 cr. colloquium series, linked academic advising component and student life component). Care will be given to discuss key personnel/roles and the formation of the FY program and colloquium committees. Etown takes great care in creating materials and training opportunities for the college's community members to learn how to work best with first year students. Some of these opportunities include; FY advisor's manual, a student academic advising handbook, a residential curriculum guide, an orientation guide and interactive website, ongoing FY faculty training through workshops and individual assistance, training for peer mentors and residence assistants. Support programs for students will also be discussed, these include schedule building
assistance, customized orientations, pilot programs, Early Warning program, Intensive Advising program, academic contract program and the Center for Student Success. Roadblocks and detours to success will be addressed. The current work initiatives include establishing/revising overarching goals, creating a FY faculty/advisor contract, consistent academic advising assessment, and strengthening the academic rigor. A case study of one FY seminar course entitled "Tools for Talk" will demonstrate the intersection of all paths leading to the road to success.

Strategies to Promote Ethical Behavior within the First Year Experience

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Tom Wolfe, quoting German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated that “In the 21st century, something will occur far worse than the great wars- that will be the total eclipse of values” (Salem State College, June 7, 2007). Higher education teachers and administrators may feel that this prediction is coming too close to reality as we attempt to address a variety of student moral issues including academic dishonesty, alcohol and drug use, bullying, discrimination, and vandalism. What are the ways that first year policies, program and curriculum are used to teach social values and responsibility? How are they taught so that they are not perceived as onerous, scary or off-putting by either the students or the professionals implementing the curriculum? This round table will have its member’s share what is happening on their campuses and discuss what works, what doesn’t, and what should be happening to promote ethical behavior amongst our students.

The Stuff in the Middle: Nurturing Ability, Kindling Desire, Building Connections

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Our students need to have a sense of ability, a sense of desire, and a sense of connection. Consider the following findings from the National Research Council (Institute of Medicine, 2004):

• “Students will not exert effort in academic work if they are convinced they lack the capacity to succeed or have no control over outcomes.” [ability]
• “Feelings of competence give students a feeling of personal control, which has been shown to be critical for enjoyment, effort, and actual learning.” [ability and desire]
• “Learning is an active process, and learners’ preexisting knowledge, skills, beliefs, and concepts influence how they make sense of new information.” [ability, desire, connection]

We give students a syllabus and carefully craft the first day’s activities. We develop meaningful
final assessments. But what can we do about the stuff in the middle--the time between the first and last weeks of the term?

This session will examine how to develop engaging activities throughout the term. Session attendees will participate in insightful discussion about the “how-to” of developing meaningful classroom activities. And they will walk away with activities they can use immediately in their classrooms. Specifically, participants will:

• Examine and discuss strategies that will help students identify and respect the abilities they bring to class, deepen their desire to improve their skills and knowledge base, and develop connections with their course, class, and college.

• Receive feedback from colleagues concerning one of their strategies to help students strengthen their ability, desire, and/or connection. Participants will examine how to open their senses (Hudson, 2007) and develop and refine strategies for use in their classrooms.

• Examine how music, humor, and creativity can complement and encourage academic achievement and build meaningful relationships.

Higher Education Opportunity Program of New York State

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The Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) is funded through a grant from the New York State Education Department and is hosted by private colleges and universities in the State of New York. The goal of HEOP is to provide supplementary academic support services and financial aid to students who are admitted to these institutions from academically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. HEOP has been an integral part of Fordham University since its inception in 1969. This session will provide an overview of this program at Fordham University and the model for the delivery of its academic support services that has enabled the program to maintain a high retention rate (average 80%) over recent years.

The new freshmen are required to attend a six-week Summer Program prior to starting their freshman year. The Summer Program is designed to give the new students a realistic expectation for their college goals. The advisement structure as well as the college skills seminars are aimed towards this purpose. During the academic year, all program students may avail the academic support services that are broadly categorized as academic advising, academic skills enhancement and tutorial services.

The model of the academic support services of this program draws on the premise of continuous
improvement using the assessment framework found in the paradigm of Total Quality Management (TQM) and to be proactive at all times. The quality characteristics the program aims to have inherent in its services involve, services geared towards student needs, minimum response time and easy access to student utilization of program services. The last characteristic is aimed for constant enhancement by meeting the student needs and gaining trust.

The session will emphasize on how the different components of the program are brought together in harmony, through assessment of relevant data, for the effective delivery of the program’s supplementary academic support services. The material will be presented as a case study to encourage participant discussion.

**Individual and Community: Deliberative Practices in a First-Year Seminar**

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Over the past eight years, the faculty associated with the Center for Civic Life have learned much about how to successfully integrate deliberation about diversity issues into the first-year seminar. Over time we have crafted a successful program. During our annual retreats we have studied assessment data, student work, and shared our classroom experiences. We found that creating the conditions that foster trust and reciprocity are essential for students to believe that they truly do have a public voice. Somewhat ironically, student reluctance to speak about diversity issues springs out of their caring deeply about relationships with their peers. Yet to have free speech, everyone must believe that they are free to speak. The culture of conversation — public conversation — is the foundation of community.

Through sharing the experiences of faculty and students, highlighting adjustments in programmatic design and delivery, and identifying specific pedagogical approaches, the Center's director will demonstrate how deliberative dialogic practices explicitly validate the experience of each student, and how that fosters student confidence and commitment. In this kind of environment, differing views begin to be understood as an opportunity for inquiry, not conflict. Only at such a moment can students begin to develop perceptive and open-ended questions and truly engage each other. This is the beginning of learning — not only to have enough trust in the group and confidence in one’s self to share ideas, but also to wonder genuinely what others are thinking.

Deliberative dialogue, adapted to meet the needs of the first-year student, creates an atmosphere of open communication that fosters inquiry and an appreciation for the value of community and diversity. It is also an essential habit of mind for people who live in a democratic society. As Terry Tempest Williams writes in *The Open Space of Democracy*: “The human heart is the first home of democracy. It is where we embrace our questions. Can we be equitable? Can we be generous? Can we listen with our whole beings, not just our minds, and offer our attention rather than our opinions?” We must attend to the emotional as well as the intellectual life of our students by
creating environments that ensure all of our students are truly free to speak and to be listened to with respect and attention.

It’s A Two-Way Street: Student and Faculty Engagement

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Furman University is a four year private liberal arts school that focuses its work on the concept of Engaged Learning. Within the field of higher education, the term engagement has many definitions. Furman has adopted its unique focus on engagement through emphasis on Engaged Learning – a stress on education outside the classroom which provides students with the means to put classroom instruction to practice and develop collaborations among faculty, students, and the community.

The initial focus of Engaged Living, Furman’s living-learning communities, always has been to impact student engagement in the classroom. In the program’s first three years, desired results had always been collected in regards to student attendance and achievement in the classroom and student engagement in the university community. An unexpected yield of this focus has been the development of substantial faculty engagement and investment in the curricular residential community, both which have become apparent in latter years.

This presentation shall evaluate Engaged Living’s simple beginnings and its growth over the last five years. As the program has stayed true to its mission – create increasingly vibrant residential communities, contribute to borderless learning, and connect students with the Furman campus and surrounding community – the presenters will highlight various moments and identify key stakeholders that made this effort possible. The crux of this presentation will be examining “the tipping point” – the moment at which faculty engagement exceeds typical classroom preparation and expectations. The subsequent impact faculty engagement has on the Engaged Living program has assisted in driving several new initiatives as well as adding a new dimension to how student engagement is viewed and developed. The presentation will be supported by internal assessments, national assessments that Furman has participated in and published studies on engagement such as
On most campuses, new faculty are as overwhelmed by their first year of teaching as the students are with their first year of college. Faculty members are focused on their subject matter and the preparation of their lectures while adjusting to a new college culture. They may have little training in pedagogy, and yet these are often the very individuals teaching core curriculum classes. What can an institution do to help these new, often overwhelmed faculty better serve beginning students?

At Gainesville State College, we have developed a unique “hybrid” one-year Teaching Excellence Program. We provide faculty development and support for incoming faculty at the instructor and assistant professor level. Topics for the program include: how to reach the “new” entering student, academic advising as teaching, developing an engaging classroom environment, crafting effective discussions, making the most of technology, creating learning objectives and assessing student/faculty progress, and working with diverse students. It also includes face-to-face mentoring with senior campus faculty. We want faculty members to learn how to reflect on their work and continue to develop over the course of their careers. This year we are piloting our program via an on-line learning community. Each faculty member was given reading material to guide their discussions and topic areas: “The Courage to Teach” by Parker Palmer and select readings by Lee Schulman. Discussions are enriched by reading, mentoring, and the topical presentations.

We will all be hiring increasing numbers of faculty to teach on-line who do not live in our immediate area. Our commitment to student and faculty development is reflected in this innovative approach to engaging faculty as learners. We will also discuss the merits and the pitfalls of developing a hybrid, learning community program for faculty development.

First-Year Seminar and the High-Achieving Student

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A 1998 profile of students attending Tier 1 universities, as rated in U.S. News and World Report, indicated several factors that might predict attendance at such an institution: high school g.p.a. of a 3.5 or higher; SAT scores of 1100 or higher; high school curriculum in calculus, physics and foreign language. Students who fit these profile characteristics were up to five times more likely to attend a top university than their counterparts (Owings, Madigan, & Daniel, 1998). Top research universities in the United States welcome high-achieving, academically gifted freshmen each fall, and must decide the best way to channel their academic talents and engage the students with the university curriculum. A freshman seminar course is one way to attain that goal.

However, what high-achieving students need from and take away from a freshman seminar course likely will differ from peers at other institutions or in non-gifted programs. What do they need? What are some common learning outcomes that selective research institutions expect students to gain?

Furthermore, a web review of 29 selective universities found that, while all were offering some sort of freshman seminar, the constructs related to the programs differed greatly. Seminars were centrally coordinated or decentralized; traditional “university 101” or disciplinary research topics; focused on common sets of outcomes or dispersed; and incorporated a variety of other constructs including advising, independent research, and problem-based learning components. This leads to the conclusion that there are many ways to focus a freshman seminar for high-achieving freshmen. But do some formats do better than others to achieve their goals? What is the appropriate level of academic challenge for these courses?

This discussion seeks to explore freshmen seminars in relation to the high-achieving student. By focusing the discussion on student needs at entry to the selective university, conversation about ways to accomplish appropriate learning outcomes can be engaged.
A formal Convocation is an important component of first-year experience and orientation programs at many colleges and universities. At some institutions, this ceremony is a long-standing tradition, while at others it is newly-established or recently re-established. Although the format, program, and timing of Convocations vary, the purpose generally includes some combination of welcoming new students to the academic community, introducing them to the culture, traditions, values and expectations of the institution, inspiring them to become actively engaged in their undergraduate experience, and serving as a “bookend” event to Commencement. In addition, as more campuses are inviting parents and family members of first-year students to this event, it also marks the beginning of an institution’s new relationship with them—beyond the enrollment, move-in, and orientation phases.

In this roundtable discussion, participants who are currently working with First-Year or Freshman Convocations at their Institutions, or those who are considering establishing or re-establishing this ceremony, will come together to discuss some common questions and share practical ideas and suggestions. We will begin with each person describing the history, timing, format, program, and purpose of Convocation on their campus. We will then move to discussing some specific questions such as: Is Convocation mandatory? How much involvement is their from faculty and senior academic administrators (e.g., Deans, Provosts)? How do you encourage faculty participation? Does Convocation serve as a “bookend” event to Commencement, and, if so, how do you create a link between the two events? What traditions do you incorporate into your Convocation program? Do you assess or evaluate your Convocation, and if so, what instruments do you use? Are parents and family members invited to Convocation, and if so, do you include them in the ceremony or host events for them prior to or after the event?

**Working Toward a Distinct "Pedagogy of the First Year": What Classroom Strategies Work Best with First-Year Students?**

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When it comes to issues of teaching and learning, are first-year students significantly different than their more experienced, upper-class counterparts? Many college instructors would agree that they are, yet few have taken the time to ponder exactly what these differences might be and how knowledge and awareness of these differences might inform their teaching strategies. This roundtable session is premised on the idea that teaching is enhanced when instructors develop a distinct “pedagogy of the first year.”

As a faculty member who regularly teaches large numbers of first-year students in both my university’s first-year orientation course as well as in my own department’s Introduction to Sociology course, I believe that first-year students benefit from a different teaching approach than I use in my upper-division courses. For example, I use a number of teaching strategies in my introductory courses that are intended to teach first-year students how to manage their time and develop effective study skills. I provide these students with detailed course maps that allow them to visualize the relationships between lectures, reading assignments, and student learning outcomes, and I set aside in-class instructional time throughout the semester to help students develop analytical thinking and writing skills.

I envision this roundtable session as a way for faculty and others who are interested in issues related to classroom teaching and pedagogies of the first year to share and discuss strategies for teaching first-year students. Some of these strategies might be considered “best practices” for teaching in general, regardless of the level of instruction. But other strategies and approaches are likely to be especially tailored for teaching first-year students. For example, what types of assignments work best with first-year students, and how can exams and other graded assignments be structured to help first-year students adjust to college-level expectations?

**Integrating Peer Advisors into Major Exploration Advisement**

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Academic advisement centers at Georgia Southern provide intrusive advisement practices to assist in the goals of retention, progression and graduation of the university. As one of seven such advisement centers, First-Year Experience became the “academic home” for undeclared student advisement in Fall Semester 2006. It was within this larger context that FYE created the Pre-Advisement program to provide an opportunity for students with 30 or more earned hours to receive additional support prior to advisement and registration. In order to assist students toward making timely progress toward a degree program, nearly 150 students with 30 or more hours were selected to participate in Pre-Advisement during the first semester of the program’s implementation.

The professional staff of the First-Year Experience program recruited, hired and trained a staff of five outstanding undergraduates to serve as Peer Academic Advisors or PAAs. The PAA staff was instrumental in the success of the program, serving as the primary advisors for the Pre-Advisement sessions. Additionally, FYE created a formal “contract” for these sessions, in which the students were given specific tasks related to major exploration that had to be completed before the student’s advisement appointment for the next semester’s classes.

By combining the use of Peer Academic Advisors, the pre-advisement “contract” and additional intrusive advisement, FYE provided our undeclared students with an innovative and well-received program. This session will explain the structure, practice and assessment of the Pre-Advisement Program and will include suggestions for utilization of Peer Advisors in the major exploration advisement process and in academic advisement centers where increased demand for services is not able to be matched by professional staff positions.

The Power of Student Voices: Revisiting the Freshman Learning Community Experience

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This session reports data from focus groups to highlight the power of student voices in assessing long-term benefits of Freshmen Learning Communities (FLCs). At Georgia State University, a large, urban research university, we collected quantitative data for eight years that mirrors the national findings on the positive impact of FLCs. Based on the cluster model, Georgia State’s FLC program is structured so that 25 students enroll together in a group of courses centered on an academic theme. With consistent growth from 11 FLCs of 275 students in 1999 to 55 FLCs with 1375 students in 2007, students who participate in FLCs have higher grade point averages, are retained at greater rates, and graduate in a timelier manner than non-FLC students. But what do the students have to say?

Focus groups provide a methodology that brings to life the student experiences and their perspectives on FLCs. In an effort to feature and hear the voices of students, researchers invited students from the 2004 class to participate in six scheduled focus groups exploring how the FLC experience impacted their participation in or view of integrative learning, student engagement, connecting to faculty, extra-curricular activities, and undergraduate research activities. Focus group methodology or qualitative inquiry, along with traditional quantitative data of grade point averages, retention, and graduation rates, provide a finer lens for viewing how learning communities benefit students beyond their first semester. In other words, focus group data provides insight into what the numbers actually mean and may broaden our interpretation of the quantitative data typically used to communicate the impact of learning communities.

Attendees at this session will receive information and materials on how to conduct focus groups at their institutions to view their FLC program from the students’ perspective. A different, richer picture emerges when one hears the voices of students.

Encouraging Critical Thinking Through Atlanta-Based Learning

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This talk is about the linked activities between the Quantitative Sciences Freshman Learning Community with the Atlanta-Based Learning Program and the Critical Thinking course. This is a three-fold learning opportunity. Activities within this combined component and a Major Business the Atlanta Learning Community, will provide a learning activity for the students.

Critical Thinking is a method for deciding what to believe. Quantitative Science is a particular kind of critical thinking—one specific method for deciding what to believe. It uses numbers and mathematics. Good business people are good critical thinkers. We hope this integrated course will awaken students to the importance of analytical reading and writing in the workplace. In this way, the integrated course is an attempt by experienced professionals to tell the youth “what we wished someone had told us back then.” The students in this combined component will directly apply the quantitative critical thinking skills learned in class to a specific problem from the Coca Cola Company, hence having the opportunity to engage with Atlanta-area professionals.

During the semester, the time line will be for the Coca Cola business team to come to GSU to meet with the students in order to present them with the argument they need to have evaluated. This meeting will engage the students in the critical thinking process while at the same time “becoming aware of and experiencing how a major business in the metro Atlanta area” use quantitative methods in their everyday working environment. Students will work together during the semester to evaluate/solve the argument. At the end of the semester, the students will visit the Coca Cola Company to present their work. This project and its solution will be on an electronic portfolio that the executive of the company can review and assess the findings of the class.

**Two-Term Programming: A First-YEAR Experience**

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At many institutions the Freshman Experience tends to be a one semester course sometimes including linked courses. New students are barraged with success strategies and information during the first semester but often do not receive nearly as much intentional programmatic support in the second semester. As a result first year students often express feelings of abandonment at the end of the first semester. Discussions on listserves, at conferences, and at individual institutions often include proposals that would extend the Freshman Experience into the second semester of the freshman year.

This focused attention to the needs of second semester students provides a much needed continuation of support for first year students. In addition, the time to introduce topics should correlate with the student’s realization of need. For example, students are usually more receptive to information about major and career issues in the spring semester. Therefore, extending proactive intentional programming into the spring semester provides students access to more wide-ranging first year experiences. An additional expectation is that the timing of these interventions may
reduce the spring-to-fall attrition rate for first-year students, which is a high attrition period.

A cursory exploration of existing programs has identified the following examples of second semester programs:
- Second semester seminar
- Service-Learning linked to an academic course
- Civic Engagement Activities
- Co-curricular activities
- Gateway Courses
- Career Exploration Courses

This roundtable discussion will offer participants an opportunity to explore and discuss the following questions: What are other institutions doing in the second semester? How successful are these programs? What are the models that are being explored? What are the challenges? What lessons have been learned?

Engage, Interact, Retain: Driving Student Success and Retention on the Web

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Jennifer Jones
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Summary: None.

Beyond Library Day: Keeping First-Years Afloat in the Sea of Knowledge

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Over the last few years, the landscape of information has become exponentially more complex. The sheer amount of information available in books, articles, electronic sources, and other media has grown at an amazing rate. New sources such as blogs and wikis have changed the way we think of scholarly authority. Complex distinctions between proprietary and open source resources further
add to the confusion.

First-year students are expected to learn and interact with this complex world, which even their professors often do not fully understand. Even good high school programs frequently do not prepare them for the transition. College libraries attempt to help students navigate through this world, but they are often hampered by too few staff members and inadequate contact time with the students. Frequently, research instruction is reduced to a “library day” in a first-year English class, when the class meets for one period in the library, and a librarian gives a brief introduction to research tools. This approach, even when repeated in subsequent classes, often leaves otherwise bright and motivated students woefully unprepared to deal with contemporary knowledge sources.

In this discussion, we’ll consider innovative ways of improving research instruction for first-years. Of course, I hope that participants will have experiences, or even untested ideas, of their own to share. However, I will also be prepared to stimulate discussion with examples from my own experience (use of primary sources, faculty/librarian teams, use of visual search engines), and from the field generally (research instruction integrated into specific courses, required or optional first-year credit courses on the research process, information literacy initiatives that extend across several courses).

**The Crisis In Financial Literacy and the Need for New Approaches to Reach Digital Learners**

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This session will review the state of financial literacy among young adults, discuss the importance of using interactive media to reach millennials and show a demonstration of MoneyU, a game-based financial literacy course.

For five of the last six years, Americans spent more money than they earned. Savings is at an all time low. Debt is at an all time high. Moreover, debt problems and bankruptcy are worst for young adults, 18 to 25. Can you imagine the impact on families and students trying to pay for college? Financial illiteracy is an acute national problem that contributes directly to student drop-out. The impact of poor financial literacy skills is exacerbated by the perceived freedoms of moving into college (and adulthood). However, consider this: it’s possible for the average Millennial to permanently change their financial outlook by acquiring basic financial knowledge and proven skills. Research shows that as few as 10 hours of financial education positively affects students’ spending and savings habits. However, only 26 percent of 13- to 21-year olds reported their parents
actively taught them how to manage money. In 2004, of the > 4,000 students who participated in the Jump$tart personal finance survey, 65.5 percent failed. Current approaches to personal finance training are not working. Traditional financial literacy lectures inspire no one. Would you be willing to discuss your financial situation in a class? Developing financial skills requires privacy, experimentation and rehearsal. Our research, development and testing confirms that using a game format gives students the environment to learn effectively. Game-based learning can emulate real-life financial situations and teach difficult personal finance concepts in a manner that is fun and authoritative. In compressed simulations, learners can readily recognize progress in skill mastery and concept application. Making decisions rapidly and continuously builds competence and power.

Habitudes: The Habits and Attitudes of a First-Year Student

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This interactive session, given by the author and creator of the Habitudes™ book series, will show participants how to nurture a leadership culture by teaching students leadership concepts using images, experiences and relationships. Students today are EPIC: Experiential, Participatory, Image-rich, and Connected. Consequently, faculty and staff must put more creativity into training to take leadership development beyond mere instruction. By leveraging the power of pictures, attendees will learn to teach leadership principles that are memorable and transferable.

Inspired by the research done at UCLA by Dr. Helen and Alexander Astin, as well as the studies done by Coca Cola and Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance, Growing Leaders has pursued the creation of curriculum that helps students realize their highest potential.

In 2000, the Kellogg Foundation published a report on the status of leadership on university campuses in North America. The report included both state and private schools, and was compiled by Dr. Helen and Alexander Astin, from UCLA. Some of their conclusions were:

1. Every student has leadership potential.
2. Leadership cannot be separated from values.
3. Leadership skills must be taught.
4. In today’s world, every student will need leadership skills.

Because we concur that in today’s world every student will need to possess leadership skills, Growing Leaders attempts to enable first-year students to begin to see themselves and apply themselves as leaders in the respective fields in which they plan to enter.
During the session, the presenter will guide attendees through the Habitudes™ Teacher’s Guide to show them how to create a language of leadership on their campus and use communication techniques that engage millennial generation students. The presenter will demonstrate a Habitudes™ teaching session including an image, learning objectives, a creative idea to introduce or teach the leadership principle, a story to illustrate the principle, ideas for a movie that demonstrates the leadership principle, a student self-assessment, and an exercise in which students can participate.

The session will include small group discussion and interactive exercises. A portion of the presentation time will be allotted for a question and answer session as well as a forum to brainstorm ideas on how to implement an EPIC teaching style at their institutions, including the use of eight building blocks for learning. Students with various learning styles can engage with the Habitudes™ curriculum because of the EPIC nature in which they are taught and written. Working in partnership with colleges, universities and student groups both in the U.S. and internationally, “Growing Leaders” has been able to demonstrate that students can:

1. Understand the principles
2. Remember the principles
3. Practice the principles
4. Communicate the principles

Campuses who have used Habitudes™ with first year students have increased retention, participation in student leadership positions and GPA.

**Securing Resources to Implement and Sustain Programs for Student Engagement in the First Year**

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Student Success (including retention, achievement of desired learning outcome and completion of educational goals) depends in part on the degree and quality of each student’s engagement in the learning process, in and out of the traditional classroom. There are both institutional practices and student behaviors that are important to effective first year student engagement.

A key college priority is the work of improving the success of its students. Students who have successful outcomes, curricular and extra-curricular, are future alumni who reflect the multi-dimensional support received during their college years. To achieve such outcomes requires a resource base that can support multi-lateral projects and programs. However, we are aware of funding restrictions that colleges encounter and the limits placed upon the scarce resources.

Few colleges have the resources to support new projects of the magnitude and duration required to achieve a high level of equilibrium in the first year student development process. Existing budgets
will be manipulated and refocused towards this interim initiative, and in most cases at the expense of other complementary and multi-dimensional student success strategies. It is important to build multi-year connections that provide sustainable funding and generate value to all stakeholders. Strategies to secure alternative funding will be highlighted through best practices that the presenter has effectively implemented in his career in North America and internationally.

**Using CIRP Surveys to Measure Change in the First Year**

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Because the YFCY was designed in part as a follow-up instrument to the annual CIRP Freshman Survey, almost one-third of the items on the YFCY questionnaire are direct post test items on the CIRP Freshman Survey. With these longitudinal data, institutions that participate in both surveys can create a valuable data set to assess how much their students change over the course of the first college year. One of the most valuable aspects of longitudinal data collection is the ability to move beyond just a “snapshot” of the student experience toward a more effective measure of change and development over time.

This presentation will used matched data from the 2006 CIRP Freshman Survey and the 2007 YFCY to illustrate how institutions can used these tools to examine not only issues of transition for their students, but also diversity, civic engagement, academic engagement, interaction with faculty, financial concerns, and expectations of college versus reality. National findings from these most recent surveys will be used in the examples, and so the presentation will also serve as a portrait of the first-year college student.

**First-Year Programs and Information Literacy: Challenges and Opportunities**

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First Year Programs have become increasingly commonplace on campuses throughout the country. They developed as a way to address the particular needs of first year students in order to promote student retention, academic success, and identification with the institution. In recognition that the academic library is crucial in providing first year students with the research skills that are essential to a successful undergraduate career, library instruction is a component of many FYPs.

At Hofstra University, the library and the First Year Program developed a model for integrating the library and FYP that exemplifies both the opportunities inherent in this type of collaboration, as well as the benefits that flow from viewing the model as a process in which change, informed by each previous year’s experience, is an expected and welcome component.

The history of our project began in 2001, when the library faculty at Hofstra University began offering Library 001, a one-credit introductory course in library and research skills, whose target audience were first and second year students. In 2003, the library was approached by the administration of Hofstra’s First Year Program about integrating Library 001 into the First Year Program. This marked the beginning of a continuing and evolving collaboration between the library and FYP. This integration includes collaboration between library faculty and the subject faculty on developing assignments, monitoring student progress and participating in curriculum-related field trips, as well as social activities.

This paper will discuss the growth of the library’s relationship with FYP, from its tentative beginnings with four sections of Library 001 attached to FYP sections in 2003, to the current year, in which there are 17 library classes integrated with FYPs. Additionally, the paper will consider the issues that have prompted us to tweak the structure and organization of our model based on feedback and experiences from previous years.

From Ice Breakers to Active Learning Classroom Strategies

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This session will actively engage the participants in a minimum of three icebreaker activities. Once each activity has been completed as an icebreaker the presenter will provide ideas for using this same strategy to teach content in an active learning environment. More strategies will be introduced if time permits. The following strategies will be presented:

Connections/Diversity Activity: Students’ task is to shape the pipe cleaners to represent something that is very important in their life. For the icebreaker students will guess what the objects represent.
Then the facilitator will ask all students to stand if their creation represents family, religion or spiritual life, hobbies, or career choice. This exercise can be a springboard for a diversity lesson.

Transition from High School to College: In this activity students will be in groups of three. Each group will have a Jacob’s Ladder toy. They must use this toy to explain some of the differences between high school and college.

On All Sides: This icebreaker has students sharing information about themselves and their families by standing side-by-side, with back together, and face-to-face. Discussion follows about the difficulty of sharing the information in these different ways. This can be used to introduce a study on relationships and conflict resolution.

Have You Ever…: This activity helps students find other with similar interests and experiences. This activity can be used in a content area to discuss important events or individuals in any discipline.

Continuums: This activity will help students find resources among their peers. For the instructor/facilitator it offers a way to group students. This will be demonstrated in the presentation.

Chaos Toss: This activity requires space enough for the group to be in a circle with open space in the middle. The participants will be throwing balls to each other. In the debriefing of this activity the participants will discover this is really an introduction to time management.

Watch Your Students Achieve Their True Potential and Persist in the First College Year and Beyond with the CollegeScope Student Success Program

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Session attendees will get an inside look at the progressive CollegeScope Student Success Program. There will be an educational power-point presentation, in which attendees will learn about what the programs is, its uses, how it functions, the theory behind the curriculum and the current findings of its effectiveness, along with a demonstration of the software. There will also be an opportunity for questions.

The CollegeScope Student Success Program is a one-of-a-kind student success curriculum that focuses on issues of student transition, achievement and persistence. It incorporates all of CollegeScope’s products: Do What You Are, a personality type assessment and career development program based on Carl Jung’s Type Theory. The Peps Learning Style Inventory, an assessment that looks at preferred learning styles measured by 20 conditions under which students prefer to learn and do their best. These assessments are delivered in conjunction with a comprehensive student
success electronic text that is designed to help guide college students towards achieving their potential, and to assist faculty, advisors and counselors in giving their students the best guidance possible. This is the most complete and comprehensive solution to managing the difficult transition and retention issues facing students, colleges, and universities. With topics concerning college, career, and lifelong success the text engages students in learning by incorporating interactive activities, giving students an opportunity to reflect and develop their natural gifts.

The curriculum was designed by Dr. Marsha Fralick, who is a leader in the field of educational counseling and personal development and is actively involved in The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience events.

**Engaging an Entire Campus Community in the First-Year Summer Reading Program**

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The goals of the Summer Reading Program for incoming students include participating in a shared intellectual conversation with the campus community; expressing ideas about a common text, and responding respectfully to competing ideas others bring to the discussion. A connection to the University mission statement (i.e. civic engagement and global citizenship) is used to structure a book selection each year. Despite expanding the program to include traditional first year, transfer, and international students, first year resident advisors and student leaders, faculty, staff, local alumni, and Board of Trustee members, engaging the entire campus community has yet to be achieved. Regardless of a faculty demand to raise the intellectual climate of New Student Orientation, staff participation has significantly exceeded faculty involvement. Findings over three years suggest that the type of book chosen has little impact on whether or not the book is read during the summer; mixed results have been achieved regarding the success of signaling the intellectual campus community. Initiatives including inviting a speaker (i.e. author, content expert) to campus within the first few weeks of the semester, structuring co-curricular activities (i.e. volunteer opportunities, theatre productions, discussion panels), and using of technology (i.e. blogs, innovative library resources) have been employed to initially engage and subsequently reinforce the message to the campus community.

**Assessing the First Year Experience: Using NSSE and Qualitative Approaches to Enhance Student Success**

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First-year student success is no accident. Student engagement in intentionally designed educationally-purposeful activities is necessary to achieve desirable learning outcomes. More than 1,200 baccalaureate institutions have used their National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results to assess the quality of their undergraduate experience, and many have used their data to guide the development and improvement of their first year experience.

Using information collected from institutions for the past several years, we will highlight a diverse representation of a dozen institutions using student engagement data to assess first-year experiences. These examples are potentially instructive for institutions that have NSSE data, but also for institutions needing evidence of the potential for such initiatives and those considering different assessment models.

NSSE results provide campuses with information about the extent to which first-year students are involved in educationally purposeful activities. However, the data do not pinpoint specific practices and programs that account for the results. Most institutions simply need additional insights into how and why first-year students are engaged. Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice), a national study of high-performing institutions, identified an array of effective institutional policies, practices, and programs related to creating clear pathways for first-year student success. To be valuable, however, the DEEP principles must be translated to individual campuses. The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success (ISES) is one tool to assist campus leaders to assess and shape the conditions for first-year student success at their own institutions. The second part of this session will introduce ISES as a qualitative assessment tool to gain insights into first-year student engagement and the institutional conditions, programs and practices that promote success. The ISES protocol will be shared with participants and we will discuss how it can be used to frame a campus first year experience self-study or as a protocol for focus groups with students, faculty and staff.

**Linking a Summer Bridge Program to Themed Learning Communities**

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Many colleges offer a summer bridge program and even more offer learning communities for first-year students. Few, however, link the two initiatives. The Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Summer Academy Bridge program, which began in 2001 with 18 students, served 375 students this summer, representing approximately 1/5 of the entering freshmen class. Since the beginning, bridge participants at IUPUI have moved into linked learning community first-year seminars for their fall semester. In 2007, 57% of the bridge students enrolled in Themed Learning Communities (TLCs), and the remainder enrolled in IUPUI’s traditional learning community sections. All include a first-year seminar course.

Annual retention, GPA, and satisfaction assessment results have always indicated that students who enroll in both the Bridge Program and the TLCs are more likely to be retained, to be academically successful, and to feel positive about their experiences at IUPUI. By all measures, the linkage of the Bridge Program to the TLCs has proved to be a powerful pedagogical initiative for enhancing the academic success and satisfaction of IUPUI freshmen. Nevertheless, the logistics involved in linking the two programs are challenging and even daunting.

The presenters will provide brief descriptions of IUPUI’s successful Bridge and TLC initiatives, share assessment data for both programs, and concentrate most of the presentation on the nuts and bolts of making successful links between summer bridge programs and learning communities. An IUPUI faculty member, who has participated in both initiatives, will offer the faculty perspective on working with Health Professions majors in the Bridge and TLC programs. Handouts will include copies of assessment results, initiation descriptions, and other relevant materials.

**Strategies for Integrating Curricular and Co-curricular Learning in the First College Year**

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We will begin our session with introductions of the presenters, and will ask audience members to introduce themselves with regard to their role in working with first-year students.

Next, we will engage the audience in a reflective writing activity where they will assess the current level of co-curricular learning integration in first-year seminars on their campus.

Next, we will briefly discuss the literature related to the impact of co-curricular learning on first-
Next we will discuss the work done at IUPUI where the presenters (a student affairs administrator and an academic dean) will share best practices for curricular – co-curricular integration.

Next we will have the participants in small groups discuss efforts on their current campus toward collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs to enhance the first-year experience. Presenters will prompt groups with questions and then open up for a full-group discussion of best practices.

Next, we will engage the participants to develop an action plan for increasing cross-campus collaboration on their campus to enhance first-year seminar student learning.

Finally, we will end with a question and answer period.

**Intersections of the American Democracy Project and the First-Year Experience**

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The IUPUI presenter will discuss aspects of first-year programming including the “Template for First-Year Seminars at IUPUI” and the process by which this five-member instructional team designed the new course, Discover Indianapolis. The presenter will describe the impetus for course development, including campus and community factors, marketing for the course, and the course itself. Specifically, he will outline the roles played by the instructional team and give a detailed summary of pedagogical techniques used to teach study skills, time management, information literacy, stress management, and campus involvement as well as describing how the final course project integrates IUPUI’s Principles of Undergraduate Learning and students’ new-found knowledge of the city. Also detailed is the specific involvement of student affairs in development of several rich co-curricular learning experiences for the students.

At IPFW, the central academic delivery mechanism for the First Year Experience (FYE) is Learning Communities (LCs). LCs consist of combinations of regular university courses (including, but not limited to, general education, introductory-level, developmental, population and/or theme-based) that share content. Co-curricular activities designed to support the learning objectives of the courses are an integral part of LCs. All faculty are asked to incorporate five co-curricular activities into each LC. The FYE support team has worked to develop activities for
faculty. One of those developments was the FYE Conversation Series. The conversations are presented during the noon hour on Mondays by faculty from across campus and are supported by our student government. These conversations are aimed at increasing civic-mindedness and civic engagement among first-year students. The final activity for the series is a Hunger Banquet where students “experience” the inequitable distribution of food in the world. The IPFW presenter will outline the program, its goals, and assessment measures.

Both presenters will talk about the links between the American Democracy Project and FYE.

**Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners: First-year Student’s Academic Confidence and Student Engagement**

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Students enter college with a variety of high school experiences and backgrounds that influence their success in the first college year. This study examined the academic confidence of entering students and how their level of confidence relates to important indicators of student success.

Research questions
1. What types of high school characteristics and experiences are associated with students’ academic confidence?  
2. How does a students’ academic confidence relate to indicators of success during the first year?

Students were categorized into three levels of academic confidence: low, medium, and high. With regard to research question 1, results indicate that first-year students with low academic confidence report significantly lower levels of high school academic engagement, high school grades, and SAT/ACT scores. In addition, students with low academic confidence also were significantly less likely to have completed a challenging high school math curriculum (calculus and/or statistics), significantly more likely to be first-generation, and were more likely to indicate that they were not sure they would graduate from the college they are now attending.

Research question 2 included three important indicators for success during the first-year: 1) expected academic engagement; 2) certainty students will persist when faced with academic challenges; and 3) self-reported importance of the campus environment to support student success. Results indicate that students with lower academic confidence are less likely to persist when faced with academic challenges, expected to be less engaged, and placed lower importance on the campus
environment to support their success.

Overall, these results indicate that new students with lower academic confidence are less likely to persist in difficult times and less likely to view campus resources as a means for improving their success. Participants will be invited to discuss approaches to supporting students with low academic confidence and determine ways to connect them to educational support resources.

**Cultivating a Classroom Community: Personhood and Strategies**

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We invite attendees to share and evaluate instructional practices that build community within the classroom among first-year students.

We begin with Parker Palmer’s “community of truth” metaphor to introduce different images of classroom learning, and identify their implications for instructors and first-year students. Because we “teach who we are,” we consider how instructors gain self-knowledge and use it to discern its impact on the learning environment. We then transition from philosophy and personhood to the particular strategies that we—facilitators and participants—have encountered or tried. The organizing question is this: How do instructors create contexts that encourage students to see themselves not as passive recipients but as active knowers situated within the community of truth?

The three facilitators will draw on their administrative and teaching experiences with first-year students to facilitate discussion around three themes: (1) experiential learning and classroom activities; (2) curriculum design and assignments; and (3) classroom configurations. The facilitators will solicit participant feedback, map it on posters, and then discuss ways to assess the effectiveness of these strategies and arrangements. Participants will also benefit from resources distributed at the session that highlight some of the facilitators’ ideas and practices.

This roundtable will be both content-rich and interactive, with ample opportunities for input in
ways that will serve as transferable practices back to local campuses. During this part of the session, one facilitator will act as secretary, recording participant suggestions and questions. The session’s facilitators will provide at least five ideas and logistics with immediate application possibilities, and many more ideas will follow from participant input. In the same manner as their past sessions, the facilitators will provide participants with a summary of the session including links, resources and references mentioned by the facilitators and participants. These will all be provided later that day.

**Guiding Students With Personality Assessments—Practice vs. Malpractice**

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Many institutions have turned to personality assessments of one type or another in an attempt to guide students through the transition from high school to college and from indecision to decision concerning major and career paths. The Strong Interest Inventory, Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), StrengthsQuest, Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), DiSC Personality Assessment, and a host of other tools have been enlisted by institutions to facilitate this effort.

Several questions need to be asked in looking at this practice. How effective has the use of these instruments been? What is their proper place in the guidance process? What are the professional and ethical issues that need to be addressed in the use of such instruments?

Credentials to use these instruments can many times be obtained without any formal training in the instrument itself. This has led in some cases to misuse and over-characterization of the application of the instrument’s findings.

This presentation will examine these issues and explore the proper practice of assessment administration contrasted with what might best be labeled “malpractice” of assessment administration in student guidance in the first year of college.

Examples will be provided from current practices by the presenters in how to set up a program that integrates an effective integration of assessments with other tools in the life guidance process. Participants will explore “how to”…

* Debrief rather than just distribute results  
* Identify and develop unbiased language in discussion and debriefing of assessments  
* Provide guiding categories while avoiding stereotypes
* Encourage open-exploration rather than promoting early foreclosure
* Paint a comprehensive picture rather than narrow view of human uniqueness
* Ensure quality control in your credentialing process through proper training

Interactive experiences will be provided for participants that will help them make an immediate translation of presentation concepts to actual practice for their institutions. Research data will be included that support the effectiveness of the advocated approach.

**Moving Beyond Multiple Choice: Creative Assessment Strategies for Millennial Learners**  J. Bradley Garner
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Another semester begins. Students wait expectantly as professors review syllabi, learning objectives, required activities and assignments, and the procedures that will be used to assess their learning. In a vast majority of these classrooms, one of the primary means used to assess student learning will be some form of testing in the guise of quizzes and examinations. For many of the over 15 million students enrolled in degree-granting institutions during the 2007-2008 academic year, it is very likely that written examinations will be a significant factor in determining the degree to which they have “learned” the required course content (often interpreted as their final grade). Extrapolating from the work of Milton (1986), if each of these students are enrolled in an average of eight courses per year, and each course involves an average of two tests, there will be over 240 million tests given during the 2007-2008 academic year. Testing is alive and well in higher education.

There have been several attempts to create criteria for “good” testing practice. Angelo and Cross (1993) have proposed that classroom assessments should be teacher-directed, mutually beneficial (i.e., students in learning, faculty in the assessment of teaching), formative, context-specific (i.e., responsive to the needs and characteristics of students, teachers, and disciplines), ongoing, and rooted in good teaching practice. Wergin (1988) asserts that good practice in assessment results in: 1) Improved teaching and learning, 2) A focus on what is maximally relevant, and 3) A mechanism for informing students about what they know or can do.

This session will focus on providing participants with a minimum of ten ways to assess student learning that go well beyond the traditional tendency to rely on objective assessment strategies.

**When the First Year Really Isn't the First Year**

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Students who enter college frequently bring along college credits. These credits are intended to provide the student with a head start on a baccalaureate degree. However, they may not be as valuable as they are perceived to be. Two experienced academic advisers will lead a discussion about the impact on the first year experience.

Some of the issues to be considered are
- What are the factors driving this trend?
- Does completed coursework preclude participation in curriculum-based learning communities?
- Are these students academically prepared and developmentally mature enough to enroll in advanced coursework?
- Is time to graduation really reduced?
- How do we best advise these students? When does advising begin?

We are interested in exploring institutional responses to this phenomenon and the possibility of future research.

CampusCore, a TRiO Learning Community

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There are many different models of learning communities in colleges and universities across the county. However, CampusCore is unique because it's at a community college and it's affiliated with the TRiO/Student Support Services program. Community colleges serve a different educational role in the community, and therefore, face different challenges than four-year institutions. CampusCore has demonstrated fantastic results to assist in student success in their education.

This poster session will outline the development and components of CampusCore. It will also exhibit the results of the student participants in the program. While giving conference participants an opportunity to ask and discuss the program with the students' advisor and program administrator.

First-Year Initiatives in Community College: Lessons Learned
The needs of community college students are at once similar to and vastly different from those of traditional students at 4 year institutions. In addition to building study skills and involvement in the culture, community college FYE courses need to address "real life" issues of juggling employment, relationships and parental responsibilities with education. Students are overwhelmingly first generation and are often pressured by others, who do not understand the long term payoff of higher education, to abandon their studies.

This session will describe how Ivy Tech Community College of Central Indiana developed the 1 credit hour IVY 101 course and continues to adjust curriculum to meet the changing needs of students. IVY 101 achieved full buy in from the college, including close relationships with Student Services. Tips for creation and maintenance of these relationships will be addressed.

In an institution lacking a formal Orientation program, Academic Advising and IVY 101 work together to support students through pre-enrollment and the first year. Facilitators will explain the development and application of a developmental academic advising model which includes enrollment in IVY 101 to improve student retention and success.

Although FYE courses are often viewed as those "anyone" can teach, it is imperative that the hiring process for instructors is deliberate and calculated. IVY 101 instructors are hired for their instructional style and passion, as much as for their credentials. Instructors must bring excitement, encouragement, and energy to the classroom. They must convey that students can and will succeed with the application of skills learned in IVY 101. Each potential instructor is interviewed by the IVY 101 Program Coordinator and required to attend a course orientation.

Next steps for IVY 101:
* Expand into 3 credit hour course
* Launch common reading program
* Compile and distribute community resource directory to students

Learning from Learning Community Assessment: Reflections on an Evolving Program

Megan France
Orientation Assessment Graduate Assistant
Assessment has the potential to be a powerful and strategic tool in identifying program strengths and weaknesses. Harnessing the benefits of this tool requires thoughtful and effective planning as well as implementation. This session will provide attendees with a greater understanding of what it takes to develop an extensive and sound measurement program. Furthermore, we will review how our program is evolving as a consequence of the assessment results.

Beginning in 2002, initial objectives were developed for the Learning Community program at JMU. Specifically, as a result of living in learning communities, first-year students were expected to 1) feel greater cohesion to JMU; 2) have higher levels of mastery-approach achievement orientation (learning for learning sake); and 3) develop better meta-cognition skills (deeper processing skills) than first-year students who did not live in learning communities. In 2005, annual assessment was conducted to measure these program objectives. The results were encouraging with respect to learning community students’ mastery-approach orientation. Specifically, first-year students who did not live in a learning community decreased in their mastery-approach over the academic year, while students who were participating in learning communities maintained their level of mastery-approach. However, there were no significant differences between the two groups on meta-cognitive skills and on their feelings of belonging to the university. After reviewing several years of assessment results, program objectives were revisited and improved.

This session will overview the assessment results and discuss the reasoning for enhancing program objectives. This session will also provide an opportunity for attendees to consider how they can use our example of a Learning Community Assessment Plan to develop effective assessment on their campuses. Finally, the process of engaging faculty and fostering their integral role in the assessment process will be presented.

“KSU’s University College: Strategic Restructuring to Put Attrition in Reverse”

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Kennesaw State’s University College, formed in 2004-2005, provides an academic home for exploratory students who have not yet determined their academic major and also provides greater visibility and significance to a variety of programs, academic support services, and projects. Many of the programs housed in University College, such as the First-Year Seminar and Learning Communities, have a history of excellence at KSU. Others are relatively new. All of them are focused on promoting student engagement and student success in and out of the classroom.

This institutional initiative panel will address how Kennesaw State University utilizes data collected from the Foundation of Excellence self-study and results from the YFCY and NSSE to design, implement, and assess its student success and retention programs. University College’s strategic restructuring puts attrition in reverse and aligns with the University system Board of Regents’ Retention, Progression, and Graduation (RPG) initiative. Panelists will highlight the revamping of the First-Year Seminar and the issues related to ensuring academic substance in the course. We will also discuss the retention strategy of placing Peer Leaders from the Center for Student Leadership in pivotal roles on First-Year Advising Teams and examine the increasing faculty-student and student-student interaction (via Facebook and other communication technologies). Finally, we analyze how the creation of a new Early Alert system has contributed to successful collaborations among faculty, academic administrators, and student personnel administrators and sparked a renewed focus on student retention and success. University College works closely with the other Academic Colleges, the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, the Center for Student Leadership, the Institute for Global Initiatives, the Office of Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Success and Enrollment Services to provide academically excellent programs and services that enhance the college experience for all students.

We will present assessment data (including ANOVA to assess group differences of three cohorts via student GPA, declaring a major, and students’ understanding of Gen Ed) to show outcomes for student persistence and retention, academic performance, and student satisfaction.

**Blueprint for Success: A Grassroots Initiative at a Two-Year College**

Wendy Lingo
The concept of College 101 was developed by a Kirkwood Community College Quality Improvement Team (KQIP) comprised of a team of faculty, staff and administrators. In spring 2005, that team proposed implementation of College 101. The KQIP Steering Committee approved our proposal in spring 2005.

Four members of the KQIP committee volunteered to work on the curriculum development for the fall semester of 2005. Chickering’s Theory of Identity Development provided the theoretical and philosophical basis for the objectives of the course. We developed common course assignments with those objectives in mind.

Fall 2005, we marked our first offering of College 101. We had 10 sections on the main campus and 3 on satellite locations. The course was a 2-credit-hour course, taught by a cross-section of faculty and administrators. Student success measures of persistence, number of credit hours taken in subsequent semesters and term GPAs provided a strong rational for continuing the program.

By fall 2006, we moved the course to 3 credit hours to accommodate both instructional and student needs. We offered 23 sections, taught by a cross-section of faculty, staff and administrators. We continued to document stronger levels of persistence, number of credit hours taken and higher GPAs for College 101 completers.

By fall 2007, we increased the course offering from 23 sections to 32. We have 33 instructors serving approximately 700 students. One section uses a team-teaching approach. The shared curriculum continues to provide the foundation for the course that drives the collaborative efforts of all involved in the College 101 initiative.

Due to the diversity across the college, including faculty, staff and administrator involvement, the College 101 initiative continues to evolve from a grassroots effort into an embedded part of the college culture.
When Administrators Teach a First-Year Experience Course

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Historically, first year experience courses have been taught by faculty and staff at most colleges and universities. At Kirkwood Community College, there have been administrators teaching the first year experience course, College 101, since the first semester that it was offered. In fact, the number of administrators in the first year experience classroom has increased.

The concept of College 101 was developed by a Kirkwood Community College Quality Improvement Team (KQIP) comprised of a team of faculty, staff and administrators. In spring 2005, that team proposed implementation of College 101. In Fall 2005, we offered College 101 for the first time. There were 10 sections on the main campus and 3 at satellite locations. By fall 2007, we increased the course offering from 23 sections to 32. We have 33 instructors serving approximately 700 students. One section uses a team-teaching approach. The shared curriculum continues to provide the foundation for the course that drives the collaborative efforts of all involved in the College 101 initiative.

This session focuses on the perspectives of administrators in the first year experience classroom. The experiences of administrators in the classroom will be shared in this presentation. The presenters will share their reasons why they continue to teach this first year experience class. They will also discuss their reasons why administrators should be in the first year experience classroom and what type of administrators will succeed in this class.

This session will also focus on the unique challenges of administrators as they balance administrative responsibilities with the responsibility of teaching this class. The presenters will discuss how they have successfully continued to teach this class more than one semester. The issue of pay for teaching this class will also be discussed.

Undecided and Over-Technologized: Using an Interactive, Multimedia Approach to Better Connect with First-Year Students Exploring Majors and Careers

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Our First-year students are part of the high-tech millennial generation. They download music, connect through social networking sites, and text message for instant communication. As Prensky (2001) states, “they have been networked most all of their lives.” First-year undecided students are no exception, and technology can help first-year seminar instructors reach students with modes of delivery familiar and preferred by them. According to Prensky (2001), “today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors.” Current literature shows the benefit of using classroom technology to address this difference to reach the millennial student (Carlson, 2005; Lightstone, 2006; Tucker, 2006). Oblinger and Oblinger state that these students are “more comfortable in image-rich environments than with text” (2005). Likewise, research shows that the use of technology, such as personal response systems, increases students’ understanding of the material (Crouch, Fagen, Callan, and Mazur, 2004).

This presentation is designed to show how we used technology to connect with our students by producing and using custom videos, collaborating with campus resources, integrating personal response technology, and assessing student learning and satisfaction. Attendees will
• review the literature on students’ need for and use of technology, as well as the effectiveness of using technology
• learn how we produced custom videos dealing with stereotypes about music, majors, and careers
• learn how we collaborated with campus resources to develop, acquire, and use technology
• use a personal response system to learn how our students used this technology
• view the custom videos and play a video-based major exploration game
• receive suggestions on using videos and personal response systems
• learn how to assess student learning and satisfaction with the integration of technology.
Attendees will receive copies of the PowerPoint and the results of our assessments and will be encouraged to share their own experiences.
Little Things Count

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This Roundtable Discussion will share and discuss those very simple things that participating institutions have done to increase first year student satisfaction and, hopefully, retention. For example, the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts sends out birthday cards to freshmen with a coupon entitling the recipient to a free birthday cookie at the local coffee house. Simple, but students love it, and they are quite responsive to it, impressed that the institution cares about them. Other institutions do equally simple things that aren't part of large organized programs, but that are effective at creating a supportive environment. This Roundtable Discussion encourages institutions to share those simple things, discuss them, and brainstorm new ones.

Meds, Parents, and AD/HD: Strategies for the New Wave of At-Risk Students

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One of the main challenges of transition into the first year of college is the requirement that students begin to manage themselves with a much higher degree of independence and autonomy. By all accounts, there has been a steady increase in the number of students matriculating at two-year and four-year colleges whose abilities to meet this developmental challenge is significantly challenge. There has been no substantial statistical study of this problem, but a recent survey conducted by Landmark College through the AHEAD organization suggested that the primary concern of most disability services coordinators was executive function difficulties within their student population. At the anecdotal level, almost four out of ten students who matriculate at Landmark College have failed out of college elsewhere—in most cases despite having above average or superior SAT scores, intelligence testing, and high school grades.

Developments in cognitive neuroscience and its various branches strongly support the hypothesis that about five to ten percent of the student population has significant challenges in the realm of self-management and executive function, whether labeled under the category of AD/HD or Non-Verbal Learning Disorder (and, increasing, Asperger's syndrome and/or high-functioning autism.) The issues may vary according to the specific condition, but the reality is the same. High school competence and success made possible by the support of families (often the "helicopter parents" described in current media), school systems with increasingly well-defined support structures, and, quite often, medication administered by parents and by school nurses in loco parentis, falls apart completely in the face of the developmental transition to college.
This presentation will focus primarily on describing and detailing the problem, with a particular emphasis on creating a more three-dimensional understanding of how various diagnostic labels can be understood in terms of the challenge to self-management, and also how to see more clearly the nature of the role of parents and, often, medication, in the management of academic performance in the high school years.

Based on this framework, the second part of the presentation will review practices developed at Landmark College to account for these transitional challenges, with particular emphasis on the vital role of communication with matriculating students and their families during the period before the first semester begins. Excerpts from the Landmark College Discussion Guide for new students will be shared.

Judging Judgment—The American Jury System on Trial in the First-Year College Writing Course

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At Lehigh University, First-Year Writing focuses on the skills of interpretation, analysis, critical thinking, and argument. The second of the two-semester requirement introduces students to the interpretative and rhetorical skills of civic discourse, and to active participation in American democracy.

“Crime and Punishment in America,” a second-semester course that featured substantial reading, films, guest speakers and symposia, and other experiential inquiry, had four units: (1) speculating about the causes of crime; (2) evaluating the American jury system; (3) seeking solutions to the problems with America’s prisons; and (4) making an interpretive claim about the rhetoric of Tim Robbins’ death penalty film DEAD MAN WALKING.

This case study examines student performance in the unit on the jury system, which began with the controversial claims of Paul Butler, a professor at George Washington University Law School whose article “Selective Racially Based Nullification Can Create Justice” argues that African-American jurors should acquit African-American defendants whom they know to be guilty of nonviolent crimes. His claim is that the entire criminal justice system is biased against African Americans, and that the jury presents an opportunity for the minority to challenge “the tyranny of the majority.”

In the rest of the unit, students learned about the problems of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution in practice as they examined complex elements of the jury system such as unanimous and majority verdicts, peremptory challenges, and jury nullification, adaptations that students came to recognize as attempts to facilitate justice within a society rife with bias. Inquiry culminated with
a guest speaker, a former member of the Pagans motorcycle gang who, after spending seven years of a life sentence for rape in a Delaware state prison, was released when new incontrovertible evidence of his innocence moved the governor to commute his sentence to time served.

Students evaluated the effectiveness of the jury system, basing their assessment on the effectiveness of one of its elements (i.e. peremptory challenges, the unanimous verdict, jury nullification) in seeking justice within a culturally diverse society.

In assessing the effectiveness of the course, the presentation will rely heavily on close examination of student written work.

**Energizing FYE with Technology**

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In this session, attendees will learn how support the mission of their institution, measure student learning through performance and outcome based assessments, meet regional and state accreditation requirements, address program accreditation requirements, and provide evidence of student learning by using technology in the most efficient and effective way.

With the help of technology, students introduced with such tools as e-portfolios have the ability to reflect upon their own growth and learning experiences throughout their college career. When exposed to e-portfolios within their First-Year Experience course, students gain intricate skills that can be utilized well beyond the completion of college. Through their online portfolio, students can demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, and growth through their own personal collection of diverse works.

In the same way, institutions can use student e-portfolios to assess and measure evidence of student learning, outcomes, and competencies. Therefore, the requirements of their accreditation agency can be met, as well as the mission of the institution fulfilled.

LiveText will discuss and present samples of university portfolios that address the needs of both student and institutional requirements. In addition, attendees will observe how the right set of tools and processes can lead to both student and institutional success. In addition, special guest speakers will share their firsthand experiences using LiveText e-portfolios and assessment tools in their First-Year Experience programs.

**The Blueprint for Welcome Week**

Darrell Ray
The manner in which campuses welcome and acclimate new students to the environment may directly impact student satisfaction and ultimately retention. Welcome week activities are generally the first opportunity a campus has to engage the student body and establish rapport. The session will provide a detailed examination of the planning, execution, and assessment of welcome week activities. While the session information is presented with the assumption of centralized coordination of activities, seated within the Division of Student Affairs, information presented will be applicable to any campus setting.

An initial overview of the historical evolution of welcome weeks will be presented along with the institutional structure of the presenter’s institution. A review of the student assessment process conducted by the presenter will be shared. During this section the participants will review the assessment instrument utilized, data obtained and received direction on how to conduct a specific campus assessment. Discussion of how to structure a planning committee will also be highlighted, with specific emphasis given assessing the political nature of campus relationships and departments.

Beyond assessment, specific programming initiative ideas and methodology for creating campus specific initiatives will be offered. The importance of program collaboration and facilities planning will be included.

The final section of the session will cover technical aspects of developing a strategic marketing and outreach plan. This will include insight on establishing campus coalitions, institutionalizing certain events, and involving academic affairs. Details will be shared on how to partner with the either admissions or orientation to implement the communications plan with new incoming students. Special attention will be given to marketing to transfer and non-traditional students.

The conclusion section will allow participants to engage one another and share best practices from their respective campuses.

**Impact of a Short Pre-First-Year Program on Retention**

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Can a short-term, content-focused pre-freshman program have an impact on retention of students in the biology major? The Biology Intensive Orientation for Students (BIOS) Program was assessed to determine the impact of a 5-day intensive pre-freshman program on retention of biological science majors at Louisiana State University. The program was offered during the last full week before the beginning of the fall semester. It combined content lectures and examinations for BIOL 1201 - Introductory Biology for Science Majors, as well as learning styles assessments and informational sessions to provide the participating students with an intensive preview of the requirements of BIOL 1201, as well as the pace of college. Students were tracked following their BIOS participation, and their progress was compared to that of a control group composed of BIOL 1201 students who were identified as the academic matches to the BIOS participants (high school GPA, ACT score, and gender), along with students on the BIOS waiting list who had applied to participate but were not accepted due to space constraints. The BIOS participants performed significantly better and had higher semester success rates (grade of A, B or C). At the beginning of their junior year their retention rate in the major was much greater that of the control group (83.33% versus 57.41% respectively). The percentage in the major and on-track to graduate in four years was almost double that of the control group (46.3% versus 24.1% respectively).

From Reactive to Proactive: Academic Coaching for Student Success

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Initially, our efforts focused on working with students, primarily second semester freshmen, on academic probation. We provided one-to-one "coaching" for these students. More than half of the students on AP chose to participate in the program. Their results were consistently impressive: higher grades and higher persistence rates at statistically significant levels.

We asked ourselves, "if the program works so well with students who are already in academic difficulty, what kind of results would we see if we offered the program pro-actively to high risk
students before they stumbled academically?" The Academic Coaching and Assistance program was born.

We identify high risk freshmen (and now transfer students) based on their entering characteristics. Each student is enrolled in a 1 credit hour study strategies course taught by their academic coach. In addition to the weekly class, the students have weekly individual appointments with their academic coach. During these sessions, the students focus on goals, problem solving, time management and other topics that are key to their success. Professional staff in Academic and Career Services serve as the Academic Coaches.

Results are monitored every step of the way; performance and persistence data are gathered and analyzed of participants and non-participants. We consistently see improvements in the majority of participants.

The presentation will focus on the structure of the program, how the program fits into a network of support provided by Academic and Career Services, and ways in which participants can replicate this program at their institutions. Handouts will include samples of communications to students, syllabi and other materials that participants can use to shape their own programs. There will be ample time for questions and interaction between the presenters and the participants.

The First-Semester Experience: Preparing Students for Success

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The First Semester Experience: Preparing Students for Success presentation discusses the origin and evolution of the advising process at Madisonville Community College from the Traditional Model to the Revised: First Semester Experience Model in an effort to improve student success.

Session participants will enter the workshop as a first semester student to provide the participants with a snapshot view of the interaction between the advisor and the first semester student. After providing the participants with a brief “first semester experience”, the presentation will discuss the advising challenges faced by an Open Door College and the effect upon the at-risk student and the rationale for the change in the process.

The lessons learned and the benefits gained from the migration to the new model will be discussed, highlighting improvements to the process and the creation of additional student support structures.
The session will end with allowance of time for questions.

**From Theory to Practice: Research-Based Strategies for Teaching the First-Year Seminar**

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Five theoretical principles emerge as recurrent themes in the scholarly literature on student success:  
(1) Personal Validation—student success is more likely to be realized when students feel personally significant, i.e., when they feel recognized as individuals and that they matter to the institution. (2) Personal Meaning: student success is promoted when students find meaning or purpose in their college experience and see relevant connections between what they’re learning in college, their personal life, and their future goals. (3) Active Involvement: student success increases with the degree or depth of student engagement in the learning process, i.e., the amount of time and energy students invest in the college experience—both inside and outside the classroom. (4) Social Integration—student success is enhanced through human interaction, collaboration, and formation of interpersonal relationships between the student and other members of the college community—peers, faculty, staff, and administrators. (5) Self Reflection—student success is strengthened when students: (a) reflect on and “internalize” their learning experiences, transforming these experiences into a form that relates to what they already know or have previously learned; and (b) gain self-awareness of how they are learning and thinking.

This workshop will focus on how to transform these theoretical principles into specific strategies that may be implemented in the FYE course through classroom learning activities and out-of-class assignments.

**Charting Their Own Courses: Directed Self-Placement**

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The Freshman Orientation experience is a crucial factor in developing and retaining successful students who are happy at the schools they have chosen. Yet too often the new student’s first
experience at orientation is a series of placement tests in composition and mathematics. Though student affairs has long known that placement testing during orientation creates a very stressful atmosphere and a high level of anxiety, this placement procedure is still a common tool used by many institutions. Some schools rely on a combination of SAT scores with writing samples or portfolio reviews instead, but these testing alternatives still require a critical review or judgment of student work by the faculty. At orientation students still nervously await their placement results, and whatever community building activities that had been planned are sidelined by the announced placement decisions. The positive and hospitable learning environment the institution strives to achieve may never come to fruition given the unfavorable circumstances.

Three years ago, Marymount University instituted a new initiative, Directed Self-Placement (DSP), to create a more welcoming student centered orientation atmosphere. This presentation will illustrate how Marymount transformed its Freshman Orientation program by using an in-house web based DSP program to place incoming freshmen in English and mathematics courses. The presentation will explain how the directed self-placement approach evolved as a collaborative effort among various orientation stakeholders: student development and academic affairs administrators, information technology personnel, and the English and Mathematics faculty. 
• demonstrate how students navigate the web based program to make informed choices regarding their English and mathematics placements.
• discuss the challenges and rewards of changing a University’s orientation culture.
• report on three years of student DSP assessment results.
• outline future plans for expanding the online format to include freshmen course scheduling.

Training Effective Peer Mentors

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Each year, McDaniel College conducts training for 40 to 50 peer mentors, including peer mentors who work with our First Year Seminars, peer mentors who guide our new international students, and peer mentors who work with transfer students (also considered first-year students). Leadership of the program rests with the Assistant Dean for First Year Students, housed in Academic Affairs, who works closely with a Peer Mentor Advisory Board. The training continues to evolve each year in response to feedback from first-year students, faculty, and the peer mentors themselves.

The poster session will include handouts detailing each part of the process:
• Peer Mentor Selection
• Spring Training
• The Contract
• Orientation Training
• Ongoing Training in the Fall Semester
The poster itself will highlight specifics of the five-day orientation training (such as establishing boundaries, responding to high-risk drinking, assisting a faculty member).

Distinctive features of peer mentor training include the fact that it pulls together Academic and Student Affairs. It trains students to fill multiple roles—as teaching assistants, as role models and confidantes for new students, as sources of information about the campus community, student conduct rules, and academic requirements. On our small campus, being a peer mentor is an instant identifier as being intelligent, caring, and hard-working, and as a consequence, there is competition to get one of the coveted peer mentor positions.

**FYS as a Locus for Faculty Development: Creating Mini Learning Communities**

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The First-Year Seminar Program at Middlebury College has, in its 20-year history, become a locus for faculty development in pedagogy and for curricular experimentation. To examine this role of our Seminar Program, we will present two significant transformations of our campus climate to which the Seminar Program has contributed. First, we now house Middlebury students for their four years in one of five clusters of dormitories called “Commons,” which students enter when faculty affiliate their First-Year Seminar with one of the Commons. Second we will look at how bridges have been built from the academic to both the residential and the professional staff dimensions on campus in the form of Seminar Resource Teams. Beginning in 2004 we integrated teaching and learning services -- the support for research, writing, advising, and educational technological -- into teams of professional staff and student peer mentors (a reference librarian, an educational technologist, a peer writing tutor, and an "ACE" or Academic Consultant for Excellence) which were then assigned to each seminar instructor. We will look at the work adjustments made on all sides, and at the synergy that results when campus-encompassing affiliation works well. We will discuss how this teamed approach to integrated teaching/learning support can prod seminars to become mini learning communities in which both faculty and students take more risks, are more ambitious in what they ask of themselves, and move naturally toward giving back to the community from which their resources are drawn. We will look at two seminars from Fall, 2006 to examine the impact on all participants in these mini teaching/learning communities.
A Holistic Exploratory Program: 22 Years and Growing

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The Exploratory Program has been in existence since 1986. Beginning with 137 students and 10 volunteer advisers, the program has grown to 900 students and 130 volunteer advisers. This program has won the NACADA Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Institutional Advising Program. This poster session will highlight the key elements involved in the Exploratory Program. These holistic elements include a web page, videos on majors and minors, an Improve My Performance Program designed to help students raise low grade point average (GPA), role of volunteer advisers, and the summer training of these advisers. Statistics on the retention rates, average GPA and credits earned, and majors selected will be presented for all graduates, students still at the institution and students who have left the institution. Content of the summer training program for all advisers, the process and work with low GPA students, the recruitment of volunteer advisers, and the initiative of establishing a Campus Wide Advisory Committee will be available for interested conference participants and especially for those attendees who plan to establish or enhance a similar program at their institution. Finally, the recently developed first year seminar for Exploratory students and its compliment, a resident hall living-learning experience, will be featured. All participants are encouraged to ask questions and concerns of the poster session leaders, as the main goal is the sharing and exchange of information on the development and success of Exploratory programs.

Poster Learning Outcomes:

1. Discover a successful program and strategies for working with Exploratory students

2. Explore strategies about building a comprehensive and continuing volunteer adviser recruitment and training program

3. Discuss techniques, strategies and outcomes for adviser intervention—Improve My Performance Program for low GPA students

Extended Orientation vs. Content-Rich First-Year Seminars: A Lesson in Contrasting Models

Lynn Marquez
More than fifteen years ago, Millersville University began offering discipline specific one-credit seminars for students in selected majors. In 2001, findings of the drug and alcohol taskforce generated implementation of holistic living/learning communities anchored by a one-credit freshman seminar for exploratory freshmen. Students participating in the program lived in the same residence hall with an assigned upper class peer mentor and were block scheduled in a one-credit seminar with either their freshman English or communications course. This FYE experience met with great success as evidenced by increased enrollments in the program, expansion across campus to students in more majors, and higher retention and student satisfaction rates. Assessment findings indicated that, while the seminars were successful in engaging students with the University and faculty typically enjoyed teaching the seminars, some students were unhappy that the course did not count for general education credit and faculty often found it difficult to engage students in meaningful dialogue on liberal arts issues. In 2005, to address these concerns and enhance learning, the University piloted three-credit “passion” courses. The courses were proposed by faculty who had a passion for both teaching a subject that did not necessarily fall within typical disciplinary bounds and encouraging students to engage in the University community. These seminars have also met with great success among both students and faculty. Starting with five “passion” seminars in 2005, enrollment has grown and fifteen seminars enrolling approximately 300 students were offered in the fall of 2007, with an additional two seminars, enrolling roughly 50 students, to be offered in spring 2008. Three-credit courses allow students to engage with faculty on a disciplinary subject, participate in the community through service-learning, and learn the typical (or exceptional) expectations of college life in a more relaxed and informal academic setting. The strengths, challenges and lessons learned from this process will be shared.

Leadership Begins With Day One: A Combined Residential, Academic, and Service-Learning First-Year Community

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The Day One Leadership Community is an outgrowth of 20 years of successful FYE programs at Mississippi State University. This program is our biggest and best ever, and a reflection of an institutional commitment to give leadership, character development, and FYE high priority.

Components of Day One include: living together in a specially modified and staffed first-year residence hall; enrollment in a purpose-built 2 credit hour Leadership Forum developed by our Leadership Team and taught by three John Grisham Master Teachers; enrollment in one of nine “pods” of 25 Day One students taking a selected core-curriculum course together; optional enrollment in a large, popular section of General Psychology taught by a Master Teacher and FYE expert; and enrollment in one of 36 “action teams,” generally 4 to a “pod,” that each connect to a different “community partner” for two hours of service-learning per week per student. The service-learning component of Day One is extensive and run by a highly trained Service-Learning Coordinator with that academic specialty. As part of the Leadership Forum course, each “action team” proposes, develops, carries out, and presents its own unique service-learning project, linking the academic content of the course to service and leadership activities in the community. Special touches include a Day One Jumbotron, blogging, and a “syllazine” (a slick and engaging cross between a syllabus and a magazine) that is, to our knowledge, unique.

Methods, materials, successes, challenges, and outcomes will be shared, including a recruiting tool that turned out to be more effective than all the rest put together. The 230 students and nearly 50 faculty, administrators, and professional staff who comprised the “alpha class” of Day One invite you to share in our excitement about this innovative program. At Mississippi State University,
leadership begins with Day One.

Creating a Web: First-Year Program Integration to Achievement and Engagement

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In spring 2006, the NSE team identified two department activities in need of strengthening, the early identification of students in jeopardy, and student participation in programs on first-year transition issues. NSE redesigned these initiatives and strategically integrated them into the New Student Seminar to better monitor student performance, increase engagement, and ensure the needed student and instructor participation. This integration was piloted in fall 2006 and, with campus-wide support, has become an effective solution.

The New Student Seminar is a one-credit, graded, required General Education course. Through this integration, Seminar instructors complete online alerts that are routed to the NSE First-Year Counselors’ inboxes, enabling them to reach out to struggling students in a timely manner. The integration also incorporated a course requirement to promote engagement. Seminar students attend two events in the programming series on first-year transition issues hosted by campus partners and write reaction papers about them. Tracking and survey data have illustrated the impact of “webbing” the three areas of the department

Welcoming 2,100 first-year students to campus this fall, MSU is the second largest and fastest growing university in New Jersey. It draws its students from neighboring counties, contributing to its ethnic, cultural, social, and economic diversity. Rated a medium-selective institution, MSU has an 82% first-year student retention rate - a level more akin to that of highly-selective institutions according to the Consortium for Student Retention Data.

New Student Experience serves as a driving force for first-year curricular and co-curricular activities. Its activities include New Student and Family Orientation, convocation, Fall Frenzy, academic counseling, monitoring of students in academic jeopardy, Learning Communities, a Peer Leadership program, and Alpha Lambda Delta. The department is staffed by a Director, an Associate Director, a Coordinator of Orientation and Family Programs, four First-Year Counselors, a Program Assistant, and 20 Peer Leaders.

Using a Comprehensive Assessment Model in First-Year Programs to Enhance Student Success and Retention

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This session will show how the assessment process will can drive program success. Since its inception in 1995, the FYC has used assessment to demonstrate program effectiveness, enhance student learning and development, and drive improvement. The assessment process and model has allowed the program to be able measure how effective it is in meeting the stated program goals and objectives.

The assessment process is multifaceted as the FYC program includes many components. The assessment areas include student learning and development, student involvement and connections, student performance, and FYC advising and teaching. A strength of FYC’s assessment program is the use of multiple and varied methods to assess student learning and program outcomes.

These assessment model, process, methods, and tools will be shared. The presenters will emphasize how the assessment model was built into the program at its inception, how the process refreshes and reframes the program, how the outcomes have helped to educate the public and how assessment has been instrumental in changing University perceptions about the program. The adaptability of the model to other programs will also be discussed.

**Increasing Faculty “Buy In” in FYE**

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This presentation explores a series of incentives that respond to the question: What’s in it for me? Through participation in a year-long Foundations of Excellence self-paced assessment to identify what faculty are most interested in and concerned about when it comes to participating in a First-Year Experience Program, one mid-sized public university was able to go from offering skills-based classes that faculty were disinclined to teach to a series of theme-linked, rigorous courses, situated in the disciplines. Upon analysis of quantitative and qualitative survey data along with
FYE task force and Policy Center for the First College Year recommendations, administration and staff of a newly formed FYE Program at this urban commuter university located in the Midwest were able to create a thriving FYE program which has garnered faculty interest and support, and has become a signature program for the institution. As part of the presentation, participants will receive a variety of suggestions about how to develop a contextualized plan for identifying the local needs and interests of their students and faculty, along with multiple ways to respond to them.

**If the Shoe Fits: Analysis of Two First-Year Seminars for Different Student Groups**

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This presentation will share our assessment of two different first year seminar courses offered within the same institution and their differential effect on both prepared and at-risk students. Student outcome measures included retention, academic success and academic standing.

This study makes several unique contributions to the literature on first year seminars. Typically, first year seminars are deemed effective when seminar participants demonstrate greater retention rates than non-participants. This approach does not take into effect self-selection and the detrimental statistical effect of the unsuccessful seminar participants (i.e. students who participated in the seminar but earned a low grade). This study examined multiple student outcomes (academic success, academic standing and retention) for three different student groups, 1) successful seminar participants, 2) non-successful seminar participants and 3) non-participants.

Additionally, our institution has a policy by which students are defined as “at-risk” based on specific standardized test scores and/or High School GPA. These students are required to participate in a three credit study skills intensive first year seminar course rather than our one credit transition to college seminar. This provided us with the unique opportunity to directly compare different types of seminars. Despite the “requirement” that students participate in the study skills course, there is no mechanism for enforcing this policy. This results three different enrollment patterns for our at-risk students, 1) study skills participants 2) transition to college participants, 3)
no first year seminar. This enrollment pattern afforded us the opportunity to examine whether the study skills seminar was, in fact, more efficacious for the at-risk students than the transition to college seminar or no seminar intervention.

In addition to presenting our research findings, the poster will provide full details related to both the analysis and results as well as how the outcomes of our assessment impacted our policy for at-risk students, seminar curriculum and retention programs.

Creating a Customizable Textbook: Essentials for Success

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This program session will provide a detailed summary of the experiences Northern Illinois University first-year seminar’s course coordinators had in converting from a publisher provided content textbook to a completely customized, campus authored textbook. The many benefits to developing a customized textbook will be shared in this program session. Additionally, the presenters will provide details of the process - from determining the content, finding authors, establishing a style guide and editing strategy, and creating activities - to working with publishers to develop an appropriate format. Hayden-McNeil Publishing will assist in this presentation by giving participants an understanding of the resources they provided to NIU and the course coordinators during this process.

The following learning outcomes can be expected for this session:

• Participants will be able to identify three benefits to using a completely customized textbook compared to a content-provided customized textbook.
• Participants will be able to recall various forms of assessment used in the development of NIU’s customized First-Year Seminar textbook.

• Participants will be able to identify key constituents necessary to have on board before undertaking such a project.

• Participants will be able to recreate a plan (timeline, assessment strategy, project to-do list) based on NIU’s plan and the course coordinators’ reflection of the implementation process and assessment outcomes.

• Participants will be able to identify obstacles and hindrances that NIU course coordinators faced in the textbook creation process.

Teaching Critical Thinking & Learning to First-Year Students: 30 Years of Experience and Research

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Over the past 30 years, Dr. Timothy L. Walter and his colleagues have developed a validated instructional program of basic critical thinking and learning strategies that are viewed as general education attributes by many institutions of higher education. These critical thinking and learning strategies are typically taught across the liberal arts curriculum. Between 1979-2007, several thousand students received instruction in the basic critical thinking strategies while enrolled in FYE courses, academic support courses, and traditional courses at colleges and universities. The critical thinking strategies that these students have learned are those basic strategies upon which much higher level critical thinking is based, as described in Bloom's Taxonomy. One of the challenges that first year students face is that much of what they are expected to do requires what are thought to be "higher order" thinking skills, but most students haven't had the opportunity to learn or refine the basic "lower" or "mid-level" skills upon which higher levels build. Without systematic use of these basic strategies, students struggle or fail to learn higher level skills. The presentation will focus on introducing participants to the intellectual model upon which these strategies are based and participants will then see how instructors in the classroom can engage students in interactive classroom exercises which facilitate the learning of basic critical thinking strategies that are general education attributes and applicable across the curriculum to all courses. Participants will leave this presentation with the skills to teach students in all courses, including the FYE seminar, the critical
thinking strategies upon which higher level thinking is developed and which make thinking more orderly and effective. Participants will learn how to teach students how to apply these strategies to information whether written or spoken. They will specifically learn how to teach students to apply these strategies to their texts, readings, lectures, and class discussions. With the increased focus on the teaching of general education attributes such as critical thinking in our colleges, we believe that the FYE course at many colleges is the perfect point at which to introduce students to basic critical thinking strategies. This experience provides students with an opportunity to learn strategies in a "user friendly" environment and then apply the strategies across their curriculum.

**Academic Support + Orientation = A Perfect Community College Fit!**

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Over the past four years, a multi-tiered orientation plan has been developing at Oakland Community College, a large, five-campus system with over 55,000 students. The multi-tiered approach provides a deliberate strategy to engage students at the onset of their college experience to help effectively transition them to academic and campus life, begin or continue educational plans, and increase first-year retention. Two levels of the multi-tiered plan are now in place including a one-day orientation prior to start of classes, and an online orientation focusing on student services, campus resources, enrollment information, and instructor expectations.

The third tier includes creating a first year seminar course focusing on academic skill development and persistence. The OCC model, designed to be a two-credit interdisciplinary paired course, pairs an academic course with a FYE course taught by the same instructor. The course introduces students to the culture of OCC, provides an opportunity to build community with peers, faculty and staff, and focuses at an introductory level on skills and information critical to student success. The course optimally will foster interaction with fellow students and faculty, and link theory and practice by creating involvement and community along with academic integration. This course will fill gaps in the traditional curriculum regarding what first-year students need to know.
To support this initiative, highly successful academic programs and services based on best practices are in place and flourish. The programs include supplemental instruction, CRLA certified tutors, and success seminars that support a variety of disciplines and courses from developmental to advanced. One program, based on the SI model, represents a community college initiative where study group leaders meet with students before and after classes to encourage independent learning, personal management, and critical thinking while forming interpersonal relationships in a collaborative setting.

Mixed-method data from students and participating faculty consistently report positive feedback related to helpfulness, study skill growth, learning confidence, and grade expectancy. Other data on CRLA certified tutors, success seminar attendance, and academic support center use will be shared. This information will be beneficial to attendees interested in academic support, orientation, and FYE programs at a community college.

Getting WISE With New Community College Students

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Oakton Community College in suburban Chicago recently adopted the WISE rubric to guide its work focusing on new students: Welcoming, Informing, Supporting and Engaging. This focus grew out of the college's participation in the Foundations of Excellence project that identified four key areas for development: new student orientation, one-stop center for student services, curricular focus on student engagement, and communication with students and among college staff. This session will describe how the college’s culture influenced implementation of these recommendations and will report the results from evaluating the redesigned orientation.

Key elements of the redesigned orientation include a conference model program involving round table discussions with trained student Orientation Leaders, an opening session led by student development faculty using interactive clicker devices, and breakout sessions on: student life, college support services, transitions to college, academic advising, and use of online services. The
use of clickers provided a good way to involve students early in the orientation session as well as to collect data useful in evaluating orientation and planning follow-up activities. The program concluded with a closing session and drawing for a free I-POD. The program included faculty, staff, administrators and student Orientation Leaders from multiple disciplines and departments at the college.

One key finding from the Foundations of Excellence self-study was that Oakton has consistently provided a wide array of services designed for new students but that students perceive the college as issuing a "passive invitation" to use those services. Orientation prior to the redesign had not been required and had historically focused on delivering information to students about the college's services. The redesigned new student orientation relies on a format and facilitation strategies to increase students' perception of Oakton as proactive in supporting their success by providing services across the institution and across students' first year at the college.

**First-Year Student Retention: From Good to Great**

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In the business classic, Good to Great (2001), Jim Collins suggests a strategy for organizations to move from mediocre to excellent performance. Six years ago, Oklahoma City University was faced with declining enrollment, a budget deficit, unstable executive leadership and a lackluster freshmen retention rate of 67%. The university organized a transformation based on the Good to Great model resulting in significant institutional improvements, including increasing the freshmen retention rate to 81% in six years.

This presentation will juxtapose successful institutional initiatives with Collins’ Good to Great framework. The results of these efforts have reaped the institution a 13% increase in freshman retention since 2001, a balanced budget, consistent, excellent executive leadership, endowment and capital growth, and improved rankings in U.S. News and World Report College Rankings.

This presentation will review administrative and academic initiatives that cumulatively enhanced institutional performance. Administrative efforts include a large reduction in force, personnel changes at the executive level, a commitment by the president to increase salaries across the institution, improved hiring practices, and the restructuring of debt. During this 6-year period, new and renovated facilities were made possible largely by generous donors, including a new business school, music school and 366-bed residence hall. Renovated facilities include the student union,
visitor center, dance and arts management building, and student health clinic.

Academic initiatives included securing significant grants for faculty and curriculum development, effective replacement of retiring faculty, and a strengthened governance structure. Purposeful collaborations between academic and student affairs included the implementation of a comprehensive first-year experience program and the hiring of a full-time FYE director, development of strategies for academic success such as an early warning report system, pre-enrollment and mid-term interventions and the activation of a university-wide retention task force focused on employing assessment and institutional data to drive decisions.

Multigenerational Learning Through Student Engagement With Peer Tutor/Mentors

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How can a community college math professor effectively teach a group of new, under-prepared students recently graduated from local high schools? He or she can do so with the help of trained and experienced instructional aides who are able to relate to the students in a manner that the professor cannot: as peer tutor/mentors.

Pasadena City College’s .XL Program is a summer bridge/first-year experience for under-prepared, first-generation college students of Latino descent who place into the lowest level of the pre-college math sequence. For six weeks in summer, 60 .XL students study pre-algebra, acquire life and study skills, receive an orientation to college, and engage in community-building activities on and off campus. The two .XL math instructors and counselor collaborate with two trained tutor/mentors who are also members of previous .XL cohorts.

Social constructivists and learning community research have revealed the power and value of multigenerational teaching and learning. .XL evaluation findings for the five cohorts of summer bridge/first-year experience students suggest that the contributions made by the peer tutor/mentors are significant for all the members of the community: staff, faculty, students and tutor/mentors. .XL students succeed and persist at a significantly higher rate than their non-bridge counterparts. Faculty report a greater sense of commitment to their work, and the tutor/mentors reveal that their responsibility and increased competence have resulted in a greater connectedness to the community and increased understanding of math and English concepts.

The presenters, two tutor/mentors will discuss the .XL Program, the use of non-faculty support,
and, specifically, the collaboration and resulting transformation that have occurred for everyone involved in the .XL Program. They will present quantitative data suggesting the efficacy of summer bridge/first-year experience programs as well as qualitative data that supports the active participation of peer tutor/mentors.

MAP-Works: Supporting First-Year Students’ Success at a Community College

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In 1998 Ball State University developed a collaborative survey project to provide quality information and to share the responsibility for student success, Making Achievement Possible Works. MAP-Works is structured, literally, to help make student achievement possible and to focus on early interventions. It begins with a survey designed to reveal the strengths and talents of first-year students, to help them identify areas for further growth, and to facilitate one-on-one interventions with students at risk. Individual information and feedback based on survey responses are provided to faculty/staff and students. Also, a variety of group summaries are provided to administrators on campus. In 2007, the MAP-Works assessment was reviewed and a version was developed for a community college environment. The community college version was piloted at Pellissippi State Technical Community College (PSTCC) in Fall 2007. Their experience with this project will be discussed in this presentation and will be beneficial to other community college professionals considering a similar process for their campus.

Program Format: The presentation will follow this format:
Part 1: The presentation will provide an overview of the MAP-Works project and the faculty/staff involved at PSTCC
Part 2: The presentation will include a discussion of the reporting techniques, including formats, audiences and examples.
Part 3: Utilization of the results at a community college will be discussed in both an open discussion and small group discussion formats.
Part 4: Finally, the session will end with open discussion and questions.

Identifying and Assessing the Needs of New Students Through Institutional Self-Study

Julie Alexander
Program Associate and Coordinator of Special Projects
Understanding how institutions structure the first year of college for its students helps all academic and student affairs practitioners to be more effective. The Foundations of Excellence self study supports institutions’ work to determine the degree to which they are effective in the delivery of their first year. Specifically, the presenters will introduce a model that utilizes a set of aspirational principles for excellence in the first year and provides an accompanying evaluation process. The goal of this self study is to produce a campus strategic plan for subsequent actions to improve first-year student learning and retention.

This presentation will draw from strategic action items for improving the first year produced by institutions that have participated in the Foundations of Excellence® self study, and results from a national faculty/staff and new student survey on first-year practices and policies. The analysis will emphasize results in three important areas to first-year student success:

- Communication between institutions and first-year students
- Institutions’ role in connecting first-year students with other new students, upper-level students, faculty, etc.
- Academic advising practices effecting first-year students

Examples of what institutions can do to better understand the components of the first year, the role institutional policies and practices can take in enhancing first-year student success, and how institutions can learn which actions will likely be most effective in a given institutional context will be presented. Participants will be encouraged to consider the analysis in light of their own institutional contexts, share how their campus goes about improving the first year, and discuss the degree to which an institutional self study of the first year of college may be beneficial.

**University College: A First-Year Student Neighborhood Focused on Student Success**

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The ethical imperative that guides the student-centered university is that students be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to other ends such as the institution’s financial health or the well being of departments." (University Colleges and the Student Centered University, the Association of Deans and Directors of University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies.) Some universities include a structure that effectively contributes to promoting the qualities of a student-centered university. This unit, often referred to as University College, typically focuses on first-year students. Prairie View A & M University opened its University College (UC) in 2000 as a state-of-the-art freshman residential complex, but it's far more than a set of buildings! UC is a comprehensive freshman program with holistic, intrusive advisement by professional staff. Each student is assigned to a University College Academic Team that is resident-hall based and includes approximately 102 students, a Professional Advisor (PA), a Learning Community Coordinator (LCC), two student Community Assistants (CA) and a Faculty Fellow. The UC model has implemented accessible advisement, academic enhancement, support services/referrals, and co-curricular activities within the residential complex. UC has built a relationship with campus faculty through the Faculty Advisement Coordinators (FACs), the Faculty Fellows (FFs) and the Professional Advisor Liaisons (PAL) programs. The collaboration of the Professional Advisors and the residence hall staff as part of an "academic team" that is focused on student success” runs the gamut from academic programming in the halls to student support referrals to activities targeting financial aid paperwork to off-campus cultural and social development programs. The UC model has shown statistical success in improving freshman retention and academic performance. In this presentation we will discuss the interaction of the UC Team: advisors, faculty, residential staff and students!
It’s important to understand technology and generational differences. We will profile the differences of the earlier generations to present. You will learn how society has played a major role in how the students today think, act, relate, and learn. This presentation will help the advisor better relate when interacting with the millennial student. We will discuss the characteristics, culture and defining events that shape this generation. We will use diverse strategies to help you better understand the millennial generation. Teaching the millennial student is about creating a better learning experience for the millennial generation. Majority of college instructors were born in the Baby Boom era and had a totally different learning style than those students of today. Through this section you will learn about educational problems that students face like short attention spans and lack of certain developmental skills. You will receive suggestions on enhancing learning environments and building better student/teacher relationships with technology. Being able to properly advise the millennial student plays a vital role in his/her academic progression. This section will elucidate the obscure difference between “teaching” and “advising.” Since communication is the key in any academic or professional relationship, this presentation will emphasize on communication tools such as providing proper feedback and avoiding generalizations. The section will also provide information and advisement techniques on comprehending, analyzing, and relating to the millennial student. Mental health is an important factor that will allow you to understand the stability of millennial students. Understanding and nurturing mental health will alleviate potential violence on school campuses and abroad. In this presentation, you will learn key components that will aid in student distress. You will learn warning signs of distress and how to help. You will better understand the importance of assessing mental stability to have a safer and more productive environment.

Culture Shock: New Students and the Language of Success

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New and first-generation students who are making the transition to college need our help in learning the language of the new culture. For many, the vocabulary they used in high school doesn’t have the same meanings in college. This presentation will provide educators with translations and activities for bridging the gap.

Because students’ success in college depends so much on meeting them where they are and getting them where they need to go, it is important that we re-examine what new and first-generation students, who are less likely to be familiar with the vocabulary and procedures of higher education, know and do not know. Sometimes, there are hidden rules that must be learned before students can understand what they need to know to succeed.

This presentation will begin with a short activity for demonstrating the hidden rules of the game. Participants will get first-hand experience on what it feels like to think they know all of the rules and make mistakes while others who definitely know the rules play correctly. Then, the presentation will include an activity focusing on the terms that are used in college classes, but that have double meaning. For example, “retention,” “summer term,” and “due date” have connotations and denotations that are different for faculty and students. Finally, the presentation will end with discussion of strategies and challenges for acclimating new and first-generation students to the culture of college.

All of the active learning activities in the presentation can be used in the classroom with students to help generate discussion about how to cope with the new language and customs of college.

**Putting the Community in a Community College Common Reading Program**

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This presentation will discuss the Common Academic Experience at Pulaski Technical College. This presentation will focus on the planning, implementation, challenges, and assessment of this program.

The Common Academic Experience at Pulaski Technical College is the result of one of the Foundations of Excellence self-study recommendations to increase opportunities (through formal structures) for meaningful student engagement outside the classroom that supports efforts within the classroom. Research shows that students who connect to college are much more likely to
persist, and therefore, the Common Academic Experience was created to help students find ways to connect to the college despite the challenges they face as commuter students.

Because a substantial number of new students must enroll in FY Seminar, this course was selected as the course with the best potential for reaching the largest number of students. In addition, PTC is a commuter college with extremely low levels of participation in any activity outside of class, so it was essential that we create a program that would accommodate a great variety of student schedules and student interest.

First, we decided that at the center of the Common Academic Experience, there should be a common book which would be required reading for all students enrolled in FY Seminar. This book would be the basis for co-curricular assignments within classes and co-curricular activities out of class. Then we decided that students should be rewarded for many levels and types of participation in campus activities, so we created a “Destination: Degree” passport. This passport allows students to receive credit for attending activities and using campus services that fit their schedules.

We also wanted to choose a book with strong ties to the local community so that students and faculty alike could use the larger community as an extension of the campus. During the pilot semester, students in FY seminar read Warriors Don’t Cry by Melba Patillo Beals, one of the “Little Rock Nine.” Many of the Common Academic Experience activities were designed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock and related events.

Supporting Low-Income and First-Generation Students at Purdue University

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This program will focus on the mentoring outreach & support programming provided to students participating in two different programs designed to increase access to and academic success at Purdue University – West Lafayette. Both programs are housed in Purdue’s Student Access,
Transition and Success Programs department.

The first program, the Purdue Opportunity Awards (POA) program, provides students that come to Purdue with high financial need with financial assistance along with mentoring support that facilitates both academic and social integration. The POA program offers a scholarship to at least one student from each of Indiana’s 92 counties, and these students are all low-income (Pell grant-eligible) and tend to be first generation as well.

The second program, the Twenty-first Century Scholars Advocacy and Support program, works with Twenty-first Century Scholars (TfCS) at Purdue. The Twenty-first Century Scholars program, broadly, was created by then Governor Evan Bayh in 1990 as a means of providing low-income students in the state of Indiana a means of attending college. Financially-eligible students sign up for the Twenty-first Century Scholarship in 7th or 8th grades and take a pledge that states they will refrain from drug/alcohol use, achieve a 2.0 GPA and graduate from an accredited high school in the state of Indiana. In fulfilling this pledge, students receive eight (8) semester of tuition at any state institution of higher education. The TfCS Advocacy and Support program at Purdue, funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation for Education, was implemented in fall 2007 to provide support to these students, who are almost always low-income and first generation.

This presentation will focus on how the two peer mentor and support programs were created, their assessment and evaluation, and future directions for the programs. The session will also offer an opportunity for discussion about how to support low-income students in college.

**Mining Real-time Data to Improve Student Success: Lessons Learned from a Gateway Biology Course at Purdue University**

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The transition from high school to college can be a challenge for many students, especially those in sciences and engineering. The typical first-year student’s schedule is usually filled with large
enrollment, low interaction classes. Generally, students in these courses have no indication of how they are doing in a course until after the first exam, by which time chances of success can be greatly limited. Believing that earlier efforts need to be made to identify students at risk of being unsuccessful, a group of researchers came together at Purdue University to actively address this concern. Working off findings established by J.P. Campbell (2005), the project identified at-risk students in an introductory Biology course in Fall 2007 through mining real-time data from the course management system. The goal was to identify students early enough to provide students the opportunity to adjust their behavior (effort) and improve their chances of success.

A predicted student success algorithm was applied at the end of each academic week based on data from the course management and student information systems. Each student was placed into one of three groups based on his/her chance of successfully completing the course – high risk, moderate risk, and not at risk. Students in the low and moderate groups received interventions starting at week 2. Students with a high probability of successfully completing the course received no intervention. The schedule of intervention started mildly with an email reminding students that their effort potentially impacts their grade and encouraged them to use all the resources available to them. Each week the interventions grew progressively sterner from mild encouragement to direct student intervention.

The presentation will provide specific discussions on the models, weekly interventions, and results. The session will provide outline future projects, suggest potential options for other institutions, and provide an opportunity for attendees to discuss their approaches to early identification of at-risk students.

Program Development and Evaluation: Theory Into Practice

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It is generally accepted that greater coherence is achieved when practice is linked to theory. In spite of this understanding, it is often the case that programs are developed with only partial attention to the theoretical foundations that guide our fields of study. This presentation will discuss the process of linking student development theory to first-year program components to increase the probability that important outcomes are addressed. We will also consider how program evaluation can be designed to reflect key outcomes that have been predicted by theory. Process evaluation (how well did we deliver the program?) and outcome evaluation (how did our students change as a result of the program?) will be discussed. Of additional interest is the use of evaluation results to
better understand or inform theory.

A case study will be presented to illustrate how the cycle of theory > program development > evaluation > theory can be accomplished in a student leadership program. Time permitting, participants will have the opportunity to engage in a hands-on activity that applies the session concepts to a first-year program of interest.

The Four Phases of a Successful First-Year Experience Program

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This session will provide handouts that include the full details of a successful first year experience program and the assessment tool used at the end of the first semester. Ramapo College of New Jersey is a highly selective state college located in Northern New Jersey. In fall 2006, enrollment was at approximately 5,500 with approximately 750 first time first-year students enroll annually.

At the College we have implemented a four phase orientation model that has yielded a retention rate of approximately 90% of our first year students. This session will outline all programs that encompass the transition model that runs from June to May. This session will also include the assessment tool used at the end of the first semester to measure the effectiveness of the orientation model and the satisfaction of the first year student population.

FOUR PHASES:
The four phase model includes:
Phase 1 (June/July): One Day Student and Family Summer Orientation
Phase 2 (Labor Day Weekend): Two Day Check-In Programs for Residents/Commuters
Phase 3 (Fall Semester): First Year Seminar/Three Personal Development Workshops/Common Reading/Advisement/ Programming/Freshmen Caucus Election Party
Phase 4 (Spring Semester): Spring Intervention Program/Peer Mentorship Program/End of Year Celebration

ASSESSMENT:
At the end of the fall semester, a modified version of the “Your First College Year 2006” (YFCY) survey titled “Your First Semester” was administered through the FY Seminar Course to all first-year students (n= 750) to measure student satisfaction and adjustment. The “Your First Semester” survey utilized a five point likert scale to measure student perception of their college adjustment. The data was disaggregated to allow for an in depth examination of the following:
The social and academic adjustment of (FGCF) resident vs. commuter
The social and academic adjustment of (FGCF) female vs. male
The social and academic adjustment of (FGCF) by ethnicity

At the end of the spring semester, Institutional Research documented our freshmen to sophomore retention rate at approximately 90%.

Empowering Students: The Process and Impact of FYE Coaching

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Goals of this session include providing participants with an understanding of what FYE coaching is, the outcomes of coaching and the process of coaching. Participants will understand possible reasons why coaching is successful as well as the assessment data that reinforces its benefits.

By empowering students to seek his/her own solutions to challenges inherent to the college transition, coaching allows for greater student accountability, and more informed decision making. Additionally, coaching provides students with a greater connection to faculty and staff as well as an awareness of campus resources. These outcomes, supported by the assessment data, would logically provide for greater persistence and success in meeting challenges and barriers faced during the first year transition.

The presenter will examine the possible reasons FYE coaching benefits students. Participants will hear a brief synopsis of theoretical models that support the coaching model, including Tiedman and O’Hara’s Individualistic Decision Stages and three of Chickering and Reisser’s seven vectors of psychosocial development. At the core of the presentation, the presenter will detail the unique process and impact of coaching at RIT, especially as it differs from counseling, advising and mentoring practices. Presenters will share the RIT vision and philosophy of the coaching process and detail how it is reflected in our supportive relationships with students. Finally, the presenter will share in greater detail the quantitative, qualitative, individual and programmatic level assessment of coaching, and testimonials shared by RIT students present at the conference.

Rounding the First Year: Sliding into Second

Latty Goodwin
As a response to growing recognition within higher education of the need for a greater commitment to students as they transition between the first and second years of college and enter what is commonly called the “Sophomore Slump,” a pilot program was recently initiated at the Rochester Institute of Technology to round out the first year and support students in the transition to their second year. This pilot program, dubbed “Sophomore Boot Camp,” was designed to provide support beyond the first nine months and prevent students from feeling like they have been “dropped” at the end of their first year. Research (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Schaller, 2005; Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000) indicates that expectations rise as students complete their first year—the very same time institutional resources devoted to their perceived needs decline.

As a centerpiece of this three-day conference, held right before the beginning of fall quarter, students explored their strengths using StrengthsQuest (Clifton & Anderson, 2006). Several sessions during the conference provided opportunities for the students to identify and reflect on their personal strengths through interactive group work. With this enhanced understanding, students also spent time with significant professionals from the campus and broader community who challenged the students to effectively utilize on-campus resources and to venture outside of their comfort zones. Throughout the three days, students were exposed to a new network of peers and professionals who could enrich their college experience. This pilot provided students a means to assess their academic trajectory, to expand their definitions of success, to boost both their confidence and likelihood of achieving success, and to facilitate valuable mentoring connections with faculty and others. Within a conference format, FYE instructors served as the visible connectors between the first year and the rest of the college experience.

Resources are often limited in student affairs, and the “Sophomore Boot Camp” provides a model that can be applied in a wide variety of contexts with only a modest investment of resources. The poster presentation will provide a summary of the pilot describing how to implement a similar program by including details about the development process, logistics, curriculum, assessment and outcomes. Given the positive student response on a post-conference survey, non-intrusive and well-timed outreaches to this population are well worth the effort.

References


Rock Valley College is a community college with approximately 4,850 FTE. Located in Rockford, Illinois which is near the Wisconsin border and 90 miles due west of Chicago, RVC has recently participated in the Foundations of Excellence® in the first college year, a self-study process offered through the Policy Center on the First College Year. This program is designed to help institutions evaluate their programs and services aimed at supporting first year students. Through our data collection and analysis, RVC was able to determine our students were having a first year experience that we did not desire for them.

As a result of this experience, RVC decided to focus on designing a FYE program this academic year. During this process, we have asked ourselves several questions which we would like to share in the round table format:
• How do you define FYE at your institution?
• What expectations do you have for your students who participate in your FYE program?
• How do you know that your FYE program meets the needs of your first year students? What are you assessing?
• What are the strengths and challenges of your FYE assessments? What are your findings?
Our approach to the round table is to divide the participants into four groups. Each of the four RVC hosts will facilitate the discussion of all posed questions in their assigned group. Once the discussion time limit has expired, each group will be asked to report out the larger group with their summaries. Ultimately, the RVC hosts will attempt to draw larger conclusions and themes relevant to the discussions. We anticipate sending a written file of the summaries from all 4 groups to the participants.

A Look Into Strategic Development and Outcomes of a First-Year Student Orientation Program

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Rock Valley College is a two-year community college which offers associate degrees in over 60 disciplines for transfer to four-year colleges and services to over 15,000 students annually. As a participant in the Foundations of Excellence®, Rock Valley College has implemented several initiatives to improve student retention rates at the community college level. As we look into best practices and strategies to improve current services, we realize the need to create a program that is both strategic in its approach and responsive to students needs. As a result, Rock Valley College has developed a comprehensive three-tiered orientation program that will aid in the college’s mission to improve retention rates among first-year students. This presentation will not only focus on the development of the three-tiered orientation program, but strategies used for increasing enrollment in a non-mandated course, what works and what doesn’t, best practices, and building assessment tools with results. The first component of the orientation program is the educational planning sessions. These new innovative 90 minute long sessions are designed to familiarize students with pertinent information needed to transition to college and are mandatory for all new credit seeking students. Assessments of these sessions include student satisfaction surveys, retention tools, and student credit enrollment after completion of the session. Next, is the voluntary New Student Orientation event which is held in the fall and spring semesters. This event includes activities such as: a campus tour, campus resources, mock classrooms, and meet-n-greet activities. Student satisfaction surveys are conducted to identify student needs and wants. The final component is the one-credit hour, non-mandated, orientation to college course designed to help students get acclimated to the community college environment. With the help of faculty and staff instructing the course and a 3,000% increase of student enrollment from the year before, a comparison of success indicators for these student cohort groups will be identified.
Integrated Academic Advising: One Campus’ Story of Restructuring Advising to Benefit First-Year Students

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After a retention consultant identified academic advising as a campus concern, a taskforce including faculty, staff and students initiated a thorough assessment of the existing split model advising structure (Pardee, 2000) which included a centralized first-year advising office, and decentralized upperclass advising with faculty advisors. Recommendations based on data analysis were submitted to the Provost. Based on key findings, recommendations to connect students with faculty as early as possible, while maintaining the ongoing support of a professional academic advisor were important considerations. “It is critical that faculty be involved in advising students: the literature amply supports both the need and the value of faculty advising (Kramer, 1995, p. 5).”

Many of the recommendations were accepted, and implementation of the decentralization of campus advising occurred Fall 2007. The newly established model is a dual model of academic advising (Pardee, 2000), where students are assigned both a major faculty advisor and staff advisor in a central office. Based on the importance of providing outreach and assistance for undecided students (Gordon, 1995), and an opportunity to self-assess their interests, abilities, values, learning patterns and connection to course selection, major and occupation choices (Damminger, 2007), two offices – Premajor advising and Career Services were closely aligned to interact with, and provide active support in, the changing system of advising.

Ongoing assessment of academic advising is vital to determine system effectiveness. By involving Institutional Research at an early phase of reviewing current structures, implementation, and establishing a long-term assessment plan, they serve as active partners in determining success. “Institutional researchers who act as campus partners to those who plan for more effective advising programs will find great value in participating in the exciting changes that effective advising can bring to students and other members of the college community (Creamer & Frost, 1995, p. 25).”

Welcoming, Defining Expectations, and Providing Resources for First-Year Students to Succeed

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This presentation will discuss the importance of "Welcome Events" in developing the first year student experience. It will discuss how such event can provide information and resources for
students to reach their full potential within the University environment. The session is meant to be interactive with each participant providing information based on their experiences within their own University climate.

The First part of the discussion will be centered around the development of Welcome Days at SF State. This will be a short synopsis to help provide a context to the discussion. Information provided will include the reason for developing such a program. The discussion will also include other "Welcome Event" models from the various institutions represented in the session.

We will then focus on the objective of such events and how such objectives are or are not met through the scheduled activities. For example, objectives for SF State Welcome Days included:

1.) Improve retention
2.) Facilitate graduation
3.) Connect faculty, administrators, and staff with incoming freshmen
4.) Strengthen a sense of community on campus
5.) Develop academic class identity (Class of 2011)
6.) Strengthen alumni support
7.) Educate students early on regarding University expectations/policies, procedures, and resources
8.) Educate parents regarding University services and resources
9.) Develop a new SFSU Tradition
10.) Compliment current University traditions including Commencement and Homecoming
11.) Promote the University through public and community relations (town and gown)

We will then discuss the challenges of hosting such events on campus including:

1.) Budget/financial resources
2.) Availability of University space/venues
3.) University-wide buy-in and participation
4.) Marketing, promotion and attendance

The final discussion will be around how to best overcome such challenges through learning from colleagues' success stories. We will also discuss the importance of networking and working together with surrounding universities/colleges to best support the continual development of such events.

Civic Learning and the First-Year Experience

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At the closing plenary session of the 2007 Conference on the First-Year Experience, Tom Ehrlich challenged the audience to infuse political engagement and civic learning into FYE programs. He argued that it is essential to become more intentional about civic goals and learning outcomes beginning in the first year as part of a broader effort to promote lifelong engagement.

Many FYE programs do seek to encourage civic learning through such approaches as community service and service-learning, required courses with civic content, and co-curricular activities with a political focus. It is not clear, however, what learning outcomes those programs are intended to achieve and what are effective strategies to help students achieve those outcomes.

We hope to stimulate a lively discussion of these questions in this roundtable session. The co-facilitators will briefly summarize the recommendations and ideas emerging from a “Civic Learning Institute” sponsored by the California State University Office of Community Service Learning, which brought together directors of FYE programs and service-learning offices from across the 23-campus system to generate ideas for programs to meet Tom Ehrlich’s challenge. Then we will ask participants to describe civic learning outcomes for their own FYE initiatives, including “lessons learned” about what was - and wasn’t – successful. We will close the session with a discussion of how we can assess civic learning initiatives more systematically.

The Role of Peer Mentoring and Advising in First-Year Experience and Transfer Transition Courses

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This presentation examines the collaborative efforts of the College of Science and the Student Advising Center at San José State University aimed at motivating and assisting first semester freshmen and community college transfers with becoming successful students at the university. Central to these efforts are Peer Advising programs. “Successes as Transfers” (Science 90T) Peer Advisors (PAs) work primarily with community college transfers, whereas “Success in Science” (Science 2) PAs work primarily with first-time freshmen. With rare exceptions, all PAs are chosen from among the successful graduates of Science 2. These paraprofessionals function both as teaching assistants for the activity sections of their respective courses, and as academic coaches for the students enrolled. Based on our Coach/Mentor/Friend (CMF) model, the PAs “coach” their students in acquiring academic skills such as time management, note taking, and test taking. On a nearly weekly basis, PAs monitor study habits by reviewing the flash cards and planning calendars of each of their students. PAs assist in the instruction of where/how to locate online (and other campus) resources, and review campus policies and procedures.

Our panel presentation/discussion will feature PAs from Science 2 and Science 90T, the Associate Dean of the College of Science, and the Student Development Specialist who pioneered the collaboration between the College of Science and the campus Student Advising Center. They will briefly describe the structure and functioning of the two courses and their roles as peer advisors; the methods used to facilitate student “buy-in”; and the program design and training necessary to prepare PAs to be effective instructional aids and academic coaches. There will be time for Q&A with several PAs.

Peer Mentors and Writing Center Tutors: What our Collaborations Taught us About Serving the SJSU First-Year Students

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In 2005, the SJSU University Library opened a satellite office, The Library Outpost, in the Academic Success Center along with other campus services to provide focused research instruction to the freshmen students as they begin their studies at San Jose State University. Given its proximity to the other programs serving the freshmen needs, the Library Outpost staff has worked to collaborate with these programs to ensure that the students helping students have the basic research skills to share with their student clients. The Library Outpost librarians work with the directors of the Writing Center and Peer Mentor programs and their students who provide direct reference assistance to their clients, offer workshops to students through the Writing Center, and assess the research needs of the writing center tutors and peer mentors through surveys. As a result, the librarians from the Library Outpost receive direct referrals from their work with the Writing Center tutors and Peer Mentors. This poster session will detail the results of the workshops offered directly to the Peer Mentors and the Writing Center tutors and summarize how these workshops impacted the Writing Center Tutors and Peer Mentors serving freshmen students at the Academic Success Center.

**Collaborate and Celebrate: Student Success Belongs to All of Us**

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Participants will learn, discuss and explore a transferable comprehensive model that promotes significant benefits to both students and employees. SUCCESS@Seneca is based on an integrated, service-delivery model that provides the essential connections between academics and college resources. The program focuses on the promotion and support of academic services, personal growth, and career development-working co-operatively to address the needs on the “whole” student. This successful collaboration has resulted in a multi-dimensional approach to improving student success and institutional retention efforts. Participants who attend this session will discover an initiative that engages a diverse and sizeable
SMILE (Student Mentoring in Life and Education): An Inside Look at an Innovative Peer Mentoring Program at a Multi-Campus College

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The presenters will take the participants through the five year development of the SMILE Mentoring Program. The program was started in order to address issues of student retention and engagement and has proven to be an extremely successful program which articulates well with the academic areas.

Through a power point presentation, the presenters will cover activities of the program as well as the delivery of the Mentoring online course which is a Liberal Arts credit for mentors.

The issue of diversity is central to the mentoring program. The student body at Seneca is culturally diverse with more than forty different countries represented on campus. The theme of diversity is continually addressed in mentor training and in mentor/protégé matching across culture, in order to increase students’ cultural competence. The audience will be encouraged to participate in an exercise which will examine their own stereotypes and cultural competence.

Program challenges as well as plans for the future will be covered in this presentation. Some of the plans include expansion, the building of a program database and the launching of SMILE Facebook. Some of the challenges include running a uniform mentoring program on three campuses as well as having multiple intakes of first semester students per year.

The research aspect of the program will also be discussed, including the program's participation in a two year, seven million dollar research project funded by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and the Ontario Government. This research is focusing on the retention and engagement of at risk students. Seneca is partnering with two other Ontario colleges in this project.

The results of previous research, as well as our own program evaluation, will also be shared with participants as well as the current theory of mentoring in a post secondary environment.
The presentation will conclude with a question and answer period.

**You Are What You Read: A Purposeful Approach to a Summer Reading Program**

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Seton Hall University began its summer reading initiative five years ago and has engaged its students in an integrated curriculum that includes the perspectives of both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. This session will describe the deliberate, collaborative process the university used to create a new reading program. It will provide a step-by-step blueprint for creating a program and also describe how we articulated clear, measurable objectives for the initiative. This session will also share some of the successful (and not so successful) programming that complements the reading experience.

The Freshman Studies department established the summer reading program in response to a perceived need for a shared experience for its incoming class. Lacking a university core curriculum at the time, the University Life class was the only course that all incoming students took. The summer reading program was established to strengthen the common first-year experience and also to send a subtle message to students that they were embarking on an intellectual experience. Freshman Studies started the program simply – the bells and whistles came later. Representatives of Student Affairs and the English Department were enlisted to craft our goals for the program and to select parameters for our book choice.

This session will describe how our Summer Reading Program has developed over the years to include audio books, podcasts, a writing contest and targeted programming. This workshop will also review the articulated objectives of the program and go in to greater depth about ancillary programming scheduled during the year to enhance the reading experience.

Not all of the programming has been successful. In addition to highlighting the slam-dunk successes, this session will also describe some of the pitfalls of the summer reading program, including what to do when students hate the book choice and how to program when money is tight.

**Leadership Education in the First-Year Seminar and Beyond Through Faculty and Student Affairs Collaboration**

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Slippery Rock University has created a transformational First-Year Experience Program. This program includes a comprehensive model starting with Orientation, the Summer Reading Program, the First-Year (FYRST) Seminar, and continuing with completion of a leadership certificate. Through the certification process of the Compass Leadership Program and the collaboration between the faculty and student affairs personnel, SRU has successfully integrated an evolving leadership education platform.

Introduced by the university’s President with a responsibility to serve our students’ ever emergent leadership need, a leadership foundation is initiated by a common summer reading experience, with its leadership theme, for first-year students. Leadership skill development continues and is successfully integrated within the FYRST Seminar. The Compass Leadership Program’s five components, diversity, ethics and decision-making, teambuilding, campus involvement, and the student’s personal definition of leadership, are included in first-year seminar course objectives. The first level of certification can therefore be obtained by 93% of SRU’s first-year students through the developed curriculum and supporting co-curricular activities. Students can then continue with levels two and three certification to enhance their credentials as they prepare for life beyond the university.

Highlights of the presentation include the intentional collaborative efforts between faculty and student affairs personnel in: (1) the design and implementation of the first-year common summer reading experience, (2) first-year leadership education integrated into the FYRST Seminar, and (3) the expansion of the leadership certification program beyond the first year by means of the academic curriculum and co-curricular activities. A comprehensive set of supportive materials will be provided to all session participants.

How Participation in the National FYE Conference Over a 20-Year Period Contributed to the Development of an Effective Campus-Wide First-Year Experience

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This interactive and multi-media poster session will show how best practices for improving student learning and success in the first year of college have been successfully integrated into a campus culture at one university. To address both internal and external forces, the national conference on the first year experience and students in transition has served Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania well as a cost-effective means for learning about proven strategies for improving student learning and success.

SRU used a number of the strategies gleaned from conference experts to: create an early orientation program and a full week of welcome activities, install a summer reading program which incorporates an author presentation, develop an integrated freshman seminar and learning community cluster initiative, create a residential living/learning environment, generate a freshman leadership program, enhance academic services for students, build a peer leadership program, construct web-based services, improve first year advisement services, increase honors program and intercultural programming participation, use a portal environment for student interventions, and craft an early alert program and other academic interventions for first year students.

Improving the first year experience for our students occurred by choice, not by chance. The result of these strategically planned comprehensive services is improved student learning and success and an engaged campus culture. No one program is responsible for the improved results. It is about changing a culture-empowering others to assist with the transformation effort-and creating a wonderfully stimulating environment for all.

Those outside of higher education often marvel why “competitors” are so willing to share their ideas, best practices, and secrets of success as happens in conferences like FYE. Maybe it is that we approach each other as colleagues who respond to a higher responsibility to serve our students’ needs and help them achieve their potential regardless of where they seek their education. In that way, our success is gratefully attributable to the collective commitment of an entire profession. Poster session facilitators will share materials related to program development, implementation,
and assessment.

A Multicultural Approach to Teaching First-Year Experience: Process, Outcomes, and Reflections

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The United States population is growing in its ethnic diversity. Four states are already recognized as having a majority population comprised of ethnic minority people: California (56%), Hawaii (77%), Texas (50.2%), and New Mexico (57%). In addition to helping students with a successful transition from high school to college, First Year Experience classes are unique opportunities to start educating and training students to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills to effectively relate and work with people from diverse backgrounds.

In this paper we will present an approach to teaching a First Year Experience from a multicultural perspective, including (a) Pedagogy, assignments, process, exercises, etc., and (b) Impact on students’ learning.

Didactic and experiential in nature, this course provides students with a multicultural experience as it pertains to self-exploration and understanding one’s worldview regarding the Big 8 of diversity: Culture, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, and class.

Quantitative end-of-the-term evaluations (1 = Ineffective, 5 = very effective) indicate that students find instructors of this class as very effective in delivering the class content and the process used to achieve class objectives (Mean = 4.86, range = 4.67 – 5.00). Using the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992) we conducted content analysis of three assignments: (a) Reaction papers to the video “Skin Deep”, (b) Responses to the “Silent Interview” (in-class activity), and (c) Comprehensive final reflection paper. Our preliminary analysis show that students achieve a better understanding of themselves and their levels of privilege associated with their backgrounds; increase their knowledge, comfort level, and sensitivity about complex issues associated with living in a multicultural society; and develop skills and confidence about active listening, interpersonal communication, and use of sensitive/inclusive language. Most importantly, students make a personal commitment to embrace diversity and make a positive change in their interaction with others.
Difficult Dialogues? You Betcha: Developing FYE Curriculum and Programs in the Context of GE Reform

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As a first step toward reforming its GE program, SSU launched a pilot FYE program in 2006. Building from the strengths of existing freshman student development programs, the design team sought to connect further the development of students with an intellectually rigorous program of instruction blended with our first-year writing and critical thinking courses. We engage students in “difficult dialogues” about identity, globalism, diversity and social change (and received a grant from Ford to support this purpose). In that we feel we have succeeded; at the same time we have experienced many difficult dialogues of our own in attempting to foster institutional support for this program. Our panel will offer reflection upon these conversations.

Our approach models effective campus partnerships. We will detail how two librarians worked with the design team to interweave information literacy into critical thinking, writing, seminar, and student development, rather than as a separate component of the curriculum. Our panel is comprised by members of each key learning area.

These positive dialogues have both fostered institutional change and improved pedagogical practice. FYE has developed strategies for engaging students in difficult dialogues while maintaining their commitment to critical thinking. Emotionally charged topics can cause a breakdown of discourse in the classroom. We emphasize the seminar process and the commitment
to the whole student to reinforce the application of sound critical thinking.

Of course change does not occur without more vexing dialogues as well. Faculty governance committees continue to debate the course's merits, and some stakeholders remain skeptical. Assessment is another thorny issue: Neither statistics nor the statements of informants can be communicated without context, hence the need for difficult dialogues, even where assessment is concerned. Despite these concerns, as practitioners of and teachers of difficult dialogues, we’d enjoy the opportunity to discuss our work with colleagues.

**Getting Students to Care: Gaining Educational Investment Through a Psycho-Social Approach**

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Advising is a partnership. The image of advisor and advisee, both invested in academic interactions, comes to mind. Quality interactions and outcomes are expected, with responsibility beginning with the advisor. A good advisor strives to establish comfort, trust, and the concept of partnering with the advisee, thereby garnering advisee participation. This is the ideal situation. However, non-participatory advisees, who are often non-participatory students, demonstrate the psychosocial aspect of non-persistence (attrition). These students do not take an active role in planning their education and often show few signs of any kind of investment in their education. Nonparticipation raises questions such as, "Does the student want an education?" "Is the university providing appropriate resources?" "Is the advisor lacking the necessary skills?" Unfortunately, advising efforts are external, as are other retention programs, making it difficult to engage this particular population of uninvolved students. However, through understanding a student’s internal motivations, these students CAN be successful. This presentation describes non-participatory behaviors and an advising strategy for targeting nonparticipation through addressing the psychosocial factors of academic self-efficacy, outcome expectation, and decision-commitment. The presentation will include both lecture and audience participation through a variety of methods, including demonstration, small group discussion, and question and answer.

**Working Well With First-Generation College Students**

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All freshman students come to college with various needs and desires. Many have been planning for college most of their lives along with their families. However, for a large number a lifelong plan for higher education has not been on the table all their lives. Indeed, many are from homes where those in the parenting role are uninitiated to the college/university experience. This session will discuss ways of serving first generation college students. In addition to describing the setting in which the presenter's work is done, the vehicle for monitoring students will be described, some characteristics of "first geners" will be presented. Information will be provided regarding successes with "first geners" and their families. Such tactics as: intrusive program contact, careful selection of students, early program contact, focused family contact, targeted praise, staff cultural competence will be discussed.

Experience in working with "First Geners" will be elicited from session attendees in a written survey. The opportunity to share session attendees' vantage points will close the session.

**Correlating Changes in the First Year: Aligning Southern Oregon University's Call for Institutional Change with National Trends**

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In 2006-2007, Southern Oregon University joined 31 other two- and four-year institutions in conducting a year-long self study of their first year of college using the Foundational Dimensions® model. Within the self study, assessment data are collected from first-year students, faculty, and staff on their perceptions of the delivery of the first college year. In addition, institutional data and documentation are collected on current policies and practices affecting first-year students. The self-study ends in action items focused on improving student learning and success.

In aggregate, common themes appeared in the action items across the thirty-two institutions undergoing an institutional self study of the first year in 2006-2007. This presentation focuses specifically on three of these major themes. Some of the areas that will be addressed include:

1. Academic Advising  
   a. Moving beyond course scheduling
2. Faculty and Instruction  
   a. Acknowledging / rewarding teaching excellence in first-year classes  
   b. Professional development  
   c. Having a voice in first-year issues  
   d. Addressing first-year responsibilities in hiring and orienting new instructors
3. Administrative Organization
   a. Management of the first year of college
   b. Collaboration and communication between departments

In this presentation, the following items will be addressed for each of these three themes:
1. SOU’s first-year assessment and recommended action items
2. National assessment results – comparing Student and Faculty/staff results and comparing 4-year and 2-year institution results
3. Current first-year practices and policies
4. Recommended action items for improvement in the first year

Session attendees will be provided concrete evidence of areas of needed improvement within the first-year of college as experienced by these 32 institutions, as well as the varied institutional approaches created to address these issues. Open discussion is encouraged.

**Brain-Based Learning: Its Effects on Teaching and Retention**

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This Concurrent Session will begin with participants engaging in an activity which illustrates the concepts of brain-based learning. Using activities and metaphors, the session presenter will provide rudimentary information about up-to-date research on neural plasticity, dendrites, neurotransmitters and their effects on learning, teaching and success.

Then participants will consider a brief history of Southern Utah University’s FYE evolution and the system’s responses as it moved from a grassroots program for at-risk students to an individualized, required first-year program with seminar, brain-based curriculum and portfolio assessment at its core.

Participants will then examine the present program skeleton that developed over 23 years to involve a new paradigm for expanding intelligence. The model includes brain-based/accelerated learning and critical thinking, summer reading, civic engagement, developmental advisement, general education and thematic learning communities, peer mentors, weekly seminar, more developmental advisement, an all inclusive connection to university resources, library/research orientation, developmental education, and portfolio assessment.

Finally, individuals will consider the significance of brain-based learning and ways to implement similar design elements at their schools. Then they will use their realizations as talking points in short seminars so they can experience the value of seminaring.

The session will conclude with the facilitator addressing participant questions, concerns and
comments and time to complete evaluations.

A Collaborative First-Year Experience: Student Success Personnel, Librarians, and General Education Faculty

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Over the past seven years Southern Utah University has made significant progress in teaching information literacy skills and incorporating these skills into the First Year Experience and general education courses. This presentation will track the evolution of SUU’s Information Literacy course and focus on the collaboration between the librarians, First Year Seminar instructors and general education faculty.

In 2000, LM 1010 Information Literacy became a general education requirement for all freshman students. The course focuses on developing information literacy skills, selecting relevant sources, and evaluating, organizing and citing the information.

Independently the University’s Student Success Center was teaching Univ 1000 First Year Seminar. This course was designed to help launch students’ university careers successfully and to equip students with the tools and abilities that would increase their career and academic skills. In 2001 the Deans Council approved this course for inclusion into the University’s general education requirements.

In 2004 the librarians and the Student Success Center personnel created cohort groups of 25 students who took the two courses simultaneously. The students’ research in LM 1010 was based on the topics discussed in Univ 1000. Student peer mentors were hired to assist in the courses. In 2006 a general education companion course was cohorted with the other two courses and topics from the companion course were used for research in LM 1010. In 2007 First Year Seminar students were involved in researching, writing and discussing topics chosen from First Year Experience curriculum topics and/or companion classes.

This presentation will track the evolution of the LM 1010 and First Year Seminar courses and discuss the collaboration between First Year Seminar instructors, librarians and companion course instructors. There will be an examination of the improvement in the students’ skills as well as retention rates.

FYI: First-Year Introduction

Linda Odell
Counselor
The FYI workshop was developed to assist new students with their transition to college and to provide a thorough introduction to college; to improve student engagement and connection to SFCC. This process is intended to increase student success, satisfaction, and commitment to the first year of college by making connections with other new students and getting to know faculty and staff; understanding SFCC policies and procedures; becoming familiar with services, resources, and activities available; and to learn how to be more successful in college and discover what instructors expect.

Students were informed of the program after completing their placement testing. The four day workshop was set up one a week prior to the beginning of fall quarter. The typical daily three hour schedule included small group seminars, learning modules, sample classes, tours and educational plans. The seminars met each morning to discuss college terminology, college success tips, study skills, note taking, and SFCC expectations of students, student academic responsibility, campus resources, SFCC policies and procedures. The students selected different FYI learning modules to attend which consisted of career planning, time management, dealing with math anxiety, library and research, get smart, student programs and activities, computer survival skills, education career pathways, service learning and learning communities. FYI sample classes included communication, education, English math and psychology.

When Thinking is Critical: Activities in Contextualized & Accelerated Learning for Allied Health and Nursing Students

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Research demonstrates that small interactive cohorts significantly reduce the time students spend in developmental classes, in part, because they actively participate in learning that directly relates to their interests and goals. Our presentation will show how critical thinking activities that ask students to pose vital questions, gather relevant information, impartially consider alternatives, develop well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, and communicate effectively build skills that can transfer into the workplace.

**Faculty Development by Stealth: Using First-Year Seminars to Enhance Undergraduate Teaching**

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As increasing number of research-intensive universities seek ways for undergraduates to have early and engaging interaction with faculty, freshman and sophomore seminars have become more common and better supported institutionally. The kind of teaching that goes on in such seminars—discussion-dominated and open-ended—is an energizing and even rejuvenating experience for the faculty themselves. These seminars can also provide faculty with the opportunity to try out ideas for new course materials, explore subjects of particular interest to them, and further their research in what is in fact a laboratory for teaching.

Beginning with the challenge of involving faculty in developmental activities when the reward structure and institutional culture do not necessarily support such involvement, the presenters will provide an overview of the different stages of curricular development in freshman seminars, from advertising to course proposals, student applications, the selection process, workshops, professional support, and student evaluations. Second, they will offer specific strategies designed to draw faculty participants into practices and conversations that enhance their teaching, enable them to share best practices with faculty in other fields, and make the seminars rewarding for them and empowering for their students. Finally, there will be time for attendees to discuss and generate new ideas about opportunities for varieties of faculty development on their own campuses through existing partnerships and through non-traditional approaches.
Going Strong in the 5th Year With a Common Reading Program

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Background:
The summer reading program began in 2003 as a joint initiative of the American Democracy Project and the Foundations of Excellence in the First College YearTM. Original funding for the books came from Academic Affairs due to a highly engaged and interested Provost. A committee of faculty and staff reads suggested books, makes the final selection and designs a program to accompany the selection.

List of Selected Books:
• Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich (2004)
• The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nightime by Mark Hadden (2005)
• The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien (2006)
• Miracle in the Andes 72 Days on the Mountain and My Long Trek Home by Nando Parrado (2007)

Selection Criteria:
• Reasonable length (< 300 pages ± 10%)
• Available in paperback
• Lively read
• Relates to civic engagement
• Current and relevant issues
• Theme is of real importance
• Theme can be related to multiple disciplines
• Availability of relevant speakers
• Not available as a movie

Some Things That Work Well:
• Author visits. We will discuss ways to raise funds
• Introduction of book in summer orientation
• Special shirts
• Give-aways for freshmen
• Lectures by outstanding faculty presenters
• Tie-in with the freshman seminars including ready-made lesson plans
• Mornings with the Professors lecture series with retired faculty and staff members.
• Black construction-paper poodles hung upside-down all over campus
• Residence halls decorated using the book themes
• Essay contest
The Transition From School to University: A Case Study at a South African University

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The South African school system is increasingly producing students who do not make the grade in higher education. The problems resulting from the gap between school and university have been exacerbated by the inequalities that exist in the South African secondary school system, and which are still part of the legacy of apartheid. Within the context of learners’ increasing unpreparedness for university studies, their difficult transition from school to university and the concomitant high drop-out figures in higher education, this study investigated the extent to which universities – with Stellenbosch University as a case in point – can contribute towards preparing students for university studies from as early as school level, and thus facilitate their transition from school to university.

Taking this research question into account, the researcher investigated the extent to which specific variables played a part both in the pre-university phase and after admission. The research design was a case study of black newcomer first-year students who participated in a Stellenbosch University bursary project in their Grade 12 year.

The research findings have revealed that the inequalities in the South African schooling system influence the transition from school to university. The classification of schools plays a crucial role in students’ preparedness and how they handle the transition from school to university. There are various academic, social, emotional, cultural and financial factors that impact on this transition. However, the factors are interdependent – no one factor can be regarded as being more important than another. It was concluded in the study that universities have a responsibility to ensure that the diminishing pool of potential students in higher education be expanded. Universities should contribute towards preparing prospective students more effectively so that the transition process
will be less challenging. It is believed that this will also improve the throughput rate.

**Student Affairs Professionals in the Classroom: Preparing Professionals to Teach**

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With the ever changing landscape of higher education, the collaboration and integration of both academic and student affairs is increasingly important. Student affairs professionals find themselves devoting more time in the classroom teaching first year seminars, leadership and peer education courses and more. According to National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, half of the first year seminar programs across the country are taught by student affairs professionals. With course goals such as critical thinking, campus involvement and community development, student affair professionals are well matched for the task. However, as a profession, we have a responsibility to appropriately prepare staff for this new and complex task. Good teaching requires a solid understanding of curriculum development and design, group facilitation, assessment and a variety of teaching pedagogies.

This presentation will provide a model created at Stony Brook University. The model includes 3 Tiers: Essential content, Priority content, Needs-Based content. With an emphasis on technology, all instructors participate in a one-day conference style training and work throughout the semester in small workgroups for continuous professional development. Participants will conduct an inventory of campus resources and needs to determine ways to modify the Stony Brook model.

For more information about the model, please visit:  

**Fusing Elements of Campus Culture into First-Year Instruction: What Faculty Should Know**
The primary goal of this roundtable discussion is to engage faculty and first-year instructors in a conversation on the use of campus culture as a powerful tool for enhancing their work in the classroom. Campus culture gives institutions their unique identities and provides a lens through which campus constituents and stakeholders – faculty, staff, and students alike – can understand their environment. Similarly, the cultural perspective provides an opportunity for instructors of first-year courses to invoke elements of campus culture in the classroom in an effort to enhance first-year student learning. This roundtable discussion will examine the ways in which faculty responsible for first-year instruction can draw on elements of campus culture – including institutional norms of behavior, values, stories, legends, physical artifacts, rituals, sagas, language, myths, symbols, and architecture – to facilitate active learning in the classroom and strengthen student-campus bonds in the first year.

Participants will gain an understanding of the properties of campus culture and discover ways in which they can fuse elements of culture into their instruction. Practices from a wide-range of institutions will be shared, and participants will have an opportunity to share examples, practices, tools, and methods from their own experiences. Learning outcomes include exploring the basic concepts of campus culture and discovering practical tools and methods for implementing effective student learning practices in the classroom.

The program will be highly interactive and participatory in nature. While the presenter will offer brief comments on the core concepts and practical uses of campus culture, the key content of the roundtable will come from contributions from participants. From a series of probing questions on campus culture, audience members will have the opportunity to address issues on their own campuses and discover practical uses of campus culture relevant to their own instruction and other student learning endeavors.

Connecting the Dots: Intentional Efforts to Build a First College Year Ethos at Suffolk University

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This session will examine the coordinated and synchronized efforts of Suffolk University (MA) to create a comprehensive, meaningful, and deliberate first year of college. What started as a pilot initiative of SU101, a one-credit course designed to enhance the first-year experience and ensure a successful transition to campus as well as surrounding urban community, has grown in three years into a broad-based, campus-wide program with more than 50 sections. In addition, the University has developed a four-hour Seminar for Freshman, an academic-based seminar which all first-year students take. Incoming students choose from forty seminar topics, each course of which is taught by a full-time member of the Suffolk faculty. With the current unique linking of these two courses in a pilot initiative, Suffolk has provided a unique academic experience whereby students are enrolled in both an academic and transition-based non-academic first-year course. The University is attempting to document, through ongoing assessment, the effectiveness of the course coupling and the benefits that accrue to students in terms of enhanced student learning. Finally, these efforts are being tightly coordinated with other first-year initiatives on campus, including a common reading program, student success group projects, and the incorporation of service-learning into the curriculum, to create a powerful and broadly-connected first year of college in an intentional learning environment. With a newly created Dean’s Task Force on the First Year Experience, the University is making great strides in implementing and documenting effective practices in the first college year.

**Leveraging Facebook Applications for More Effective Orientations**

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This presentation will discuss the questions and findings of the pilot program involving ten schools and Red Rover, a free, open source, Facebook application that is intended to provide year-round orientation to increase, organize and assess student involvement. We will explore questions like: Will students use a college sponsored and controlled Facebook application? Does that use seem to increase involvement? What are the theoretical correlates between the click stream data collected from within Facebook's application platform and the "offline" qualitative and quantitative metrics around involvement? What are the emerging assessment possibilities that this new technology creates? What are the keys to orchestrating successful technology initiatives between activities, information technology, administrators, and students, when they all speak a different language? Through the exploration of these questions, participants will process and become familiar with the current nexus of activities, technology, research, and changing student needs.

**Leading First-Year Students into the Deep Waters of Academic Research**

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Since 2003, the First Year Learning Communities Program at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi has held a symposium in which first year students present visual rhetorical representations of their research findings and analyze research of their peers. The audience includes faculty, staff, and peers and has grown to such an extent that we occupy the entire University Ball Room and have added formal panel discussions. The conference attracts visiting faculty from nearby institutions as well as local news media. Students from every Learning Community in the First Year program, approximately 1,200 first year students, participate in the conference, held at the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters. Participation brings meaning and purpose to student research in the first year, introduces students to formal academic presentation, visual rhetoric, and persuasive and argumentative skills, and enables students to see learning, reading, and writing not only as an individual act but as a social act that addresses a larger audience. Finally, students make cross-curricular connections as they often conduct research on topics associated with their Learning Community’s large lecture component: Biology/Chemistry, Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, and History. Presentations are concurrent, with students co-presenting with their LC
colleagues in 30-minute sessions. Students present in various ways, including poster board presentations, PowerPoint presentations, audio/video, and through the visual and performing arts. What results is a vibrant, engaging learning opportunity that serves as the culmination of the first year experience at our institution and prepares students for future rigorous intellectual work. Program materials will include handouts explaining key components of the research symposium and sample lesson plans designed to prepare students for their presentations, access to our University website that documents past conferences, and numerous visual images from past conferences. Additionally, we will present our findings of student feedback from the most recent conference.

A Comprehensive and Collaborative First-Year Model for High-Achieving Students

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This poster will focus on the collaborative first-year academic program utilized by the Honors College at Texas Tech University. It will specifically discuss how the Honors College responded to the sentiment that high-achieving students don’t need to take an introductory course to the university, and how the Honors College has developed an FYE course that is both academically rigorous and a beneficial transition between high school and college.

From 1997-2001 the Honors College required all incoming freshmen to complete a section of University 101 (IS 1100). This one-hour course designed to improve a student’s time management, study habits, library proficiency, etc., was poorly evaluated by students, claiming “Honors students already know about that stuff,” or that “it should be more academic.” Therefore, the college decided to create a First-Year Experience program designed specifically for high-achieving students.

The Honors College launched a mandatory, collaborative FYE program that consists of both a 3-hour academic course and a no-credit lab that meets outside of normal class time called the “Learning Community Group” (LCG). Incoming students (approximately 300 annually) choose one of fourteen academic FYE courses, ranging from political science to English. Students are then automatically enrolled in the attached LCG, which is led by two highly trained undergraduate peer mentors (28 mentors). The LCG allows students from class to forge relationships with one another while at the same time learning about opportunities at the university and in the Honors College. Some of the components include: writing personal statements, study abroad, Strengths Quest, cultural events, current event discussions, specific opportunities within the Honors College, and occasional interaction with faculty members. The program consistently receives positive evaluations and continues to develop each year. While the entire program is not practical for all institutions, the LCG can serve as a model for engaging high-achieving students.
Regional & System-Wide Partnerships: Bridging the Gap Between the Local and the National

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Events like the Annual Conference on the First Year Experience provide “a forum where higher education professionals can share experiences, concerns, and accomplishments.” At a recent California State University (CSU) system-wide meeting titled “Bringing Civic Learning to the First Year,” participants representing several CSU campuses lamented the fact that we are so seldom able to meet and compare notes inside the CSU. After all, each one of us has information and knowledge that would in many cases offer our colleagues exactly what they most need to solve a pressing problem or to nurture a successful but under-funded CSU campus program.

As we continued talking, however, we realized that many of us would be attending the 27th Annual FYE Conference in San Francisco, and that it is being co-sponsored by two of our sister campuses: San Francisco State University and San Jose State University. We therefore determined, as a group, to propose this roundtable, which asks participants to discuss ways of bridging the information gap between the local (what we each know and do successfully at our home campus) and the national (what we learn at national conferences) by imagining, together, ways of
constructing new and more frequent opportunities for regional and system-wide exchange. We believe that other multi-campus systems—those outside California—have faced similar challenges. We invite colleagues working in these other large systems to join us in imagining some ways to bridge the gap. Questions that we think might best be answered in the regional or intra-system context might focus on budget, reassigned time, staff support, administrative home, program visibility, and program power. Topics would surely include transferability of best practices; scaling up local practices; working with regional and intrasystem peers; multi-campus grants; positioning your program for system-wide recognition; and working in concert across a multi-campus system.

Reading to Write: Attuning First-Year Students to a Literate Life

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I will give a brief history of the genesis of “Reading to Write,” followed by a synopsis of the course and the booklet. I will give several examples of workshop activities that teachers from many disciplines can use with freshmen to demonstrate the skills of effective reading and writing. Participants will do one of the activities, and there will be ample time for questions and comments. I will provide a copy of the 50-page booklet, “Reading to Write,” to each participant.

Bridging the Gap Between First-Year Student Expectations & College Expectations

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What are student expectations? What are teacher and college expectations of students? Who is responsible for shaping student expectation of college? Are student expectations important? When student expectations are not realistic, what intervention is possible? When there is a gap between student expectations and teacher expectations, how do we bridge this gap and raise student expectations and keep high standards?

Western teacher employed in the UAE university and even local teachers do not seem to take student expectations in to account when they design the curriculum. Academic and non academic programmes are designed with the view that it the role of the institution to deal with student expectations to the standard level we want and most students expectations are non realistic and shaped by their pre college experience which is often below college expectations. Research shows that students do not come to college knowing nothing about it. Nowadays most students are second generation students coming from educated families. Knowing student expectations is essential in
designing and implementing educational programmes and activities. Communicating college expectations, and policies to students will enhance their involvement, motivation and interaction with them. The workshop will deal both student and college expectations in a crosscultural context, involving Western or Western-educated teachers and local Emirati Arab Muslim students.

**Finding That Middle Ground: Designing First-Year Experience and Learning Strategies Courses That Avoid Redundancy**

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First, participants will be provided with an overview of the learning community program at The University of Central Missouri. Opportunities for discussion regarding other programs will be encouraged at this time. Second, the results of the study to assess the level of redundancy between the Freshman Seminar and Learning Strategies classes will occur, based on perceptions of the one hundred students who completed the survey. Third, recommendations will be provided on ways to enhance both programs without exposing students to the same or similar information. Finally, a general discussion and exchange of ideas will conclude the program.

"Helicopter Parenting": Stunting or Supporting First-Year Student Growth?

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Today’s traditional-age college students describe themselves as being very close to their parents. A recent study found that first-year students speak with their parents an average of more than 10 times per week (Grace, 2006). In turn, the parents of today’s college students are close with their children and actively involved in their children’s college experience (Coburn, 2006; Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001). The term that has been coined to describe these parents – “helicopter parents” – reflects their defining tendency to drop their children off on campus, but to continue to hover, ready to swoop in if needed (Howe and Strauss, 2003).

Many in higher education who work with students have expressed concerns about the increasing
levels of involvement of these so-called “helicopter parents” with their college students. Does this parental hovering get in the way of students’ development into mature adults? Does it prevent students from learning to tackle obstacles and solve problems on their own? The general popular consensus seems to be that, yes, indeed, this new level of parental involvement may interfere with students’ development.

In this Trends and Issues concurrent session, these questions will be explored using the dual frameworks of theory and the empirical literature. Examples will be drawn from the first presenter’s experiences working with students, their parents, faculty, and student affairs and other professional staff and from the second presenter’s experiences as the parent of a current college student.

The session will conclude with suggestions for ways to help the parents of first-year students become supporters of their students’ development into mature adults and our partners in their students' success. The focus will be on messages to communicate to parents and ways to communicate those messages. Opportunities will be provided for program participants to share their own challenges and successes in working with parents of first-year students.

An Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Parent Orientation Program at UNT

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Although most institutions offer a parent program option to their orientation program, there has been little formalized research into the quality, planning or programming of parent orientation. There has been very little research into the impact parent orientation has on parents and whether or not they feel that such programs have met their needs.

This presentation will compare the results of two research studies conducted at the University of North Texas during the summers of 2002 and 2006. Both studies sought to determine the effectiveness of the parent orientation program at UNT to the parents who participated those summers. The studies attempted to measure whether parents (after attending parent orientation) felt that they had adequate information about the institution to adequately support their student through the college transition; if parents felt welcomed by the UNT campus community; and if they felt that they have developed resources and institutional contacts that would be useful in the future in assisting their child to have a successful college experience at UNT.
The presenters will review the methodology and results of both studies and will focus on the differences of the results between the two studies and highlight their conclusions. In addition, the presenters will provide a brief overview of current parent orientation practices in order for the audience to have a frame of reference for parent orientation programs and the components they comprise.

The purpose of the session is to provide practical research in the area of parent orientation. By highlighting the UNT program, participants can gain a perspective on orientation at a four-year institution and its perceived effectiveness.

Using Empirical Data to Improve First-Year Seminars

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Still today, “…a majority of all leaving takes place in the first year” (Tinto, 1993, p. 14). In response to this trend, colleges and universities have invested considerable resources in the development and implementation of programs and services that are designed to provide the academic and social support deemed necessary for success in college (Astin, 1993). Such services include bridge programs, study skills courses, and first-year seminars.

First-year seminars are “one of the commonly used strategies for improving the first-year experience” (Hendel, 2006-2007, p. 413). Originally, first-year seminars were designed to ease the transition from high school to college and to respond to the unconscionably high rates of attrition (Muraskin, 1998). While first-year seminars vary in structure and content (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992); they tend to exist for the same intents and purposes—namely to promote student success in college and to ease students’ adjustment to the collegiate environment.

In the spring 2007 term, we conducted a large-scale study of the first-year experience at a research-extensive university located in the southeast region of the nation. With approximately 855 useable responses, we calculated descriptive and multivariate statistics to measure the impact of various campus services on student outcomes. Perhaps surprisingly, we found no statistical association between “participating in a first-year seminar” and academic achievement (as measured by GPA), adjustment to college, and satisfaction with college.

Based on these findings, university administrators devised several strategies to redesign first-year seminars; for instance, first-year studies curricula were redesigned to focus on specific learning
outcomes/domains (e.g., critical thinking, effective communication, etc.). In addition, a new set of first-year seminars were added to the university’s offerings; such seminars were distinguished from others in that they (a) were taught by full-time faculty members (b) were limited to no more than 18 students per section and (c) covered topics from “The Birth of Punk and Rock” to “What Would Martians Say About Us?” In this session, we will present recent findings from our assessment of the new seminars as well.

Phoenix: An Academic Recovery Program for First-Year Students

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The presentation begins with a detailed explanation of the Phoenix program. We will discuss the overwhelming transition from high school to college, why some students do not do well their first semester, and what these students can do to ensure future success. The next section of the presentation will involve the components of the Phoenix Recovery Workshop. We will present each component as it relates to the support and encouragement of these students who are at risk of academic dismissal. The presentation continues with a discussion of how students are notified about the program. A discussion of how the small group facilitators are trained will be presented to illustrate the importance of providing knowledgeable facilitators for these students to learn from, ask questions of, and communicate with regarding their academic situation. The workshop itself requires a detailed discussion involving the welcome session, the small group sessions, the financial aid information session, and the individual advising sessions available for schedule changes. The small group sessions will be broken down in the presentation and a detailed explanation of the information of disseminated to the students in these sessions will be provided. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the assessment procedures that were used to determine the effectiveness and success of the program. Results from the student evaluations will be examined as will attendance numbers. One year retention percentages will also be examined. Finally, we will allow a period of time for questions from the conference attendees.

Paving the Road to Success: Supporting At-Risk Students Through Academic Advising and Learning Communities

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First-time freshmen qualify for the Academic Development Program at the University of Texas at San Antonio through provisional admission as a result of not meeting regular admission standards (i.e. SAT or ACT scores and high school record).

All students who are provisionally admitted must participate in the Academic Development Program (ADP) administered through UTSA’s Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success. Provisionally admitted students must enroll in pre-selected courses during their first semester at UTSA and enroll as undeclared majors.

All ADP participants must enroll in an ADP learning community designed for provisional students. The learning community is formed by linking freshman seminar with a core curriculum course. The freshman seminar is a 3-hour college credit course designed specifically for UTSA’s at-risk freshmen. The goal of this course is to provide training for students in the application of the knowledge critical to success in college. The course is designed to assist students in becoming active learners, develops academic skills, and helps students explore own educational goals and objectives through self-assessment, reflection and discussion, and helps establish a sense of community at UTSA.

Another critical component of the program is the advising component. The advisor and student relationship begins at orientation and proceeds throughout the academic year. For example, ADP advisors participate in Checkpoint, a mid-semester program designed to review students’ midterm progress. Additionally, all ADP advisors serve as freshman seminar instructors which enhance student support.

The Academic Development Program offers additional benefits such as mentors, participation in a common reading program and social activities throughout the semester. More importantly, since the program’s inception, retention rates of UTSA’s at-risk students have increased. At-risk students are more likely to succeed in their academic journey with the collaborative efforts of academic advising and learning communities.

**Easing the Transition: The Effects of High School Rigor and College Readiness Indicators on University Student Success**

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A college preparatory program that provides students access to rigorous curriculum is Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). The program serves academically “middle” and underrepresented students with support (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996). Increased participation in AP courses, particularly among African American and Hispanics, has been found in AVID schools (Watt, Powell, Mendiola & Cossio, 2006). The significance of AVID has shown that AVID students completed more college-level courses in high school and enrolled in college at higher rates than their non-AVID classmates (Slavin & Calderon, 2001).

While many high school students are benefiting from college preparatory programs such as AVID, research on these students’ performance at the college level is limited. The following research questions were explored:
1) Is mastery of the college readiness (HERC) standard related to university student success as measured by GPA?
2) Is high-level math course completion in high school related to university student success?
3) Is AP course completion in high school related to university student success?
4) What do students report as reasons contributing to their success in their first year of college?

A mixed-methods approach was used (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). College preparation measures examined were: HERC mastery, high-level math course completion, and AP course completion. University student data revealed the significance of college preparatory measures in student success at a 4-year university, and that AVID students have an advantage over their non-AVID peers in navigating through college.

Findings can assist in making informed decisions about the types of college readiness skills that contribute to academic success in college. University students reported that AVID strategies (note-taking, organization, and test-taking skills) are valuable to them. The “AVID effect” (Mehan, et al, 1996) refers to the effect that a small group of students or instructors has on larger groups due to AVID strategies used.

Purpose and Passion in First-Year Experience Courses: Comparing Interdisciplinary and Traditional General Education Seminars
As part of the extension of a First Year (Freshman) Seminar program at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, during the Fall 2006 we introduced five new Interdisciplinary Freshman Seminar classes in addition to continuing to provide Freshman Seminar sections of existing general education intro-level courses. In the Interdisciplinary Seminars, faculty designed curriculum, targeted towards a freshman audience and addressing the objectives for the Freshman Seminars, around a content area of particular interest to them (e.g., the ‘burbs – an exploration of the suburbs; God, Ghosts & Goblins – an investigation of belief). In the traditional General Education Freshman Seminars, faculty integrated material addressing the Freshman Seminar objectives into an existing, introductory-level disciplinary course, and adjusted the structure of the course to accommodate a freshmen-only audience (e.g., Intro to Human Development, U.S. History from 1865-Present). For both formats, classes were restricted to 25 first-semester freshmen and included significant writing assignments together with a range of college-student skill-building and co-curricular activities.

In this presentation we will compare and contrast the strengths of, and challenges associated with, teaching seminars in each format. Specifically, we will examine the specific ways in which the faculty attempted to achieve the Freshman Seminar learning objectives in both the Interdisciplinary...
and the Gen-Ed formats, and the common and unique challenges associated with doing so in each. These objectives include the development of: communication skills, information literacy, student success skills, critical thinking skills, an understanding of interdisciplinary, and engagement with the UWGB community. We will also examine the extent to which students in each format perceived having achieved the seminar learning objectives by the end of the semester, and compare these results to the specific ways in which faculty teaching each format attempted to foster these objectives.

**First-Year Programs at Community Colleges**

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During this roundtable discussion, the facilitators will foster conversation about what first year programs bring to a community college. In addition, we will cover first year programs that have and haven’t worked at various community colleges. We will also talk about ways to market these programs to our students and upcoming programming trends in community colleges.

The facilitators represent three different generations (and perspectives) of employees in student life. Together, these ladies hold over thirty three years of experience in Student Activities at several institutions. Each facilitator currently works in Student Activities at Tulsa Community College; however, they all work at different campuses. The populations and activities at theses campuses are as varied as their locations. Not only do they bring Student Activities experience, they also have extensive presentation and facilitation/mediation experience.

**Creating a Successful FYS Course in a Two-Year College**

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Developing a first year seminar course at a two-year college can be very difficult. Our institution, a two-year college with both urban and suburban campuses, has open admissions and students from a variety of backgrounds. Our greatest hurdle in developing the course was finding a balance so that students with developmental backgrounds and without them could attend the same class and find it equally supportive and helpful in preparing them for college life.

In this session we will discuss the history and development of UCC 101 from a few college study skills courses offered in the early 1990s to its current manifestation: 2,000 students per year, taught by approximately sixty faculty, assisted by peer mentors and support staff from every department in the College. We have a custom textbook, a common final exam, intense faculty and peer mentor training, and a curriculum which attempts to prepare students for their experiences in any college, including those we hope they will attend when their time at UCC ends.

We will discuss the steps we took to develop the course: negotiating for faculty and peer mentor compensation, training faculty and support staff, developing materials, attending the national conferences on the FYS (and helping to create a local, state-wide organization and conference), assessing our students and our program, and convincing the faculty to mandate the course to all first-time full-time students. Over time we have completed a process that we feel will be extremely useful to other two-year colleges seeking to develop a similar program. It will also be useful to four-year faculty and administrators to see a program whose policies and procedures are truly “best practices” for all involved. We will distribute sample syllabi, training materials, and the innovative assignments and experiences that have made UCC 101 such a success.

Got Students? Office of Academic Support Services - An Integrated Approach

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The University at Albany Office of Academic Support Services (OASS) has been creating support services for students since 1989. An outgrowth of the successful Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), OASS creates programs to help the greater University community, with a strong emphasis on targeting first year students. These programs include an Independent Tutoring Program, Faculty and Peer Mentor Program, weekly Study Skills Workshops, extensive Study Groups, University Tutoring Program, an Academic Early Warning System, a Freshman Year Experience and Peer Leader Program, CSTEP, and Project Excel (Student Support Services). During this session, we will focus on each program’s implementation and how students take advantage of these services and its effect on their first year of college.

Our session will focus on our multifaceted approach in helping students reach their academic potential and goals. Developing individual relationships with students early is the key to our success. By starting early and being proactive in reaching out to students as well recruiting mentors, tutors, and facilitators it allows us to take part in authentic team building, transition assistance, peer support groups, purposeful placement, and early intervention. This includes purposeful admittance into our FYE classes, CSTEP, and Project Excel programs as well as continuing support for EOP initiatives. This allows us to strengthen relationships with the University and foster a campus community where upper classmen and alumni give back and provide resources to our students. We will bring in information that includes recruiting, workshop, training, and orientation materials as well as sample correspondence to reach our faculty.

The Role of Undergraduate Research in Mentoring Underrepresented First-Year Students

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Although UCLA is one of the most selective undergraduate Research institutions in the country, we find that relatively few students of color and first generation college students participate in undergraduate research and College Honors, nor are they competitively eligible for graduate school upon graduation. Through this panel, we hope to come to an understanding of the particular social and academic challenges that these students may face in their first year of college.

In 2005, the UCLA Research Rookies Program initially was formed to create a pipeline for the McNair Scholars Program, a federally funded program intended to prepare historically underrepresented and first generation college students for PhD programs in the humanities and social sciences. Under the guidance of a Graduate Mentor and sponsorship of a UCLA faculty member, selected participants attend workshops and information sessions that expose them to research opportunities and provide information about graduate school.

Panelists will give an overview of the Rookies Program, describe its evolution over the past three years, and will review the benefits that the first year participants receive. Additionally, we will focus on how a community of scholars model aids in the retention of the Rookies and also their graduate mentors, who also tend to be from similar backgrounds.

**Advancing Learning Outcomes Through Interactive Case Studies**

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The University of Alabama at Birmingham imposes coherence on undergraduate education through specific instruction in targeted competencies, including ethics and civic responsibility, from the freshman through the senior year. Students are introduced to responsible dialoguing on sensitive issues in Freshman Discussion Groups. Instruction and practice continue in the discipline-based, faculty-taught anchor course in each freshman learning community (FLC).

Student Affairs developed and facilitates for these anchor courses an interactive Student Affairs Module (SAM) that integrates dialogue about ethics, diversity, and civic responsibility with case
studies that help students recognize the role of student development as an integral part of their collegiate experience. Student Affairs has partnered with Academic Affairs to advance such learning outcomes as to think critically, approach problems systematically, set timelines for project completion, work in groups, cultivate diversity awareness, connect to the (campus) community, and understand the ethical consequences of personal choices.

In class 1, students are assigned case scenarios in which fictitious students have multiple, overlapping problems and concerns. Students work in teams to disentangle the problem, prioritize the issues, and suggest potential resources in Student Affairs to help address each issue. In class 2, students present their case scenarios to the class, discuss the resources they identified, and articulate how multiple concerns might influence one another.

Between classes 2 and 3, students must attend a campus cultural event and write a reflective paper regarding their observations and participation. In class 3 students are challenged to think about their future involvement on campus and to brainstorm activities that would support their academic and career goals and contribute to their understanding of learning in a campus community.

Session attendees will receive copies of the training materials for SAM facilitators, student handouts, and grading rubrics for the group presentation and writing assignment.

How Are We Doing? Assessment and Program Development in University 101

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For a decade, University 101 was UAB’s stalwart First Year Experience program. Originally conceived as a retention effort targeted at Conditionally Admitted students, U101 has steadily solidified into an academically enhancing critical thinking course. One mark of U101’s success is its prominence in the role of alternative FYE programs required for all in-coming students in the Fall Semester of 2008. To satisfy their FYE requirement, students will be offered several alternatives: U101, Learning Communities, Science and Technology Honors Programs, or
Discipline Based Introductory Courses for declared majors. Significant portions of the U101 curriculum such as the Advising Assignment, Time Management Seminar, and Group Project will be comprised a required 30% portion of the alternative FYE programs.

Despite U101’s apparent success, a concern for both faculty and administration was the validity of the assessment tool being used to measure student learning outcomes. Data from self-designed pre-post tests, subjective ratings from instructors and students, GPA, and retention levels all pointed to success, but a well-designed study yielding hard statistical evidence was not available until the academic year 2006-7 when Dr. Gypsy Abbott was appointed to conduct the research. Her report notes that “a mixed methods design, using qualitative and quantitative data collections methods, was used to analyze student-learning outcomes for the Fall of 2006, with multiple assessment opportunities: (a) within course assessments, (b) course project, (c) pre-post assessment of critical thinking skills, and (d) End of Course Survey.” Quantitative data analysis concluded that “content validity” as well as “construct validity” was demonstrated and that “the continuous improvement model used has clearly resulted in the desired changes.” Qualitative data analysis endorsed that U101 “provided assistance in learning skills related to critical thinking, problem solving, and time management.” In short, we now had evidence that supported the course’s success.

Our presentation will offer insight into both curricular design and program assessment of this course. Perhaps this model will provide useful suggestions for programs that seek methods for developing similar courses or selecting assessment tools.

Engaging Commuter Students Through Online Technology

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This program will examine some of the successful online programs and services offered by the Office of the Student Experience at the University of Calgary. It will demonstrate that first year commuter students can be successfully engaged in the campus community and provided with timely information through a variety of low-cost, high-impact online services.

It is no secret that traditional-aged first year students have grown up using computers and the Internet. They expect easy access to information at a time that is convenient for them. Through social networking websites and media such as cell phones they have also come to expect interactive online experiences.
At the University of Calgary, approximately 93% of these tech-craving undergraduates are also commuter students, the majority of which continue to live with their families while attending university. They are a disparate group spread throughout the city and who identify primarily with pre-established communities and with their academic programs.

The U of C’s online programming for first year students has addressed both the preferences of this generation and the challenges of connecting commuter students. Our students find such programming to be accessible, highly interactive and easily updateable. It also addresses the needs of our educational institution because it is cost effective, expands hours of service, provides opportunities for student leadership, facilitates cross-departmental collaboration, and provides continuity with other online services throughout a student’s postsecondary experience.

The presenters will discuss the learning objectives, software, staffing and volunteer resources, and assessments of the following services: Online Forums, a discussion board moderated by student leaders and campus professionals; U of C Zine, a professionally published monthly e-magazine written by and for students; Blackboard course management software used for non-academic purposes; videos created for and posted on YouTube; and the creation of a student e-Learning Assistant position.

The Men’s Program: A Unique Mentoring Program for First-Year Men

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A number of disturbing trends underscore the need for support and mentoring for male students. The percent of men attending college has been declining nationally. A study of Washington universities found that men failed academically at twice the rate of women. Alcohol abuse and male-initiated violence often plague campus communities.

Rather than attempting to intervene after substance abuse and/or violence have reached dangerous levels, we developed the highly proactive Men’s Program. Since 2002, we have randomly selected two floors in the residence halls (120 men) to participate in the program. We kick-off the fall quarter with a series of special events and then we continue meeting with them throughout the year at both informal social gatherings as well as more formal educational programs. Mentor relationships with older faculty and staff men assist the young men in making responsible choices, particularly around issues—such as drinking and dating—which many young males use to define their manhood. The Men’s Program connects young men immediately upon their entrance into
UCSB with a supportive community within which they can examine and act on issues relating to leadership, community awareness and involvement, masculinity, gender roles, engagement/disengagement, and isolation versus integration into the institution.

Results from the last five years are quite positive and compelling. And last year, we launched a Women’s Program.

This presentation will provide: an overview of the creation of the program, a review of the various educational and social programs offered throughout the year, a discussion of empirical findings that indicate success, and a sample of evaluations from the student participants.

Residence Hall Advising Team: Bridging the Gap for First-Year Students at a Research University

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The University of California, Davis (UCD) is a large, research institution with a decentralized academic advising structure. Historically, first-year students had trouble navigating the advising services and were intimidated to seek out advising on a large campus. Approximately ninety percent of first-year students live in Student Housing. Prior to the early 1990’s, Resident Advisors provided limited academic peer guidance and programs to their residents. With feedback and support from residents in 1996 to increase fees, Student Housing began to partner with the College of Letters & Science to provide academic advising programs in the residence halls. The partnership developed to include collaboration with the other three academic Colleges as well as the campus Advising Services and Learning Skills units. Unique to research institutions, this collaboration resulted in the creation of the Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT) in 1998. The RHAT structure was solidified in 2000 and consists of two main components: 1) academic peer advisors who implement evening residence hall programs and provide advising services, and 2) peer tutors who provide tutoring on common first-year student courses in residential academic advising centers. The RHAT program is administered through an advisory board including staff from academic affairs, Student Housing, and student affairs. Presenters will discuss the history and organization, the specific components of the RHAT program, strategies for establishing collaborations between academic and student affairs, details about the peer advisor training, assessment of the program and data collected, as well as the challenges and future direction of the program. Presenters will engage participants in discussion regarding collaborative initiatives between academic affairs and student affairs to improve academic advising for first-year students.
First-Year Students and Social Networking Sites

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Almost every first-year student, 94 percent, spent at least some time on social networking websites in a typical week. The majority of students (almost 60 percent) spent between one and five hours on online social network websites in a typical week during their first college year.

In comparison to other activities, time spent on online social networking was less than academic pursuits (such as classes and homework) and “live” socializing. Students spent the most time attending class and labs (91 percent reported spending six or more hours a week in class), socializing with friends (75 percent reported spending six or more hours a week doing this) and studying/homework (62 percent reported spending six or more hours a week studying). Far fewer (21 percent) spent six or more hours per week on social networking sites. Further, approximately the same proportion of first-year students reported spending more than six hours a week partying (22 percent) and/or watching TV (19 percent).

In general, fewer freshman male students used social network sites: 73 percent of male first-year students reported that they spent more than one hour per week on such websites each week, compared to 84 percent of females.

Although students who spent more time on social networking sites did not report spending less time on critical academic activities such as going to class and doing homework, they did report having more difficulty managing their time and developing effective study skills. Specifically, students who spent more time socializing online were more likely than those who spent less time to report that their social life interfered with their schoolwork occasionally or frequently, and that it was somewhat difficult or very difficult to develop effective study skills and to manage their time effectively.

Connecting the Dots: Creating an Integrated First-Year Experience at a Large University

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The literature highlighting research and best practices for first-year experience programs unequivocally supports a comprehensive and integrated student transition experience as most beneficial to students’ first-year experience and success (Hossler, Kuh, & Olsen, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates, 2005; Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot, & Associates, 2005). Despite wide acknowledgement of this approach in theory, many institutions are hindered in practice by organizational structures, historical divisions of labor (Caple, 1996), and campus climates that separate the various programs and policies that are intended to support first-year students. Nowhere is this more of a challenge than in large, diverse, decentralized university environments where student needs are often addressed in institutional or departmental silos, which limit the scope and reach of initiatives for first-year students.

Faced with this very challenge, a team of faculty and professionals from both academic and student affairs at UCLA were charged by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education to integrate numerous programs located within divisions and departments across the campus into an intentional and comprehensive first-year program to debut in Fall 2008. Members of the UCLA team, who represent different functional areas in the support and success of new students, will briefly share their experiences from this multi-year process. The facilitators will use UCLA as an institutional case study to generate discussion about the unique challenges of first-year service and program delivery at large universities. Further, the facilitators will engage the group in an exchange of specific ideas, strategies, and resources that serve to overcome those challenges and, thus, create a meaningful and seamless transition experience for new students.

The purpose of this session is not to hold up any one institutional program as exemplary. Rather it aims to acknowledge the challenges that large universities face in the delivery of first-year programs and to share effective strategies and resources across a network of professionals who serve first-year students at large universities.

Cross-Campus Collaborations

James Smith
Assistant Director for Residence Life
During the presentation, the facilitator will introduce self, and if applicable, see that participants introduce themselves. Next the facilitator will present outcomes to the group on various first year initiatives at UC Riverside and how collaborating with various offices has benefits and risks. The facilitator will briefly touch on First Year Learning Communities, Living Learning Communities, Supplemental Instruction and the political acumen used to work with various offices. Since the crux of this program is a roundtable session, the facilitator will ask the group to discuss trends and initiatives on their campus and how they collaborate with various offices.

Creating Community Online: How First-Year Students (and others) Form Social Ties Online

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The presentation will start by determining the audience familiarity with online social networks. A brief summary and explanation to fill in any gaps in the attendees knowledge will follow. The presenter will ask participants to identify three main positives and three drawbacks associated with online social networks.

For the next 10 minutes, the presenter will summarize all the essential findings of his doctoral dissertation study.

The presenter will present the models of analysis and vet them amongst the attendees.

Collectively, participants and the presenter will identify how these findings apply to first year students, and then to other students in our universities.

We will then explore the role that we can play within online social networks and the role that online social networks can play within our work with students.

Sometimes the Numbers Don't Tell the Whole Story: Assessing First-Year Targeted Retention Programs With both Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

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Higher Education professionals facing the difficult task of retaining their entering freshmen have developed a wide variety of specialized retention programs to target demographics that are considered to be ‘at-risk.’ These types of targeted retention programs are often creative spaces where the overlap between student services professionals and academic affairs faculty/staff can produce great innovation. We are interested in the development of these targeted retention programs and the sometimes very daunting task of assessing them.

Our institution, a 4-year public university, has implemented many such retention programs through our Division of Undergraduate Studies. In determining how to structure such programs and in assessing which aspects of each are successful, we will discuss the collection and application of quantitative assessment data, pointing out places where assessment methods outside of the traditional quantitative ones are necessary.

In this session we will present assessment data from four of the first-year targeted retention programs currently under way in our Division. This session will discuss the following targeted projects among entering freshmen: commuters, first-generation, athletes, and residential colleges. We will discuss the structure of these programs and also identify successes and challenges in the implementation of these targeted retention projects.

In discussing the implementation and assessment of these retention programs, we will suggest that quantitative variables cannot be the sole determinates in identifying the communities for targeted retention programs.

**Living and Learning Together: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Partnerships**

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With 10 years of history behind our living learning communities at UCA, we have made some mistakes and learned from these as we've worked out issues between student affairs and academic affairs. In this presentation we will take the time to address both the great benefits and very real obstacles the student affairs and academic affairs personnel encounter when learning to collaborate. We will share what we have done to make the classroom academic experience stretch outside the classroom and how the outside experiences are brought inside the classroom to create a seamless learning experience for our students.

Having identified key areas that create tension between these groups, we find three areas of potential conflict: fundamental differences in work schedules and perception of time, differing relationships to the institutions, different methods of evaluation and assessment. With two canons of literature forming the foundation of most living and learning communities, the possibility of "turf wars" is very real. Critical to the success of integrating both faculty and student affairs professionals is the underlying mission to educate students. We will help participants identify pivotal persons on their campuses who are critical to forming a strong partnership.

Sometimes to be successful you have to start with the unsuccessful. We'll take some time to talk about lessons learned and the resulting best practices. We'll talk about egos, power, and funding. And finally, we'll discuss a variety of relationships and help workshop participants use these relationships as they exist on their own campuses to create successful living and learning communities.

**A Collaborative Team Approach for a First-Year Seminar: Supporting Active Learning**

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A first year seminar college task force set goals for first year students in a Research One four year university program in the College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) at the University of Cincinnati. The following goals were recommended:
1) A carefully planned college orientation
2) Quality Academic Advising
3) Development of student cohorts or learning communities who would take classes together
4) A first-year seminar taught by a team that included a senior faculty member and an upperclassman, and
5) An interactive experience in the first-year in the college

Data compiled from surveys and interviews of previous CAHS students, indicated to the college task force an urgency to provide first-year students with the opportunity to connect with professors in their selected field of study in allied health during the first weeks of college. The programs in the CAHS include: Clinical Laboratory Science, Speech Pathology and Audiology, Advanced Medical Imaging Technology, Rehabilitation and Health Sciences, and Nutrition and Dietetics.

The overriding goal of the first quarter is to orient students to life at the university while helping students succeed in their courses and to become engaged in student life. A team approach pedagogy model is utilized to include a faculty member and undergraduate teaching assistant in CAHS for each seminar section. Undergraduate teaching assistants provide personal experiences with various aspects of academics, extra-curricular activities, assistance in technology and more. This unique teaching style provides a sense of community and a supportive environment for all of the first-year students.

Examples will be provided regarding the team teaching method, course goals, class material, information literacy, pedagogy, text selection, guest speakers, reflective journals, interactive exercises, blackboard technology, and end of course survey/evaluation. Data derived from course surveys, NSSE and the University of Cincinnati’s 5 year retention data for the College of Allied Health.

**Maximum Impact on a Shoestring: Strategic Planning for Sustainable First-Year Initiatives**

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Many institutions are expected to deliver high quality first-year initiatives on a shoestring budget. Common approaches for jump-starting first-year initiatives range from providing large sums of seed monies which disappear after a specified period of time to assigning units with new yet unfunded responsibility for building first-year experience programs. In either extreme, program leaders charged with developing first-year experience initiatives face long-range planning and
resource management dilemmas that center on the question of how to maximize their ability to impact student success given their personnel and financial limitations.

This roundtable discussion will assist program leaders to reflect on their strategic planning while learning from the experiences of others so that they will be better equipped to: 1) construct and implement an approach to the first-year that is affordable and effective for their home campus, 2) build the buy-in and infrastructure necessary to sustain their institution’s attention to the first-year, and 3) establish appropriate benchmarks for success. Hopefully, participants will also develop a network of colleagues to contact for further consultation and support beyond the time devoted to this session.

The session facilitators will use discussion prompts/approaches to generate active participation by all who attend. Specific topics discussed will be dependent upon the interests that participants bring to the session possibly including vision development and goal setting, defining desirable outcomes, advocacy and collaboration strategies, budget benchmarks, funding strategies, staffing strategies, assessment and evaluation, information and results dissemination, program marketing, and more. The facilitators will shape the conversation to be relevant to participants who may represent a variety of contexts including different types of initiatives and scale (focus, size, and stage of development) as well as different types of institutions.

Peer Mentoring as Mid-Collegiate Student Development Experience: Developing, Supporting, and Assessing

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The Peer-led LC program at UC, now 7 years old, has grown exponentially within the past two years from 12 in 2006/2007 to 43 in 2006/2007 to 60 in 2007/2008!

In these LC’s, 20 FY students are co-enrolled in two or more academic classes. Additionally, the LC meets twice/week with a PL. The PL’s responsibilities are profound – mentor FY students, build group solidarity, support academic development, connect students to campus, develop and implement engaging, meaningful activities, etc. While our program provides ample support and monitoring, PL’s operate as autonomous and trusted paraprofessionals.

As PL’s support FY students, they themselves engage in intensive mid-collegiate experiential learning processes. With each cycle of experience and reflection, we learn and refine our methods of supporting Peer Leaders. How do we support Peer Leaders’ development, and continuously improve the Peer-led LC program?

We will provide a concise whirlwind tour of our annual cycle of PL development, share our learnings (and future hopes), and leave ample discussion and sharing time.
Presentation will include
• Structure of program
• Roles of PL’s
• Roles of veteran PL’s
• Recruitment of PL’s
• Selection and hiring
• Handbook
• Training
• Collaboration across the university
• Weekly small group PL meetings
• Weekly Peer Leader reflections
• Peer Leader assessments
• Student assessments
All kindred souls who work with Peer Mentors and/or LC’s should find a home here!

Calibrating Cognitive Machinery: Teaching Strategies to Help First-Year Seminar Students Get in Gear

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The University of Colorado-COLORADO SPRINGS has experienced rapid and continuing success with its Freshman Seminar Program, which originated with one section of 19 students (5 percent of incoming freshmen) during Fall, 1991, and now serves nearly 750 students (nearly 80 percent) in 54 sections during Fall, 2007. The success of these 14 multi-disciplinary, three-credit, academic courses is due to the commitment of a core of faculty from more than 30 units across five colleges who motivate, engage, and support first-year students in the classroom. It is organized around broad and appealing content areas such as “Crime and Punishment,” “The Mating Game,” “Life and Death,” “ColoradoLiving.com,” “Unreality,” “Tuesday Night at the Movies,” “Food for Thought,” “This I Believe” and “Trial & Error,” and taught by interdisciplinary, cross-college teams of faculty, staff, and Junior Teaching Assistants. While focusing on their chosen compelling topic, students develop their skills in speaking, writing, teamwork, and technology; are introduced to the fundamentals of various disciplines; and work closely with faculty and peers. Freshman Seminar students spend one-half of their in-class time in small groups of fifteen with their individual instructor(s), and the other half with all students enrolled in the content area for presentations by experts within a variety of disciplines. The course begins two days before other classes with “Preview Daze” and ends five weeks early. This session will focus on specific teaching strategies and hands-on exercises for the first-year classroom. According to UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute, today’s college freshmen are largely overconfident, disengaged, and often lacking in the focus required to attain a college education. Many are over-obligated and over-optioned. This session will stress academic fitness and focus on specific teaching strategies that
help students engage in the classroom and get in gear, academically. Participants will receive practical faculty training materials to enhance first-year teaching at their home institutions.

UCONN CONNECTS: Individualized Academic Intervention

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The retention rate at the University of Connecticut, a research extensive university, has risen from 86% to 93% over the past ten years. This significant increase can be attributed to a comprehensive approach taken up by faculty, students, and staff across campus dedicated to supporting students through the first year of college. First Year Experiences courses taken during the first semester in combination with a targeted and personalized academic intervention during the second semester, A combination of First Year Experience courses taken during the first semester and Through First Year Experience courses taken during the fall semester, and a personalized academic intervention for students who find themselves on scholastic probation in the spring semester, support through the entire first year transition is prevalent and widely utilized.

UCONN CONNECTS provides a model for academic intervention targeted at second semester students. Specifically, UCONN CONNECTS invites students on scholastic probation to work individually with a student or staff facilitator throughout the semester. Facilitators and students meet weekly or bi-weekly and assist with the academic goal setting process, develop effective time management study strategies, and hold students accountable for their academic progress. In addition, facilitators help to connect students with other resources on campus, including their academic advisors, content-specific tutoring centers, and offices such as career services. Facilitators are non-judgmental and encourage students to take personal responsibility for both their successes and their failures.

In this session, presenters will outline the program, address the process of training facilitators, and provide qualitative and quantitative data highlighting the effect of such a program. Session participants will be engaged in a discussion about what elements are necessary in an effective facilitator, how UCONN CONNECTS collaborates with faculty and student affairs professionals across campus, and what criteria should be used to accurately assess student success in the
The majority of the session time will be spent on the training of Peer Leaders (PLs), their role in the classroom, and how we assess their performance and what the data shows us. With this said, we will begin with a brief overview of the First-year Florida course (ex. size, credit hours, curriculum, etc.) and the recruitment and selection of the PLs to serve as a springboard for the subsequent information. The first item to be covered in depth will be the training of the PLs. We will discuss our multiple training class model (ie. three classes instead of one), the training curriculum design and implementation, the use of a seasoned/returning PL as a co-instructor for the training class, and the follow-up training opportunities once the formal training class is over (ie. brown bag lunches, roundtables, mentoring groups). The second item to be covered will be the role of the PLs in the classroom. Our philosophy is that undergraduate PLs are equal teaching partners. As such we will share the ways PLs are utilized in the classroom and teaching experience (ie. to create and implement lesson plans, read and grade papers, schedule out-of-class meetings and socials, etc.) and the partnership that must be established with their co-instructor (a UF faculty or staff member). We will conclude the presentation with assessment. Since the University’s evaluation process does not provide students the opportunity to evaluate their PL we created a web-based survey to obtain this feedback. We will discuss how the instrument aligns with the PLs’ learning outcomes and those of the FYF program and how this data is used with the PLs individually for development. Qualitative data received in the form of a learning contract (pre-test), mid-term assessment, and final evaluation (post-test) will be shared to provide a more comprehensive picture.

Promoting Undergraduate Research to First-Year Students

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This session will highlight the importance of promoting undergraduate research opportunities to first-year students, as well as national and institutional research opportunities and methods to promote those opportunities in first-year programming. In the August 17, 2007 edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education, the article “What good is undergraduate research, anyway?” highlighted recent research on the outcomes of involvement in undergraduate research.

In this presentation we will be brainstorming and discussing both personal and cognitive gains of undergraduate students active with research projects. We also will look at involvement in research through the framework of educational environments (physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed) as presented by Strange and Banning (2001).

We will share national resources on undergraduate research, including the National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates summer research program and the Council on Undergraduate Research. Additionally we will highlight institutional undergraduate research programs, using programs at the University of Florida as an example. Aside from the University Scholars Program open to students of all majors, we are in our second year of offering the Science for Life course which is open to first and second year students interested in pursuing research in the sciences. Funded by a grant from the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Science for Life students are eligible to pursue fellowships to engage in research with a faculty member starting in their second semester in college.

Finally, we will discuss methods to promote undergraduate research with first-year students. We currently bring in upper-class honors students who have been conducting research to our Introduction to Honors Professional Development courses to discuss their involvement with research. We also have our students reflect on their research interests following the panel. We will brainstorm other ways to promote this type of involvement through our classes and other first-year programming.

**Improving the Peer Educator Experience: Research on Developing and Assessing Learning Outcomes for First-Year Peer Educators**

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Peer educators are widely used by colleges and universities to assist with first-year students’ transition to the collegiate experience. A significant amount of research has indicated that peer educators are affected developmentally by their experience (Badura, Millard, Johnson, Stewart, & Bartoloemi, 2003; Badura, Millard, Peluso, & Ortman, 2000; Good, Halpin, & Halpin, 2000; Holland & Huba, 1989; Jones & Kolkó, 2002; Micari, Streitwieser, & Light, 2006; McKinney & Reynolds, 2002; Rice & Brown, 1990; Sawyer, Pinciaro, & Bedwell, 1997; Tien, Roth, & Kampmeier, 2004) while learning specific skills and competencies (Benjamin, 2001; Dye & Robison, 2005; Dye, Pinnegar, & Robinson, 2005; Harmon, 2006) which further amplify their
experience and made it meaningful. Peer educators not only experience personal and professional development through service in these types of positions but also proceed through a unique learning process where they integrate what they learn and determine practical applications for their career development (Harmon; Micari, Streitwieser, & Light; Puchkoff & Font-Padron, 1990; Tenny & Houck; Tien, Roth, & Kampmeier).

Specifying learning outcomes allows peer educator program coordinators to measure the degree of student knowledge and the specific competencies gained from participation in a particular program (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004). Assessment of learning outcomes offers a direction for designing and modifying programs and services while offering suggestions to students about the intentions professionals have for what they are to learn (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

This presentation provides the results of interviews with 11 peer educator program coordinators at colleges and universities to examine the development and assessment of learning outcomes for peer educators working with first-year students.

**Supporting Student Transitions: MAP-Works on Multiple Campuses**

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At Ball State University, a collaborative survey project was developed in 1988 to provide quality information to support first-year student success. The project is titled Making Achievement Possible Works (MAP-Works) because it is structured, literally, to help make student achievement possible and to focus on early interventions. It begins with a survey designed to reveal the strengths and talents of first year students, to help them identify areas for further growth, and to facilitate one-on-one interventions with students at risk. Individual information and feedback based on survey responses are provided to residence hall professionals, academic advisors, first-year seminar instructors and students. Also, a variety of group summaries are provided to faculty and professional staff on campus.

In this session we will introduce the Making Achievement Possible Works (MAP-Works) project including the purpose, a brief history, and new enhancements. We will review and discuss the information obtained through MAP-Works and we will review and discuss the report formats used with students and faculty/staff groups like academic advisors, first-year seminar instructors, and residence hall professionals. We will provide concrete examples of how various campuses (including a large public institution, a mid-sized private institution, and a small private institution) have utilized MAP-Works to help first-year students succeed. We will end the session by having participants discuss how this information could be used on their campus and what general best practices can be learned from this example.

We expect that participants in this session will understand the basics of the Making Achievement
Possible Works (MAP-Works) project; understand the types of reporting offered to students and faculty/staff; and understand how different campuses have utilized MAP-Works at their institutions.

To involve participants, open discussion is invited. In addition, we will use sample student and faculty/staff reports and have participants discuss how this information could be used on their campuses.

**Building a Digital Library for the Provisioning of Mobile Orientation**

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Mobile learning (m-learning) is an emerging research field altogether separate from the domain of e-learning (Traxler, 2007). Educational researchers are exploring ways to provide educational content on the mobile devices students carry. A device is deemed mobile if it is carried as easily as a person would carry a wallet or keys (Caudill, 2007). Attempts to place orientation materials on mobile devices will be haphazard and ineffective if they are not provisioned in an organized and accessible manner. This poster presents the fundamental techniques of digital librarianship applied to the challenges of mobile orientation. Techniques of digital librarianship include creation of metadata (data about data) standards for digital objects, and understanding the organization, access, and preservation problems of digital media. The cost of producing a digital library of mobile learning objects can be alleviated through the use of open source digital library software.

A digital learning object can include such files as digital maps, mp3s, and text documents. These objects can be placed onto mobile devices if the native mobile device file format is utilized. File formats for use on mobile devices may differ from the native format of a personal computer.

The ideal way to construct any kind of bibliographic system (digital library) is to first state the objectives (Svenonius, 2000). Once a digital library has its objectives established (our objective: developing a digital library which organizes and makes accessible to the user digital objects which can be used to mobile orientation) the next step is producing the content for dissemination, use, and ultimately setting the foundation for college and university level education. This poster will illustrate and instruct orientation professionals on digital library best practices while also informing educators about the developing field of m-learning.

**Works Cited**  

Traxler, J. (2007). Defining, discussing, and evaluating mobile learning: the moving finger writes and having writ... International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 8(2) Retrieved
Individual Academic Consultations: Discussions About Study Strategies to Enhance Academic Life

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Academic Enhancement at the University of Kentucky focuses on academic consultations as a way to address retention and persistence. The consultations are a way for students to be active in their learning and increase their academic skills. Academic consultations focus on behavior changes and are a proactive and reactive response to students’ academic struggles.

Two types of academic consultations are available for students. The first are the general consultations, which are one-on-one sessions with a learning specialist that focus on a variety of strategies that can be implemented immediately. The consultation revolves around the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), which reviews strengths and weaknesses in learning and study skills. The general consultation is used for UK students who need assistance in critical reading, time management, note taking, and other areas.

If a student is either on academic probation or has a significant decline in grades, another consultation is available, entitled Pro-Series 3. The Pro-Series 3 is a set of three academic consultations for students who need an intensive review of study strategies. The first appointment consists of a review of the LASSI scales that are strengths and weaknesses. The next appointment, about one week later, is an intensive review of active approaches to increasing some of the LASSI scales using their strengths. The final appointment is a few weeks later to discuss the student’s progress and ways to be more proactive in the beginning of the semester.
The presentation will focus on how addressing these various deficits in study strategies can help in retention and GPA at UK. The presentation will review the initial consultation program, assessment of the LASSI and GPA of participating students, and areas of improvement for the future of the program. The presentation will conclude with a review of personal accounts of the consultation experience.

**Meeting Students Where They Are: Timing-Strategic Academic Programming in UK’s Residence Halls**

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The proposed session will discuss the structure and function of regular, relevant academic programs presented in UK residence halls and the assessment measures implemented to monitor their efficacy. This initiative represents a continuous, intentional collaboration between Academic Enhancement, a unit in academic affairs, and the Office of Residence Life, in student affairs. As retention and persistence rates continue to be major themes on our campus, these presentations were designed to help students make connections with other residents, give students opportunities to connect with upperclass students who have successfully navigated the first year and beyond, foster recognition and discussion of issues that first-year students typically encounter, and encourage students (directly and indirectly) to conceptualize residence halls as both academic and social space.

The series of academic programs that has emerged from this joint effort is based on a framework
that follows a mentoring format and Vygotsky’s learning theory. These monthly presentations were designed largely by Peer Presenters with a student perspective in mind, and each month’s topic is geared toward the different issues that students face in their first year. The goal of the program is to incite academic discussions among students outside the classroom and encourage them to prevent themselves from encountering difficulties.

This initiative is continually assessed in several ways. Each student is emailed an optional, anonymous survey after each presentation she/he attends. Also designed by Peer Presenters, these surveys adapt items from published instruments to increase reliability and validity. Peer Presenters write a brief report after each presentation. Professional staff analyze these and identify trends in hall staff and student attendance and participation. Additionally, basic information is collected at each presentation, providing valuable information regarding student access. This information is then analyzed with respect to other factors of the residence hall (location, presence of a living-learning community, etc.).

**Using Undergraduate Marketing Interns: Maximizing Student Awareness and Use of Academic Enhancement Services**

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The proposed session will discuss the value of undergraduate marketing interns to the design and implementation of effective outreach efforts for Academic Enhancement. Promotion of the department naturally occurs somewhat via the delivery of its services, such as through presentations on study skills in various venues, or word of mouth among students receiving peer tutoring.
However, as the scope and reach of the department has broadened since its inception in 2004, the need for active promotion efforts to create and sustain further awareness across campus has been increasingly necessary.

Although outreach to professional advisors, faculty members, and even parents of first year students is key due to their influential relationships with students, it is most important to ensure that the student body 1) knows that Academic Enhancement services exist for their use and benefit, 2) knows where and when they can access services, and 3) perceives the department as student-friendly and feels inclined to actually take advantage of services. To this effect, it was acknowledged that the best perspective for attracting undergraduate students would come from their peers.

Three undergraduates were hired to develop branding for Academic Enhancement, as well as to generally act as receptors of student perception of services and provide feedback to the senior staff. In addition to the design of a logo, interns have been responsible for the conception, production, and distribution of promotional materials that are consistent in theme. Examples and rationale of their advertisements and literature, such as posters, fliers, mailers, and brochures, will be presented, as well as descriptions of their coordination with administrative offices and the Office of Residence Life to distribute them. By fulfilling this time-consuming marketing and advertising role with creativity and focus, interns free the Outreach Coordinator to address public relations and communication responsibilities.

**Comprehensive Intrusive Model for Campuswide Retention**

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This presentation is a celebratory overview of retention activities developed via departmental collaborative efforts at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, which used the first year seminar as the focal point and center for student service delivery. These retention activities included, but were not limited to: 1) academic support, 2) financial aid counseling, 3) personal counseling, and 4) career counseling.
The service delivery model was established in three phases: 1) creation of uniform course syllabus for the first-year experience course, 2) creation of retention specialist positions, 3) creation of a referral, monitoring, and tracking process for each student.

The initial phase required the establishment of a university-wide task force to create a university-approved syllabus for the first year experience seminar. All departments approved the course content, goals and objectives. In addition, all departments agreed to provide instruction based on the goals and objectives of the course. To further enhance this course, the task force jointly created the first-year experience seminar textbook, which would be, generate to the university.

Phase Two required the establishment of six new positions (retention specialist). These positions required the creation of job descriptions and hiring of counselor/advisors, career counselor, financial aid counselor, and counselor for students on probation.

Phase Three involved the identification of our “at-risk” student population by administering the Noel-Levitz, College Student Inventory (CSI). Data analysis from the CSI was used to develop diagnostics and descriptive student centered support programs. The first-year experience seminars are used as a focal point for contacting and providing student’s information about available and required services.

Peer Mentoring: Promoting an Academic Focus in the First Year

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This presentation is separated into five sections: a) Overview of the Peer Mentor position at UMass Amherst b) Peer Mentor Training & Supervision c) Academically focused Peer Mentor d) Year long educational initiatives/curriculum e) Completed assessment of our position, as well as, our plan for future assessment.
The Residential First Year Experience Program at UMass Amherst consists of eight theme based halls. Seventy-five percent of these students are also part of academic learning communities in which the courses match the residence hall themes. In addition to the Resident Assistant position, UMass Amherst created a residentially based and academically focused Peer Mentor position. This position staffs a Residential Academic Success Center and implements an in-hall curriculum focused on the academic needs of first year students during the entire year.

Based on knowledge of first year students and their needs throughout the entire first year of college, we developed multiple strategies for working with students about their academics in the residence halls. Peer Mentors are trained to approach students about their academics. We developed a Peer Mentor Handbook that clearly distinguishes a traditional RA role from the Peer Mentor role. The Handbook explains strategies to address academic topics with first year students during each month of the year. It incorporates ways to reach students through casual conversations, formal mentoring sessions, and standard workshop designs.

Lastly, this past year, we participated in the National Study of Living-Learning Programs and conducted focus groups with our sophomore students. We will briefly discuss our findings as well as share future assessment plans.

Incorporating High-Impact, Low-Cost Technology in FYE Classes: A Beginner’s Guide

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This hands-on session will discuss and demonstrate state-of-the-art technologies that can be easily and economically incorporated into FYE courses. In the presentation, we provide an overview of several new technologies that can be used in and outside of classrooms, illustrating the ways that technology can be employed to personalize FYE classes and engage students. These innovative technologies are changing the nature of classroom dynamics and requiring the development of new skills, both on the part of students and instructors.

Designed primarily for novice technology users, the participative presentation begins with a discussion and demonstration of in-classroom technologies that can enhance first-year experience courses. Specifically, we examine and demonstrate “smart” presentation media and the use of interactive classroom technologies. These technologies, which involve electronic student response units and receivers, offer immediate feedback from students during classes and real-time assessment of student attitudes and beliefs. We also will examine the use of technologies involving the Web, such as Web-based group activities involving blogs and wikis and the use of virtual worlds like Second Life. In addition, online plagiarism detection software like Turnitin will be discussed. The pros and cons of incorporating online components into FYE classes, and issues regarding student involvement and personalization, also will be considered.
Finally, we will consider the overall benefits and disadvantages of the use of technology, addressing the practical—and philosophical—issues of how the use of technology can improve educational outcomes. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of technology for encouraging student success.

**Film and Diversity: A Life-Changing Double Feature for First-Year Students**

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There are many challenges facing first-year students at U.S. universities and colleges. It goes without saying that broadening students’ awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the many different types of people they will meet in their new campus environment is a priority and key to students’ academic success. The lead presenter will discuss her teaching experiences and provide samples of the materials she has found to be most effective in diversity electives and other multicultural awareness courses for first-year students.

Using popular films like "Real Women Have Curves," "Smoke Signals," and "The Wedding Banquet," the presenters will demonstrate how the films become tools that facilitate discussion of sensitive topics yet allow for individual opinions. Writing and discussion activities will be presented to show how students are prompted to explore the cultural points of view portrayed in each film. Samples from film journals will be provided; these reveal how students’ reactions and observations develop through the course of the class. In addition to increasing students' knowledge and understanding of cultural differences, the "Seeing the Big Picture" textbook will help students develop strong critical-thinking and analytic abilities as they learn to recognize and question messages inherent in the films' portrayals of different populations. The presenters will also demonstrate the Point of View segments from directors, insiders, and students that appear throughout the textbook and that provoke perspectives students might not otherwise encounter.

The lead presenter will provide success stories from American and international students as they let go of fears and prejudices through use of this material. The presenters will reveal evidence that students were challenged academically and personally in ways they enjoyed and valued and reported that what they have learned was immediately relevant to their lives and useful to them.

**Engaging All Students: Implementing Universal Design in First-Year Courses and Programs**
Universal Design (UD) and Universal Instructional Design (UID) are relatively new models for enhancing higher education access and retention for all students. The emphasis in the literature surrounding UD and UID is on students with disabilities, yet UD and UID can also provide a framework for multicultural postsecondary education that values difference and welcomes and supports diversity. Through implementation of UD and UID, staff and faculty create more welcoming spaces for all students by rethinking professional practices to develop programs, services, and curricula that are inclusive for all learners. For the past two years the Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation (PASS IT) project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, has brought together postsecondary educators from a wide variety of institutions throughout the nation to create professional development materials for others with similar work scopes.

This session will begin by providing a brief introduction to UD and UID, including guiding principles, ideas for implementation, and results from both formative and summative assessment. Each of the presenters will then work with a small group of session participants to discuss how they
can implement UD and UID in their own settings. Finally, the entire group will come together to consider how their ideas for implementation can benefit all students while also enhancing inclusion for students from populations that historically have been underrepresented in higher education, including students with disabilities, students of color, students who are English language learners, and so on. The session will conclude with sharing information about a wide variety of resources and the dissemination of a free scholarly book that addresses theoretical and practical applications of UD and UID in classroom, academic support, and student affairs settings and also provides an extensive bibliography of both print and online resources.

Key to Successful Supplemental Instruction (SI) Programs: Obtaining and Sustaining Administrator Buy-In on Your Campus

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Administrators are well aware of the higher cost of recruiting students compared to retaining them. SI has been shown to improve grades, increase course completion, reenrollment, and lower D, F, and withdrawal rates of students who participate in this dynamic model. All of these outcomes strengthen retention efforts. It is critical to lay the groundwork with administrators for how a program such as SI can provide academic support and promote retention in a cost-effective manner. Starting small with a pilot program with one or two SI sections allows for quality control and concentration on the startup, ongoing training of leaders, and effective assessment of the academic outcomes.

Benefits for students, leaders, faculty, and administrators include success and self-motivation for students who engage more deeply with course content while participating in a vibrant learning community. The SI model involves students working together, questioning, grappling with new information, and practicing methods that will help them learn more deeply. Once this is accomplished within a group of interdependent learners, SI participants are ready to apply what they have learned to their class work and be better prepared for the challenge of examinations and future courses.

It is important to have a centralized SI program with one coordinator who deals with developing relationships with administrators and faculty. Reporting lines and positioning within the university must be well established. This can be accomplished through collaboration with program directors, chairs, and deans in order to gain access to higher levels of administration.

This presentation will provide a road map for starting or expanding an SI program, gaining access to and trust with administrators, analyzing data, sharing national data outcomes, and taking part in scholarly research. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss their concerns and challenges related to gaining administrative buy-in on their campus.
The Academic Alert System: A Beneficial Tool for Students, Instructors, and Advisors

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To ensure that every student takes full advantage of the educational opportunities and support programs on campus, the University of Missouri-Rolla (UMR) implemented the Academic Alert System in 2005. A web-based application that supports communication among instructors, advisors, and students, the system is a collaborative effort among the UMR Retention Committee, Information Technology, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies. Beyond improving communications among students, instructors, and advisors, the Academic Alert System reduces the time required for students to be informed of their academic status and informs them of actions they need to take in order to meet the academic requirements in their courses.

The Office of Undergraduate Studies regularly assesses the utilization of the Academic Alert System and its impact on student academic success. This presentation includes assessment data from 2005-2007.

Catch Them if You Can: The Evolution of the Early Warning System at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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We will provide background information about UNCG and the office of Student Academic Services as it relates to the purpose of the Early Spartan Success Initiative (ESSI). We will then cover the following topics:

• Introduction into the historical research of similar early warning programs and initiatives and how they influenced the evolution and philosophy of ESSI on The University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s campus.
• Discussion of the guiding philosophy of Appreciative Advising as well as technical needs associated with setting up the program and online form
• Participants will engage in the ‘flowchart challenge’, an experiential exercise where the ESSI process is described and applied to other campuses
• Handouts will be distributed to each participant with extensive detail of how the process works (submission form, scripts for phone calls and emails, content of meeting with students, follow-up procedures)
• Overview of the University Studies program at UNCG and how ESSI was piloted through this course
• Themes and case studies will be provided from the pilot in Fall 2006 and university-wide in Fall 2007
• Feedback from instructors who used ESSI
• Overview of assessment plan with handouts
• Discussion of the future direction of ESSI
• Questions and Answers

Ensuring Web Accessibility for all Students

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As the population of students with disabilities continues to increase colleges and universities are faced with proactively providing accessible information systems for online offerings. Providing barrier free WEB sites is not just a courtesy but a law. Since September of 1996, the US Department of Justice ruled that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to WEB pages. Accrediting associations such as SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) has a requirement addressing accessibility of on-line courses.

Many colleges and universities are redesigning and customizing their WEB sites. Portal housing of all on-campus service functions is becoming a reality. Students are often exposed to university functions prior to their First Year Experience after being accepted to the university and certainly during the first year. Use of the Web is particularly prone to inaccessibility, not from intent or malice, but due to the lack of awareness on the part of web site creators. It is clear that universities
are rapidly moving forward with technology offerings. What is not clear is how they will ensure equal access for all students. Dialog regarding how this equal access will be achieved needs to be happening in a proactive manner. The issues are not just for Disability Service Offices or Information Technology Divisions to ensure this accessibility. This must be a campus-wide effort. This presentation will address the process necessary to achieve accessibility. Participants will be encouraged to discuss implications and solutions.

**Soaring to Greatness: Initiating a Common Reading Experience**

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In the Fall of 2007, the University of North Carolina Wilmington initiated Synergy: UNCW’s Common Reading Experience, a collaborative effort between Academic and Student Affairs. This session will outline the creation of this program from conception to implementation, detailing what worked and what we have learned from the experience. This will benefit attendees considering a common reading program and those who currently have one.

The session will begin with general information about conception and program goals. The book selection criteria, process and distribution will be shared. The inaugural selection was The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

Although freshmen were a focus, our goal was to create a campus-wide experience. Therefore, informing the campus of this new initiative was essential. This section addresses marketing strategies for various purposes and audiences: a website, mailings, campus/community media, faculty and student events, and training of student leaders.

The implementation of the program in the classroom and on campus will be presented next. The Coordinator of Freshman Seminar will discuss how it was incorporated into the curriculum, provide examples of activities and faculty resources, and discuss faculty training. We also encouraged instructors from all disciplines to utilize the common reading in their courses.
Educational and entertaining campus-wide events, such as a kick-off event, films, lectures, discussion groups, and an essay contest, were planned to bring the Common Reading to all students. The planning and implementation of these events, including successes and challenges, will be discussed.

The presentation will close with qualitative and quantitative data gathered from surveys and other methods. Triumphs and challenges of this first-year initiative will be emphasized. The session will conclude with questions from the attendees. Attendees will receive a planning timeline, a list of events, and other handouts, and visual aids will be used throughout the presentation.

**Comparisons of Collaborative Learning Methods Used in Higher Education**

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The research for this topic is ongoing and will be completed by January of 2008. We will send additional information as is required. The research will involve information from many sources and a subsequent analysis in order to make conclusions about the effectiveness of collaborative
learning. First year students at the University of Notre Dame will take surveys about their experiences and asked specifically what they liked and disliked about the approaches. In addition, professors of classes that use collaborative learning as a teaching method will be interviewed. We will observe students as they take part in collaborative learning activities and draw from personal experiences. The preparation for the presentation will also involve a general research of methodologies and approaches that are being used outside of the University of Notre Dame. Comparisons will be made between the approaches used and effectiveness of collaborative learning in the different colleges at Notre Dame. We will determine if certain subject areas benefit more from collaborative learning activities than others do. This research will benefit professors and students by determining the most successful ways to implement collaborative learning techniques into a college classroom.

Building a Bridge: Crossing the Divide Between Faculty and Student Development Professionals and Curricular and Co-Curricular Work

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Drs. Johnson and Bisese will begin by talking about their work together co-creating a more comprehensive first-year program at the University of Richmond. The University has a legacy of a first-year academic course and a number of student development programs; these programs are stand-alone and do not collaborate around goals, activities or mission.

Drs. Johnson and Bisese have spent the last year trying to take these pieces and create a program with greater coherency for the student. Along the way, they have been successful and unsuccessful in finding new avenues for partnership between faculty and student-development staff, which is critical to the success of this new venture in first-year student focus.

After introducing the session within the frame of their work, Drs. Bisese and Johnson will invite participants to share their methods and challenges bringing faculty and student development staff into productive collaboration. We will particularly emphasize change based on evidence and assessment; appreciating the cultural divide between faculty and student-development professionals; considering the role and effective use of authority in creating programs and/or programmatic change; and, most especially, creating a program that integrates the scholarly work of students and faculty in traditional disciplines with the programming college students need and demand for success.
Infusing Undergraduate Research into the First-Year Experience

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Recent studies have shown the value of undergraduate research from the perspective of both students and their institutions. Students gain self-confidence in their abilities to conduct research and are more likely to interact with faculty outside of the classroom. These same studies have also called for an increased emphasis of undergraduate research starting in the first- and second-year experience.

This presentation will begin by defining undergraduate research and examining current literature and best practices. Specific attention will be given to highlight research across the disciplines and not simply in the natural sciences or engineering. Next we explore how this research supports student success in the first college year. We will present a variety of initiatives that could be incorporated across institutions to encourage more students to participate in the research process. We will examine how to use the first-year seminar, orientation, mini-grants, not-for-credit seminars, learning communities, and other experiences to get more first-year students excited about participating in research. Throughout the presentation we will incorporate specific examples from the University of South Carolina and other institutions from across the country.

University 101 Teachers Speak Out: The Course From the Instructors’ Perspectives

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University 101 is a first-year seminar designed to help students succeed both currently as a college student and later in their personal and professional lives. University 101 course goals focus on helping students assimilate positively into the University including developing and balancing a set of adaptive study, coping, critical thinking, logical problem-solving, and success skills. This seminar style course provides intimate sized classes with no more than 20 students per class, and is taught by one or more instructors and peer or graduate student leaders who have a special interest in helping first-year students succeed. Common content areas are covered in all sections of University 101 while allowing for flexibility in serving unique student constituencies. Instructor panelists will entertain questions and comments from session attendees. Copies of instructors’ syllabi and other pertinent course materials will be provided for audience participants. The Director and Assistant Director of the University 101 program will facilitate this platform.

**University 101 Peer Leaders Speak Out: The Course From the Peer Leaders’ Perspectives**

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University 101 is a first-year seminar designed to help college students succeed academically and throughout their personal and professional lives. University 101 course goals focus on helping students assimilate positively into the University; balance a set of adaptive study, coping, critical thinking, logical problem-solving, and academic success skills. This seminar style course features small class size, with no more than 20 students per class, and is taught by one or more instructors who have a special interest in helping first-year students succeed. Common content areas are covered in all sections of University 101 while allowing for flexibility in serving unique student constituencies.

**Designing Educational Programs that Promote Cognitive Development and Success in the First College Year**

Tracy Skipper  
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The session will highlight the work of three frequently referenced theorists who have studied cognitive development in young adulthood: (a) William Perry, (b) Marcia Baxter Magolda, and (c) Patricia King and Karen Kitchener. A brief overview of these theories, focusing specifically on the work of King and Kitchener and what they can tell us about first-year college students will be presented. Additionally, some of the research validating this work will be offered. The presenters will offer group activities focused on putting theory into practice in areas that include: the writing classroom, advising and career development, diversity education, and living-learning initiatives.

**Publishing on the College Student Experience**

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**Summary:** None

**Is it Possible to Sustain Individual Spirituality, Authenticity, Wholeness, and Self-Renewal in the Academy Today?**

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Summary: None

**Findings from the 2006 National Survey on First-Year Seminars**

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Summary: None

**Innovative Strategies for Intentionally Supporting and Coaching First-Year Students**

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As we are aware, students today thrive when provided with personalized and intentional communications. Knowing this, the University of South Carolina provides a unique partnership between two innovative on-campus programs, the First Year Call Center and the Academic Centers for Excellence. This presentation touches on the benefits and development of this partnership, but its focus is to demonstrate the individualized attention provided through to students. The presenters will begin with a brief overview of both programs and the history of the partnership, after which they will discuss how this partnership provides the individualized attention our first year students have come to expect.

The First Year Call Center attempts to make contact with all first year students to welcome them into the semester, remind them of important dates, and answer any questions they may have. Through this, ten well trained upper class students have a personalized conversation inquiring about experiences, habits and satisfaction within the university.

As a result of these conversations, the First Year Call Center discovered that 89% of our first year population reported being academically satisfied or very satisfied with the university in fall 2007 semester. Of this 89%, nearly one third of these students voluntarily mentioned difficulty with course content, course load, or overall study habits as a challenge.

Although students continue to arrive on campus with an abundance of AP credits and high standardized test scores; many claim they “never studied in high school.” Transitioning study habits from high school to college still challenge many first-year students. Academic success coaching assists students in learning how to study by capitalizing on strengths and addressing academic weaknesses. The Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE) at South Carolina offers individualized academic success coaching to all students in four locations (three residence halls and one in the main campus library). Thirty-two graduate students serve as Academic Success Coaches assisting students in a one on one setting with study skills, time management, and goal setting. Again, providing the personalized and intentional support our first year students like most. This session will conclude with time for questions and answers.

Specifically, this session will provide: 1) the importance of individual and intentional support for first year students 2) Information about the framework for both programs: First Year Call Center and Academic Center for Excellence 3) Details about FYCC and ACE partnerships 4) Research about students’ academic satisfaction and preparation related to study skills in college 5) Ideas for
implementing student calling and academic success coaching on your campus.

Making a First-Year Reading Experience Work: A Step-By-Step Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Common Reading Programs

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First-Year or common reading initiatives have become a popular component of First-Year Experience programs because they provide an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to share a common intellectual experience. In the monograph, Common reading programs: Going beyond the book, Jodi Levine Laufgraben defines common reading programs as “…educationally purposeful programs that engage students in a variety of in- and out-of-class academic and social experiences” (p. ix). These experiences assume a variety of formats, depending on the institution and goals of the common reading program, but all share the common goal of engaging first-year students.

This session will explore the process of creating a common reading program, from planning to implementation, to meet the needs specific institutional and student needs. Through case studies, participants will learn more about how to create an effective common reading program on their own campus. Drawing from experience planning and implementing a common reading experience, data from other program coordinators and participants, and information from the common reading monograph, the presenter will share specific examples of: program goals, book selection criteria and timelines, and strategies for using the book at orientation and in first-year seminars (and other common first-year courses) will be shared. Participants will leave the session with a step-by-step guide to creating an effective common reading program on their own campuses.

Reference

iPods® and Inquiry: A Student-Friendly Comprehensive First-Year Information Literacy Curriculum

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Brenda Davenport
Director of First Year Composition
Icebreaker – Small group activity at the beginning to get participants brainstorming about where are students are lacking in information literacy skills. Recording on flip chart the top concerns provided by audience to show the areas of student information literacy that need to be improved. Transition into program of how our new curriculum addresses these needs.

The Way We Were – Presenters will provide a brief explanation of how these skills were taught to first year students in three different courses (University 101, English 101, and English 102). We will describe the common shotgun approach as used on many college campuses where there was no collaboration between divisions, frequent repetition of library sessions, research papers assigned to students without the necessary skills in place, etc.

Tides of Change – Presenters will then detail the cross campus collaboration that developed between the library, freshman composition, and University 101 as all three were disgruntled with the current situation of student information literacy skills within their own respective areas. Presenters will describe the concerns and the brainstorming across divisions that resulted in the developed curriculum of how information literacy was to be taught across these three courses without unnecessary repetition and while helping students gain the information literacy skills they need.

Curriculum Development and Implementation – The curriculum is built around the five learning outcomes as defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL): 1) knows the nature and extent of the information needed, 2) accesses the needed information effectively and efficiently, 3) evaluates information and its sources critically, 4) uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and 5) uses information ethically. Explanation will be provided to the rationale and timing of the assignments determined in each of the three first year courses as they assist students in mastering these outcomes (i.e. iPod® library tour, library orientation sessions, additional developmentally appropriate research assignments, etc.).

Assessment and Improvement – See “Evidence of Assessment.”

**Beyond the Page: Building a Collaborative and Integrated First-Year Reading and Writing Program**

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Louise Ericson  
Director, Center for Student Success  
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The session will open with a digital story of PREFACE. Through images and music, participants will gain an understanding of its history and programs.

But rather than “sell” the PREFACE approach, the goal of the session is for participants to examine the program they currently offer or the program they envision creating and find strategies useful to them.

To help participants begin thinking about goals for their own programs, they will complete a brief multiple choice survey about first-year reading programs. The major headings of the survey – goals and aims, programs and services, and partners and sponsors – will serve to structure the workshop.

Throughout the session, presenters will elicit feedback from participants’ responses to the survey (by a show of hands) and use them to shape the discussion.

The ways in which PREFACE differs from many first-year reading programs will be a significant part the session. These include its place in the English 101 curriculum, its collaboration with University 101, the year-long interdisciplinary programs, the support from academic units and student services across campus, and the role of students in events such as the annual student-led conference.

In fact, one of the presenters, Anthony DeClue, is a USC Upstate undergraduate student who has received a grant to study student leadership. He will discuss his involvement with PREFACE to create additional leadership opportunities in the program for students.

Throughout the workshop, pictures and documents reflecting the program will be shared, and the results of assessment data will be integrated into the discussion.

After a question and answer session, participants will be encouraged to write down the top 3 priorities for their own first-year reading/writing programs. Presenters will share our own “top 3” goals– adding service opportunities, increasing parent and community involvement, and strengthening second semester offerings.

The Equity Scorecard for the First College Year

Elsa Macias
Director of Research and Development
From high school graduation to the end of their first college year, students live through a period of academic vulnerability not previously experienced. This vulnerability is particularly acute for first-year students of color. Adopting the Equity Scorecard process developed at the University of Southern California, the University of Wisconsin Colleges has begun to address the institution’s responsibility for this vulnerability, and the inequitable outcomes that result from it.

In this session the presenters first describe the Equity Scorecard process. This begins with the formation of campus “evidence teams.” These teams analyze data disaggregated by race/ethnicity within the four perspectives of: access, retention, excellence and institutional receptivity. For each perspective the team develops a “scorecard,” selecting goals and measures appropriate to the institution. Where these measures reveal inequitable outcomes, benchmarks for improvement are defined. Four interim perspective reports and a final project report are written and shared with the president and the campus community. This creates awareness of the inequities revealed and enables the university to begin to take responsibility for equitable outcomes for students of color.

We then present the implementation of this process at the freshman/sophomore transfer institutions of the University of Wisconsin Colleges. The focus for the Colleges was on first-year students of color, with goals and measures selected in each of the four perspectives that address the experiences of and desired outcomes for first-year students. Particular attention was paid to rates of access to the university from feeder high schools; retention and performance measures for new students with comparable academic credentials, and of the campus climate as experienced by students of color.

We conclude with an overview of key findings, both from the USC perspective having implemented the Equity Scorecard at a variety of colleges and universities, and from the perspective of the UW Colleges.

**Starting Right: Focus on the Community College Front Door**

Arleen Arnsparger
Through a facilitated discussion with participants, presenters will share information from new research into the entering community college student experience. Facilitators will raise questions to help participants focus their own efforts on strategies that help first-time students persist beyond the first few weeks of class.

The one-hour session will begin with a 15-minute overview of SENSE (the Survey of Entering Student Engagement) and the MetLife Foundation Starting Right Initiative. Presenters will discuss the purpose of the study, the methodologies, and the components of community college student engagement addressed in the survey and focus groups.

For the next 15 minutes, facilitators will engage participants in group work and a discussion about the challenges and opportunities in working with entering community college students.

Brief video clips from focus groups with students, faculty and student services professionals will be scattered throughout the session. Participants will see and hear what students and colleagues say about the entering student experience.

Drawing from the work underway with entering students in the SENSE pilot colleges, the presenters will lead a discussion about how to use data and qualitative information from students to target areas for improvement and design “front-door” strategies to increase community college students’ changes of Starting Right and achieving their academic goals.

**Progression of Residential Learning Communities at the University of the Pacific**

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At the University of the Pacific, we have connected the Pacific Seminar class with our Residential Learning Communities. Pacific Seminar is a mandatory, first-year class involving discussions around global warming, social responsibility, civic duty, and education. Faculty members who teach this course represent a wide variety of majors across the curriculum. Students are purposefully placed into Pacific Seminar classes based on their housing assignments.

There are two residential communities on campus that are designed with this program. One is a traditional hall with 235 residents and the other is a community comprised of three buildings of sixty students each. Along with Resident Assistants, there are Student Advisors who live in the hall. The primary responsibility of the Student Advisors is to program (active and passive) with the Pacific Seminar syllabus and be a link between the residence halls and the faculty. Many programs integrate the faculty either coming into the residence halls or preparing material for use at the programs. In-hall programs include a film series, faculty discussions, study sessions, and the Collegiate Readership Program.

This poster session will highlight our progress in the development of this program and some areas that we need to further develop. A snapshot of where we started, where we currently are and where we plan to go will be provided. There will also be samples of assessment tools used and their results. Presenters of this session include a current Student Advisor, an Area Coordinator, and a Senior Graduate Resident Director. Each of the presenters has an integral part of the Residential Learning Communities.

First-Year Film Festival: Innovations for the First College Year Using Technology

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Funded by the office of FYE and supported by the Toledo community, local donors, the Apple Corporation and the university this event exposes the campus community to the video expression of the trials, transitions and stories of our first-year students collaborate in an active learning experience using cutting edge technology to create and produce 3 to 5 minute videos that document and describe their first-year experiences. First year student’s team up to write direct, record and edit their work using cameras and video software provided. Teams consist of 4 to 5 first-year students. Mentors from the department of Theater and Film are available for consultation and technical support. Training sessions are required where students are trained in equipment and
software provided by the office of FYE.

The contest time frame is short to allow students to learn to work quickly, efficiently and with a team. This UT festival in its second year exposes students to technology in a creative out of class group experience.

In this age of MT, You Tube, pod casting and video availability students our “digital natives” are extremely media savvy. They are increasingly aware of the semiotics of film and are conscious of media manipulation. Their natural ability to understand the nuances of imagery and their familiarity with video technology makes this contest a unique and exciting opportunity for collaboration.

We have found that students make life long friends while working “hands on” in a group and learn to effectively communicate to their peers the experiences of a first year student. This Festival celebrates the diversity of varied experiences as well as encouraging student self-awareness. As a bonus our campus and community become aware of the challenges facing students in their first transitional year.

This poster session will include (on my own PC) videos winners, budget requirements and outline of rules and regulations.

**Faculty and Learning Communities: Motivations and Satisfactions**

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Programs like residential learning communities and freshman interest groups have proliferated and can now be found on many campuses across the country. Much has been reported regarding the positive consequences of these efforts on students: higher GPAs, improved retention rates, higher levels of peer and faculty interaction. While the success of these programs often relies on faculty involvement, little research has been conducted on the impact on faculty who participate in these types of initiatives.

This exploratory study compares faculty responses to teaching first-year groups on two public university campuses in an effort to learn what motivates faculty to become and remain involved, how satisfied faculty are with their experiences, and what changes faculty may have made in their pedagogies as a result of teaching in learning communities.

One campus is a flagship university and the other is a regional comprehensive university. Faculty
who had experience teaching these groups were asked to provide both quantitative and qualitative information, exploring topics such as motivations for participating, satisfaction with their teaching experience, adaptations of their teaching styles, their perceptions of student participation and performance, and their intention to continue teaching first-year groups. Open-ended surveys and personal interviews provided further detail.

On both campuses, faculty populations were small, and thus conclusions are preliminary rather than conclusive. While faculty on both campuses generally supported the idea of teaching in learning communities, there were some differences between the two faculty groups regarding enhancement of professional goals, levels of student participation, and motivation.

Research conducted by Tinto and others points to the importance of the kinds of student-faculty connections fostered by learning communities. The results of this research into two differing learning community models may be useful to program planners in their efforts to recruit and retain effective faculty partners.

Creative Approaches in Using Peer Mentor Programs to Enhance First-Year Student Success

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This interactive poster session will feature various UW-Parkside peer mentoring programs which have been developed, piloted, and implemented as a part of our on-going First Years Success Initiative. Various campus coordinators from a wide range of disciplines will present practical peer mentor program models and activities that have worked with a diversity of students, ranging
from "at-risk" to honors program students. We will also discuss special major department peer mentor programs that have been developed and utilized with outstanding results. The program will focus on sharing a variety of first year peer mentor programs and approaches that have worked on our campus and may be of interest to first year experience planners at other institutions.

First-Year Students and General Education: Issues and Questions

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UW – Parkside's access mission and the nature of its service region creates special challenges for its students and the institution. Approximately 66% of the students are first-generation, 40% are from the lowest two quintiles of family income, and nearly 40% rank in the bottom half of their high school class. Approximately 65% of the entering students test into at least one developmental (remedial) course, and about 57% into two. Nonetheless, these students have achieved a high school diploma and the right to attempt college education. Ignited in 2003 by a reform of the general education program and selection of the University as one of the 24 founding universities for the Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year project, the University has piloted numerous projects in efforts to define the optimal approach for reaching our student body population. This presentation will highlight the methods, or rather questions that led to the reform of the general education program and the development of the first year program. These programs are both data (assessment) driven and have co-sponsored numerous projects to improve student performance through either the integration of development skills into specific general education courses or through changes in course structure (extended time, usage of peer tutors/mentors). This presentation will highlight the efforts and results associated with developmental skills. Assessment
measures include the Nelson Denny Reading Examination, an in-house developed rubric for literacy, course grades and associated success rates and student retention rates. Efforts will be made to touch upon projects of greatest interest to the audience.

Creating a Supportive Environment for First-Year Students by Developing a One-Stop Shop

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Students are often required to stand in multiple long lines to transact the business of admissions, registration, records, financial aid, parking, and cashiering. Providing a One Stop Shop where employees (advisors) are cross-trained in all areas allows for a much higher level of service to first-year students. Students are able to talk to one employee (advisor) regarding all areas in order to get questions answered rather than going from line to line--employee to employee. This presentation will discuss how Utah Valley State College was able to design and implement a One Stop Shop in an effort to create a higher level of service and support for first year students. The challenges and benefits of creating this service will be explored along with pitfalls to avoid. The creation of a culture that promotes high levels of service and support is critical in developing a successful One Stop Shop. Ideas and strategies of how to implement this service in order to provide greater support for students will be highlighted. Handouts on how to develop this service will be available as well as an invitation to visit Utah Valley State College's One Stop will be extended.

Think Globally, Act Locally: Building on a “Learning Community Platform”
One of the most perplexing challenges for those who wish a greater coordination between residence life and academics is the dreaded problem of “faculty-buy in.” Over the years, Villanova’s freshman year advocates tried to create – against faculty resistance – a freshman seminar with common texts. Reshaping our approach has achieved the same goals in a much more exciting way, with strong faculty commitment, far exceeding our expectations. In effect, the school has worked with a four step progress:

1. Creation of a two semester freshman seminar program, required of all incoming freshman students. This interdisciplinary course, which we call The Augustine and Culture Seminar stresses reading classic primary source texts, class discussion, writing, and group projects. While there are loose guidelines for the course, faculty members have resisted the idea of campus-wide common texts or readings.

2. Three years ago we created a powerful collaboration between the Residence Life Office and the Registrar, to house the nearly all of incoming freshman students with their ACS seminar classmates. Commuters were also housed with their ACS classmates. This created what we call a “learning community platform”

3. Rather than attempting to create campus-wide commonality, we then approached groups of faculty members whose students were housed together. Instead of working with large numbers of faculty members, small teams of faculty members began to form their own commonalities.

4. As the word got out, faculty members eagerly started forming their own teams, creating a variety of different models of faculty-generated learning communities across campus, all building on the learning community platform.

The presentation will review a variety of past evaluations, which generally show that the more intense the intervention, the more powerful the impact. We will also review several on-going evaluations, several of which may be available by the time of the presentation.
Engaged Arts/Engaged Students

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Wagner College features an award-winning First Year Program with a curriculum that specifies a civically-engaged experiential learning component. This session will highlight Wagner’s innovative use of civically and educationally engaged arts to help deepen student learning. All three professors, who are members of the Arts Division, will serve as panelists and highlight their use of the arts to broaden the learning opportunities for First Year students.

Using their own teaching as examples, Prof. Toth and Ruff will describe the learning objectives and outcomes for their civically engaged art projects in which students paint murals for and with the underprivileged. Among the sites: a shelter for battered woman and their children, and Rikers Island Prison where students paint murals with inmates. Similarly Prof. McDonald will explicate his Learning Community which features a partnership of Oral Interpretation with a course in Education. His students meet with elementary school students from disadvantaged neighborhoods where they engage in story-telling together.

Another feature of Wagner’s First Year Program is “Theatre Night: The Diversity Play.” Wagner also boosts a vibrant theatre department, of which Profs. McDonald and Ruff are members; each year they select a show which target issues of difference targeted to First Year students. Among recent titles: Bash, Indian Wants the Bronx, and Fiddler on the Roof. Follow-up discussions on gender, sexuality, religious difference, and ethnicity then ensue.

Often the arts are over looked when designing first year experiences. The panelists have been deeply engaged for many years in this award-winning First Year Program and have been advocates for innovatively integrating the arts into the First Year experience. Student assessment and perceptions will be examined in this panel as will practical and academic issues, as the panelists discuss how to intentionally and deeply engage students’ critical thinking through an engaged arts
experience.

**Getting Your Money's Worth Out of the First-Year Experience**

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Jerome Bruner has argued that settling institutional questions of education, for example, how to improve the quality of education—a question that draws into its orbit concern for the successful transition of first year students into college living/learning—must begin with ‘a decision about an ideal.’ We must make a decision on how we conceive ‘what a learner should be in order to assure that a society of a particularly valued kind could be safeguarded.’

The curriculum and practices of liberal arts colleges, at their best, manifest a particular decision regarding how the learner is conceived. Drawing on the classic notions of ‘art’ and ‘liberal,’ Terry Mazurak argues that the liberal arts ‘are that body of knowledge and competencies necessary for skillful making which a free person does.’ What a free person makes is her or his own life. ‘One must decide what the best life for oneself is and this involves discovering who one truly is.’ The learner, therefore, should be motivated to discover the good life for him/herself; an endeavor whose success depends on whether what one believes about ‘the world, one’s own nature and society is true.’

The work of Ken Bain provides evidence that the best college teachers believe ‘that students must learn facts while learning to use them to make decisions about what they understand or what they should do.’ This intentionally self-involving dimension of good teaching aligns with the decision of the liberal arts colleges’ to provoke and support critical examination of and decisions regarding living a good life.

The writings of Robert Putnam, Arthur Levine and Oliver Sacks are used to show the troubled societal setting marking the outlook of many first year students. Putnam’s sense of the decline in social capital and Levine’s evidence for what the community surrounding the student is failing to teach provide a sense of realism regarding the context in which the liberal arts and their ideals are engaged.

The research on First Year college students’ outlook and behaviors correlates with a sense of decline in social capital. Liberal arts colleges must take seriously the effect of this decline in developing their FYE programs.
The FYE program at Warner Pacific College is designed to promote student self-discovery. With focused attention given to the first generation college student, the course begins with the Strengths Quest assessment. Through the unpacking of the assessment students come to see that they all enter college with a set of skills and abilities that can be developed in the pursuit of a successful college experience. The seminar is taught by full time instructors and focuses on the topics of motivation, academic self-efficacy and a sense of belonging (to a community in search of truth regarding the good life). Key to the success of the course is the relationship developed between students and peer mentors who walk through the fall semester together. Peer mentors work with students on a holistic level working on the varied issues of transition to college on an academic, social and emotional level.

**Community Engagement From the Halls to the Classroom: Forging Links With a Residential Learning Community**

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Washington State University is in its third year of implementing a large-scale residential learning community, serving nearly 90% of its incoming freshman class (approx. 2500 students). In each of its three iterations, WSU has strengthened the collaboration between classroom and residential experiences, involving more components of the university—faculty, residence hall staff, librarians, writing tutors, and professional advisors—who work together to increase first-year student engagement and academic success.

Our residential learning communities encourage dynamic connections between all partners in order to foster student agency and provide multiple opportunities for critical thinking. We have utilized the university’s academic initiatives to link courses with residence life and academic services. In the first six weeks of the semester there were more than fifty integrative academic events in which faculty, staff, and students participated. Student reflective writing and instruments addressing social connectedness will play a major role in assessment throughout the semester.

Consequently, we believe the traditional hierarchy of the student-staff-faculty relationship has pushed itself to a new level of engagement and confidence. First-year students, customarily those most in need of support, are finding assistance from all angles. Strong crossovers from the classroom to the service units to the residential communities are providing the “net generation” with a sense of responsibility and common ground, essentially moving them from “me” to “we.”

By developing healthy communities of students, we are addressing the challenges of hyperbonding, academic integrity, and civility. Through working together to approach all of these issues, departments can assist students to remain respectful, and academically honest, while still creating the close bonds vital to the university setting. Forging strong relationships between student and academic affairs allows us to magnify our impact on student communities and learning outcomes.

**Tutor Tapping, Training, Tracking, Touting and Thanking**

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Peer tutoring is an effective—and cost-effective—means of providing supplemental instruction for students who need assistance with study skills, writing, and individual coursework. But how can we select and train the best students for these important roles? And how can we keep up with their schedules and appointments for the purpose of both organization and assessment? What are the most effective means of convincing students that their services are helpful? And how can we compensate and appreciate the work they do? This interactive session will begin with a
presentation by the Director of the Academic Center and the Dean of Wesleyan College, describing peer tutoring initiatives at a small, liberal arts women’s college. Following this presentation, participants will report on what works in their institutions and contribute to an electronic catalog of ideas for peer tutoring. This electronic catalog will be sent to each participant at the conclusion of the session.

Orientation as the Cornerstone to Your FYE Programming

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The New Student Orientation (NSO) process at WTAMU refocused and re-energized our campus community while providing a cornerstone for the FYE program. Traditionally, the orientation program focused on social integration and course registration. There was little integration of other orientation efforts such as Discover WT day for prospective students, Buff Branding (our “fish” camp), first year success seminars, learning communities, or freshman convocation. As our FYE team facilitated a revamped approach to NSO, we revised its mission and the program elements designed to fulfill it. The mission needed to move beyond simply registering students for classes. NSO at WTAMU had to set a foundation for academic success. To accomplish this new mission,
we started with the five key questions identified in Lisa Chase’s Making Your Mark (2007.) Answering these questions effectively during NSO would give students a foundation for their own motivation for academic success. These five questions were:
• What’s going to happen today?
• Who’s sitting beside me?
• Who’s teaching me?
• What’s the job market?
• What do I have to do to be successful?
The answers to these questions drove our program development. As a result, the following learning outcomes for NSO were identified:
• Connect with what motivates students – relationships and career information
• Paint a clear picture of their education and career journey
• Outline the skills necessary to be successful at college and in the workplace
• Give a clear overview of the academic program, culture and expectations
• Provide supportive student success resources
• Strengthen college success and self-management skills
• Build relationships with faculty and students in program group

Specific programs were designed for students to meet these learning outcomes. Given that 68% of our students are first generation, an effective orientation experience is vital to their success. Supportive and positive relationships with those at WTAMU and peers coming to WTAMU were central to our NSO plan. We used peer leaders and MySpace to develop supportive, exciting relationships with and between students before their orientation date. Peer leaders contacted their group members via e-mail and phone. During this relationship building time, they encouraged students to access their “career success team” MySpace page created by the peer leaders. In the weeks leading up to their orientation date, peer leaders would facilitate relationship building between students, disseminate pre-conference “homework” to develop the expectation that college will require dedication, and define group norms for interaction and support. Each career success team served as a learning community that was carried through the entire first year of college. The following outlines the elements of the New Student Orientation.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW:
PRE-CONFERENCE Pre-orientation homework
Students were able to take care of their pre-conference homework assignments during this pre-orientation period. Testing, such as CLEP, ACCUPLACEER, and other assessments were available to them.
DAY 1 The skills that will make students successful in college are the same skills that will make them successful in the workplace – Career Success Skills
Welcome
Our goal was to make a great first impression with a positive, professional atmosphere. The concepts/skills outlined in this orientation will help students graduate from college. But more important, these skills will see students through their entire career. It’s a 2-for-1 deal. The college success skills students develop are the same employment skills they will need for a career: good work habits, efficient time management, and an organized system for getting your work one at a high standard. If students approach the college years as professional development for a career, they will be well prepared for the workplace, and will come as close to guaranteeing a good job upon
graduation.

Career Success Teams (Learning Communities)
During this time, students have their initial face-to-face meeting with their peer leader group members. During this time, students review their MySpace dialogue, exchange e-mail addresses, take pictures of their group to be uploaded onto their MySpace page, and overview orientation.

Career Vision Exercise
As a part of pre-conference homework, students identified their top five career interests. Peer leaders pulled the identified career interests from an O’Net summary report. Students also used computer banks to visit the Reality Checks website to evaluate their life needs upon graduation (http://www.cdr.state.tx.us/realitycheck/). Pressure to make “the perfect decision” can feel monumental. Keep in mind that it isn’t the career/major students choose that matters – no decision is irreversible or binding – it’s the work ethic and attitude students display that will determine success.

Cornerstones to Success Video
Eight cornerstones to success in college and careers were demonstrated in a humor video created by WTAMU students. This video used alumni as experts to describe each cornerstone

Job Market Overview
Students reviewed, via technology, résumés of candidates for a potential job in a high demand field. Using the interact clicker technology, students vote who they would hire. Local employers describe why they selected a particular résumé over the opposing one. Peer leaders them us O’Net’s summary report for top career field and have the students discuss what they need to be doing in college to develop the attributes noted within the report. We then provide web sites where students can research the occupations related to majors and the skill sets and competencies necessary for success in the field.

Flash Drive Demo
Pass out Career Portfolios jump drives and discuss the purpose and use of these portfolios throughout their college careers. Students put work created through NSO on their jump drives.

Identity Game with Faculty
This segment is based on the reality game show, Identity. In order to let students see faculty as real, approachable, and supportive people, students try to match up the “fact” with a specific faculty voting with clicker technology. Once identified, faculty talk about their education, career path, teaching focus, and special interests

MyPlan Career Assessment
Students engage with an online assessment for career options. MyPlan.com helps students plan more fulfilling lives by making well-informed decisions about their education and careers.

Nuts and Bolds Lunch Discussion with Peer Leaders
Peer leaders have lunch with their career success teams and discuss the nuts and bolts of college success without presence of parents, faculty, or university personnel. This is where students get the
“scoop” of student life.

Academic Success
This segment helps students make the connection between the career skill profile, core curriculum, and academic success. We talk about how the course content links to employability, which will help students develop the motivation to succeed.

? Self Management Assessment: The questionnaire helps to assess past academic work habits and decide the kind of habit they’d like to have. It requires a significant commitment to change past behavior into high performance behavior – to help student stick to their goals, you can remind them that it takes 21-45 days to develop a new habit.

? Ideal Student: Students develop a list of the things that make a student successful. We then compare the students’ list to what WTAMU professors indicate as traits successful students demonstrate.

? Core Curriculum: An integrated Education at Work in the Real World, we explain the purpose of the core curriculum to their college and professional success.

? Action Plan for My Success and Transitions: Work sheet completed by each student to identify and set goal for their first year. Their achievement targets are supported by a detailed action plan where they identify the places, people and programs on campus designed to help them reach these goals. Students then make a pledge to each other to take specific actions, with timelines for reporting results back to the group.

? Change: Interactive exercise that demonstrates the challenges and opportunities the transition to college can have for students.

Speed Dating
We use the concept of speed dating to provide an overview of College Student Success Support Systems. Each career success team starts at an assigned table with a specific service or office on campus. These offices have two minutes to explain and market their services to students before they transition to the next table.

Amazing Race
The Amazing Race mirrors the reality television show as a means of creating an interactive and meaningful campus tour that focuses on identifying where the “speed Dating” Student Success Support offices are throughout the university.

DAU 2 Today is the day students officially become a WTAMU student

Amazing Race Awards
We have a PowerPoint going of pictures from the previous day, hand out awards from the Amazing Race, and preview the day.

Student Technology Training
Students receive interactive technology training using the university registration system, e-mail, degree audit, and degree plans.

First Year Experience Program Overview
During this segment, students are provided their common reader texts, view a video of the Buff Branding “fish” camp and sign up for it, review past freshmen convocations, and interact with First
Year Experience Seminar themed course learning outcomes.

Learning Styles
Students take a learning styles assessment and complete group activities based on their results. Students learn how to adapt their style to be successful in any class.

Advising in the HELC
Students and parents receive individualized intensive advising from faculty about careers and majors. Faculty will then overview important course schedule requires and recommendations.

Registration in the HELC
Peer leaders will guide their career success teams through the course registration process, selecting and registering for courses. After students register, they are directed to their student e-mail account and encouraged to complete the NSO zoomerang survey evaluation.

The results from this complete overhaul of our orientation process produced important and exciting results.
? 93% said career success teams and peer leaders were helpful relationships and would continue communicating with them.
? 94% said career information will motivate them to work harder.
? 95% said they significantly strengthened college success and self management skills as a result of NSO initiatives.
? 97% said they understood what the university expected of them and what it takes to be a successful college student.
? 95% said they gained important knowledge of campus resources.
? 94% - advising made me more secure about my major.
? 98% said they were excited about attending WTAMU
? 98% said they were very motivated to succeed at WTAMU.

FYE Courses in Different Disciplines: Where is the Consistency?

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WIU requires approximately 2000 first year students to enroll in two FYE courses; one during each of their first two semesters. FYE courses include approximately 40 different entry level courses from approximately 20 different academic departments across campus. The content in these pre-existing classes was not altered in designating them as FYE classes.

With completely different content, we have developed several other ways in which to try to provide a consistent experience for students. We will describe what we ask from various participants in the FYE courses to make them similar.

Course Expectations: We carefully control the enrollments of the classes to keep them small (e.g., typically 20 or fewer students). We provide a set of Expectations for the class that include writing requirements, co-curricular requirements and use of peer mentors.

For Faculty: We offer workshops for returning FYE faculty each year, and we provide more detailed information to first time teachers of FYE courses. We offer support money for use in attending co-curricular events which has stringent requirements for use.

For Peer Mentors: We require attendance at FYE training sessions each semester and provide a list of peer mentor duties.

Assessment: Both FYE faculty and first year students as asked to complete a survey each semester, and several questions ask about experiences that should be similar across classes and sections.

As part of our presentation, we will talk about which of these activities have worked in creating consistency and about areas in which we still need improvement. We will also talk about the general success of using FYE courses that vary completely in content.

A Common Reading Program in an Uncommon FYE Program

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This presentation addresses the challenges of incorporating a common reading into an FYE program that spans many academic disciplines. The FYE program at Western Illinois is embedded
within a wide range of existing Gen Ed and introductory courses; students enroll in one FYE class each of their first two semesters. While FYE sections share common features (e.g., small section size, tenured/tenure-track instructors, attendance of co-curricular activities), use of the common reading is elective and discretionary for each FYE instructor.

Selection of the common reading involves an open nomination process, committee review and a campus-wide vote. Nominations are requested based on relevance to the University theme and opportunities for programming (i.e. bringing in the author). In addition, the selection committee considers accessibility of writing, style of writing, length of book, appropriateness to multiple disciplines and other factors that would affect use in the program. A campus-wide vote determines the ultimate selection.

Within broad parameters, faculty teaching FYE courses have substantial discretion in course content and pedagogy. This discretion allows for choice about how or even if the common reading is used for that section. This approach is somewhat contradictory to other approaches to a common reading in which everyone participating in the reading (and participating in the same way) as well as associated activities is the goal. But it is assumed that the consequences of this discretion result in a higher quality experience for students engaging in these elements of the program. On a broader level, a diversity of experiences in the FYE program may be more beneficial than a ubiquity of experience.

The importance of the common reading in supporting our unique FYE program will be evidenced by student and faculty survey data, and further description of faculty activities and campus activities will also suggest strengths for the program.

**Connecting With the Campus: Healthy Living, Academic Expectations, and College Services**

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Westminster College offers a semester-long freshman seminar program which is designed to help students develop the academic skills that they need for college, including critical thinking, oral presentation, writing, reading, and study skills. In addition, we felt that students needed some help in transitioning to college in other areas. Trying to include that in an academically-oriented seminar class proved difficult, so we separated that from the academic course and developed the Campus Connect program.

Westminster’s Campus Connect program developed to meet the needs of students in three areas: developing healthy lifestyles: 1) Alcohol and other drugs, 2) Sexuality and relationships, and 3) Physical Health, understanding college-level academic expectations: 1) What faculty want, 2) Advising and Registration, and 3) Majors and Minors, and understanding how various college offices and services can further their academic and life goals and values: 1) Getting involved on
Students meet either in small-group sessions or in large-group sessions once a week to explore the topic of the day. Some sessions are led by upper-class student mentors, while others are led by college staff. If mentors lead the sessions, they are trained by college staff and faculty to do so. Assessment of the program shows that smaller-group sessions led by student peers are generally more effective than large-group programs and those led by staff.

This poster will describe the program, its delivery, its benefits and drawbacks, and issues to consider in instituting such a program. Specific issues to be discussed include increased student knowledge of healthy living, academic expectations, and college service, time and logistic issues, use of students in program delivery, selection of content, increasing student motivation, and separation of the program from the academic seminar.

**STEM Students in Transition: Bridging the Gap Through Reinforcing Competency-Based Skills**

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WSU and SCC are both open-enrollment institutions. Up to half of the students entering STEM majors fail the first introductory course in their intended major. The mathematics placement test can be used to predict which of the students are seriously at risk. FYE faculty identified a number of competency-based scientific and mathematical skills that are deficient in “at risk” students and used this to design an entry level course “SM101” that could be required of all entering students deemed “not yet ready” for STEM majors. An opportunity presented itself to field test this at a STEM summer institute for high school students. In so doing, we wanted to determine if this curriculum could be used as a STEM “bridge” between high school and college. The 3-week residential STEM institute contained one week each of physical, engineering and biological sciences with constructivist-based experiences in addition to field trips to STEM industrial settings. The course was well received by the STEM institute students. In Fall Quarter 4 sections of SM101 were run at WSU. Pre/post data were gathered on attitudes towards and competency in STEM. Longitudinal data will be gathered on subsequent academic performance in the students who took
SM101 as compared with a sister group of students, matched in math placement score, who did not take the recommended class. Efforts to implement the class at SCC will be discussed as well as the perceived need to develop sections of the class that use discipline-specific applications. Session attendees will discuss what prescriptive curricula might be successful in enabling less prepared STEM-intended majors to bridge the gap between high school and college work.

**Redefining First-Year Engineering Mathematics Education at Wright State University: A Model for Increased Student Success in Engineering**

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The inability of incoming students to advance past the traditional first-year calculus sequence is a primary cause of attrition in engineering programs across the country. As a result, this session will describe an NSF funded initiative at Wright State University to redefine the way engineering mathematics is taught, with the goal of increasing student retention, motivation and success in engineering. The WSU approach begins with the development of a novel first-year engineering mathematics course, EGR 101 “Introductory Mathematics for Engineering Applications.” Taught by engineering faculty, the course includes lecture, laboratory and recitation components. Using an application-oriented, hands-on approach, the course addresses only the salient math topics actually used in core engineering courses. These include the traditional physics, engineering mechanics, electric circuits and computer programming sequences. The EGR 101 course replaces traditional math prerequisite requirements for the above core courses, so that students can advance in the curriculum without having completed a traditional first-year calculus sequence. The WSU model concludes with a revised engineering math sequence, taught by the math department later in the curriculum, in concert with accreditation requirements. The result has shifted the traditional emphasis on math prerequisite requirements to an emphasis on engineering motivation for math, with a "just-in-time" structuring of the new math sequence. This session will provide an overview of the WSU model for engineering mathematics education, followed by an assessment of student performance, perception and retention through its initial implementation. It will also summarize the scope of our NSF CCLI Phase 2 and STEP Type 1 awards, which include pilot adoption and assessment by other institutions at both the university and community college levels. The presentation will include significant updates since the approach was reported one year ago, including the introduction of EGR 100 as a precursor to EGR 101 for initially underprepared students.