Challenges to Student Success in the Middle East

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The social, cultural and economic context of the United Arab Emirates is explained to provide a substantive basis for the understanding of the rapid growth and development of higher education. There are several key factors around the issue of creating a balance between maintaining a cultural identity which is local, based on Islamic beliefs and the Arabic language and a forward looking, global perspective that introduces other, largely Western, cultural influences. Using the university that we work in as an example of an institution of higher education founded by local interests and designed to deliver an American model of higher education we examine the first year experience. We discuss the issues emerging in the development of strategies to enhance the academic success and socialization of first year students at a university which has a mission to serve the needs of the labor market of a society that recognizes the limited duration of its major resource, oil. In examining academic advising, the curriculum, learning support systems and student expectations and responses we describe the changes that were necessary in order to make these elements of higher education work more effectively and serve the needs of this highly diverse student body.

Influential Interventions: Improving STEM Learning Outcomes for Underrepresented Students

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Agnes Scott College has undertaken its “Influential Interventions” initiative to increase the quantity and quality of instruction and academic support available to students in STEM courses (especially among first-generation and underrepresented minority students) and systematically assess the results. The college has expanded and enhanced its peer tutoring program, adding a Learning Assistant (LA) component, and is helping faculty learn (and share with colleagues) effective STEM pedagogies. In addition, Agnes Scott faculty and staff are collaborating with our project partners at Davidson College and sharing the results of their work at national conferences. During the spring of 2012 Agnes Scott administered and is now evaluating the results of the new Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey in order to better understand the experiences and perspectives of our first-generation and underrepresented students and implement changes in pedagogy and institutional practice in response to these findings. A cornerstone of the initiative is an enhanced Math and Science Learning Center, including creation of a new half-time Learning Center Coordinator position (a Ph.D. in chemical engineering with experience in peer learning and tutor training). In collaboration with STEM faculty, this coordinator recruits, selects, trains and supervises peer tutors and LAs; and facilitates interactions between faculty members and the LAs assigned to their courses. These LAs attend the gateway STEM courses alongside the students they are tutoring, and conduct weekly one-hour Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions with all students in a given course section. Before the start of each semester the Math and Science Learning Center Coordinator conducts a week-long training session, attended by the six STEM faculty participating in the initiative and the eight LAs. The faculty instruct the LAs in how to link their weekly one-hour sessions to course content and learning goals. In addition to analyzing data from the DLE and NSSE surveys to evaluate campus climate and student perceptions, the Coordinator is assessing the initiative by using grade comparisons and pre/post test data to compare the academic performance of students in gateway STEM courses during a two-year period (2011-13) to that of students who took the same courses during the 2009-11 academic years (before the use of LAs and SI). She is also conducting focus group interviews with students, learning assistants, and professors at the end of each semester during the 2011-13 academic years to gather and analyze qualitative data on the effectiveness of the LAs and SI.

Facilitating Transition into University through Reflective Practices in the Freshman Communication Courses

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The expectations of the first year composition and public speaking courses can be baffling to students for whom this may be their first exposure to an American curriculum. For those who come from an educational background where the medium of instruction is not English, adapting to a new academic system and the expectations of university life could be a traumatic one. The session discusses the benefits of including reflective practices in a variety of writing and speaking assignments in the first-year composition and communication classes that incrementally facilitate the transition from high school to university, linguistically and cognitively. The structured trajectory of the teaching plan of freshman courses in composition and communication that sets the framework for academic writing and speaking can be alien to students whose academic experiences are academically and linguistically located within a specific cultural location and academic outcomes. At the university, besides acquiring new knowledge, they also have to familiarize themselves with new systems of learning. This is reflected in the inability to comprehend sequential formats and methods of academic writing, and diffidence in the ability to achieve academic outcomes. Providing the students with confidence in their abilities can facilitate their transition into university and set a more fruitful and motivating environment for learning. Through samples of assignments and feedback, the session examines the significance of incorporating reflective practices in a variety of assignments. From initial exercises of paraphrasing and summarizing, and peer review, to the final research paper, a carefully embedded strategy that combines topics that encourage student engagement and sharing of common experiences, to a sense of commitment to the community and the institution are employed. Students learn the skills and engage in content that encourages self-reflection and value-added critical and evaluative processes. As students move from being novices to experts, they also arrive at a better understanding of their own learning, and move from diffidence to a confidence that impacts their academic lives and engagement with independent and lifelong learning. The task of meeting unfamiliar assignments and pedagogical strategies in the future is then faced with an attitude of enthusiasm and as a challenge, as learning becomes reinforced in multiple contexts both within the academic setting and establishes its relevance beyond it. Together with evaluation of the strategies used in the classroom and feedback on their effectiveness, additional content would be sourced from three threads: canonical and current theory and literature on reflective practices and testimony of reflective practitioners, innovative research and methodology in experiential learning and active learning practices that reflect the application of reflective practice, and experiments in pedagogy and teaching and learning that enhance theoretical tenets and concepts.

Why Wait Until Day 1? Retention and Success Starts from Offer of Place – A Programme to Identify, Intervene, and Prepare Students for a Successful First Year

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A major focus for Student Services has been improving student success and retention. A pivotal time at which to make an impact in this area is with new first-year students. Research shows that the first 6 weeks are crucial in setting the pattern for success or failure. If that is the case then why wait until day one to start addressing issues? Traditional approaches to early intervention have commenced at the start of the teaching semester. AUT has adopted an approach where incoming first year students are empirically assessed to identify those that are more likely to encounter difficulty or withdraw from study. Using an in-house developed system called START (Student Analysis of Readiness Tool), AUT pulls together information from the application of an incoming student. Using this tool to identify students, Student Advisors (professional staff) proactively contact the student, offering advice and support, and connecting students into specialist support services as needed. The advisor has the information from the student’s application, and the Student Readiness Survey, to help guide discussion and to identify and remedy issues as quickly and effectively as possible. The aim here is to identify and mitigate any issues or potential issues that would impact on a student’s study before the start of their studies. By extending our contact forward to when a student confirms an offer, we gain months of time in which to assist the student, all with the aim of giving them the very best start to their studies. START was based upon evidence from examinations of past completion and retention data, exploring student characteristics that show lower completion and retention rates, when accounting for factors such as programme of study etc. University exit surveys were reviewed to examine the main reasons for withdrawal. Discussions with student support staff highlighted the main issues and repeating patterns of students that experience difficulty. START looks for key risk factors in the academic, social and personal characteristics of the incoming student and highlights students more likely to experience academic failure and or withdraw from study. AUT responds to these high-risk students in a high-priority fashion. Student Advisors (professional staff) proactively contact these students as soon as they have confirmed their offer of place, which is often months before the start of the academic semester. They begin the relationship with the student early, and link them into any specialist services as needed. AUT has also developed Tertiary readiness programmes which occur approximately a month prior to Orientation. The main focus of these programmes is to provide students with the fundamental academic skills they need to be successful in their studies. High priority students are encouraged to attend, and are followed up with if they choose not to. Students’ academic progress is monitored from day one as part of AUT’s existing FYE programme, which looks for intervention trigger points such as non-submission of an assignment, failure in a test or a pattern of non-attendance. As the student progresses through their studies, less and less emphasis is placed on their readiness profile, and more on their ongoing academic achievement.
Predicting Student Success in Higher Education

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The research covered is part of a broader approach to attrition and student success within Avans University of Applied Sciences. In order to decrease attrition, the institution is combining evidence and practice. Based on Dutch literature as well as literature from other national contexts, potential predictors of attrition were identified: previous education, education of the parents, engagement, social and academic integration, procrastination, perceived academic control, conscientiousness, and motivation. Not all predictors were available in existing Avans data and a significant amount of literature was conducted outside the Netherlands. Therefore a first year survey was developed in which the previously identified potential predictors of attrition were included; to test previous findings in the Dutch, commuter based, context and to gain insight in the predictors of attrition and student success in our population. Data was collected among first year students at the Faculty for Industry & Informatics. Around 200 students completed a questionnaire which was later combined with a.o. study results. To measure the relation between potential predictors and student success, the concept of ‘student success’ had to be made operational. In contrast with the educational system in the USA, resits are common in the Dutch educational system. To take the issue of resits into account when predicting student success, two dependent variables were constructed: (1) Average grade (1st attempt and resit results) and (2) Assessment Efficiency Index (AEI; number of passed tests divided by the total amount of taken tests). A third indicator; status of the student after the first year: diploma earned, persisting, switcher or drop-out, will be added later. Average grade and AEI had a strong correlation ($r=.83, p<.01$). Several scales ($\alpha>.7$) were constructed as predictors. The traditional aspects of persistence, as outlined in Tinto’s work (Tinto, 1975) did not match our data. Possibly this is a result of the commuter-based school-system in the Netherlands or a result of the active educational methodology used at Avans. Significant correlations with Average grade; a.o. ‘active participation’ ($r=.23, p<.01$) and ‘average grade of previous education’ ($r=.35, p<.01$) and with AEI, besides the previous mentioned predictors, ‘lack of motivation’ ($r=-.20, p<.01$) and ‘procrastination’ ($r=-.20, p<.01$), were found. ‘Average grade of previous education’, ‘active participation’ and ‘attending class’ explained a significant proportion of variance in Average grade, $R^2=.32, p<.001$. Surprisingly ‘attending class’ was negatively correlated.
‘Active participation’ and ‘attending class’ also explained a significant proportion of variance in AEI, Rsq=.23, p<.001.

**First-Year Student-Athletes: Predicting Academic Performance and Retention**

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The poster presentation will include the following components: Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, and Implications. Each component will include enough information to summarize the main points, and generate further discussion. The following is a summary of the information to be presented: A sample of 674 first-year student-athletes at Ball State University were examined for five consecutive years to determine what combination of demographic, academic, and athletic variables best predicted first-year GPA and retention into the second year of college. The dependent variables of first-year GPA and retention were chosen because they are two primary components used to calculate the Academic Progress Rate, a semester by semester evaluation of team academic performance used by the NCAA. Results revealed college student-athletes had a higher first-year GPA if they were female (r = .36), Caucasian (r = .36), attended college relatively close to their hometown (r = .09), scored well on standardized tests (r = .49), had a respectable high school GPA (r = .65), were ranked high in their graduating high school class (r = -.58), had a large high school graduating class (r = .15), declared a major upon entering college (r = -.11), were not a member of a revenue sport (r = .37), and earned a considerable amount of playing time (r = .15). Building on the relative strengths of those relationships, first-year GPA can be predicted by knowing gender (B = .16), race (B = -.26), standardized test scores (B = .03), high school GPA (B = .41), high school rank (B < -.01), and high school size (B < .01). The retention of student-athletes into their second year of college produced a slightly different set of relationships. Student-athletes were more likely to be retained if they were Caucasian (r = .16), attended college close to their hometown (r = .09), scored well on
standardized tests ($r = -11$), had a respectable high school GPA ($r = -14$), were ranked high in their graduating high school class ($r = 12$), were not a member of a revenue sport ($r = -09$), and earned a considerable amount of playing time ($r = -17$). Predicting retention is possible with information about race ($B = 1.09$), distance from hometown ($B = .4$), type of sport ($B = .82$), and amount of playing time ($B = -.70$).

**Partnering for Success: Creating a Seamless Transition to College**

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Berry College’s New Student Orientation and First-Year Seminar programs offer a model of strategic collaboration between the divisions of student affairs and academic affairs. Both SOAR, an overnight orientation event for students and parents in June, and Viking Venture, a four-day pre-semester orientation for students in August, are administered by the Office of Student Affairs. First-Year Seminar, a 10-week transition course falls under the auspices of Academic Affairs. However, both faculty and student affairs professionals, as well as key student leaders are involved in every stage of planning and delivering these two programs, creating a welcoming community that supports students in their personal and educational goals. Students meet their first-year seminar instructor, who also serves as their academic advisor, at breakfast during SOAR. In this initial meeting, they are also introduced to some of their first-year seminar classmates, receive a summer reading assignment and begin to learn about academic policies and expectations in a comfortable and friendly environment. On the first day of Viking Venture, students attend their initial first-year seminar class and remain with their first-year seminar cohort through many of the planned activities, including a dinner book discussion at their instructor’s home. Student affairs staff and faculty along with students and administrators comprise the orientation advisory committee that assists the associate dean of students in planning and improving orientation each year, and student affairs. While faculty make up the majority (80%) of first-year seminar instructors, key student affairs leaders teach a section of the course every year, participating in training workshops and meetings. In addition, faculty and staff collaborate with student leaders throughout orientation and first-year seminar. The benefits of this cross campus collaboration are numerous. The faculty and staff who work together in orientation and first-year seminar gain a greater understanding of each other’s work, which they are able to communicate to students and colleagues. Additionally, these individuals expand their
campus contacts and resources, which encourage greater communication on behalf of students. Equally significant, the involvement and cooperation among student affairs and academic affairs sends a strong message to parents and students that the institution is fully committed to assisting students in their first year. In our presentation we will discuss the evolution of our program including a look at how assessment continues to produce better practice, and share our strategies for promoting collaboration across divisions.

**Strategic Enrollment Management: Transformation from Tutoring Centers to Learning Commons**

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An institution of approximately 20,000 students determined to accomplish its two top strategic outcomes which primarily focused on first year students’ academic, developmental, and retention to degree successes. “Create distinctive coherent undergraduate learning experiences that integrate curricular and co-curricular programs” and “Expand the student populations for … enrollment and implement programs to recruit them and retain them to successful program completion.” Therefore, senior academic, student, finance-administration, and strategic enrollment management division leaders made transformational changes to, within one year, move from three independent tutoring centers to a full-spectrum learning commons. The changes encompassed new philosophy, leadership, organization, facility, staffing, technology, partnerships, procedures, budget, and programs. The transformation story, new model, and successful outcomes are presented. Senior leadership (Vice President for Enrollment Management, Dean of University Libraries, former Provost) will illustrate the transformational level changes in such a way as to concisely describe what was, and more importantly, the strategic enrollment management philosophy that shaped the desired vision. For example: strategic partnership development to acquire ideal space and collaboration in the library,
$800,000 renovations, new technologies, and fiscal sustainability, and expansion of academic subjects; resource reallocation and leveraging to strategically staff, organize, and operate, and; program enhancement and development. The Director of the new Learning Commons will describe the new, comprehensive approach to programming and the assessment. Moving form three centers, one each focused on tutoring writing, math and statistics, and study skills, the Director will concisely present an amazingly now vast array of Learning Commons programs. Also incorporated; expanded Supplemental Instruction, remedial reading comprehension, English and math placement/testing, course content tutoring, tutor certification, e-tutoring, and formal liaisons for strategic interaction and collaboration with nearly 20 other programs associated with first year success (Residence Life, Greek life, Student Money Management, Student Support Services, First Year Programs & Orientation, Counseling, etc.). The Director will also address the multi-faceted assessment of the transformation from three “centers” to the “commons.” Assessments were based upon a comparison between the previous “centers” approach and the replacement, new “commons” approach. Further, a key assessment is the new “commons” approach being part of a focused self-study and regional accreditation. Following initial introductory matters, the presenters intend a grand total of 30 minutes to present, will provide “take away” materials that will supplement the verbal and media-supported presentation, and will encourage and respond to audience questions in the balance of the hour.

Tell Me a Story: Using Narrative Cycles to Integrate Theory and Personal Experience in Peer Mentor Training

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Brigham Young University’s Freshman Mentoring (FM) program is a two-semester program which provides peer mentor (PM) support to an entering class of 6,000 first-year students. Peer mentors in the FM program are hired annually in the spring and then participate in extensive training, which includes readings, written reflections, and online group discussions focused on issues of transition, high-impact practices for the first-year experience in higher education, and approaches to facilitating change. The purpose of this training is to better position PMs to build mentoring relationships with first-year students and support them in taking up a deep orientation to learning (Entwistle, 2000). In order to facilitate this type of development, the readings and written reflection prompts are oriented to elicit narratives of past experiences, facilitate connections between experience and theory, and encourage PMs to embed the core values of the
peer mentoring program in the practical knowledge that guides their work with first-year students. Moon (1999) argues that reflection can be a powerful tool to reveal how practice is influenced by experience, prior knowledge, and new learning. Further, her work has suggested that as we reflect and come to understand our practices more deeply and clearly, we can be more intentional in enacting practice. With regard to the issue of knowledge integration, Clandinin (1985) describes what she terms personal practical knowledge, an integrated and holistic way of knowing which includes what we know from our personal lives, from our study and thinking, and from our experiences and actions within our educational practice. According to Clandinin, this kind of knowledge grows in experience and includes the knowing we bring from previous experience, what we are currently learning (i.e. reading and thinking about), and what we are currently experiencing in our practice. In our PM training, we sought to provide experiences that would help integrate these two forms of knowledge and lead to practical knowledge that could then be used to guide PMs’ interactions with first-year students. This interactive session will introduce participants to the story cycle model used at BYU and provide a brief explanation of its theoretical underpinnings. Participants will also have opportunities to engage in dialogue surrounding the peer educator training needs on their own campuses and how story cycles could be used to effectively meet these needs.

The Other Role of the Academic Library in First-Year Student Success

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In the fall of 2007, librarians at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) participated in a faculty development co-op designed to identify and recommend improvements to the university’s First Year Seminar (FYS) curriculum. We recorded all non-research-related questions asked by students at library reference and circulation desks, and shared with First Year Seminar (FYS) faculty our findings about information critical to success that students may not have been getting in a coordinated manner. One significant finding was that about half of the questions students asked in the library were not related to library research; of those, about half had to do with computer hardware and software. Thus, we recommended to the FYS program that faculty make no assumptions with regard to incoming students’ technology-related skills and experience. We also suggested that FYS faculty further collaborate with student services to help students gain the computer proficiencies they will need to be successful in college. We disseminated a summary of our results to the entire faculty via the Center for Teaching, Learning
and Assessment (TLA) newsletter, and created a New Student FAQ which we continue to update and make available to students via the library website. We have continued to gather data concerning our students’ non-research-related questions. In fall 2011, we formally presented our more recent findings to the CSUMB Academic Affairs Council, which comprises the Provost, deans, TLA director, and others. While it has long been common knowledge among academic librarians, the Council was surprised to learn that students frequently ask library faculty and staff questions about technology, advising, financial aid, and so on. One significant outcome of this presentation was the placement of a student peer technology tutor in the library for nine hours a week, during the time periods our data indicated students tended to ask the most technology-related questions. This new service was implemented in response to our findings as well as in anticipation of the discontinuation of a required technology course for first-year students. We were also asked to share students’ questions about the university’s Common Management System (CMS) with the Student Information Systems office. In this poster session, we will share our simple methodology, highlights of our findings, and strategies for leveraging the academic library’s potential to contribute to data-driven efforts to improve the first-year experience.

**Peer-Led Learning Support: Aiming for Best Practices in Recruitment, Selection and Initial Training**

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**CANADA**

The session is intended to be of value to those starting new programs or in the early years; and an opportunity for experienced coordinators to consider alternatives to current practice and to contribute to the conversation. The presenters bring their own expertise managing peer-support programs which include those based on the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) model of Supplemental Instruction (SI). We bring a combined total of 31 years of experience, and collectively, have selected and trained upward of 500 student leaders. Yet the one thing we know
for certain about the cycles of recruitment, selection, and training is that we’re always striving toward an ideal. This is an opportunity to share, and also to test, our own best practices against those of others, and to reflect on our own ways, from our varied institutional and program perspectives, to work through questions and challenges that others bring to the session. Presenters will open the session with brief introductions, highlighting the types or programs and institutions from which we come. As an introduction and shared context, we will map the process, from recruitment to initial training. The session will include an overview of each aspect of the recruitment cycle, including the particular challenges, and examples of proven strategies. Collaborative activities will punctuate each segment. We will incorporate a focus on how we assess and adapt strategies; how we know what’s working well, and how the challenges also have seemed to evolve. Recruitment, selection, and training of leaders are on-going challenges, worthy of our focus and reflection.

**Yoga & Pineapples: Surprising Articulations of Student Happiness**

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In the last few years, Carnegie Mellon University's interest in the first year experience has paid particular focus to the personal development of our students. As a result of their residential and metacurricular experience, we believe that it is the right of every student to "have engaged in meaningful exploration and expression of self-identity that contributes to their ability to articulate, reflect on and adapt their vision for self." Lofty as this goal may appear, the work that we do, and our House Model reflects this core belief in the deepest possible way. How we make meaning in the residential communities through complex dialogue, challenging programs, the intersections between academic and metacurricular defines the everyday experience for our students. In this session, we are eager to share three such examples that engender high impact modes of exploring personal development. The first is our Big Questions program, which brings faculty across disciplines into the residence halls to facilitate a conversation about matters of the heart: what is love? what is authenticity? What does it mean to lead a good life? One Housefellow has been teaching a weekly yoga class with her first years and has coupled some of those ideas with a weekly reflection about notions of authenticity, care for self and of others. The weekly series is frequently written by first year students in the House community, reflecting tremendous range and growth. Lovingly entitled, "The Pensive Pineapple," this series is an affirmation of the desire of our students to want to pause, reflect, grow and share with others.
Most recently, Carnegie Mellon students came together to orchestrate a Pittsburgh-side conference, "OMx" where over 300 students, staff, and community members came together for a conference on the concept of Happiness. These are simply a few examples of how our institution has explored the art of happiness and we offer them out as a platform for what we hope to be very robust and creative dialogue on the meaning of personal development for first year students in multiple contexts; singularly, within smaller localized communities, in cyberspace and globally. How can this roundtable generate ideas for faculty and staff to creatively support first year students as they find space to explore notions of the self?

Great Idea, But Does It Work?: Assessment of Common Reading Programs

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After a quick explanation of the topic of the session (CRP assessment methodology, data/results, and trends), the presentation will continue and be broken into the following five parts: • An overview of the University’s CRP program and its relationship with our FYE course (3-5 minutes). • An explanation of the methodology and goals of the assessment (8-10 minutes). • A detailed and through presentation of the data from our study (12-15 minutes). • An overview of the literature of and trends in CRP assessment (10-12 minutes). • An interactive discussion of our assessment and of potential ideas for CRP assessment at the session participants’ schools (15-20 minutes). During the overview of our University’s CRP program and FYE course, I will explain the goals and the methods of both programs in detail. In explaining the methodology and goals of our assessment, I will show how our pre-/post-test was constructed and validated and provide the surveys that we used. During the presentation of data from the study, I will give detailed, statistical information and analysis of the results from the pre-/post-tests and the surveys. The overview of literature and trends will summarize a number of published studies and give a clear picture of the varieties of CRP assessment. The interactive discussion will give participants and opportunity to comment on our assessment and brainstorm/discuss ideas for their own CRP assessments.

UK Soccer Experience 2012

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Cam Saleeby
The UK Soccer Experience 2012 was a non-credited academic and experiential learning opportunity allowing first year students an initial introduction into study abroad without the lengthy commitment of an entire semester and at the fraction of the cost. This presentation will be divided into two parts providing information for attendees interested in creating and implementing a first year experience abroad program at their own institutions. It will not only tell a story, explaining what occurred, but, more importantly, talk through the “ins and outs,” the challenges, and the successes the presenters had through the creation of this project. Audience members will leave the presentation informed about how to replicate a successful First-Year Study Abroad Experience on their campuses. In the first part of the presentation, attendees will be introduced to the UK Soccer Experience 2012 including costs, trip planning, how/why the idea emerged, and its role within College of Charleston’s First Year Experience. The use of Peer Mentors involved in the program will also be discussed. Peer Mentors (upper-class students who work for New Student Programs and Admissions at College of Charleston) had specific responsibilities prior to and during the trip. Strategically involving Peer Mentors resulted in a galvanized group experience (for both the participants and the staff members) in the presenters’ minds for everyone involved. It proved successful and beneficial to both the freshmen participants and peer mentors themselves with regard to engagement in the program. The second part of the presentation will review the “mini-course,” an eight week seminar setting that included reading, discussing, and learning about the relationships between soccer and its historical, cultural, social, religious, and economic relevance to the UK. The text for the class, Soccernomics, helped provide a strong learning base for the students as it used insights and analogies from economics, statistics, psychology, and business to reveal counterintuitive truths about soccer. Assessment used throughout the “mini-course” and upon returning to campus will be discussed. During the trip itself, students were required to complete daily reflections challenging them to bring together class materials and their experiences abroad. The presentation will end noting the challenges with organizing the experience, how these problems were addressed, marketing it to the student population, and future plans as the First Year Experience Abroad programs are expanded into Germany, Scotland, and the Dominican Republic. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Heads Up - A Thinking Persons Approach to Success
HEADS-UP is a way of looking at life in and beyond college. Heads up is usually given as a type of warning or alert, but at the College of the Marshall Islands HEADS-UP has become an acronym with multiple meanings in an attempt to more fully engage learners and their education. H is for habitual, healthy and holistic – are your habits healthy and all-encompassing or are they causing problems for your life in college. To find this we need to look at all the dimensions of your health (Physical, Social, Intellectual, Emotional, Environmental and Spiritual – Donatelle, 2008) to see if you are in balance and reaching your education peak. E is for educational, environment, evolve, and effort – to become educated learners need to change the way they think and they think. It is a natural evolution that leads to graduation and success. A is for adaptation, accountability, and attitude – are you adapting to the differences of college. Without adaptation, change, learners may put their education goals at risk. D is for drive or define – drive means that you must push forward to get the things you want. Define is to give meaning to what you do. S is for Success. Success is self-defining to the individual, but success requires all to take 100% responsibility for their own actions. No one else is responsible for your future, but you and you need to take that responsibility seriously. U is for Unleashing and P is for potential. Our task as educators is to teach our learner how to unleash their potential and the sooner we do this the better learners we have. U is also for Uplifting and P is for people. Once we have taught our learners how to unleash their potential, it is their turn to help others reach their potential. What we are asking of ourselves and students is that we all become Change Agents. What we are looking for is for people to help themselves and each other realize that there may be something they are doing in their life that is causing them to fail to reach their potential. As educators we are, by unspoken but implicit design Change Agents and must extend that responsibility for accountability to our learners. Their future is in their hands and we can only show them how to succeed because their success is up to them.

First-Year Experience: The Value of Theatre as a Tool for Teaching Problem Solving and Collaboration

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As the starting point for my proposed discussion I wish to share with my audience an article recently published online and subsequently in Theatre Journal: “10 Ways Being a Theatre Major Prepared Me for Success.” I will merely hand out copies of the article to be read at the participants convenience and, thereafter, summarize its content as a prelude to the session overall. My intent is certainly not to suggest that all students become theatre majors, only that taking a theatre class or two will greatly benefit young students, particularly in regard to the mastery of such skills as learning to work collaboratively with others and learning how to problem solve. Whether these skills are used inside or out of the theatre is immaterial except to the degree that the study and practice of theatre is a proving ground in itself. After having summarized the article and entertained questions regarding its content, I will focus on one theatre course in particular that I teach: Theatre Script Analysis. By so doing, I will be able to touch on all the pertinent theatre courses in one fell swoop. After all, this course emphasizes moving a play from the page to the stage, a process that requires both problem-solving skills and collaborative interaction every step of the way. I will approach my subject systematically, beginning first with playwriting, which is an exercise in problem solving in itself and anticipates collaboration down the line. I will next address the problem-solving, collaborative dimensions of what the producer has to contend with as well as the stage director. Next, I will address these same issues in terms of acting and then the technical side of theatre – both design and operations. Along the way, I will introduce my audience to some of the assignments I use in Theatre Script Analysis to illustrate the points that I am referring to. By necessity, I will be brief in my overview; but, nevertheless, strive to drive home the fact that problem solving and collaboration are integral elements of the theatrical art, expressed as they are in a number of specific ways. Last, I will close by mentioning how involvement in theatre for first year students, no matter the area of specialization, can help overcome initial feelings of alienation and estrangement by encouraging them to involve themselves in shared projects wherein they can feel a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Transition Skills of First-Year College Students with Learning Disabilities

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This study gathered data from three different sources to answer the research questions. The questions that guided this study were: RQ1: What are the academic and social skills that students with learning disabilities use as they transition from high school to college? This question was answered through analysis of data gathered from TKSSs and interview question two. Participants
reported how they used or in some cases did not use the top ranked skills. Time management was ranked first and participants revealed that they understand the importance of time management, but they often procrastinate and wait until the last minute to complete assignments and in some cases it is too late. Participants use self-advocacy, the second highest ranked skill, to speak to professors about accommodations they require. The third highest ranked skill was cognitive skills and participants used it to apply learning strategies that work best for them. 

RQ2: Which academic and social skills do students with learning disabilities consider to be the most important as they transition from high school to college? This question was answered by data gathered from TSC and the first question from the interviews. Participants considered time management, self-advocacy, and cognitive skills to be the most important. The interview question asked participants to tell why they considered certain transition skills important. The responses to this question revealed why participants perceived the top three ranked skills most important. 

RQ3: How have the academic and social transition skills helped students with learning disabilities to adjust to college? Interview questions four through eight addressed this RQ. Participants were asked to discuss how certain academic and social skills helped them in college. They were also asked to discuss how they solved an academic and social problem in college. Responses to these questions revealed that the participants believe they have well developed social skills, but have encountered social problems on campus with friends and roommates. Participants also revealed they depended on others to help them solve their social issues. Responses to questions about academic revealed participants learned strategies that worked well for them in high school and worked well for them in college. Participants stated they use their professors and in some cases their peers to help them to solve their academic issues. Each one of the research questions was addressed from data gathered from the research instruments. TSC clearly identified skills participants considered important for successful college transition. TKSSs addressed the transition skills used and revealed that the majority use or know most of them and several responses from the interviews revealed how students use certain transition skills such as self-advocacy to approach their professors to help them to solve learning issues in their courses. Other responses to the interview questions revealed that participants believe themselves to have good social skills but, many discussed having social issues mainly involving friends or roommates. Participants also learned study strategies in high school that have helped them in college. The emerging understanding from the findings of the study revealed that students with learning disabilities are aware of some of the skills they need to be successful in college. The literature stated that many students arrive on campus ill equipped with the necessary transitions skills (Gil, 2007; Hadley, 2006; Mellard, 2005) and some participants in this study revealed that they may not have the necessary skills. The response to change and letting go of past roles is the core of the transition model which is the theoretical framework of this study. Students in this study know what they need to make a successful transition to college, but in several cases their response to change has been to avoid certain behaviors. Participants’ stated that they used procrastination instead of time management, or were hesitant to speak to a professor about their academic needs, or continued to rely on authority figures such as a resident director to solve their problems. The Transition to College Program will address these issues and teach students the skills necessary to make a successful transition to college. The Transition to College Program (Appendix A) was designed to be a two phase program that will span at least one year. Phase I will be implemented as a two-week program for graduated seniors who are enrolled in C College. Phase II will follow the students throughout the first semester with weekly follow up sessions to assess how they are using the transition skills and the impact on their success in
college. Phase I will be residential (at the college) and students will receive instruction in time management, self-advocacy, and cognitive skills. The curriculum will include a text book, *The Survival Guide for College Students with LD and ADHD*, handouts, discussion topics, role play scenarios, journal entries, and opportunities to practice the skills learned. An assessment component will measure the students’ achievements.

**You Think You Know Me? Personal Narratives of First-Generation College Students**

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The presentation will involve the presentation of research that was conducted regarding first-generation college students. Participants will first receive background information about first-generation college students (i.e. definition of a first-generation college student, typical characteristics of a first-generation college student, common challenges faced by a first-generation college student, and common perceptions of first-generation college student). The presenter will then provide the research question to the audience: how do first-generation college students succeed despite the challenges experienced in their past and present, in light of their goals for their futures? The presenter will then provide the background of the study (sample size, population, setting, and methodology used). Participants will then hear the results of the study, including video samples from the students themselves. Finally, the presenter will ask the participants to consider the practical implications of this research in regard to initiatives involving first-generation college students, while providing some suggestions as well.

**First-Year Advising--One on one, Group work and Assessment Strategies**

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This roundtable discussion would begin with a basic understanding of the methods by which we advise at Dartmouth College, a smaller liberal arts college within the Ivy League. Discussions would focus on the diversity of our staff and its meaning to the late adolescent student, along with how interactions may differ in one on one advising situations versus group advising. Detailed information will be given on a "protocol" used for group advising, and participants would be encouraged to share in the protocols used with their communities as well as thoughts
on protocols that are more effective for one on one advising. Qualitative and quantitative data assessment methods which have been used this past year at the College in assessing advising strategies would be shared, along with considerations of the benefits of each in gathering information to be used to refine advising for first year/transitional students. Cultural competency components would be discussed--e.g., are group sessions more effective for one type of student versus another?

**Increasing First-Generation Student Retention with Targeted Advising using Non-Cognitive Information**

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It is well established that such student precollege cognitive measures as high school GPA and test scores (ACT, SAT) have a certain predictive value in student retention. While research is replete with evidence of the value of student advising in a college’s retention strategy, there is a gap in the literature on the impact of using noncognitive survey information by advisors to better target student deficiencies. The primary goal of this study was to explore the relationship between retention and exposure to noncognitive risk factor information for students and advisors. One thousand fifty-four freshmen students enrolled in a first-year experience (FYE) course at Dixie State College were given the Student Strengths Inventory (SSI) survey that measures six different noncognitive risk factor variables. By using a regression discontinuity design, students were initially divided into two sample groups using an index score generated by combining the high school GPA and ACT (or equivalent) test score. Students who fell below the cutoff point were further subdivided by random sampling into three groups: (a) students who received their survey results with no further action, (b) students selected for general advisement, and (c) students selected for targeted advisement using the survey results. When comparing the retention rates from fall semester 2009 to fall semester 2010, the retention rates varied as predicted by the researcher; however, these differences in retention could not be attributed to the usage of the survey with one exception: when the treatment group was filtered only to include first-generation students, usage of the survey results was statistically significant in contributing to a 62% retention rate, the highest of any of the sample groups studied.
1-800-ADVISOR: When Students Have Inappropriate Expectations of the Student/Staff Relationship

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As advisors for traditional first-year students, our office created transition efforts to accommodate their needs, with pushes in electronic messaging (e-newsletters, Facebook and Twitter), while still having daily walk-in availability and a 24-business hour response guarantee. Our annual survey in November 2011, which evaluates our practices, returned some alarming responses, claiming that e-mails weren't answered “in a timely fashion” and that we were generally unavailable. After some thought, we began to question the objective validity of these complaints. Our office offers daily walk-in advising, and e-mails are answered promptly. We then began thinking about experiences with our students: sometimes, we get e-mails from students, only to have them call 10 minutes later, asking why we haven't responded yet; or other times, when students contact us to pick out their classes for them, even though we teach freshmen how to do this for themselves. This behavior posed the question: by only reacting to our students’ needs, are we missing a proactive developmental opportunity? Millennials’ culture is one where students look to have information “spoon fed” to them, which may cause them to “expect a prescriptive advising style. In a prescriptive advising relationship, the advisor is an authority over the student” (Keeling), and students “trust authority figures to take care of them” (Young). Teenagers today also “don't develop the ability to delay immediate gratification” due to communication tools like the Internet and cell phones. Our profession has touted (these presenters included!) not only the usefulness but also the necessity of utilizing electronic messaging and social media as delivery methods for advising. Although this may be where our students exist and where they get their information, are we unintentionally playing into this “instant gratification” and “spoon-fed information” game? Furthermore, does it come at the expense of teaching them about appropriate expectations in the advisor-student relationship and about the general expectations of being a responsible person in the workforce and in society?

Our presentation addresses this concern: where do we find the balance between addressing our students’ needs and just meeting their desire for instant gratification? When do we as authority figures stop “taking care” of things for students and instead enact developmental advising models, transitioning them to accomplish these things themselves? We will bring together case studies, a literature review, make recommendations for practice, and hold an discussion with
attendees about their own experiences with setting boundaries and expectations in the advisor-student relationship.

**From a Solo Operation to a Chorus of Collaboration: Developing Student Leadership in Student Programs**

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This presentation will examine one program, the Engineering Learning Community at Drexel University and the methods that coordinators used to put students voices first as well as holding students accountable for the production of the program. Strategies and techniques suggested in this session will also work for staff advising student groups and other similar programs. The presentation will briefly review the history of the Engineering Learning Community (ELC), which is a major-based living/learning community comprised of 40 first-year students representing eleven majors from across the College of Engineering. Throughout its existence, the program has been successful in retaining students and connecting students to campus resources; however, it was very much driven by ideas that the coordinators running the community believed would be beneficial for the students. As such, there was a breakdown in communication between the coordinators and the students as evidenced by a number of assessments. Despite coordinator efforts to include student input, students felt their voices were being disregarded in the program’s operation. The presentation will review assessment strategies that led to this discovery and share student responses to the programming, as it existed prior to its reinvention. The presentation will then review how the coordinators developed new programming initiatives that would not only make the operation of the learning community transparent to its members, but also put them in positions of power within the community. In other words, program coordinators pushed for a more developmental approach. The program changes focused on three principal ideas: communication, student leadership initiatives, and assessment. The presentation will detail the ways coordinators improved upon these notions in the re-imagining of the ELC including sharing the methods of communication as well as what was communicated; the development of new student leadership roles including a student-operated tutoring program; as well as ways the program developed assessment both to learn from students about the effectiveness of the program and to share with supervisors about the efficacy of the community.
Addressing Advisor Guilt: Keeping Perspective When Students Leave STEM Majors

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While one of the most difficult parts of having academic failure conversations is breaking the bad news to the student, there's an equally difficult dialogue that stems from these interactions: the one advisors must have with themselves. Having to tell a student that he should consider another major can be taxing and often leaves advisors feeling that they've failed their advisees. However, that perception can be reframed if the advisor can focus on the positives attached to the outcomes of such meetings. Advising for students in academic difficulty tends to focus on holistic development of students, guiding them from a place of failure to a place of success, but advisors must also find ways to support themselves through the same process. After difficult meetings, advisors should take time to reflect on what was said (or not said), how it was delivered, and determine if more could have been done to help the student. Often, advisors develop close relationships with advisees and take the students' burdens on as their own. Advisors truly want students to succeed, but the reality is that they won't all succeed. When that happens, advisors need to step back and think about how they DID help a particular student, rather than feeling like they didn't do enough for that student. In every student failure, there is opportunity and it is the advisor's job to help the student see that opportunity. As advisors, we would like to help advisors view this as a positive experience. By helping students realize that they are on the wrong path, an advisor is preventing the student from wasting time and money and guiding the student towards a more successful and satisfying academic experience. These discussions often yield renewed energy that can be used to direct the student to another major. If a student can be successfully steered towards a secondary interest then a new drive and motivation can begin to appear. Using examples and case studies, we will help advisors think about the right questions to ask to help a student explore what those other interests are. We will also ask advisors to think of examples from their own experiences in which they felt discouraged to help the student find a positive in that experience. This presentation will help advisors view their own advising experiences with a critical eye and widen their definition of success.

Peer Advising Programs: A Case Study on What to Do When Things Don't Go According to Plan

Jeffrey Birou
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Student success research done by Tinto and others has repeatedly demonstrated that a sense of engagement with a university or college influences persistence. In the Drexel University College of Engineering Undergraduate Advising Center, we wanted to sustain or grow our retention numbers through new, but cost-effective programming. One way to achieve this goal is through a peer advising program, which we designed to help incoming and current students by providing them with additional resources, support and information, allowing a kind of education between peers that a professional staff member cannot provide. As the program coordinators, we hoped that new students would utilize what we consider a valuable resource, producing a better sense of engagement and thus increasing student success and retention. Our presentation will address how we began our Peer Mentor Program in 2009 and the steps we have taken to better improve it based on limited resources and challenges. For example, we started a pilot program this year where incoming freshmen students can request to be paired with a mentor for their first year. We will speak candidly about how this effort, among others, garnered a lot of interest but ultimately did not have long-term effects. This lack of engagement was indicative of a larger problem we faced, and we’ve had to retool the program multiple times to try to find that “sweet spot” between student engagement and effective use of our peer advisors’ time. To do this, we’ve employed assessment measures like focus groups and online surveys to capture both the peer advisors’ and the targeted students’ thoughts on the program. Our presentation is intended to provide information and best practices to other advising professionals that wish to start a peer advising program at their home institutions, as well as candidly sharing our pitfalls in hopes that others will learn how to avoid them. Because we are our own best resource, we also hope to create an environment where we can share ideas and challenges. Our goal is that everyone will leave the session with new strategies for creating or improving their program, including us!

Scaling Up: Using Small-Scale Peer Advising Models for Large-Scale Programs

Kelly Vass
UNITED STATES

One measure of a peer-advising program’s success is its ability to provide individualized attention and a sense of community among its participants. Our 2011-2012 incoming class had 850 students, over 10% of who requested to be paired with a peer advisor during their first year at Drexel. As we planned for the year ahead, we sought innovative ways to reach students. Though we incorporated both in-person and online social networking opportunities for students, our advisee and peer-advisor satisfaction surveys showed that our efforts were not working. This confirmed some of our concerns, leading us to restructure our program. We then looked at the challenges we’ve faced in our peer-advising program’s two-year history, we wondered whether it would be possible to adapt small-scale practices to create a more personal experience for our students. In this sense, small-scale is defined as a program suited to meet the needs of up to 100 students or less. Because our target audience was a large population of students, we assumed that our program had to be proportional to this number. However, in looking at the success of small-scale programs, we determined that it would be beneficial to start small and create a program that reaches a fewer number of students more successfully. The lead presenter had seen high retention levels and campus engagement as the Advisor for a small-scale program at Villanova University. Additionally, our College’s Engineering Learning Community (ELC), which serves 30-40 students annually, has been more successful at engagement and retention than many similar programs in our college, leading to a 3% year-to-year attrition rate between 2009 and 2010. In designing our peer-advising program, we wanted to emulate this success and knew that we would need to start with a smaller number of students. Once we had developed a solid working model, we could begin to scale it up each year to reach a larger number of students. We are currently in the process of restructuring our program and factors we are considering are target audience, size of program, and student accountability. Our presentation will share our own transition between two program models and our initial thoughts on how these changes have and will continue to affect student retention.

Bringing Emotional Intelligence to Your Students (Two Institutions/Two Models)

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Emotional intelligence can be viewed as a cluster of emotional and social competencies: the ability to effectively express, understand and control emotions and the ability to cope and adapt to changes in one’s environment. After learning about the positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and student success and retention at a presentation given by James Parker from Trent University at the International FYE Conference in Toronto in 2006, independently, Dana Copeland (Fanshawe College) and Laura Allan (Wilfrid Laurier) recognized an opportunity to get to the root of many of the reasons why students, including strong academic students, are not successful when making the transition to higher education. The aspiration is that if we can help students become more emotionally self-aware and invested in their own emotional skill development, we can better prepare them for life’s challenges: in college or university, in relationships, in their careers. We give them the seed and some stimulus for growth. Dana and Laura will provide practical guidance for implementing an EQi based curriculum. We will describe: • the factors that needed to be considered to responsibly manage this project and to get your institution to support it • the administration of the online assessment (large number of students, short period of time) • the Higher Education Report that the students receive • the EQ content of our courses • the assignments that support reflective learning Bar-On’s EQ-i® Emotional Quotient Inventory is a self-report instrument that assesses the following dimensions: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and stress management, and general mood. Andrea Lehman (Multi-Health Systems, the publisher of the EQ-i®) will describe the instrument.

Strange Bedfellows: Coupling Math and English in Developmental Learning Communities

Strange Bedfellows: Coupling Math and English in Developmental Learning Communities

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The presentation will begin with an overview of Indiana Tech’s Title III program designed to support traditionally under-served students. I will begin by explaining the structure of the program, which includes the following components: learning communities led by faculty members who also act as their community’s academic advisor; linked coursework between Math and English with shared, co-written, co-assessed assignments; and supplemental instruction with tutors. I will also share data that shows that students in our Title III program exhibit increased mastery of mathematical concepts, have accumulated more credit hours at the end of their first-year of college, and have higher GPAs than their peers who are not a part of the Title III program. After reviewing the program, I will explain our objectives and our philosophical approach to the Math/English link, which we also share with students. By the end of the semester, we expect students to: 1) Understand the relationship between math and English—that both math and English literacy are critical to quality of life and position in society; 2) Use active reading strategies; 3) Use writing as a tool to solve mathematical problems; and 4) Use mathematical processes to develop logical evidence and clear essays. To meet these objectives, we explain that math and English share conceptual frameworks, such that combining like terms in math could be compared to organizing paragraphs, or that following problem-solving steps in math is analogous to following an argument in a scholarly article. Second, we present the idea that verbal and mathematical literacy are critical to quality of life and position in American society. To demonstrate this point, our first shared assignment involves reading and analyzing the first chapter of Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project by Robert P. Moses & Charles E. Cobb Jr. This chapter argues that the mastery of Algebra will lead to increased social equality and justice, particularly for people of color. This reading simultaneously presents students with scholarly writing and provides the framework for the linked assignment for the rest of the semester. Throughout the semester, we then assign work that merges math and English concepts. Our remaining linked assignments include writing acrostic poems about mathematical concepts (in order to demonstrate abstract thinking), creating story problems (with at least three steps to solve for one variable), maintaining learning journals that track students’ reactions to difficulties they may face in math class, and conducting primary research (that includes some statistical analysis) and presenting it as a scholarly article in English. All assignments include assessment rubrics, and each rubric contains items that English faculty assesses, and items that Math faculty assesses. The grades count for both courses. Preliminary results demonstrate that students have increased post-course test scores compared to their peers who do not take the linked courses. In addition, qualitative data show that students begin to see the interdisciplinary nature of university coursework and begin to apply their reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

Making Change in the First College Year: Lessons from Institutions that Improved Student Engagement

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While reform has been on the higher education agenda for at least a quarter-century, calls to improve undergraduate education have grown more insistent in recent years. Improving quality in the first year of college has been of particular interest given the importance of setting students on a path to success. More importantly, efforts to reform the first year experience have been facilitated by the rich body of research and evidence-based practice supported by organizations like the National Resource Center for the First College Year and more recently, the Foundations of Excellence. At the same time, efforts like the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has provided hundreds of institutions with evidence about educational effectiveness in the first year. What’s promising is that over the last decade, a substantial proportion of NSSE institutions have realized significant improvements in their first year student engagement scores. These results indicate that reform in the first year experience is possible, and also suggests the dimensions of engagement that appear to be most amenable to improvement, or more likely indicate where institutions have made investments. Colleges and universities increasingly report that assessment results inform campus improvement initiatives. While assessment information can inform initiatives by focusing attention on desired change and providing a means for monitoring progress, little is known about the phase of the assessment cycle that involves examining the impact of changes that have been undertaken and whether they have produced the desired results (Banta, Jones, & Black, 2009; Suskie, 2004). Few studies examine before-and-after assessment results to substantiate institutional transformation (Keup, Astin et al. 2001). Also missing are qualitative case studies that analyze the process of change (Astin, Lindholm et al. 2001). This study addresses shortcomings in our understanding about the assessment process and offers specific insights about what accounts for institutional change. This session will focus specifically on the rich evidence that has been gleaned from institutions that realized significant change in the first college year. First, general conclusions about measures of engagement in the first year that seem most amenable to change will be shared. Then insights about institutional efforts to improve the first year experience from the in-depth study of 64 institutions, and 8 case study sites, will be shared. Project staff will discuss the impetus for reform, the programs and practices that made a difference, and how the campuses fostered the improvements.

Responsibilities and Challenges: Responding to First-Year Students’ Changing Needs

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JAPAN
The presentation focuses on the increase in leave of absence rates at our university and the potential affect this will have on retention rates and on students’ educational experiences. We will argue that an increase in the number of students to university in general, and the rising number of students who lack a clear purpose in particular is leading to a decrease in retention rates. There is also tendency that the percentage of matriculating students with psychological problems has been on the rise. The presentation is divided broadly into four parts: a description of the institution and students; the presentation of the initial data we have collected and patterns and trends we discovered; explanations for these trends; a final section where we outline our plans for the future based on the conclusions we have made and a discussion with the audience on similarities and differences in their institutions. The first section gives a brief introduction to J. F. Oberlin University, its major colleges and the student body: and how the profile of the latter has changed over the last five years. This will also include a description of the first-year program run in University College of Cornerstone Education, where we work, and will also outline how we support students experiencing difficulties adjusting to life at university, problems with their studies, and emotional and psychological issues. After this, we will present our findings based on our initial analysis of the data collected from across the University’s colleges, the counseling centre and other sources. This data spans the period from 2005 up until 2010 and details the rates of leave of absence and dropping out across different Colleges, by student year, and also the reasons given by students for their decisions. Following these two sections, we put forward some possible explanations for the increase in leave of absence rates, noting how explanations differ in each college, before discussing the implications of these initial research findings, and what impact they may have on the College of Cornerstone Education student support strategies. During the last two sections, we would like to invite participants to compare their own institutions retention rates and student profiles and build a cross-cultural picture of the challenges facing first-year programs around the world. We intend to create a website to compliment the presentation, where participants can write comments and share experiences during the conference and beyond.

**Defining Universal Characteristics of Institutional Excellence for the First Year of Higher Education**

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After retiring from the University of South Carolina in 1999, two of the early leaders of the National Resource Center, Betsy Barefoot and John Gardner, established the Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. In 2003, Institute staff, with support from three foundations, joined a group of other academic researchers to develop a set of standards to define institutional excellence for the first year. Known as Foundational Dimensions®, these standards were designed to be used for measurement and aspiration. The utility and appropriateness of these standards were vetted with 124 private and public institutions in 2003 and with 82 community colleges in 2005. These standards are freely available in the public domain. The original purposes for developing these standards were: 1. To create a set of criteria to both measure institutional performance and to encourage aspirational emulation of the criteria for first-year improvements. 2. To offer an alternative approach to defining excellence only in terms of student retention. 3. To engage institutions whose efforts to develop programs had “plateaued” and who were seeking a different approach to student success. 4. To encourage institutions to develop a comprehensive plan for new student success guided by this set of standards. Since the Foundational Dimensions were put in the public domain, they have been overwhelmingly used in the United States. The standards have also been used in three other cultures: the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Because of the importance of the need for new tools for assessment and improvement, coupled with the obligation of the United States and other countries to play a leading role in shaping the first-year reform agenda, the developers of these standards believe it is time to ask how relevant and appropriate they are to educational settings outside of North America. (297 words)
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This session will focus on a Kennesaw State University first-year initiative, the “Early Start Bridge Academy (ESBA),” a summer bridge learning community for first-year students prior to their first fall enrollment. The ESBA is designed to provide developmental mathematics and at-risk mathematics students the opportunity to meet the goals of the program as stated in its tag line: “Get In, Get Started, Get Through”. The ESBA learning community includes either a developmental mathematics or a college algebra course, along with a first-year seminar. The program provides incoming, self-selecting, traditional first-year students the opportunity to get a head start in math—a subject that most expressed a fear of failing and for which most were ill-prepared (as indicated by the standardized tests such as the SAT, ACT, and COMPASS). In addition, the first-year seminar provides students with study skills and other strategies for academic success, including time management. The learning community format also fosters strong peer interactions that contribute to students’ success in their first year of college. This session will describe the organization required, the unique structure (social, environmental, and academic) and features of the ESBA program, the campus offices involved, the recruitment and selection of participants. The research foundations related to self-efficacy and mathematics self-efficacy as it pertains to the teaching and learning success of developmental students will also be presented. Bandura (2003) states that student beliefs about their abilities are more predictive of
their success than their actual skills levels. Without the belief to accomplish, students will not reach the goals they desire (Bandura 2003, Pajares 1996). Data collected as part of this program will be shown to examine the impact of the effectiveness of the ESBA on student performance in mathematics and the effect of the social and academic integration provided through program activities and curriculum. Data will be analyzed to determine student academic success in terms of grades, credit hours earned (progression), and retention. The study specifically addresses the following research questions: 1) Do ESBA students perform at a higher level in their developmental mathematics courses than students who do not? 2) How do ESBA students perform in baccalaureate math courses, comparatively, with students who did not have the ESBA experience? 3) Is there a higher level of academic success, retention and progression of developmental mathematics students who participated in the program compared to those that did not?

**Improve Student Retention and Success with the CollegeScope Student Success Program**

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**CANADA**

The issues of student retention and success cannot be solved simply by improving grades and raising test scores. The solution begins with motivating students to fulfill their individual potential by leading proactive and fulfilling lives. The CollegeScopeTM Student Success Program is a dynamic and innovative resource that has increased fall to spring persistence by 26 per cent. By helping students develop a solid sense of self, encouraging the exploration of opportunities and instructing them in how to set attainable goals, CollegeScope helps students maximize their education. This session covers the underlying theory of CollegeScope as well as the unique features of the program. Attendees will hear success stories from other schools using CollegeScope and a detailed explanation of how this curriculum positively impacts students.

Different delivery methods and teaching options for the program will also be highlighted. The CollegeScope program includes:  
• Personal assessments (personality, learning style, interests and multiple intelligences) that allow students to learn more about their individual strengths and personalities, thereby becoming more self-aware and confident about their natural traits.  
• An interactive curriculum that focuses on college, career and lifelong success. The material provides direction while the interactive elements engage and involve students in learning. As students move through the electronic text, they are met with a wealth of quizzes, journals and activities, ensuring retention of the material covered.  
• A focus on career development, which is fundamental to educational planning, goal setting and instilling motivation in students. CollegeScope helps students with career development by identifying their personal strengths and matching them with suggested occupations that fit their profile.  
• Online student and faculty portfolios that are useful in monitoring student progress so that faculty can provide early intervention for students who not engaged. Staff can check student work, read journal entries, review quiz scores, send messages to their students, and more. The program was developed by
Dr. Marsha Fralick while she was teaching college and career success courses at Cuyamaca Community College. For her efforts, Dr. Fralick recently received the 2011 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience. The CollegeScope Student Success Program is used at higher education institutions across the country.

ACE IT Transition Program for Trades and Technology

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Kwantlen's ACE IT Transition Program for students is a collaboration between high school representatives of the Partnership Programs, Kwantlen's Student Development and Trades and Technology staff and faculty, and Kwantlen Peer Coaches in response to recognition that some students entering into partnership programs have difficulty adjusting to the new learning environments and the demands of trades and industry based training programs. However, student success is paramount in these programs for the individual students involved, the retention of learners who may wish to continue in their trades program and because of the financial cost involved for those students who do not succeed in meeting program requirements some of which are set by the Industry Association Boards. The ACE IT Transition Program has been designed to prepare students involved in the accelerated entry into the trades or technology programs for their first university experience in apprenticeship or foundation programs. One of the first goals of the ACE IT Transition program is for students, prior to their arrival, to evaluate their level of readiness for academic life, which may help them to prevent failures at these early stages in their career development. Another goal is to help students to understand the scope of university life and to evaluate their need for preparatory or further support through student services such as learning centers, disability services or counseling supports. A third goal is to help students reflect on their experience and plan how to proceed in their education and development from this point on. The ACE IT Transition Program has three main parts. Part 1 is an online preparatory section where students can complete self-evaluation and pre-conference activities including a student and parent Orientation evening held by the Trades and Technology Faculty in collaboration with the school district liaisons. Part 2 features a half day (4 hour) conference which provides interactive programming to help students develop a deeper appreciation of the learning environment, a knowledge of important aspects related to the academic life, ways to adapt to different teaching and learning practices, and a knowledge of student related policies and
university procedures. In addition, the students are able to review the key skills for academic success in several areas such as self-regulatory behaviour, learning, organization and communication. Upon successful completion of the program students will have been introduced to the key strategies to succeed in their university experience. In this second phase Peer Coaches play a significant role in encouraging critical and reflective thinking as students, led by Peer Coaches, participate in small group-based activities. Part 3 of the program involves an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program elements via pre and post evaluations of the program elements as well as an opportunity for students to identify what their next steps are as individuals. This presentation provides an overview of the ACE IT program from the development of the program to the final evaluation process. It will also feature research findings identifying elements that were effective and to what extent, and what needs to be revised or revisited and why, in accordance with the Action Research Cycle.

Closing the Engagement Gap: Increasing Student Interaction with Academic Staff in Australian Higher Education

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Given that the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) has been patterned closely on the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), this allows for a careful comparison to be made concerning the effectiveness of Australian and North American universities in relation to a number of student engagement outcomes. One such recent comparison conducted by the Australian Council for Higher Education Research found that Australian universities performed significantly lower than their North American counterparts on nearly every indicator falling under the Student and Staff Interactions (SSI) category of the AUSSE and NSSE surveys. The report ominously concludes that 'It is thus unsurprising that Australian students rate their relationships with teaching staff at much lower levels than their counterparts in the USA. Given the link between staff contact and critical factors such as retention, satisfaction and the achievement of general learning outcomes, these findings indicate that students in Australia are being short-changed by their universities' (Richardson, 2011). Numerous research studies have indicated a strong link between increased student-staff interactions and a host of positive student learning, retention and persistence outcomes. In light of this, Australian universities have been slow to adopt and implement engagement strategies that leverage student interactions with academic staff. The reasons for this are likely to be multiple, including differences in funding, differences in student-staff ratios, and, most importantly, differences in university cultures (including professional identities) on opposite sides of the Pacific Rim. The session presents a progress report on three major teaching and learning innovations that have been adopted in La Trobe University’s Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Each of the interventions has been designed to help increase constructive
interaction between first year students and academic members of staff. Two of the programs –
genernal academic advising and the first year academic seminar – represent student engagement
innovations that have a long history of strong efficacy and widespread adoption in North
American Universities, yet, and conspicuously so, both have yet to gain much of any traction in
the Australian context. The third innovation has sought to increase interaction between specially
trained senior tutors and first year students who have tripped early warning indicators of
into the importance of staff student interactions in Australian university education.’ Research

The Role of Collaborative Learning in the Academic Success of First-Semester Students
with Diverse Needs

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This presentation will begin with an overview of the literature and our current understanding of
collaborative learning, using a power-point presentation. This will include the work of Daniel
Goleman, C. Dweck among others in the field, as well as the earlier research done by Osterholt
and Barratt that looked at the difficulties first-year students were having during their transition to
college. After the audience has a clear understanding of the structure and implications of
collaborative learning, we will then provide further detail about the common barriers that prevent
many first semester students from being successful in college. These barriers include both the
spoken and unspoken domains that encompass motivation, social/emotional development, self-
regulation and academic skills attainment. The inter-relationship of the four domains listed will
then become the core of the collaborative learning activities that we will demonstrate with
audience participation. Through the demonstration we will point to the various ways in which
such class activities are designed to support all students, provide equity among diverse levels of
skills and reinforce, rather than sacrifice content learning. The participants will be asked to
collaborate to design their own simple activity that supports the holistic needs of students and that they could use in their own practice. We will allow time at the end of the session to reflect upon the experience and ask questions.

Service from the Start: Teaching the Value of Service-Learning in Freshman Seminar Courses

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To provide context, the session will begin with a description of Lee University’s mission, core values, and the type of first-year students who enroll. We will discuss that nature and aims of Lee’s emphasis on service-learning as an integral part of the undergraduate experience, explaining that students are required to complete at least ten hours of community service each semester. One of the challenges of this reform was finding the appropriate platform to communicate this requirement to students and explain to them the philosophical reasoning behind such an endeavor. It was in this context that the Leonard Center, Lee University’s clearing house for service-learning projects and administration, partnered with the office of First-Year Programs to become the primary medium through which first-year students would be exposed to the value of service-learning. Rather than simply providing an essay on the importance of service-learning, the office of First-Year Programs decided to actually make engaging the local community and its needs an integral part of both the freshman seminar course (GNST 101: Gateway to University Success known as “Gateway”) and New Student Orientation Weekend when all the first-year students arrive on campus. All first-year students are asked to attend New Student Orientation, which occurs the Saturday and Sunday before classes begin. During the information sessions on Saturday, students learn that the following day (Sunday), they will meet with their Gateway classes, and the first organized activity that they will do as Lee students is board a bus, and go to a nearby nursing home to spend the afternoon serving the individuals living there. After three hours, the students then return to campus for a time of reflection on what they saw and what they learned. During the semester the Gateway classes, with the assistance of the Leonard Center, arrange a second service project, and take time to reflect on that experience as well. Finally, the culminating activity for all freshman students is an Operation Christmas Child “packing party” where classes fill shoeboxes with small gifts to be distributed around the world to children in need while listening to holiday music and visiting with their instructors and peer leaders. The session will elaborate upon the administrative
challenges in planning all of these activities, and it will also discuss the survey results conducted in the fall of 2011, which showed a significant change in student perceptions regarding service-learning.

Does Choosing to Live in a Discipline-Based Residential College Make a Difference in the Engagement of University Freshmen?

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Somewhat surprisingly, students are only mildly engaged with faculty, with a mean engagement score on the SA/SIQ of 2.37 out of 6.00. The overall mean score is calculated from each item on the questionnaire. Five of the items on the questionnaire relate more to engagement with faculty, and eight relate more to engagement with peers. One item measured both types of interactions. Peer-related items typically had higher mean engagement scores than faculty-related items. In fact, the peer-related items were consistently classified as “moderately engaged” while the majority of the faculty-related items were classified as “mildly engaged.” Results suggest that
choice of living arrangement (on- or off-campus) is a significant factor in the students’ engagement level. Mean engagement scores for students living in discipline-based residential colleges were slightly higher than those for students living in theme-based residential colleges, and mean scores for students living in theme-based residential colleges were slightly higher than those of students living in traditional housing. However, significant differences were not found between the three groups of students living on-campus. The only significant difference found was between the groups who lived on-campus and the groups who lived-off-campus. One of the themes that emerged from student comments, “off-campus living equates to less time to study and participate in activities”, supports these findings as well. Specifically, one student said, “Living off of campus has made it hard to attend extra study sessions and activities on campus,” and another student noted, “Living at home made it difficult for me to feel a part of campus life this year. I felt out of the loop and knew very little about the activities on campus.” The strongest predictor of engagement in the current research was students’ ACT scores. This result shows that students’ academic ability upon entering college is related to their engagement in their freshman year. Because engagement was being measured by academic and social interactions with faculty and peers, this result is not surprising. Perhaps engagement scores were higher for students with higher test scores because they are more likely to engage in academic activities in college. Collectively, these results have important implications for allocation of resources and establishment of policies to optimize not only university student engagement, but also their satisfaction and success.

Curriculum Theory & First-Year Seminars: Using “Complicated Conversations” to Foster Student Learning

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This session will explore the implications of curriculum theory on the development and teaching of an interdisciplinary First-Year Seminar. According to Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010), young people spend over 50 hours per week “connected” to some type of technology. Certainly, this phenomenon is not unfamiliar: the student with wires dangling from the ears, head down, gadget in hand, thumbing away at the screen, laptop to the side, etc. This near-constant connection to the screen has problematized the reality in which students live and learn, essentially leading student into what Baudrillard (1994, 2000, 2002, 2007) called “hyperreality.” In an era with so much consumption of “information” and uncritical presentation, first-year students, for the most part, do not have many opportunities to distinguish between that information and “knowledge.” Interdisciplinary First-Year Seminars are essential for helping students to understand this nuance and for facilitating the transition from secondary schools, where emphasis is placed on “what” to think, to the academy, where emphasis is placed on “how” to think. The role of the First-Year Seminar, then, should be built not only on curriculum theory but also on what cognitive science has taught us about learning and human development.
This session presents a model of building First-Year Seminars on such theory and effectively employing what Pinar (1994) called “complicated conversations.” Regardless of the topic, the goal of a well-designed course should be to focus on the provocative tensions that surround the key tenets under study. This theory is bolstered by Doll’s (1993) “4 R’s” of course design: richness, recursion, relations, and rigor. This session will revisit these two pillars of curriculum theory and present a course that was developed based on this model. The instructional design process is guided from theory to practice vis-à-vis the 4 R’s: (1) richness assumes breadth over depth, including various examples and contexts for illustrative purposes; (2) recursion allows students the opportunity to tie class discussions and course content to previous conversations in the course, highlighting the interconnectedness of various phenomena; (3) relations help students to reflect on their own backgrounds and experiences and, hopefully, build agency in light of the topics being considered; and (4) rigor requires students to be critically engaged in the development of thought, and assessment practices should be deliberately chosen to help guide the students to academic success. The implementation of the course is based on the complicated conversations.

Faculty Development for Successful First-Year Seminars

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As the first contact point between newly minted high-school graduates and college life and work, the academic First-Year Seminar (FYS) can be a site of transformation, where students who have spent years in school memorizing facts and summarizing information suddenly learn the excitement of critical inquiry and independent thought. For this transformation to happen, faculty must be prepared to teach in ways that put students at the center of the learning process, that challenge them to engage with ideas, that create spaces for experimentation, failure, and beginning anew. While faculty is experts in their fields, however, many lack the special skills and knowledge needed to teach first-year seminars effectively. Pedagogical instruction is rare in most graduate programs, and both new and seasoned faculty need substantial training to design, create, and deliver first-year seminars that enable students to move from lower-order to higher-order thinking, especially in light of the changing nature and expectations of students. Recent neuroscience research has exposed the problem of waning attention spans, particularly in late adolescence. What, then, may be some of the curricular implications of this trend, and how might faculty respond to the challenge? These are some of the guiding questions of this session. This
interactive roundtable session offers participants the chance to begin designing an effective faculty development program for first-year seminar instructors at their institutions. The facilitators will share strategies for creating buy-in for faculty development and for launching and sustaining programs. They will share resources on late adolescent cognitive development; research on cognition and technology; active learning pedagogies; writing assignments to promote critical thinking; and outcomes-based course planning; and techniques for transforming the classroom into a critically reflective learning environment.

E Pluribus Unum 2.0

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Millennials often think the world revolves around them and they know everything they need to know. What they often don’t know is what they don’t know, such as what people who live right next door but look different and come from different backgrounds are like. As different as they may be, this presentation will demonstrate a method that I have used in my First-Year Experience classes to show my students that different is not a synonym for scary, using what Millennials are most familiar with: media. I will explain a three-step approach to teaching diversity with the help of various video clips that can also be used to practice other skills first-year experience (FYE) students need, such as note-taking, critical thinking, and connecting with peers and faculty as well as the community-at-large. The overall goal is to make students understand that our society achieves unity only by embracing diversity. I start out by showing clips from The Danger of a Single Story to show how stereotypes are created and how they limit our perspective. While the focus of the lecture is on ethnic background, the discussion can be broadened to race, gender, etc. The second step is to show an episode of the reality show 30 Days that depicts a heterosexual man who moves in with a homosexual man to live with him for a month. The third medium is a movie about a college professor who unexpectedly forms a friendship with two illegal aliens in New York City. What all three videos have in common is diversity in more than one regard. While some students think they are open-minded about sexual orientation and race, they may catch themselves being prejudiced towards immigrants. Others have no problem with immigrants but struggle with accepting the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. In the end, everyone has a single story about some group and is forced to confront the issue through lively discussions about what it means to live in a diverse society. Students can also bring in their own media to share, such as songs, YouTube videos, etc. that show how stereotypes are created and spread. This presentation will give participants a list of primary and secondary resources as well as methods to discuss with their students how to strive for unity in diversity.
From Inception to Assessment: The Design, Implementation, Maintenance, and Assessment of a First-Year Experience Program

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Responding to a mandate from the University System of Georgia that all public, state institutions that serve freshmen would implement a Freshman Year Experience (FYE) program, Macon State College took steps to have a program in place in only six months. After receiving official notification to proceed, the presenter had only six months and limited resources available to design and implement a FYE program. This presentation will describe the steps taken to bring about a successful program design and implementation with limited time and resources. First, the presenter will describe the institutional mission and demographic. Proceeding along a timeline format, the presenter will next discuss the steps taken to organize an FYE Advisory Committee and sub-committees to assist with the design of the FYE program to include faculty recruitment, selection and development; curriculum development; campus engagement; policies and procedures; and assessment. Next, the presenter will discuss the actions taken to garner campus buy-in by arranging campus information sessions and presentations to the different academic schools. The presenter will next discuss the development of selected instructors, textbook selection, procurement of ancillary course materials, design and procurement of FYE promotional materials, and the design of the course assessment plan and instruments. The discussion will continue by covering the development of the FYE course learning objectives and outcomes along with the section commonalities to include the common readings and annual program theme. The presenter will describe the advising and registration of students into the new program; the administration and results of the various assessment instruments and how those results have driven program change over time. Finally, the presenter will wrap up the presentation by discussing lessons learned and the future direction of the program. Questions and comments from the session participants will then be entertained.

Infusing Multimedia Storytelling into First-Year Composition Courses

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First-year students are required to enroll in a collaborative studies cluster. In these clusters, students take two or three courses that are interconnected. In my cluster, students take an
introduction to college course (one semester hour), an introduction to biology course (four semester hours) and composition (three semester hours). The three instructors work together and coordinate assignments. The major assignment involves a service-learning project with a community partner. Our community partner for the past three years has been the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge, the only international wildlife refuge in the United States. Our students have planted native species, and for the last two years, have removed invasive species from the refuge. While the students are conducting their service, I record their work using a digital video camera. When they next come to class, I have uploaded the raw video to individual computer workstations and tell the students they need to create a 60-second public service announcement describing their experiences at the refuge. The students work in pairs and edit the video snippets together, write a script, narrate the video, add transitions and titles, and then upload the finished product to YouTube. In the second composition course, students are required to write a persuasive research paper. I use Xtranormal, a free, online video creation program, to introduce students to the idea of debate and support. After a brief introduction, students create their short video (two to three minutes) by selecting characters, settings, sounds and motions to accompany the script they write. The script must include support from credible sources and those sources must be cited informally. Once the video is completed, the finished product is published on the Xtranormal site and can also be uploaded to YouTube. As with the video creation project in the first composition course, this assignment generates a great deal of engagement and creativity. This poster session will include samples of student work, a brief introduction to the software, and an opportunity for participants to create their own PSA or Xtranormal video.

**iDiscover: An Active Learning Freshman Seminar for Generation iY**

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The cornerstone of McGill’s Macdonald Campus FRACTAL program is Freshman Seminar, administered by the Freshman Advisor and geared to helping the students with the transition to university. It has been redesigned for fall 2012 in order to: 1. take advantage of a new Active Learning Laboratory on campus 2. better address the needs of the EPIC Generation iY student. In previous years (2007-10), seminar was presented by specialized staff members in a large auditorium to a group of less than 80 students. Students attended and their comments (based on reflection) indicated that their experience was quite positive. Topics included academic expectations and university standards, study skills, time-management, budgeting, careers, etc., as well as “Surviving Freshman Year” (presented by former freshmen), along with presentations by faculty on research interests and degree programs. The seminar culminated in early April with Majors’ Fair, which introduced students to their future advisors and choice of majors. More recently (2010-11), increased enrollment has led to approximately 130 students in class, with less engagement and less satisfaction, judging by their attendance and final reflections. Additionally, the students are becoming more deeply entrenched in “Generation iY”. To respond to these
changes, we added two new activities in the fall of 2011: 1. professors were asked to volunteer to be interviewed by the freshmen, and this activity was met with universally positive feedback, on both sides. 2. students were asked to present to their peers about academic expectations (also received positively). From various observations, as well as anecdotal comments (“this doesn’t interest me”, “don’t I get to choose anything?”, “why do I have to listen to this person?”), it was felt that students needed to be more active participants in the seminar process, with more experiential seminars particular to Gen iY. For fall 2012, the seminar series will consist of seven activities: three will be mandatory, related to the domain of academic skills, and using the active learning lab (e.g. study skills, academic achievement and engagement) while the last four will be of the experiential variety, to be chosen from activities already on-going on campus. Typical domains may include: campus connection (e.g. community, campus farm volunteering, cocurricular involvement), interpersonal skills (e.g. social support networking), personal development (time and life skills management, leadership conference), and civic engagement (political activism/social advocacy). A similar pattern will be followed in winter 2012, using different domains and learning outcomes.

**College is What You Make of It: Examining the Effects of Student Engagement on Levels of Student Success in College**

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In order to determine if a first-year college experience program was effective, we surveyed all first-year students from a small, private Midwestern university. This university requires all first-time college students to enroll in a 1-hour course entitled University 101. The manifest purpose of this course is to familiarize students with college and provide a safe place for them to ask questions and learn the campus policies. However, there is also a latent purpose of this program, which is to bond the students to each other, a faculty member, and to the university itself. This course is part of an effort to increase student engagement, and, therefore, retention. Because all first time students are enrolled in this course, 23 sections overall, we found this an ideal opportunity to measure their levels of engagement on outcomes such as perceived level of academic success, level of overall satisfaction, overall educational aspirations and GPA. As far as levels of engagement, we looked at classroom engagement, overall university engagement, and college preparedness. Multiple-item indicators were constructed to measure each of the types of engagement. Using OLS regression, we tested the effect of overall university engagement on
student’s perceived level of success in college, level of satisfaction, educational aspirations and GPA. However, surprisingly, we found that overall university engagement had no significant effect on any of the previously mentioned outcomes. Next, we examined the effect of classroom engagement on the same previously listed outcomes. We found that higher levels of classroom engagement did have a significant positive effect on perceived level of success, level of overall satisfaction and educational aspirations, controlling for age, sex and race. Interestingly, there was no significant effect of classroom engagement on GPA. However, given that we surveyed these students in the middle of their first semester, their anticipated GPA may have lacked sufficient variability. Finally, we examined the effect of student’s level of college preparedness on these same outcomes. Not altogether surprisingly, we found that level of student preparedness did have a significant effect on GPA, but not on any of the other outcome variables. The purpose of this research was to determine the effect, if any, of college student engagement on successful outcomes. This was partially supported with our results. However, given the homogeneity of our sample, as well as the small sample size, there are limitations to our study. These, as well as future directions for this research will be discussed.

Crossing and Redefining Boundaries: The Process of Developing a Pan-University Collaborative Pilot Project to Support the First-Year Experience for Students with Academic Challenges

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The goal of this initiative was to develop a pilot program that will build on existing knowledge, proven programs, and existing supports in order to respond to the specific needs of a targeted group of students. The plan was to create a starting point for supporting Memorial’s students so as to help create additional knowledge. Long-term intervention must address our specific needs in ways that have been shown to be effective on our campuses. The proposal that was developed does not propose a totally new initiative but rather a co-ordination and strengthening of existing services and programs; a weaving of supports to engage first year students in a sense of community. This will be an informative session, the purpose of which is to prompt dialogue around the first-year experience and to describe the process of preparing a pilot project proposal. The first-year success program will be a first year experience, supporting students across both semesters. The pilot will engage students with a community, as full-time students receiving academic credit for their courses. These courses will be a blend of existing support courses,
cohort courses and elective courses completed without ‘specific’ supports. The structure of the pilot is strategically planned to ensure a realistic and successful first year course plan. Students will obtain credit for 8-10 courses, and will be positioned to start their second year with higher skills, confidence and sense of community. This structure will require a network of supports, including academic advising, “tracked” attendance and performance, instructional support, and evaluation feedback.

PACT: A Revolutionary Retention Program

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As a Federally Designated Hispanic-Serving College, we are especially concerned about the changing demographics in our country. As an aging and well-educated white population approach retirement, we have a growing number of younger minority and first-generation students who will be a major source of new workers. Economic Impact of Student Success: There is a close correlation between college completion rates, jobs, and the economy. Jobs: National unemployment - 9% National bachelor's degree unemployment - 4.5% Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economy: College graduates earn $1 million+ per lifetime over high school graduates. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Baby Boomers: By 2020, there will be 40 million college-educated baby boomers between the ages of fifty-five and seventy-five. Census data show that the United States is not producing college educated workers fast enough to replace retiring baby boomers. Source: New Directions for Community Colleges, no. 146, Summer 2009: Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Face of Young America: The face of young America is changing dramatically. Demographic projections indicate that the number of high school graduates in the United States will grow by 17 percent between 2000 and 2020. All of that growth will represent minority students. Source: College Board Problem: According to the White House, half of U.S. students who begin college never finish. The problem is particularly acute for low-income and minority students and those who are first in their families to attend college. Solution: PACT is an innovator in student success by changing how a college prepares its students for their careers. Through a “single point of contact” approach, Mercy College uses professional mentoring to help students achieve their goals. Mentors are assigned to students at the start of college and work with them through graduation. Mercy College employs 28 full-time, cross-trained, professional mentors who engage with students daily - in person, by phone, and online. Mentors know their students and work with them to customize their path from college through career or graduate school. PACT complements the traditional college curriculum with mentoring modules in personal, interpersonal, organizational and career development. The program includes internships and workshops on topics ranging from public speaking to interviewing to resume development, as well as an online portfolio component. PACT also cultivates employer partnerships, internships and mentoring opportunities to give students even greater access to new opportunities. Over 2,000 students are currently enrolled in PACT.
Library Support Programs for Freshmen on Academic Probation

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On many campuses each year, around ten percent of the freshmen class goes on academic probation. What can campus libraries do to support these students and increase freshmen persistence? The transition from high school to college can be difficult for some students, who must learn new study skills, learn to study more than they ever have before, and learn to write college-level research papers. In the past, libraries offered tours to new students, one-shot instruction sessions to freshmen writing classes, and hoped students would approach the reference desk with research questions. Today, libraries are trying many new methods for connecting with the freshmen class, especially those who are falling behind or need some extra help. From classes and reference hours in the residence halls, to bringing free tutoring into the library, libraries are on the forefront of offering academic support to students. This discussion will allow attendees to share what methods for reaching freshmen have worked at their institution. We will discuss successful information literacy initiatives, barriers to their implementation, and a plan of action for introducing research concepts to freshmen on academic probation.

What's New in Research

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This session will focus on the successful implementation of a strengths-based approach to the first-year experience. Research conducted in five studies will form the foundation of the session, with the results woven throughout the presentation, as well as comparisons found between each. The session will begin by describing the strengths-based philosophy and why it was hypothesized to help students succeed in their first year of college. A brief look at how strengths research has changed – in the areas of interventions, types, and outcomes – will also be described. The emphasis of the session will be on student success utilizing the strengths-based approach. Research evidence of the impact it had on first-year students will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. The ultimate outcome is student success in the
areas of learning and achievement, persistence to graduation, and the well-being of the student and his or her ability to thrive in the secondary academic learning environment. Indicators or predictors of these three outcomes will also be presented with definition and the significant effect, differences and relationships in a variety of aspects of the first-year students’ life. Some, but not all, of those are engaged learning, academic self-efficacy, and satisfaction with the college experience. Another portion of the session will explain the type of strengths-based approaches and strategies and the conceptual link between mindset and strengths-based initiatives along with the impact of these varying strengths program types. The final aspect of the session will focus on the summary of the most positive findings and key learnings from the strengths-based approaches such as augmenting students’ perceived academic control, and encouraging students to set learning goals.

Creating an Absent Professor Program to Support Student Learning

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This concurrent session’s objectives include a discussion designed to inform participants of the value of an Absent Professor Program and to engage participants in a discussion regarding the marketing of their learning commons and supporting students enrolled in first-year seminar courses. The overriding goal is to coax participants to think campus-wide rather than department- or class-wide when discussing best practices for study skills acquisition. During the concurrent session, participants will discuss the marketing of their learning commons and first-year seminars and create a rough plan to expand. Additionally, they will brainstorm ideas regarding making new connections across campus, share information regarding the best practices in study skills acquisition, and create a description of the ideal student learner mentor. There is the assumption that continuity in SI Programs and other student support services manned by students can be problematic as employees may find placement one semester, but class schedules may not match the next. This program solves the continuity issue by offering an employment alternative for mentors. A second assumption is the notion that a good mentor may quit the program, tired of the repetition without moving up in the organization. Many programs include only a mentor position and a management position. This session proposes a third tier. The presenter will discuss the need for an Absent Professor Program on any campus. AP Prefects promote your student-centered programs and learning commons and tutoring while providing student employees with valuable classroom leadership experience. Prefects can be trained with techniques similar to those of SI Leaders, but differ in that they are workshop presenters emphasizing general best practices.

FOCUS-Fostering Opportunity Cultivating Unparalleled Success: An Initiative to Improve the Experience and Success of First-Year Students at Nash Community College
UNITED STATES

This panel will discuss the development and implementation of a strategic plan directed specifically at improving the success and retention rates of first-year students. The initial focus of the plan addresses the transition from high school into college with subsequent steps emphasizing student success and retention from one semester to the next. Nash Community College (NCC) is a small community college in northeastern North Carolina with an approximate enrollment of 3100 students/semester. Traditionally, the college has experienced student retention rates slightly below 50%, which may be consistent with state and national averages, but worthy of attention and improvement. To that end, Nash Community College has identified the first-year experience, and the success of first-year students as a primary goal. The panel will discuss, in three parts, the development, implementation, and initial results and next steps associated with NCC’s FOCUS initiative. Dr. Amy Harrell, NCC’s Accreditation Compliance Officer, will overview the accreditation process that led to the development of FOCUS. This overview will include the analysis of institutional data and feedback from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Dr. Harrell will outline the initial steps taken by the accreditation committee and the development of the school’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Lisa Cooper, Director for FOCUS and First-Year Experience, will discuss specific strategies associated with the FOCUS initiative. Ms. Cooper will detail the development of a first year seminar class, ACA 115, which was specifically designed to address college ready skills and student success. Additionally, she will describe a system-wide instructional delivery model that has led to successful implementation. Ms. Cooper will also discuss the strategies developed to engage the first year student beyond the classroom. Dr. Trent Mohrbutter, Vice President for Instruction and CAO, will provide quantitative and qualitative data associated with the success of the FOCUS initiative as well as an overview of lessons learned and next steps. The panel will provide participants an opportunity for discussion and questions at the completion of the presentation. Through this panel and the ensuing
discussion, we hope to share successful strategies that can be replicated by other institutions as well as receive feedback that may help us create more, and better opportunities for student success.

Catch Twenty-Two (22) Situation: The Case of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) First-Year Students

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This presentation firstly outlines the historical background in general on issues affecting first year students within the context of South African tertiary education. The main focus of this presentation is on three crucial issues that more often affect first year students at NMMU. Firstly, it is the issue of finance, the majority of first year students particularly those who come from disadvantaged communities find it difficult to raise the registration fee to be accommodated into the university system. By and large, the above students manage to secure registration fee through bank loans but still struggle to secure funding for accommodation, food and books. Further, accommodation remains a big obstacle for these students because of limited rooms available. The majority of these students end up wasting a lot of time looking for private accommodation outside campus. In most cases they end up securing expensive and unsuitable accommodation outside campus. The above mentioned issues consume a lot of time and this ends up affecting their academic performance because they become settled into the demanding university environment after two to three months. The university orientation program is currently designed for only prepared and ready first year students hence unprepared students find it hard to adapt quickly into the university environment. For example, there are first years who come to the university without any idea of what they want to study. This type of students end up choosing modules and degrees hastily and later in the year they regret and want to change their studies. This presentation will cover the above three broad areas and more examples will be presented with the view of painting a clear and concrete picture. The research methods used to gather data will also be clearly defined during presentation. In the final analysis some solutions to the problems will be suggested with the view of contributing to the existing policy on orientation.

Extending the Bridge: Stimulating Academic Success and Student Retention through Advancement of Mentoring First-Year Students
UNITED STATES

This multimedia presentation will focus on data analysis and discussion of mentoring programs developed under the Models of Success initiative at Norfolk State University (NSU). The focus in implementing Models of Success was to identify manageable and effective strategies to expand the highly successful ACCESS Plus Summer Bridge Program from a summer experience to a year-long experience for incoming students. Mentoring from peers, faculty, and staff administrative personnel alike have been central to the great success this program has enjoyed. Comments from participants and faculty alike reflecting a desire to "keep the momentum going" throughout the academic year were especially influential in advancing the mentoring practices that became the core of Models of Success, and are highlighted in the presentation. Three models were created and are showcased in this presentation: 1) the Breakfast Club, a faculty and peer mentoring program designed for first generation and academically at-risk Summer Bridge students as well as student leaders who serve as peer mentors, 2) SMOOVE (Spartan Men of Optimism, Valor and Excellence), a male mentoring program with many facets to developing cohesion and self-empowerment amongst students, and 3) LADIES (Leaders in Academia Dedicated to Improving and Empowering Self), a female mentoring program with many of the same objectives as SMOOVE. First, the audience will be presented with a brief video highlighting participant feedback from each program. Afterwards, the formal portion of the presentation will commence with discussion about the various workshops and presentations under each program, conducted by NSU Alumni that participants attend. The audience will also be informed about the nature of assistance from academic advisors to student participants in reviewing and incorporating assessment results from the program towards development of their own action plans. Details about the three-day mentoring retreat -- held exclusively for those students completing the workshops, assessments, action plans, and proof of "follow-through" with those plans -- will also be shared. Finally, the presentation will reveal methods employed and results gathered from systematic assessments of all three models with respect to academic and retention goals reflected in Summer Bridge and consistent with NSU's institutional goals. Implications for future development will be offered and the audience will be allowed time to share their thoughts in this respect with both the presenters and presentation attendees.

It’s on the Mentor Syllabus: Practical Ideas on Getting your Peer Mentor Involved
In this presentation, I will explore different ways in which faculty can effectively use peer mentors in a first-year seminar setting. I outline my seminar course for participants, specifically focusing on the peer mentor and his/her role. The first peer mentor activity that I will talk about is an activity I use during one of my career sessions. During one class period, I ask my peer mentors to bring in other students who have completed an internship, studied abroad, and participated in several student organizations. Before the class period, I work with mentors one-on-one, and we talk about time management and lesson planning. After they feel comfortable with their lesson plan, they present the material to the class along with the people they recruited. I have found that students are much more interested in these activities—internships, study abroad, and student activities—if they hear other students talking about them. The second peer mentor activity that I will talk about is a campus orientation activity. For this activity, I ask peer mentors to plan several outings and invite students to attend. This helps the students get to know their mentors as well as learn more about the community. One of the common complaints I hear from students is that there is nothing to do in Fargo, North Dakota, which is never good to hear when trying to improve retention rates. This activity introduces students to what the community has to offer. In the past, mentors have taken students bowling, attended MU Live, a weekly dance offered by the campus, worked out at the student wellness center, and attended a volleyball game. The third peer mentor activity that I will address is an activity I use during my money management class period. For my money management class period, I ask mentors to prepare a survival guide for students. Where are the deals at in the Fargo-Moorhead area? Finally, I will talk about why it is important to create a peer mentor syllabus. Terrion and Leonard state, “Programs that rely on university students as mentors tend to be more successful when mentors are required to show how they intend to fit the mentoring hours into their schedules” (152). By having this discussion up front, using the syllabus as a talking point, mentors are able understand the expectations of the mentoring process.

**Foundation Year: Redesigning the First Year of College for First-Generation and Underprepared Urban Students**

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The presentation will include a discussion of the design, implementation, and preliminary outcomes of the Foundation Year program at Northeastern University. The formal presentation will take 40-45 minutes with 15-20 minutes for questions and discussion. Foundation Year is a twelve-month, full-time first year of college program serving a cohort of recent graduates of the Boston Public Schools who have struggled academically and personally in high school but have also demonstrated the potential and motivation to succeed in college with the structures and supports offered by Foundation Year. Students apply through a specialized admissions process that allows for a thorough review of multiple measures to determine student selection and that relies heavily on recruitment and referral by school-based staff and those from intermediary educational organizations working closely with BPS students. The non-residential program features a full year’s worth of college credit bearing coursework mirroring a traditional freshman year and delivers that instruction in a largely self-contained cohort format at Northeastern University. The program-specific faculty, student advisor, and academic tutors combine engaging, scaffolded, and extended instruction in small classes with wrap-around academic and personal support in order for students to access college-level material and achieve college-level work. Combined with traditional academics, the program boasts a sequence of required non-credit coursework. These courses aim to help students adjust to the culture and expectations of college and develop personal and academic “soft skills,” such as time management, note taking, and organization. Additionally, they lead students to develop work-readiness skills, such as resume writing, interviewing, and communicating effectively in the workplace so that they can engage in workplace-based experiential learning. Lastly, the non-credit programming prepares students to apply and transition to transfer colleges for completion of their undergraduate degree. The program provides students with critical resources whose absence can act as a barrier to students’ college success, including laptop computers and books for all classes. Upon completing the program, students continue their studies at various places, including Northeastern University, Northeastern’s College of Professional Studies, and a host of other colleges, some of which enjoy partnership agreements that facilitate the transfer admission, matriculation, credit transfer, and transition process for students.

First-Year Seminar Assessment: Using Propensity Scores to Control for Self-Selection Bias

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First year seminars have emerged as the signature retention intervention in universities across the American higher education system. While there is a rich literature based on the first year seminar framework, accurate evaluations of intervention impacts are difficult due to the methodological challenges of estimating treatment effects from observational data. Non-experimental data lacks the mechanism of randomization and, as a result, is confounded by multiple forms of bias. Self-selection bias is particularly relevant to program evaluation in higher education. Students that self-select to participate in a first year seminar likely differ from those who do not. For example, students that choose to take the course may have fewer characteristics related to academic risk (e.g. first generation status, low income, minority status, etc.) than non-participants. Those pretreatment factors represent group differences that may actually be the source of observed differences in outcome measures, rather than the program itself. Selection bias is traditionally balanced between treatment and control groups by matching. When groups are matched on an influencing characteristic, the data is thought to be balanced. Realistically, however, there are a great number of student characteristics (minority status, low socioeconomic status, poor academic preparation, etc.) that relate to students success and their decision to participate in non-required academic programs. To create an adequate control group, which is equivalent to the treatment group, many influential characteristics must be included. Problematically, as the number of student characteristics increase, so too does the difficulty of matching. Propensity Score (PS) modeling is an extension of traditional matching strategies and allows for the inclusion of many student characteristics. The PS is the calculated probability of a student participating in the intervention, given a set of student characteristics. The characteristics associated with first year seminar participation would include ethnicity, first generation college student status, Core High School GPA, etc. These characteristics are important because they relate to both the student’s choice to participate and student success outcomes (retention, GPA, academic standing). The participant’s PS (likelihood to participate) is then matched to a non-participant’s PS; derived from the same set of student characteristics. Thus, non-participants are paired to participants on an estimate of their likelihood to participate in the specified program given a designated set of student characteristics. Once students are paired, the difference between treatment and control outcomes can be used as an estimate of the effectiveness of the first year seminar.

**Setting High Expectations in First-Year Seminars to Foster Student Success**

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John Doherty
Our discussion will explore approaches to assist faculty in the development of effective first-year seminars, especially seminars designed, in part, to increase retention. We will facilitate discussions to address the issue of retention and put these discussions in the context of increasing faculty efficiency that is sustainable and scalable, without compromising faculty content, pedagogical knowledge, or academic rigor. We will accomplish these goals by, in part, mimicking the processes the authors used to develop a set of interdisciplinary, co-designed, and content-diverse first-year seminars. In this way we will help faculty replicate but tailor to their own circumstances some of the learning strategies we developed and then implemented in our seminars. This approach, based on a teaching and learning seminar entitled “Decoding the Disciplines” led by Joan Middendorf and attended by the authors in May 2011, will provide the opportunity for participants to develop strategies for course structure and function, and identify potential learning strategies and assignments. In this way, we will create a hybrid experience that combines elements of a discussion with those of a workshop. After a brief introduction of the session, we will divide all the participants—staff, faculty, and administrators—into interdisciplinary groups to foster wide-ranging thinking about the issues. We will then ask the groups to discuss amongst themselves these four questions: 1. How do you define student success in a first year seminar? 2. What do you find to be the three greatest barriers to student success in your first year courses and why? 3. What strategies and assignments have you used to address these barriers? 4. How do you know if these strategies work or not? Once the smaller groups have developed their answers (10-15 minutes) we will have them share their responses with the entire group. We will use these responses to develop definitions of success and to define the characteristics of effective assignments and pedagogical approaches. As time allows, we will share assignments we have used to achieve our goals for our first-year seminars and have the participants assess them, based on the roundtable discussions. At the end of the session, we will collect, compile, and distribute the responses to all participants. We will also provide participants with copies of the various assignments we have used, along with both a self-critique and participant critiques of their effectiveness.
Lessons Learned: A First-Year Seminar for International Students

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The presentation will cover the institutional context and circumstances that prompted the development of a first year seminar reserved for international students, implementing processes, focus course topics, and future program directions. The course was initially created to address several needs of a rapidly increasing more highly visible international student community. Modeled after the first-year course for domestic students, the international version covers similar topics but with different emphases, particularly around campus engagement, time management, academic resources, conflict resolution. During the pilot year, discipline-specific vocabulary, cultural conventions for in-class behavioral expectations, and working with peers were identified as concerns and opportunities for further course development by the instructors, students, and their advisors. These concerns also reinforced the need for a separate first-year transition course for non-native speakers, particularly those with marginal English language proficiency scores. Based on the minimum English language proficiency score required for admission many international students struggle in at least one skill area (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, or writing) and this can drastically affect their academic performance. Over time, our program assessment revealed that these students need study skills that specifically address the complex combination of English language and content learning these students are doing on a daily basis in their first-year courses. Future directions for our program include making more specific placements in our first year seminar based on English language proficiency scores. The lower language proficiency score students would be better served through our 3 credit study skills first year seminar and the higher language proficiency students could continue to be served through the International version and some might be better served by integrating them into our domestic first year seminar. Thus, rather than looking at this question as “integrated” or “separated,” our assessment and experience have led us to the conclusion that a one size fits all model is not working optimally.

Rethinking Higher Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Importance of Adult Transitions
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network. This group of programs was established to conduct research to determine the number of people with ASDs in the United States. According to the CDC and ADDM (2006), data show that between 1 in 80 and 1 in 240 children, with an average of 1 in 110 have an ASD. Research further indicates that ASDs is not prevalent within a particular race or socioeconomic status, but it is four times more prevalent in boys. It is estimated that ASDs affect 1 to 1.5 million Americans (CDC, 2006). According to Taylor (2005), ASD research implications have not been progressive over the last 60 years. Taylor (2005) suggests that ASDs have only recently been recognized in higher education. Haley (2011) offers that accurate data does not exist articulating the number of ASD students entering and/or attending institutions of higher education. To complicate matters, little research exists about transitioning and teaching ASD students. Myers, Ladner, and Koger (2011) suggest as the number of students with autism increases, institutions face the challenge of providing resources that will accommodate them. Taylor (2005) offers that since very little is known about ASDs, it may be difficult for higher education personnel to understand why it is necessary to incorporate adjustments to academic practices to accommodate ASD students. He argues that it may be difficult for both faculty and students to truly appreciate the struggles of an ASD student transitioning to the college setting and also learning to cope with his or her disability. More importantly, variances of ASDs exist for students that translate differently for each individual student. With the differences in the needs of students on the spectrum, there may be difficulties making appropriate adjustments to academic practices. Moreover, faculty and staff may not even recognize or perceive ASDs in students. The traditional transitional and orientation programs and services cater predominantly to a population of students without disabilities. It is suggested that transitioning young adults with ASDs into higher education can be challenging. For the average college student without disabilities, he or she can expect to transition to college and begin to experience and achieve basic tasks such as gaining a sense of self, developing values and personal preferences, setting goals, establishing peer connections, and more importantly, becoming independent of family. These life tasks are affected for ASD students.

**Parents as Partners in First-Year Student Success**
Parental involvement in higher education has become increasingly prevalent on college and university campuses around the world. Institutions of higher education can no longer alienate parents, but must seek ways to engage families in their student’s college experience (Daniels, Evans, and Scott (2001). The presenter will provide a theoretical framework, research, and examine the impact of parental involvement on student success. Additionally, the presenter will examine who are the students of today and the types of parents that intervene, such as the phenomenon known as the helicopter parent. Social, cultural, and economic factors that give rise to parental involvement at different stages in the students’ academic experience will also be discussed. In order to provide a broad perspective the presenter will share different institutions’ (including those outside of the United States) efforts at developing a response to the needs of parents through publications, parent programming, parent relations office, parent websites, etc. Examples from the perspective of both two year and four year colleges will be highlighted to show the collaborative nature of the program that can be developed. The different types of programmatic or institutional efforts, such as parent orientation, will be discussed as a way to encourage parent’s participation attempt to support their students. The presenter will provide information regarding parental involvement and the impact of cultural norms that may prohibit or enhance parent’s role in their student’s college experience. The idea of parents taking a more active role in their students’ education is now being seen in other parts of the world like Southeast Asia, Canada, and Great Britain. In many countries parents have worked very hard to get their children into the “right” schools and universities and want to make sure they succeed and achieve upward mobility. The pressure on students to gain entrance to prestigious universities is great, and parents want to make sure they graduate from university. Finally the presenter will provide examples and encourage discussion to accomplish such learning outcomes as 1) understanding the trends for increased parental involvement in student’s higher education experience throughout the international community; 2) determining and understanding the strategic needs of parents and the role it plays in student development; 3) learning the components of successful parent programming and partnerships; and 4) understanding how student retention, graduation, and success can be enhanced through the development of positive relationships with overly interested parents.

Character Strengths: Student Development Theory and Positive Psychology Working Together to Reframe the Student Experience

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Student development research has tended to focus upon student limitations and deficiencies in order to inform campus programs. However, a new approach to our work with students is emerging in the literature. This new trend is perhaps best demonstrated through the strengths-based campuses and programs that focus upon student talent and possibilities. Introducing students to their talents, strengths, and promise during the first-year experience is an exciting new way to offer appropriate challenge and support. This discussion will center on an emerging area within the field of student affairs, positive student development. First, we will review the research from student development, positive psychology, and emerging adulthood. This review will include an interdisciplinary review of research, which will lead into a conversation about supporting the developmental transitions of traditional-aged first-year college students. Next, we will consider how adopting a positive student development approach towards the first-year experience could strengthen existing initiatives. We will create a space for exploration and consideration of this emerging approach to working with students with the goal of identifying universities and colleagues who can offer support in piloting programs that infuse this new research.

**Beyond Retention: Early Identification and Outreach to At-Risk First-Year Students to Improve Student Success**

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UNITED STATES

Our new initiative, the comprehensive student support program, has three parts: first, utilizing technology from Starfish Retention Solutions to act as an information and automated communications hub for our retention efforts; second, changing our campus conversation from retention to addressing the success of all of our students; and third, the reorganization of our
student support offices to increase efficiency and the effectiveness of our outreach programs including the creation of the new academic success center. The newest programming from our academic success center is the early outreach program. Designed to identify at-risk students as early as possible prior to or during the semester, this program utilizes predictive modeling of admissions variables such as high school grades, test scores and the CSI survey risk factors to identify high risk students prior to the start of the semester and warning “flags” from our Starfish Early Alert program to identify at-risk students during the semester. Success counselors intervene with identified students, working with them to identify and resolve issues or refer them to other appropriate services. Students are encouraged to begin meeting with their success counselor on a regular basis. While working with the students, our success counselors stay in close contact with instructors, faculty advisors and others through Starfish by clearing flags and keeping notes on interventions in the system. We create a unique success network for each student depending on their instructors, advisor and their relationships with the other support offices. Students can access this network and make appointments through Starfish. While we still have two formal points during the semester to collect class performance data, 4 week Early Alerts and 8 week midterm grades, instructors and others can indicate concerns by raising a flag on a student at any time. Flags include automated emails to the students and others with a relationship with the student. Students are informed of support services and other steps they can take to resolve the situation. To more efficiently prioritize and outreach to students, we utilize three levels of flags: informational, which do not necessarily call for outreach; action, which call for support office intervention or advisor and support office intervention; and urgent flags, where a student is in danger of being suspended within days. Solving our underlying information and communications management problems and reorganizing our support offices to improve efficiency allowed us to increase student success with a minimal investment of resources.

**Full Text Hide and Seek: Why Our Students Are Printing Abstracts Instead of Whole Articles**

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The first part of our presentation will analyze the kinds of misunderstandings and problems we’ve seen with student use of library databases, based on anecdotal evidence and our research. Every year, libraries spend millions of dollars on proprietary databases. However, students do not always use these databases successfully. In a previous study that explored use of citation
linking software, we found that some of the library’s databases seemed to be harder for student participants to navigate than others. We found that even when students used the citation linking software correctly, they were often unable to find the full text of the article. They also frequently printed only the abstract of an article when they were asked to print the full-text. The second part of our presentation will cover our innovative methodology for studying first-year student research behavior. We will present low-cost, easily available screen capture technology solutions and how they can be used to unobtrusively perform direct observation of student behavior. We will discuss how to integrate screen capture technology with coding software to identify and quantify behavior patterns across participant results. An unexpected consequence of this research methodology was finding behaviors that we did not expect to see, research paths that we did not expect to find, and the surprising emotional reaction to watching these screen capture videos. The third part of our presentation will look at the results of our research. When designing our current study, we wanted to find out why previous study participants failed to find the full text of many of articles that they tried to retrieve via the library’s citation linking software. Was it because they did not understand the database terminology of “full text,” “abstract,” and “pdf?” Did some of the databases have worse page layout and design than others? Or was it due to a combination of factors? We will offer answers to these questions and give examples of some of the more egregious database designs that we discovered and how the students tried (and often failed) to make sense of these pages. In conclusion, we will offer advice and tips on how to work with students to resolve some of the research challenges that we’ve explored. We will propose ideas for library instruction and for faculty involvement with the research process, and we will offer the opportunity for questions and discussion about our research.

LEMO: An Educational Instrument to Enhance Students’ Learning Competences and Motivation

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Since 2005 Plantijn University College together with the University of Antwerp have carried out research on learning competences of first year students and on the development of learning competences through a bachelor program. We especially examined the relations between learning competences of first year students and study success. In this session we give an overview of research findings and of activities we set up to enhance learning. The most important tool we developed, also together with the University of Antwerp, is the ‘Lemo’, an instrument on learning competences, motivation and self-efficacy. Students immediately get appreciative feedback. Their individual reports contain short explanations, tips and links to tools they can use to improve their skills. The study counselors get group reports on the learning and motivation characteristics of their students. They can make use of the manuals, tools and scripts we developed together with partners in the project ‘Enthusiasm for learning and working’. This Lemo is based and inspired by the Inventory of Learning Styles (Vermunt), the SRQ (Ryan &
Connel), the AMS (Vallerand), the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci) and research on self-efficacy (Pintrich). The validation was carried out by Donche & Van Petegem. Van de Mosselaer was responsible for the feedback tool and wrote the functional analysis of Goleweb, the web based system for using the Lemo. Based on many sources like for example the Dublin Descriptors (Joint Quality Initiative informal group, 2004), the results of research and the experience of teachers from secondary and higher education, we defined seven crucial learning competences that are decisive in order to make a successful transition to university colleges or universities: self-knowledge, self-regulation, analyzing, structuring-relating, critical processing, application-oriented processing, working together. A student, who masters these competences, has a great chance to pass in the first year in H.E. Together with practitioners in the field of education, specific materials for learning, coaching, and feedback were developed and tested. Our aim is to enhance students’ learning abilities by raising more awareness about their own learning competences through the provision of feedback and specific learning skill training activities. We want to stimulate teachers to be more attentive to the learning processes of pupils and students. We want to stimulate teachers, tutors and study counselors to set up activities to strengthen students’ competences for effective learning. And finally, by means of all these activities, we want pupils and students to be more successful in their studies.

**Improving Student Success through Academic Coaching**

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In 2010, University Success (an after hours support program from residential students) at Portland State University began an Academic Coaching program. This program utilizes both peer and professional coaches recruited across campus. The Academic Coaching program is designed to improve first-year student retention by leveraging both peer and professional mentor relationships. Operated under a case management model, the program focuses on cultivating successful transition into university life through empowerment and personal responsibility. Each coachee meets with their academic coach 5 times throughout the term, and each session covers a different topic to include; self-management, SMART goal setting, study skills, life/school balance and personal responsibility. Additionally, each academic coach has gone through a thorough training and is aware of many of the campus resources. All of the curriculum has been created based on Course by Skip Downing and was created by an academic adviser and College Success instructor. The program has seen great successes to include higher average GPA among
participants, higher retention rates and a very high overall satisfaction rate for the coaching program. In this presentation, participants will walk away with a step-by-step process on how to create an academic coaching on their campuses. Additionally, participants will learn effective ways of reaching out to colleagues to gather volunteers for academic coaching. Lastly, participants will examine the academic coaching curriculum. The above objectives will be met through the presentation. The presentation will provide a brief history, including the changes that have been made to the program, the training materials, the curriculum for the students, and the recruitment process (for both students and professional academic coaches). Additionally, there will be an opportunity for the participants to see the actual case management handouts that are used in the training of coaches and during the coaching sessions with students. There will time left at the end of the presentation for Q&A and for the participants to review the materials.

The Little Engine that Could: The Successful Ten-Year Journey of Seneca's SMILE Mentoring Program

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The presenters will take participants through the ten year development of the SMILE Mentoring Program. Designed to address issues of student retention and engagement, SMILE began with 30 students in one program at one campus and now serves nearly 2000 students over four campuses. The SMILE (Student Mentoring in Life and Education) program is a model which is being used by several colleges across North America to develop their own mentoring programs. Through a PowerPoint presentation, various activities of the program as well as the delivery of an optional Liberal Arts course in Mentoring will be discussed. The student body at Seneca is culturally diverse with more than forty different countries represented on campus. As such, the issue of diversity is central to the mentoring program and will be included in the presentation. The presentation will demonstrate the dynamic nature of the SMILE program which has responded to the changing needs of the program, the student body as well as economic realities. For example, we will discuss how we have broadened our model to accommodate different needs within the institution. SMILE now offers a targeted mentoring program to academic departments whose students have specialized needs which are not met by our regular program. The presenters will also demonstrate how a small staff can run a highly complex and sophisticated mentoring program over four campuses with the support of a database built by ITT for the program. The SMILE Program undertakes regular online evaluations with both mentors and protégés in order
to ensure the efficacy of the program and to gain valuable feedback from program participants. Results from these evaluations will be highlighted in this presentation. In addition, program challenges, best practices, as well as plans for the future will be covered. Future plans include the launching of a partnership with the International Office to assist incoming students with the transition into Canada and the college. Some of the challenges include running a uniform mentoring program on four 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 retention study which took place in partnership with an external research company during 2008 and 2009. The presenters will share the methodology and results of the study and will emphasize the importance of building a research component into a new mentoring program as a means of providing the institution with retention data and proof of ROI. The session will conclude with a question and answer period.

The Flying Start Academic Coaching Programme

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The presentation reviews internal and external research on the area of student transition and retention previously available and highlights key differences between the experiences of students at further and higher education. The presentation will begin with an overview of internal research relating to student transitional experience before covering the implementation and subsequent development of the Flying Start Academic Coaching programme. Key statistical data gathered through annual reviews indicating its contribution to the student experience and student success will be highlighted to support the impact of the programme.

Pathways to Success: First-Year Experience (FYE) Models in the Arts & Social Sciences

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First-year students not only deal with an entirely new educational setting after five years in high school, but also encounter many differences, often struggling to negotiate this transition and its impact on their identity. To effectively engage first year students, the university must be able to assist them to deal with their educational, social and personal transitions. First-year students need to “be engaged, supported, and realize their sense of belonging” (as cited in Field & Kift, 2009, p. 2), undergirded by a supportive university framework. Making this transition successfully increases the probability of academic success for students as well as overall satisfaction with university studies: “A powerful sense of place connects students to the institution and to one another” (as cited in Kuh, 2005, p.283). In this presentation we will offer data and reflections on Faculty, staff and student experiences in two different forms of first-year experience programs in the arts and social sciences. Explorations is an interdisciplinary cohort program of 100 students offering a coordinated curriculum across the arts and social sciences. The core Faculty designed the courses together to provide not just content but skill-building and pastoral support. The newly launched First-Year Learning Communities (FLCs) in Global Issues and Social & Behavioural Sciences are thematically multi-disciplinary groupings of courses with 22-51 students. There is a distinctive core of peer-led weekly meetings focused on academic, social and personal development as an inherent aspect of the FLCs. Following an explanation of the different structures and aims of each FYE program, we will discuss the successes and challenges each has faced, lessons learned both from a classroom perspective and that of student recruitment, retention, advising and engagement. The purpose of this presentation is to share FYE experiences, open dialogues amongst participants and answer questions related to the establishment, maintenance and growth of first-year programs.

Reaching Students Where They Are with the First-Year Orientation Course

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This presentation will describe the lessons learned from two iterations of the first-year experience course at South Georgia College. The course was originally designed to assist residential students in orientation and registration (hence the acronym ROAR) and to enhance their exposure to all things college-related in a more lengthy and detailed version of the summer and fall workshops. Identified failings were: the omnibus textbook covered too many subjects to be absorbed in fifteen hours without slighting the academic information that was at the center of ROAR; there were too many non-credentialed instructors (defined as instructors with only a B.A); the coverage of subjects depended on the interests of the instructors; and the restriction to residential students limited the reach of the course. In 2011-2012, the presenter authored a new common curriculum for the course and the course was extended to all first-time, full-time students in a program now called SOAR (to denote that all students, not just residential, we're
involved). The course has seven modules, on academic subjects, such as strategies for success and avoidance of academic probation; student conduct; plagiarism; schedule design; and understanding of globalization and diversity, in part through the common reader, To Kill a Mockingbird. Without a textbook, the instructors design their own exams and to some extent teaching strategies but must cover the common curriculum in doing so. How the program was able to increase the percentage of faculty teaching the course who are credentialed (to 78%) will be related. Students and faculty alike leverage technologies that students enjoy and will need to use, such as Blackboard, group activities online, blogs and Google docs. Student misbehaviors are capitalized on as teachable moments. When students come to class without paper or pen, when they do not take notes, when they arrive late or act out in the classroom, these are not what they represent in the traditional classroom (wastes of time for the discipline) but golden opportunities for learning that make the learning itself more accessible, immediate and powerful. These moments and their impact will be conveyed in the presentation as will the results of the assessment methods. Discussion among the participants will explore their implications.

An Inclusive Model for Institutional Reform: An Institutional Study of First-Generation College Student Success

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Higher Education in the 21st century has become increasing diverse and one of the greatest shifts has been the increase in the non-traditional student. According to the literature, retention and graduation is less likely for the non-traditional college students than their peers. Colleges and universities often approach this challenge without a cohesive institutional plan, resulting in tensions within the institution. This interactive workshop is design for program/institutional leaders interested in guiding policies and practices that improve student success, especially during transitional years. An inclusive model will be presented and explored through the participants’ own institutional culture and student population. Learning Objectives: Participates will leave the workshop with: 1. A better understanding of the data available and the data needed to determine who their at-risk populations are and how the institution is supporting or hindering their success. 2. An inclusive model for institutional reform adapted to their unique program and/or institutional context that will support the analysis process of an institutional and/or program review. 3. A shared learning experience with job a-like colleagues engaged in problem finding and solving. Essential Questions to guide the workshop: • Who are our at-risk populations and how do we know? • What policies and structures are in place that support or hinder the success of all our students, especially during transitional years? I. Whole Group Opening Activity: Share a typical at-risk student profile. Discuss through the perspective of our own program/institution, what support is needed to ensure the student’s success? Determine to what degree we are currently meeting the student’s needs. (Scenario will have a generic international focus) II. A brief description of the literature on the first year persistence of
traditionally under-served populations, underlining the importance of three related dimensions in understanding or improving student retention: (a) student population characteristics, including academic preparation, SES, ethnicity, etc.; (b) institutional culture and social organization, including student support services and academic integration; and (c) student experiences of social and academic integration. How might one of these dimensions affect the other two? What relationships exist between them at particular institutions? And what implications do those relationships have for improving retention? III. Introduce Study Design 1. Inclusive Model 2. The four data points (Institutional Context, Student Demographic and Academic Data, Student Perspective, Student Learning) 3. Recursive analysis process of model. 4. Share story of one institution that used the inclusive model for institutional reform. Results: target “at-risk” student population was in fact out-performing peer group. New “at-risk” population identified and instructional structure of student and academic affairs reorganized. IV. Job a-like Activity, Put the Model to Work - Handout Model Who are your at-risk student populations and how do you know? 1. Institutional Context: Policies, practices, resources 2. Student Demographic and academic data: Mining institutional data 3. Student Perspective: Student Interviews, Survey results (NSSE) 4. Student Learning: Evidence based outcomes 5. Final Recursive Analysis: Aligning policies, practices and resources to meet students 6. Communication and implementation of findings: Roles and responsibilities: Student affairs / Academic affairs V. Whole Group Reflection and Perspectives

The Stanford Resilience Project: Supporting Helicopter Students

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The Resilience Project is a collaborative partnership between the Center for Teaching and Learning, Undergraduate Advising and Research, Residential Education, Judicial Affairs, The Career Development Center, and the Alumni Association. We launched this project in 2011 and have gotten positive feedback from the Stanford community as well as inquiries from colleges around the country. Clearly, this issue hits a nerve for educators and students alike. The presentation will show clips from the videos, discuss some of the impact the Project has had on Stanford's campus, and will present future directions the Project hopes to pursue. In addition, recent articles in the news discussing "helicopter" parenting and its impact on current and future college students will be referenced.

Self-Efficacy & Optimism: How Integration of Support Remains Vital

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It is increasingly clear that the self-efficacy and optimism of 1st year students plays a significant role in their eventual academic success, or lack thereof. At-risk students, who have been identified through Early Assessment mechanisms, become compulsory participants of the Law Faculty’s Support Programme, which formally commences mid-year. The programme is designed with a focus on small-group instruction (Butler, 2002) and the fostering of inter-group support structures, exposure to training in various components of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002), and incorporation thereof through engagement with lecturers and the substantive content of their 1st year law modules. Supplementary to this are the one-on-one consultations that are held throughout the year between the Support Programme participants and the Coordinator: Student Support, the focus of which is to continually evaluate the student’s progression, and identify any particular needs that might be universal enough amongst the participants, to warrant inclusion thereof within the main Programme. The interaction between students and the Coordinator, who administers the Programme and serves as liaison between Faculty staff and external education experts, allows for a fluidity to the design of the Programme which can be adjusted to suit the needs of the particular participant group. The integrated nature of the Programme, in that substantive topics dealt with within the Programme, are then repeated within the main lectures, is of crucial importance to the successful implementation of the support offered. The poster presentation will accordingly serve as an example of an integrated programmatic approach within a Faculty that incorporates both individual and group-based support that is focused on academically at-risk students.

**Toward a 3rd Generation Transition Pedagogy: Enablers and Challenges**

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The third generation approach to the First-Year Experience (FYE), as conceptualized by Kift, Nelson and Clarke (2010), is acknowledged as the best strategy to promote first-year success. This approach, other than approaches based only in the curriculum or co-curriculum, advocates partnerships between all divisions of the institution as well as integration of all institutional activities as this reflects more closely the comprehensive and complex nature of the FYE. The session will commence with a brief consideration of the essence of the third generation approach to distinguish it from curriculum and co-curriculum-based approaches. This introduction will be done by a representative of Stellenbosch University's First-year Academy, the institution's version of the third generation approach. As this approach requires the transcendence of traditional institutional boundaries, a process that is inevitably characterized by challenges and enablers, this session will offer participants the opportunity to identify and discuss what these challenges and enablers are, both in a general sense and in terms of what is unique to their institutions. The process will be facilitated by brief inputs from all the contributing members focusing on enablers and challenges that they experience in their particular context within their institution. These inputs will be provided by a senior manager in an academic context with a particular focus on managing entrenched attitudes, the institution's Student Dean with a focus on aligning the curricular and co-curricular activities, a member of the institution's teaching staff, and members involved in support and academic development activities with a focus on dealing with contextual or structural challenges such as poor preparation for higher education and the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the student body. The variety of contexts represented also serves as an example of transcendence of traditional hierarchies within the institution. The session is set to conclude with panel members and participants sharing best practice from their own contexts in order to generate creative solutions for the challenges that are obstacles to the implementation of the third generation approach to the FYE.
Students, who are the first person in their family to attend university, are often the most vulnerable students within a higher education community. First generation students face numerous challenges that seem to remain unaddressed throughout their tertiary education. The reasons for these challenges are complex, ranging from institutional constraints, systemic failures and personal circumstances. Universities have developed extensive curricular and co-curricular support services to improve the success rates of first year students, including programmes aimed at addressing the needs of first generation students specifically. Despite the various support structures in place, it remains a challenge to establish confidence in first generation students to make use of the available support. There is an apparent gap between what first generation students perceive and expect of student support, and what universities offer in terms of support. Stellenbosch University (SU) has a unique history in South African higher education context and traditionally attracts white Afrikaans speaking students. SU has however made significant strides in attracting more students of color, but these students are the minority and often first generation students. This minority status is more pronounced at SU in the context of a country where people of color constitute almost 90% of the population. SU is however deliberate in developing a comprehensive support structure for its students, which includes servicing the needs of first generation students. In 2012, the University introduced an Awêness camp specifically aimed at first generation students. The camp is an attempt to address the challenges these students face, and the primary objective of the camp, is to equip students with the necessary tools to negotiate the social and academic expectations of higher education. This camp includes various workshops, and included a support service exhibition. In the context of the Awêness camp, this study will explore first generations students’ perception and expectations of students support. The focus will be on the perceived resistance of especially first generation students to make use of the available support services. It will also explore the expected challenges and support needs of first generation students. Finally, this study will put forward suggestions on strategies for universities to bridge the gap between what first generation students need and what is on offer in terms of student support.

The Learning Journey to Success Starts Right Here! Stellenbosch University’s Welcoming Programme for First-Year Students

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South Africa (SA). The WP has been revised by a task team of 16 members (consisting of academic and support staff as well as student leaders) who was commissioned by the Vice-Rector (Teaching) in 2009. The most important outcome of this process, was the decision by the Top Management of SU to move away from a two-week WP to one that includes a pre-phase
(starting in the last quarter of the previous year) and a post-phase that included the first quarter of the new academic year. The University is operating within a very particular socio-economic and political context that influence the way it approaches programmes. Dealing with critical issues of diversity, transformation, quality and success the WP is planned and organized from an integrated, student-centred approach (which is systemic-holistic) and would meet institutional, academic and social integration. Best practices, nationally and internationally were incorporated. Furthermore, optimal cooperation between all sectors of the institution is emphasized, highlighting the roles of both academic and support services to ensure a successful WP. The paper will show how the WP facilitates the transition of new students into the institution and tertiary education, setting them a learning journey to academic success and developing graduate attributes to be a global citizen equipped to play a leading role in the twenty-first century A very important and somewhat unique aspect of SU’s WP is the contribution of student leaders to the welcoming of new students. Students leaders have develop programmes focused on recreational and fun activities that encompass the specific values of hospitality, friendliness and human dignity. This is not a minor issue at an institution where these programmes in the past were based more on a militaristic approach and has led to numerous unsavory incidents, injury and even death. The paper will conclude with a look at the 2012 Welcoming Programme and specific new, creative ways the welcoming experience for new students has been enhanced to contribute to their academic success.

Cultivating the Mind: Student Success through First-Year Leadership Experiences

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There will be two presenters in this session. Both individuals lead co-curricular leadership programs at the institution and will start by providing demographic information of the University, including population, ethnic breakdown, and the area of Texas that we serve. We will follow with the institution's mission and how a need for leadership programs for students was determined as a necessity for us to assist them in being successful. Following this, we will go over the structure of the program from years one through three, how it has evolved, and includes some of the challenges we have faced. These challenges include participation levels, funding, time needed to successfully run a program like this, and developing ways in which to convince administration this has a value-added benefit to our students. We will follow with sample agendas and provide some of the assignment students must complete in order to fulfill program
requirements. These assignments include reflections, written and verbal, presentations, and leading group discussions. From here, we will shift the focus of what students have reflected and share some of the videos students have submitted that provide an insight into their personal leadership skills. Next, we will follow with data and assessment tools that show the success of the program to date and provide insight on how to convince administration to institute programs similar to these. We will conclude with some pointers in recruiting students the first year of the program, how using orientation as a foundation can assist in building the buzz, and provide answers to questions from the audience.

**Reading to Write: Attuning Students to a Literate Life**

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The session will begin with a proposition: just as a musical instrument needs to be “tuned” before a musician can effectively play it, effective reading depends first on attuning the mind to what a piece of writing is. The proposition is followed by an explanation of the challenges that many students-in-transition face when they encounter texts that are unfamiliar to them. Participants will then engage in a demonstration of strategies for “attuning” new college-level readers to the demands of college-level reading. These strategies will be delivered in the form of several brief workshop activities in which they will practice strategies of effective engagement with words, as both readers and writers. These activities will be followed by time for questions and comments. Each participant will either receive a copy of the 50-page booklet, “Reading to Write,” have access to it on line, or both.

**Staying Connected When They are Thinking about Leaving: Providing Support to University Withdrawals**

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Withdrawing from UNC-Greensboro is as simple as dropping all classes or failing to register in between semesters. When a student drops his or her final course, they often are surprised to find that they are technically withdrawing from the University. Because of the lack of connection during the withdrawal process, the Students First Office (SFO) makes it a priority to reach out
and provide support to any students who have withdrawn or are considering a withdrawal from the University. Before students are able to withdraw from a final course in UNCGenie, they are required to complete a brief online survey where they are given the opportunity to share their concerns, stories, or circumstances with the SFO staff. The Total Withdrawal Survey works in conjunction with Banner Self-Service and is activated each semester after the drop/add period. When a student attempts to withdraw from all courses, a brief survey is activated. This survey provides information that would be too time-consuming and daunting to collect manually. The information collected on the withdrawal survey is valuable as it provides key information and opportunities. It informs us of areas for improvement at UNCG so that we can assist students with similar situations and allows us to reach out to the student on a personal level to recommend specific resources. Using the information shared, the staff in turn connects students with appropriate offices and resources to assist them. SFO also assists students in re-applying to the University and collaborates with campus partners to ensure maximum support and ease of transition back into the University community.

**Filling the Gap: Creating Customized Data Collection to Meet the Needs of First-Year Experience Assessment**

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**UNITED STATES**

The mission of US is to foster a learner-centered experience for student success by promoting undergraduate achievement and persistence, enhancing faculty/staff development and support,
and cultivating integrative and collaborative learning. The BAM software was developed with all of these goals in mind and allows all of the US departments, each with different missions student populations, to more effectively assist students and maximize their resources. This session will focus on how institutions of higher learning can develop innovative methods of data collection in order to assess programs aimed at serving undergraduate students. Many types of software are used by institutions for the purposes of collecting student data and tracking their behaviors. However, the tracking software used by many institutions is most often licensed from external companies at the cost of several thousand dollars per year, which can take up a sizable portion of a department or institution’s budget. Furthermore, these software packages are designed to be used by as many colleges as possible and are not specifically tailored to the needs of each unique institution licensing the software. As departments are increasingly asked to do more with less funding, the costs of maintaining software licenses for tracking software and then customizing the software to work for one’s own institution can become overwhelming. BAM was built from the ground up specifically to meet the needs of the US department. As a result, it does not pull data just for the purposes of collecting. Each category and field tracked by the software has a specific reason for existing and ties directly into the US assessment model. The customizable nature of BAM enables it to be a flexible software package that can be rapidly re-shaped and tailored to meet the needs of departments big and small. Programs like BAM can be developed in-house by institutions for a fraction of the cost of outside software packages. This session will focus on how institutions can develop their own tracking software and will outline the entire process of doing so from conception to deployment. This process will be broken into six steps, focusing on the need for innovation (“Make it New”), the need for adaptability (“Make it Yours”), the need for accuracy (“Make it Right”), the need for accessibility (“Make it Easy”), the need for longevity (“Make it Sustainable”), and ultimately how to utilize the software in the institution (“Make it Work”).

Scoring Points with Students: The Gamification of a First-Year Course

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This project was inspired by a Ted.com lecture by Jane McGonigal called “Gaming Can Make a Better World”. Ms. McGonigal describes the skills of a gamer and why people who participate in a gaming environment can lead innovation because of four “super-powers”: Urgent Optimism, Social Fabric, Blissful Productivity, and Epic Meaning. It provokes two questions: 1. How can we optimize the experience of these “super-empowered hopeful individuals” in their first-year orientation course and 2. If we, as personal development guides, cannot adapt our approach to meet the needs of our audience how can we expect the same from our students? This lecture becomes a guide to “make the real world more like a game” with the goal to promote the qualities brought out in the gaming world through the first-year orientation course. Using fundamental principles of game design we restructured the format of one class, as an experiment.
BUS 105 is a 1-credit first-year orientation course for students with a major, or intended major, in the business school at a four-year public institution. For this experimental class, half of the course is posed as a game for the students, while the other half of the game was service-learning project. In addition to established learning goals we intended to tap into students’ abilities for: greater self-motivation, creating social capital, increased productivity, creating meaning inside and outside of the classroom, and having fun! We designed the online instructional environment to supplement interactive gaming in the classroom. Students were given “assignments” and awarded points according to how successfully they met the parameters of the assignment. While guiding principles and models were used we did not create a stand-alone digital gaming environment choosing the university campus and community as our “gameboard” and utilized multiple gaming formats. Students were told at the beginning of the course the methodology source and parameters for the gaming portion. Point statistics were regularly reported to students and this fostered added competition. Final grades were assigned based on a percentage of attempted points and completed points. We found that even though students were not using a virtual-environment-electronic-game the reactions were similar to what was anticipated from Ms. McGonigal’s predictions. An additional discovery was that some games used where more compelling, impactful, and even requested by students than others. Results of student narrative research will be shared.

Evolving with Our Students: The Changing Face of Academic Probation

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Participants will review the initial implementation of the SAS 100 course in 1999 and its history at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). This class continues to be required of all undergraduates who fall on academic probation after their first semester at the University. Students receive zero credit as well as a Pass or No Pass grade. As the needs of this at-potential population have evolved over the last 13 years, so has the design of the class. Originally lasting sixteen weeks with an emphasis on study skills, SAS 100 is currently half of a semester long with a strengths-based curriculum guided by Appreciative Advising. The course policies are also unique: students, who fail to enroll in, attend, or pass SAS 100 may be academically suspended. The Personal Growth Project was introduced in 2007, thanks to the collaboration with the University’s graduate counseling program. Students in SAS 100 have the option of either writing four journals or participating in three free counseling sessions with a master or doctoral level counseling student and writing a reflection paper. At the end of the course, SAS 100 students may continue in counseling, free of charge, through the following semester. SAS 100 remains successful: the percentage of students eligible to continue after falling on academic probation has been as high as 69.6%. The presenter will close with not only the program’s recent outcome data, but also goals for the future of the SAS 100 course.
Peer Support for First-Year Students in the School of Geography Planning and Environmental Management

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PASS at UQ is derived from the Supplemental Instruction model (University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1973). PASS was deployed in the School of Geography Planning Environmental Management (GPEM) at the St. Lucia campus in 1995, albeit on a small scale of a single session of one hour a week in one course. With the appointment of a first year coordinator in 2005, PASS expanded in GPEM to six, first year courses in several programs with an enrollment >1500 students and more than a dozen student leaders. Attendance varies from 20% to 40% of course enrollment and sessions are run by high achieving, second or third year students. The PASS program aims to improve the quality of learning and is voluntary, student-centred and student-directed with a focus on providing self and peer-formative assessment with immediate feedback within an interactive and collaborative learning environment. The poster provides a graphic snapshot of the impact of PASS on enhancing student's grades in a foundation course, Environment and Society (GEOS1100), and highlights the importance of PASS for average achievers in raising their grades proportionately more than other groups. The poster also illustrates the critical social benefits of attending PASS that assist in settling new students into university life. Data on attrition rates in all first year courses in GPEM supports the contention that the expansion of PASS has stabilized attrition rates in this course to between 2-8% when compared to national averages of 18%. Feedback from students who attend PASS sessions is consistently positive and their support for the program has resulted in a steady growth in voluntary attendance to reach approximately 40% of enrollments in GEOS1100.

Borrowed Shoes Diversity Challenge: Engaging Students in Diversity Education through Flash Mobs, Blogging and Facebook

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Students registered in the Borrowed Shoes Challenge participated in new challenges daily for five weeks. All students were encouraged to participate, but the program was created by a student leader from the Leadership and Mentorship Program (LAMP), a program for first year
students that aids in their transition to university. Collaborations were made with Indigenous Services, Cultural Clubs and many services across campus. The themes for the five weeks were: Disabilities, Cultural, Socio-cultural, Poverty and Dietary Restrictions. Challenges include purchasing meals for less than $3 per meal for a day, traveling through campus using wheelchair accessible routes, publicly holding the hand of a same-gender person, avoiding products with glutten to simulate Celiac disease and much more. Our presentation will walk participants through the inception, development and implementation of the Borrowed Shoes Diversity Challenge. We will explore how we utilized first year students and upper year student leaders to create the program challenges and how Facebook and Twitter were used during the five week challenge. We will also provide examples of the photo essay or video submissions that students created to reflect on their participation in the event. Individuals attending this session will be able to take away a framework for implementing this challenge at their school. We will provide examples of the diversity passport that was developed and we will also participate in a diversity related challenge as a group to raise awareness of individuals in our presentation. The session will be highly interactive using video, student testimonies and images to allow conference attendees to see the impact of the Borrowed Shoes challenge.

An Aboriginal Cohort Program: Processes, Results, Applications

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An Aboriginal Cohort Program: Processes, Results, Applications The winter of 2012 saw the initiation of the Aboriginal TRU-Start program, a cohort program of first-year courses – English, Biology, and Statistics – for local Aboriginal students. Although, in its quest to be the University of Choice for Aboriginal People, Thompson Rivers University has increased its support systems for and research into Aboriginal education, resulting in “a dramatic increase in the number of Aboriginal students from many different communities and nations,” retention is an ongoing issue, and the Aboriginal population is still underrepresented at the university level (ALBAA). As members of a Learning Community, we developed and implemented the program to facilitate the transition for these students, who are receiving dual (high school and TRU) credit for these courses. Our approach was informed by previous successes: 1) the ongoing TRU-Start Program, begun over five years ago, in which TRU and the local school district facilitate the completion of one or two dual credit courses by select senior high school students (integrated in regular first-year classes; 2) the experiences of some of our group with a previous cohort (the Aboriginal Teacher Education Consortium) in which mature students employed by the local school district completed three courses, with degree completion as the eventual aim. Moreover, we were guided by traditional Aboriginal ways of knowing, with a holistic, experiential emphasis, and the related four principles outlined by TRU researchers: history and traditions, effective support systems, student profile, and effective and innovative education practices (ALBAA). At the same time, as we are a diverse group of school district, faculty, and student affairs personnel, and our students are of course, unique, we were breaking new ground. We will share the development process, from the completion of a faculty learning community workshop, through numerous planning sessions and experiential pre-instruction meetings with the students themselves. Attendees will learn about our collaborative pedagogical approaches and the roles of non-teaching faculty (a councillor and a librarian), student services personnel, and senior students (Aboriginal mentors and a Service Learning student) in the program. We will then outline, analyze, and evaluate the success of the program itself. Attendees will discover how we considered the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our students as we integrated traditional Aboriginal ways of knowing and the traditional Western post-secondary curriculum. Note: The ALBAA research team authored the TRU publication A Handbook for Educators of Aboriginal Students.

Withdrawal Policies: Student Failure or Opportunity for Intervention?

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Each year approximately 2,800 single course withdrawals occur at Thompson Rivers University. Last March, a ‘W’ Campaign was designed to raise students’ awareness for this much maligned academic option—withdrawal. Partnerships with faculty, student leaders, and student services created space for a campus wide ‘withdrawal’ dialogue dispelling the notion that withdrawal is just the same as quitting. In an age that supports one-touch student transactions the W Campaign offered ‘just-in-time’ spaces for students to approach faculty and various academic and student services in order to make informed choices within strict policy guidelines. In support of students’ learning the Campaign asked students: ‘Withdrawal: Is it right for you?’ Post-secondary institutions are well aware of these troublesome educational policies that students rub up against, year after year, often unknowingly but always consistently. However, few institutions have examined the connections between their educational policies and process and their students’ educational outcomes. A desire to understand the relational nature of student policies and their applicability within the everyday academic lives of students has begun to take hold within higher educational and student affairs literature (Grayson & Grayson, 2003; Tinto, 2006). Students get entangled in the messy world of educational policy when they lack basic ‘academic literacy’ and the skills and information needed to navigate the system successfully (Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, 2006; Brawner, Frillman, & Ohland, 2010). Post secondary institutions continue to place the responsibility for adapting to educational policies and practices on students and rarely acknowledge the responsibility the institution must bear (Pidgeon, 2008). Many first-year students are unaware that course withdrawals exist and do not realize that simply deciding to stop attending a course does not trigger an automatic withdrawal. These students indicate they wish they had known about the option to withdraw because they didn’t realize the serious effects an F or a DNC has on their grade point averages; a subsequent low GPA can place a student on academic probation, jeopardize funding, and even affect potential graduate school opportunities (James & Graham, 2010). The important, and often missing links between current research in student retention and student policy, and between the daily realities of Student Affairs professionals who support students’ navigation of all things ‘policy’, cannot be understated.

The Emotional Intelligence of First-Year Students

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First year offers significant challenges as new students not only need to adjust to the academic rigor of post-secondary schooling, but also to a new social and cultural milieu. Hence educational institutions need to consider both academic and nonacademic student factors that may influence student experiences in first year. In terms of the latter, one factor that may play a
crucial role is Emotional Intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence is generally understood to mean the ability to identify, appraise, and discriminate among emotions in oneself and others. It is a measure of what often is termed “common sense” or social aptitude as opposed to IQ, the cognitive measure. The applicability of EI in higher education has been investigated to some degree with mixed results. That is to say, some studies have reported significant correlations between EI and course grades, GPA, and retention while others have not. This research has been limited in terms of the assessment tools employed and the outcome measurements utilized, as well as the investigation into changes in EI. The purpose of my study was to complement and expand on this research. Consequently I designed my study much like the existing studies but broadened the scope in several ways. To start with I utilized the BarOn EQi Higher Education form which is a comprehensive EI assessment test specifically designed for university students. Besides using GPA I also incorporated students’ perception of their performance and correlated that with their EI scores. In addition, I explored associations between EI and student engagement as measured by interaction with faculty and other student as well as participation in extracurricular activity and utilization of support services. Furthermore, I investigated if and how these skills were altered by student experiences in first year by comparing pre and post EI scores. Finally, I also explored gender differences in terms of EI scores, first year experiences and relationships between the two. While the results from my study did not find any significant correlations between EI and academic success, it did reveal some significant associations between EI and students’ perception of their success in first year and measures of student engagement. Significant changes in EI over the course of first year were also revealed as were differences between males and females. In this presentation I will provide an overview of this research focusing primarily on the results and their implications for higher education.

**Academic Foundations: Building a Better College Student**

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Since 2006 this university has admitted some students each fall who do not meet the recommended academic profile for success. These students meet in a lab setting twice a week during the semester to work to overcome their academic deficits by building on personal skills, overcoming limitations, and practicing successful habits. This session will provide an overview of a course, taught by their academic advisor, for these under-prepared students. Each student takes a pre-test that identifies strengths and weakness in reading and study skills. An individual series of exercises is assigned to each student to help students reach 80% mastery in all areas. To increase reading proficiency, students are required to read five articles and answer specific questions about these articles. During the semester, the students have at least five individual meetings with their academic advisor—usually during the scheduled lab times. Meeting topics
include diagnostic test results, goal setting and progress towards those goals, midterm grades and how to proceed, and preparing for final exams. Students are also required to complete and write about five meetings with their other semester professors. Specific questions are answered about these meetings. Finally, students write a short essay based on the Learning Outcomes for the course. In this essay, they discuss how they have met these desired outcomes: 1. Establish personal goals and a plan for success. 2. Apply academic success skills to college learning. 3. Understand and practice methods for effective college reading and writing. 4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of campus support systems, especially Academic Support Services, the Learning Center, the Writing Center, the Math Help Sessions, the Library, and Counseling Services. 5. Understand and practice methods for effective course, major and career decision making.

Implementing a Summer Success Coach Program as an Enrollment, Retention, and First-Year Student Success Strategy

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The Success Coach Program at Trinity Western University is based on the following eight factors of student success (based on key areas highlighted by Tinto’s model of student attrition): 1. Personal Effectiveness 2. Academics 3. Finances 4. School Policies 5. External Commitments (off-campus involvement) 6. Internal Commitments (on-campus involvement) 7. Health & Well-being 8. Future Plans Coaches are trained to have 5 conversations with each student. The 8 factors are combined into 4 conversations so that more students are able to complete the program. For example, admitted students are contacted and asked questions around the notions of rapport and effectiveness, academics and school policy, and future plans and finances. The main objectives of the program are to assist and empower prospective and incoming students to navigate the enrollment process and transition to TWU, and to strengthen their comprehension of the TWU experience and enhance the likelihood of a successful start to their university career. There are several specific processes each Coach is responsible to engage in. Each coach is responsible for 150-200 admitted students categorized according to major. Transfer students are assigned one coach and the program is tailored to their specific needs. Each time a coach contacts a student, they guide the student through a conversation based on 2 of the 8 factors of success. Each coach’s task is to attempt to contact all her/his assigned students 4 times between June and August. For students who do not have consistent phone access over the summer months, Coaches complete some or all of the conversations via email, Facebook, and text messaging. Several events formed the basis of student engagement at the University. A “Transfer Student Coffee House” provides space for students, coaches and faculty to get to know each other through various activities; and a “Games Night” and “Ice Cream Social” encourages relationship and community. Finally, a survey is conducted at the end of the summer. The
coaches send personal emails or Facebook messages to all their students (excluding withdrawn or re-enrolled students) with a link to a survey, which includes demographic information (gender, major, and entrance type), program feedback, and personal success. Each student rated the importance of the 8 factors and their own improvement in each area as a result of conversations with their coach.

A Case on Academic Advising System of Yonsei University in Korea

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The academic advising system is an interactive system which sets up imperatively necessary communication channel with students. First, students login to university information system and are visited to their advisor’s page. After checking the bulletin board, a student can make an appointment, and/or ask an open question through the Q/A section, and/or update student personal data such as address, telephone number, mobile phone number, and e-mail address. In this procedure, advisors always keep up-to-date contact information on the student. If a student has a question but does not want to post the question publicly on the Q/A, he/she can send it via e-mail. Then the advisor can answer the same way, e-mailing back which keeping a record in the academic advising system. After any contact with a student, an academic advisor records information on the contact: date & time, type of contact (by appointment, walk-in, e-mail, Q/A, by telephone, meeting with parents, Group meeting), time spent with the student, and summary of meeting. The academic advising system is inseparably related to the university information system (http://portal.yonsei.ac.kr), which has available data on students, such as registered courses, grades, and scholarship. This kind of information and process enables the advisor to provide individualized teaching and educational program. When a student makes an appointment, the system automatically asks the main purpose to meet; the student can select the reason from multiple choices and/or write information. The academic advisor can prepare related information in case of need before meeting the student to provide timely services. Every day advisor starts by checking the system; confirming appointments and seeing what advance preparation prior to the meeting is required, answering questions in the Q/A section, and giving announcements through a bulletin board on the each advisor’s page. When an appointed student visits, the advisor provides services to the student, and after the meeting is finished, the advisor keeps a record into the system. Also advisors can provide answers of the questions on the Q/A. There are many students who visit without previous appointment. Phoning from students, and meeting with student’s parents, every contact history regarding students can be captured and stored into the advising system. Even a snippet of information, it becomes very helpful and good supporting resources for individualized students services. In near future, we are planning to expand the system including student’s e-Portfolio, which includes college life & academic plan and actual outcomes.
Launching a Successful First-Year Experience Program: Reflections from a Second-Year Perspective

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The basis of this presentation is to describe, in detail, the planning, implementation, and assessment strategies involved in launching a First Year Experience Program in a very short time frame, with the freshman seminar course providing the initial, foundational core of the program. Initial assessment data indicates that the initiation of the FYE program has proven to be an important factor in retention numbers so far, and student evaluations indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the course. The session will include an overview of the collective partnership that exists between three specific campus entities that serve to specifically support first-year students: the First Year Experience Program, the Student Success Center, and the University Housing Program. There is a high level of collaboration between these three areas, and a shared belief that the success of the FYE program is in part due to the positive, proactive partnerships that have been created as a means to mutually support all three programs. The structure of the session will include an overview of our university, a description of the process to put the FYE Program in place, with a specific description of the characteristics of our freshman seminar course. It will also include a description of the adjustments that have been implemented from year 1 to year 2 in connection with this course. The course parameters that will be covered include textbook selection, instructor hiring/training, size of sections, length of sections, location of sections, decisions made on the awarding of course credit, securing buy-in from faculty, and tuition charges for the course. As assessment has been a critical component in measuring the success of the freshman seminar course, the presentation will include a detailed discussion of the tools that have been used in this regard, and the assessment outcomes thus far. While the primary focus will be on a detailed discussion of the freshman seminar course, an overview of the FYE Program in terms of strategic planning as it relates to long-term goals will also be incorporated into the session. An outline of other activities in connection to the FYE Program outside of the freshman seminar course, such as collaborations with Housing, Student Affairs, and Admissions in areas such as summer orientation and welcome week will also be included.

Exploring Science through Writing: Introducing the First-Year Seminar in Science Program

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The First Year Seminar in Science (SCIE 13) at the University of British Columbia provides students with the opportunity to explore the nature of science and the role science plays in society. With writing being an integral component of the course, a key focus is for students to construct and articulate a coherent scientific argument. Students are given multiple opportunities through carefully designed in-class activities to achieve this learning goal throughout the term. Taught in a small class environment (with 26 students per section and 8 sections running concurrently), each section is taught by a science faculty member who brings his/her own interests into the classroom while following a fixed set of learning objectives and assessments. We designed and implemented a comprehensive course evaluation plan to assess changes in student views towards science, transition to University, perceived and actual learning gains through the adaption of a validated student assessment of learning gains (SALG) survey1 and in writing samples. Results obtained from the past two years of the course repeatedly showed overwhelmingly positive student and faculty responses to the course. In a follow-up study, we have further explored shifts in students’ attitudes towards science using student understanding of science and scientific inquiry (SUSSI) survey2. Our results show positive gains and a maturation of students’ views towards science. By providing carefully designed activities aligned with the learning objectives and assessments and a small class environment for students to rethink their definitions of science, we are encouraging students to make connections across the boundaries imposed by discipline specific courses in a typical first-year science curriculum and helping them transition to University. We propose that exploring science through writing is an ideal goal for a first-year course and present our model for designing and implementing a First Year Seminars in Science program at the University of British Columbia that achieves this goal.

Students as Self-Regulated Learners: An Exploration of Strategies to Improve Students’ Awareness of How They Learn

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Research on metacognition in education has revealed that students with high metacognitive abilities tend to be actively involved in their own learning process, carefully monitor the task they are required to complete, and are able to match the assigned task with the appropriate study behavior. Reflecting on and understanding how their learning process transpires not only improves students’ study techniques, but their academic performance as well. Problems arise however, for students who struggle in choosing the appropriate study strategy or who lack the confidence to perform the assigned task. These students require guidance on how to improve their study techniques, but lack the necessary resources to improve their situation. As educators, researchers, and/or instructors, we are in a position to help guide students to become more aware of and responsible for their own learning. This roundtable discussion will focus on how people from various roles/backgrounds at a variety of institutions have witnessed, addressed, and/or improved first-year students’ struggles with monitoring and adapting their study skills and habits to improve their learning. First, each roundtable participant will be asked to share the context of the learning environments at their institutions and their professional role at this institution. Next, I will ask the participants to describe, from their perspective, how first-year students mediate the increased responsibility of their own learning and whether or not particular instructional strategies or remedial programs have been incorporated to improve students’ study skills and habits. For example, within a first-year science class at my institution, students who failed their first midterm were invited to meet with the course instructor and/or teaching assistant to discuss how the students could better prepare themselves for the next midterm. The students were provided with specific study strategies to help with their learning of the course material and on the second midterm, the majority of students who attended these sessions improved their mark by over 20%. Sharing both successful and unsuccessful strategies will allow the educators, researchers, and instructors in attendance to brainstorm new and innovative means as to how we can improve first-year students’ ability to monitor, evaluate, and make plans for their learning.

Orientation and Transition: A Shared Responsibility

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Imagine UBC is the largest one-day orientation program in Canada, with over 900 student leaders, 7000 new students, and includes programming for all the returning undergraduate population. Until 2010, orientation was planned primarily through one office of professional and student staff, with the collaboration of campus partners. Informed by UBC’s strategic documents, assessment and our ongoing value of making the big small, this collaboration expanded to strategic planning and implementation of an orientation and transition program that was more directed by the faculties and schools, each with their own individual needs. This customization of programming and service based on academic community provides a more intentional and holistic approach to orientation and transition beyond one office. What does this mean? The Orientations team continues to serve as the hub of the process and works closely with more than 25 academic and campus offices on the Orientations and Planning Committee (OPC) to coordinate a complex structure of events, activities, and programming. In other words, orientation and transition has become a shared responsibility across many different offices on campus. The result? Programming is created based on the needs of the Faculty/School specific community with cross-campus support and expertise. Faculty partners have a greater sense of the role of student engagement in first year and throughout a student’s experience. Stronger relationships are built with students, faculty members and Faculty administration. It is important to note that the outcomes of orientation and transition do not change; it is simply the process or the operation that may be different. The needs of the specific community dictate the program development and delivery. Our organizational structure of Faculty/ School specific student affairs professionals connected to our orientation professionals allow for this dynamic responsiveness. (Note: a separate proposal was submitted by the School of Kinesiology to further demonstrate the depth of this model.) This workshop will share the assessment and business process review that informed these changes. Our current structure will be described, along with the strengths and challenges. We will discuss the impact of involving faculties and schools in a more collaborative approach for institutional improvement and advancement. We will discuss how this has transformed transitional support for students with their academics, including the implementation of ongoing peer support throughout the first year and intentional learning plans. Participants will be given an opportunity to discuss how sharing responsibility for planning and implementation more broadly may impact their work.

Cultivating a Culture of Intellect: The Importance of Peer to Peer Learning in Building Learning Communities

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The value of robust peer relationships in sustaining students through emotional and academic challenges is well established. These relationships can also be channeled to support students’ academic success. Peer to Peer learning’ opens this possibility. It is a form of learning that channels positive and supportive student-peer relationships to foster academic success. Peer to peer learning recognizes that students have a wealth of different experiences and viewpoints that inform how they process information and/or address academic challenges. Jump Start’s key strategy for ensuring successful academic student engagement is to create intentional, year-long, cohort-based learning communities. Upon arrival to campus in mid-August, each student will join a faculty-specific cohort (maximum 30 participants per cohort) led by two Peer Academic Coaches and a Faculty Mentor, and this collective becomes the student’s “Jump Start Learning Community” (JSLC). The Learning Community concept is based on higher education models of first-year Learning Communities programming (and complementary research) that emphasizes cohort-based, thematically linked, student-centred year-long academic learning collectives. Current research on learning communities indicates linkages between 1st year student success and participation in ongoing student interactions within highly interactive, consistently attended, familiar, socially/academically relevant, and peer-led communities of learning. A learning communities framework provides Jump Start with a strategic, structural approach to delivering programming that holistically positions social and academic processes as complementary. Jump Start has named this approach a “culture of intellect”. This approach both breaks down traditional barriers between academic and co-curricular spheres and promotes interdisciplinary learning. JSLCs also form the framework through which Jump Start can articulate and assess desired learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. Some of the learning outcomes for Jump Start Students in Peer-Assisted Study Groups are as follows: Students will identify and rehearse the behaviors that move them towards academic success and engagement in scholarly process; Faculty fellows and peer academic coaches will introduce students to the ways of knowing (frameworks/methods/theories/processes) that provide a foundation for all of the scholarly work in their particular faculty; Students will demonstrate formal /informal communication skills relevant to their faculty of study.

Exploring Small Group Learning in Higher Education

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Background The education of students world-wide has undergone significant change in the last few decades. In many institutions of higher education, teaching methodologies have shifted from
didactic to student-centred small group techniques. In order to maximize the learning experience, small group facilitators need to be able to work with both “task” and “process” and understand what makes groups function. They also need to be able to balance the needs of individual group members against those of the student group itself. This can be extremely challenging! Aim/
Purpose The aim of this session will be to explore and further develop understanding and experience in small group facilitation techniques. Methods The presenter will begin the session by describing her teaching context within the first year curriculum at the University of Cape Town Health Sciences Faculty. She will then explain the shift from didactic to small group facilitated learning techniques in her context as well as more widely within education. Concepts of group “task” and “process” will be explained. Theories of small group processes will then be compared. This will be followed by in-depth sharing of typical challenges within each of the group phases and ideas for how these challenges can potentially be managed. Focus will then move from group phases as a whole to the roles that are typically adopted by individual group members. Throughout the session, participants will be asked to draw on their own practices and experiences and to illustrate the challenges of small group learning and the effective use of small group learning techniques. Take home message Small group learning is about more than achieving outcomes. It is a complex but exciting process. Educators can maximize the learning experience by understanding and being able to respond to the dynamics and processes at play.

Y go E? E-portfolios and Emerging Professionalism – An Evaluation of the First-Year Health Sciences Student Experience

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E-portfolios were introduced into two multi-professional first year Health Science courses ‘Becoming a Professional’ (BP) and ‘Becoming a Health Professional’ (BHP) at the University of Cape Town in 2011. The focus in these courses is on developing students into “Integrated Health Professionals” – professionals who are knowledgeable, empathic and reflective in their practice. Paper-based portfolios had been used for a number of years to support and assess emerging professionalism in students. In 2011 the change was made from paper-based to e-portfolios in order to move to more technologically appropriate educational methods that potentially facilitate easier and faster access and response times between students and their educators. Research in the form of a formative evaluation was undertaken at the end of 2011 to evaluate the usefulness of e-portfolios in the teaching, learning and assessment of professionalism in BP and BHP. The study included both educator and student experiences. This poster presentation however focuses specifically on results from the first year student perspective drawing on information contained in both open-ended and ranked qualitative answers. Results from the study indicated that students across all the professions in the Faculty of Health Sciences were very positive about the experience of using e-portfolios. Students reported that through the process of completing their e-portfolio tasks they learned about professionalism, being and
becoming “Integrated Health Professionals” and most significantly about the value and process of reflective practice. Further benefits included learning about how to integrate theory and practice and how to manage time appropriately. It could be argued that all these benefits could as easily have been reported positively for paper-based submissions. A comparative study would have to be undertaken to establish whether the electronic nature of the submissions had any specific impact linked to these benefits. In terms of the electronic medium, students explicitly reported on the benefits of learning computer skills and becoming computer literate because of the e-portfolio tasks. They also reported that their writing skills including appropriate layout and presentation of documents improved. Students were not specifically asked about the value of the quick turnaround time for receiving marks and feedback but many students remarked on this aspect.

Adjustment of First-Year Faculty of Health Sciences University Students: Understanding Successes and Challenges and Demographic Factors Affecting Them

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The UCT Faculty of Health Sciences undergraduate programmes and the South African schools have had major curriculum revisions recently, with the first cohort of the new school curriculum entering university in 2009. With these curricular changes and UCT’s increasingly diverse student intake, it was important to assess students’ experience of first year and how to improve the support provided currently. The study design is described above. Response rates for 2010 and 2011 were 56% (188/337) and 56% (207/367). Results from the two cohorts were generally consistent with each other. Students were generally satisfied with their adjustment to a new environment. However, 32% of respondents found organizing accommodation difficult. Students whose homes are outside Cape Town and those living in private accommodation had more difficulty than their counterparts. Students from rural homes, poorly resourced schooling, lower income families and those whose parents only had primary or secondary education consulted the UCT Undergraduate Funding Office for financial support more than their counterparts. Generally students were satisfied with their social adjustment. However, students from poorly resourced schooling and those from lower income families were less likely to have good friends at university with whom to discuss problems they may have. While students were satisfied with most aspects of personal growth and development, three aspects were generally quite challenging: (a) Being away from home was especially a problem for students from outside Cape Town and those in private accommodation (b) Taking responsibility for themselves was particularly challenging for students from lower income families. (c) Coping with stresses associated with being at university was even more challenging for students from rural homes. Whereas students enjoyed their academic work at university, adjustment to academic demands posed some challenges. Many students had difficulty managing their study time (,l 50%), the volume of academic work (,l 20%), and learning requirements at university. Consequently,
approximately half the respondents were dissatisfied with their level of academic performance and 40% concluded that they should be working harder, although one-third felt their results did not reflect the amount of work they put in. Home language and family income were significant factors in several problem areas. In conclusion, the study identifies aspects of adjustment that are generally successful, those that generally challenge students, and those that are especially challenging for particular groups of students when compared to their counterparts. This provides valuable information for improving the quality of the first year experience.

The Experience of First-Year Students – Hygiene Factors and Performance Factors

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The University of Johannesburg is an urban comprehensive (offering a variety of traditionally separated levels of qualification) university located in Johannesburg, South Africa. The institution serves approximately 45 000 students on four campuses and has a relatively open-access policy. The student population at UJ is very diverse and accurately represents the South African population in terms of gender, socio-economic status and population group. The institution is also home to a variety of foreign students (especially from the rest of Africa) resulting in an extremely diverse and vibrant highly heterogeneous student population. The importance of the early identification of at-risk students is stressed by many authors, including Clift (2003:16), Gardner (1992:7), Glenn (2004:5), Habley & McClanahan (2004:4), Lau (2003:126), Schmid & Abell (2003:12), Tinto (2003:6), Woosley (2005:420) and Yorke (2000:67). It can be argued that the first year is a special case when it comes to student retention. The factors that influence the student during this time (especially the first six weeks) are different from the factors that are most influential later on in the student’s academic career (Tinto, 1988:439). The Initial Student Experience Survey (ISES) was created as a one-page evaluation questionnaire aimed at creating a “snap shot” view of the experiences of students at UJ. Because all the variables were categorical, chi-square analyses with standardized residuals were used to investigate the possibility of a statistically significant relationship between the different variables. Two questions (whether a student would still have chosen UJ and a student’s overall rating of the experience at UJ) were used as dependent variables and the possibility of a statistically significant relationship between various other ratings and experiences were investigated using the chi-square analyses. The results of the chi-squared analyses and an inspection of the standardized residuals showed that certain factors influenced a student’s overall rating at the institution but not whether a student would have chosen to still come to this institution if given the choice again. Other factors influenced a student’s willingness to choose UJ again but not really their overall experience of the institution. The division of the results reminded the researcher of Herzberg’s two factor motivation theory which was subsequently used to explain the influence of the various factors on the student experience. Specifically an article by Daniel A Sachau (2007) entitled Resurrecting the Motivation-Hygiene Theory:
Herzberg and the Positive Psychology movement published in the Human Resource Development Review was influential in the way Herzberg was used here. Certain factors had a hygiene effect (making a student feel they would rather not be at the institution) whilst others were performance related (made a student unhappy at the institution). This presentation provides an overview of the development of the ISES as well as the three years of frequency analyses. It also provides an indication of the distribution of the various hygiene factors and the persistence factors. The implication of the results of the ISES on institutional FYE practices is discussed in closing.

An Institutional Approach to Improving Student Retention and Success at the University of Pretoria

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South African universities, have been investigating strategies for improving student success for a long time (Mabizela 1994; Rollnick, Mphahlele & Ogude) (1997); Potgieter (2010). However, key factors in the external environment, firstly a culmination of twelve years of poor schooling for the majority; an undifferentiated post-school system and the yet to be established predictive validity of the new National Senior Certificate examinations for university study (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007; Mabizela 1994; Klingbeil, et al. 2004; Collier-Reed, Wolmarans & Smit, 2010) severely impact on strategies that universities must adopt to bridge the school-university gap. They demand rigorous management of teaching and learning, a focus on high-impact practices, and making clear strategic choices that serve the needs of diverse student subgroups and national priorities. This must be achieved amid multiple institutional demands, a resource constrained environment and an academic context in which under-preparedness is, for historical reasons, a majority phenomenon in most undergraduate degree programmes. Furthermore, extended programmes that could address the school-university gap are limited to national priority areas of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) due to pressure on public funding of universities. Even then, these programmes serve a minority of students in SET programmes. Faced with international and these national challenges, a sub-committee of the Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning at the University of Pretoria (UP), used developmental research (Richey & Klein, 2005; Van den Akker, 1999) to respond to the question: What model would enable strategic management of student success, enhancement of a quality undergraduate experience, and improve performance indicators? Though the aim was to develop a context specific model,
the Steering Committee simultaneously explored solutions to four concerns in the literature: (i) lack of a systemic approach; (ii) the location of initiatives in peripheral units; (iii) standalone initiatives that are delinked from academic disciplines and lack of participation by academic staff; (iv) a deficit approach that focuses on retention of limited student subgroups instead of retention, pass, graduation and throughput rates of diverse student populations. This paper reports on the circumstances that led to the development of the model, its key features and how it responds to the four problem areas, its application at the UP and ways it can be adapted to other contexts. It concludes by outlining the limitations of the model and possible future directions.

A Holistic Approach to Improving Undergraduate Education: Integrating Learning Within and Beyond the Classroom

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Format: Participants will be engaged in discussion throughout the session. Presenting the model and example project data will comprise about half the session. Introduction – 10 minutes:
Volunteers will be asked to reflect on their own undergraduate, beyond-the-classroom experiences: what they learned; how they processed the experience(s) at the time; and how they understood - then and now - those experiences to be related to their educational, career and life goals. Review of Model – 40 minutes: Presenter will discuss assessment data collected for one degree program: Input Data: Characteristics of students, such as - gender; - race, ethnicity; - GPA, SAT/ACT scores; - residency (state residents or not); - scholarship status Environmental Data: - Stated learning outcomes (expectations) – institution level, degree program, general education, and beyond-the-classroom educational experiences - Advising procedures, and how communicated - Instruction practices (syllabus requirements), how expectations communicated Outcomes Data: Assessment results for - learning outcomes (general education, in the major, institutional, and for beyond-the-classroom experiences such as study abroad or learning communities) - students perceptions of learning, and experiences of advising, instruction, communication of expectations Key visual images in the presentation: Environment: - a one page chart showing all the stated learning outcomes for students in the example degree program (institutional, school of business, degree program, general education, and study abroad learning outcomes) o how do these connect / overlap, in terms of expected learning, and in terms of delivery of courses and experiences? o how are students informed about all these expected learning outcomes? Outcomes: - a color-coded chart showing connections among students’ perceptions about their learning in beyond-the-classroom experiences and the stated learning outcomes for their academic program Implementation Q&A – 10 minutes: Volunteers will be asked to discuss how such a holistic approach is, or could be, incorporated into current improvement practices on their own campuses, such as program reviews, retention plans, program assessment, general education assessment, and institutional effectiveness practices. A key point of the session is that it’s not enough to assess students’ learning; the institution and
program must also examine the paths – within and beyond the classroom - they have laid out for students to achieve these learning goals. Articulating for students how each piece of the educational ‘puzzle’ is intended to connect to other pieces, requires us – faculty and staff – to have a clear vision for how it all fits together, and to clearly communicate that vision to students.

**Spirituality, Authenticity, Wholeness, and Self-Renewal in the Academy**

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The session will open with the presenters providing context and background on this important topic. Then in a small group, participants will be invited to discuss the following questions: 1. In your institutional life and work, can you think of specific times or situations in which you have experienced a clash between your personal values and institutional values and practices? Give specific examples of times or occasions in which you felt compelled to compromise your values and beliefs. 2. What kind of collegial behavior or administrative policies generate value conflicts for you or create inauthentic behavior? 3. In what ways are the beliefs and values of your department or institution congruent or incongruent with your own? 4. Are there times when your interactions with students have offered opportunities to discuss issues of spirituality, authenticity, and wholeness? How have you reacted to the opportunity? 5. Does your institution provide safe structures or opportunities for the sharing of values? Would the process used for this session facilitate such sharing on your home campus? The session will conclude with the presenters facilitating a processing of the discussion and a sharing of resources on the topic.

**Utilizing Assessment to Guide Faculty Development Initiatives**

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Individual instructors play a key role in the success of a first-year seminar. At the University of South Carolina, the quality of instruction and use of engaging pedagogies are the top predictors of overall course effectiveness in University 101. Thus, ensuring a successful first-year seminar requires a high level of faculty development. This session will focus on how to use relevant assessment evidence to make decisions about faculty development efforts. This presentation will consist of two main parts. First, various assessment tools used at the University of South Carolina will be shared and data from these various assessments will be highlighted in order to make connections between data and resulting initiatives. Examples of various instruments will be provided for participants. The remaining part of the presentation will discuss how this data is used to inform Faculty development initiatives, which includes a 3-day new Faculty workshop, annual syllabus preparation and teambuilding workshops, an annual teaching conference, a summer workshop series, faculty meetings, a facilitation workshop series, a Colleague Cluster program, a Faculty Resource Manual, an Faculty intranet, and a weekly list-serv e-mail. Content for all of these components is driven by assessment data collected from current and former students, University 101 Faculty, and campus partners. Participants will be introduced to the various resources University 101 Programs provides its faculty, and given examples of how assessment data has been utilized to further enhance these offerings. For example: 1. The Building Connections Conference is an annual conference for current University 101 instructors that focuses on engaging pedagogies and teaching and learning techniques. The presentation will discuss how the agenda for this conference is shaped by the findings from our assessment results. Conference highlights and evaluations will also be shared. 2. Utilizing assessment data, University 101 identify instructors who showed evidence of successfully achieving course outcomes. These top performing instructors were invited to help create a Faculty Resource Manual, and have since been utilized to update and revise the document on a yearly basis. This session will share strategies that will help institutions develop a similar manual for their programs. Resources and examples will be provided related to various indirect and direct assessments and initiatives discussed throughout the presentation. The end of the session will also allow time for participants to ask questions and engage in discussion as a way of gathering more information to take back to their individual institutions.
After briefly covering our learning outcomes we will move to the next section of our presentation where we will define the concept of integrative learning. In this section we will begin by reviewing relevant literature regarding integrative learning. We will discuss how the concept of integrative learning has evolved over time from Kolb’s theory of experiential learning in the 1970’s to Astin, Kuh, and others. We believe it is important to provide participants with a clear framework and rationale regarding integrative learning before we move into specifics concepts. Along with the history of integrative learning we will also cover the current literature from the American Association of Colleges and Universities work on integrative learning as well as how these concepts have been operationalized on the University of South Carolina’s campus. Next we’ll move into describing specific strategies for promoting integrative learning in the first-year experience. Specific attention will be given to exploring initiatives such as: the first-year reading experience, the first-year seminar course, high-impact practices (service-learning, leadership development, study abroad, research, work-based learning) in the first year, along with residential learning communities. For each area we will specifically discuss how these practices can be used to promote integrative learning. Practical suggestions will be provided along with assessment data from the University of South Carolina’s campus where appropriate. Finally we will conclude by discussing how to assess integrative learning and exploring how several institutions have chosen to incorporate integrative learning into their first-year experience. We will close by providing 10-15 minutes for question and answer with the audience.

**Writing on Campus-Based Initiatives: Strategies for Sharing Your Good Work With Internal and External Audiences**

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Increasingly, educators are asked to assess their work with students in transition to demonstrate its efficacy. Yet, assessment data are of little value if they are not shared. Professionals may be reluctant to engage in the act of writing about their work because they believe it is too hard or too time-consuming. This session provides strategies and a framework for developing brief scholarly practice pieces that describe successful college transition initiatives. The session will open with a general discussion of strategies for building a writing practice and shaping a piece for publication. In particular, the facilitator will highlight some general recommendations for writing well, exploring issues related to the message, the audience, the author, and the larger context. The development of an article for publication in E-Source for College Transitions will serve as the framework for this session. However, the strategies discussed and the writing practices explored are suitable for a wide range of internal and external publication formats and can also be applied to longer pieces (e.g., journal articles, book chapters). The bulk of the session
will engage participants in writing about a topic of their choosing, but preferably a description of an effective campus practice, which they would like to share with internal and/or external constituents. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop, netbook, or tablet to capture their drafts. Participants will also have an opportunity to receive feedback on their early ideas and drafts. The session will conclude by highlighting some potential places to publish on practice and describing strategies for working with editors effectively.

Prezi: Student Engagement Through Dynamic Web-Based Presentations

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Creating dynamic presentations is no longer an option but a requirement to engage increasingly tech-savvy FYE students. Research has shown that integrating emerging technologies can boost student engagement and retention. Faculty, administrators, and students alike are tasked with presenting topics to various audiences as presentations are ubiquitous in higher education. Software tools, like PowerPoint, are often used to provide structure and visual aides to a presentation. However, there are new tools that combine trends in emerging technology to produce much more dynamic presentations. Being aware of such tools and learning how to utilize them will aid in capturing the potential for a “lost message” due to an antiquated medium. Prezi is a new presentation platform that offers dynamic content delivery by drawing a path between multimedia and text objects in a presentation. This new tool is free and accessible to anyone with internet access without the need to download anything. Our students are familiar with interactive media through exposure to social media, gaming, and the internet. By incorporating new technology into such areas as classroom learning, advising, first-year experience, and orientation, schools may be better able to reach this generation of students (CCSSE, 2009). Passive learning typically results in passive understanding. New forms of representation (e.g., interactive models that utilize visualization and other means of making abstractions tangible and sensory) make possible a broader, more powerful repertoire of pedagogical strategies (Dede, 1996). This is a motivating factor in using a more spatial tool like Prezi over more traditional, linear tools. Through exciting FYE presentations on topics like podcasting, making videos, and streamlining websites, first-year/transitions practitioners have become acquainted with using technology to engage students and other stakeholders. This presentation will continue that tradition by sharing information that will introduce Prezi through
six primary objectives. First, we will introduce the tool (Prezi) by explaining how it is distinct from other presentation tools and show an example of how it is used to support students in transition. Second, we will summarize the importance of using emerging technologies to increase student engagement, using current research in higher education and first-year experience. Third, we will detail the challenges and benefits of using Prezi. Fourth, we will review the types of topics that can be represented with a Prezi. Fifth, we will conduct a brief primer on using a Prezi, such as setting up an account, explaining the tools and buttons, and the importance of forethought and planning for the structure. Last, we will collaborate as a “session team” to construct a Prezi LIVE! using audience suggestions.

**Insights Gleaned from an Evaluation of Tutorial Offering for First-Year Students in the Broader Natural Sciences**

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The purpose of the evaluation was to determine whether the implementation of these tutorials was advancing as planned. This presentation, while cognizant of the general findings from this study, will for the most part focus on one of the modules included in this study. It might, however, also refer to results pertaining to some of the other programmes while doing so. This specific tutorial programme is designed with current theories of student learning as its basis. It has a generic skills-content integrated approach and incorporates both tutor and mentor aspects. The poster will focus on factors related to the implementation of the support offered in this programme by focusing on the interaction between the intended population and the intended support. Changes to many of the long running tutorial programmes in SU Faculty of Science have been necessitated by a number of factors, amongst which changes in student profile and preparedness, documented problems with traditional tutorial classes and the First Year Academy’s (FYA) focus on tutorials as a means of bridging the gap between school and the first year. The tutorial offering in the faculty ranges from additional tutorial classes for selected students to comprehensive, integrated, module-wide programmes incorporating tutor and mentor aspects. The purposes of tutorial classes in different modules differ, but for the most part tutorials provide students with an opportunity to practice the skills required for success in the module while help is at hand. The traditional format, in which students work on a problem sheet and then write a tutorial test, have often been reported to be ineffective. The problems experienced during these sessions included, amongst others, student passivity and unrealistic demands on tutors resulting from a lack of student commitment and preparation (for the session). In addition, student feedback often pointed to problems with tutor knowledge and attitude. Many of the redesigns thus tried to address some of these issues.
The University of Tasmania (UTAS), Australia, has convened an annual First Year Teaching Forum (FYTF) for the past six years. The Forum is promoted as an opportunity for staff to engage in discussion and development of the first year (FY) experience at UTAS. The inaugural Forum in 2006 adopted a general discussion-based approach to the identification of issues and FY strategy development. The second FYTF was more structured; groups of staff conducted SWOT analyses of one of four topics that emerged from the first forum: student preparedness; culturally and linguistically diverse students; resourcing; or staffing. Review of the outcomes from the first two Forums suggested that many staff were unaware of the wider context, beyond UTAS, of the issues they raised. Hence, the structure of subsequent Forums was altered to include an external Keynote Address, to provide a national and international perspective on the FY experience, and, in many cases, to help normalize the experience of staff: what they are experiencing in their classrooms and at UTAS is occurring all over Australia. The themes of the following four Forums were as follows: • 2008: the national and international FY experience and a model FY curriculum. Staff workedshopped strategic directions for UTAS. • 2009: institutional and programmatic interventions for success in FY. Staff discussed FY curriculum initiatives to support students’ transition into disciplines and UTAS. • 2010: students’ FY at university as a foundation for their success and as the initial step in the development of graduate attributes. Staff workedshopped a First Year and Transition Framework for UTAS. • 2011: Keynote and workshops focused on the ways in which we shape and support students’ thinking within the disciplines of their study. Areas of concern and strategy suggestions from each Forum were reported back to the Student Transition and Retention Taskforce, Chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, as the primary route to inform the University approach. Special projects have also occurred within the University’s learning and teaching institute to progress specific Forum suggestions, such as the development of a FY and Transition Framework. The FYTF has proved valuable at UTAS for a number of reasons: it has provided insight into staff attitudes regarding FY and university FY initiatives; it has provided a means of broadening the staff perspective on FY; and staff has made important contributions to planning and shaping UTAS FY strategies.

Project Digital Literacy: Peer Teaching

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This session summarizes proven practices for building an effective multimedia assignment for a university or college First Year Studies course. The presenters will provide background and evolution of the assignment. This multidimensional project helps students recognize how to manage information and utilize academic technology. A key factor of the assignment is strategically dividing the students into groups based on their talents and interests. Dividing the students in such a way ensures the students interact and collaborate with their peers in ways that yield great student pride through project outcomes. Research shows that instructor-assigned student groups function better than self-assigned groups. The project aims to familiarize incoming students with academic resources available to them at the university. The students are introduced to a new learning environment that nurtures and helps them assimilate to campus life. This assignment establishes a support group as each student develops a foundation of successful strategies for their college career. The skill sets they learn in this project are transferable to other assignments in other courses. The project begins with training, certification and a tour of the Digital Media Lab in the university library. This certification allows the students to utilize the Lab during their studies at the university. The topics for the assignment are linked to the missions of the university. Past topics have included civility, international and intercultural initiatives, current events, and lifestyle choices. Topics should provide an understanding of campus and community values. Students construct the project using a creative approach. Example from past students’ works are shown to give the students a clear overview of what is expected for the project. Some of the classroom time is devoted to allowing the students to get into their groups to discuss their assignment. The students are in charge of developing their storyline during early stages of the assignment. The students are given approximately a month to complete their project after they receive their certification and topics. The final presentation is limited to ten minutes. The students are evaluated on criteria that are provided in the assignment description. The criteria is: number of media types used, management/control of media used, time length, level of enthusiasm, participation of entire group, content/strength of message, and overall presentation.

Examining Students’ Ability to Succeed Academically in their First Year of University

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Measuring the academic performance of students is particularly challenging due to the fact that student performance is a product of socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. Therefore, student academic success is highly dependent on a number of other things external to the student. Particularly, as the quintessential first-year University student, one encounters a variety of new challenges and issues concerning the process of adjusting to the new and intimidating environs. One such test during this transitional stage is the ability to build new relationships while modifying existing relationships with family and friends (Tinto, 1975, 1993). New students also need to learn study habits for an academic milieu that is different from secondary school, as well as learn to live as relatively independent adults. Independence also refers to the ability to manage time and money with efficacy. Several key findings from the 2003 Your First College Year survey emphasize the importance of these factors in holistically comprehending the scholastic achievement of students (Keup & Stolzenberg, 2004). It is constantly reiterated by pedagogic pundits that student academic success during the first year of college is a reflection of student’s intellectual, social and personal experiences within the institution. The formal and informal interactions the students have with either academic staff or with fellow students will impact their cognitive development which implies the importance of socialization to the achievements of students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Several factors have been offered in one prominent theoretical model used to promote academic success among first year students (Kuh, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Academic success within the college environment is affected by a combination of variables related to each of these factors (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). One must also consider student background characteristics, agents of socialization, structural characteristics, institutional environment, and student effort, which are the five factors presented in Pascarella and Terenzini’s theoretical framework (1991). It is noteworthy that certain variables have been predetermined prior to a student’s enrollment that mediate the confounding effects of the college experience, namely: academic aptitude, self-concept, psychological state, personality, aspirations, and demographic characteristics. Not surprisingly, research suggests that attrition is strongly influenced by academic performance, although it is clearly not the only factor. McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001) suggested that “high academic achievement is not necessarily related to retention and poor academic performance does not always result in attrition”. Research suggests a wide variety of factors as predictors of student academic performances. However several factors are commonly recognized (Grebennikov & Skaines, 2009): a. Academic achievement and qualifications prior to entry to university; b. Academic achievement in prior university units of study; c. Gender; d. Age; e. Socio-economic status and background; f. Socialization; g. Structural characteristics; h. Institutional environment; i. Student enrollment; j. Place of Residence. In addition, student performance is affected by different factors such as learning abilities because new paradigm about learning assumes that all students can and should learn at higher levels but it should not be considered as constraint because there are other factors like gender and age that can affect student’s performance (Hansen, Joe B.2000). McDill, E., 1989, Levin, H., 1986) B.A Chansarkar and A. Mishaeloudis (2001), explained the effects of age, qualification distance from learning place etc. on student performance. The performance of
students is also affected by place of residence. It is also found that those who live near the university perform better than other students. Yvonne Beaumont Walters, Kola Soyibo,(1998) further elaborated that student performance is very much dependent on SEB (socioeconomic background): “High school students’ level of performance is with statistically significant differences, linked to their gender, grade level, school location, school type, student type and socio-economic background (SEB).” Kirby, Winston et al. (2002) focused on student’s impatience (his time-discount behavior) that influences his own academic performance. It was found that weak students do better when grouped with other weak students in the context of the University. This holds significant applicability to the mundane workings of the University as students of a faster learning ratio are more likely to intimidate and move ahead of students who learn at a slower pace. Another factor is economic background, as lower income students fail to establish a strong connection to the University. It is stated that minority students are less likely to become involved in the decision making-process of the institution. They are also less likely to form meaningful relationships with peers, lack the necessary involvement which leads to dissatisfaction with the University experience and impacts minority student’s academic success (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Murtaugh, Burns & Schuster, 1999).

Publishing Research on College Student Transitions

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The editor of the journal will be on hand to discuss the mission of the Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition and to describe the manuscript submission and review process. He will also provide some insight into the kinds of manuscripts that the journal seeks and strategies for shaping strong manuscripts. Opportunities for involvement with the journal (i.e., review board membership) will also be discussed. Participants will have the opportunity to ask about the viability of particular topics and strategies for shaping those topics for publication.

Grappling with Contradictory Meanings: Assessing the First-Year Seminar at a Two-Year Liberal Arts Transfer Institution

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We begin the presentation introducing ourselves and the University of Wisconsin Colleges, an open-admission two-year liberal arts transfer institution located on thirteen campuses with an online program, all fully accredited to offer the Associate of Arts and Science Degree. Next we describe the Engaging Students in the First-Year (ESFY) Program, a curricular and co-curricular program informed by UW Colleges participation in the Foundations of Excellence self-study process. The major curricular component of the UW Colleges ESFY Program is the First-Year Seminar. We describe the First-Year Seminar, its common learning outcomes, its enrollment goals and constraints, and the variety of academic models across the campuses. Special emphasis will be placed on the fact that in any given fall term it is the fourth or fifth highest enrolled course, it is the most closely examined course in the catalog, is the course most frequently joined to others in learning communities, and has the greatest variation in term lengths. Each section of the First-Year Seminar has an academic home, but no one academic department oversees the program as a whole. We then introduce the problem the study sought to address, that multiple internal audiences shape First-Year Seminar assessment, which at times has led to contradictory interpretations of the meaning of First-Year Seminar outcomes in a multi-campus institution. The next part of the presentation is focused on the research design. Here the emphasis is placed on the three-step process of: (1) identifying the parties who want to use assessment results to improve (or prove) the First-Year Seminar; (2) identifying the one or two key questions these groups were asking; and (3) devising strategies to answer these questions in such a way as to provide actionable information. The presentation concludes with a description of the assessment outcomes. The extraordinary variation in retention and academic gains outcomes among the thirteen campuses and among different student groups surprised the team, suggesting a number of paths for continued research. Some campuses experienced big gains in retention, while others did not. Across UW Colleges’ campuses, better prepared students do not seem to be making academic gains from taking the First-Year Seminar. Both of these findings need to be discussed more fully with the institution and its ESFY constituents. To best serve the broad range of students in an open access institution, vigorous open dialogue about assessment results is critical. Finally, we will open up the presentation for discussion.

**Radical Impact: A Comprehensive Plan for Increasing First-Year Student Success**

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Participants will be provided with an overview of UVU’s widely effective student success plan. The research-based, three-prong approach includes a comprehensive first-year program, a multifaceted early intervention system, and a culture changing campus campaign. UVU’s First-Year Experience Program includes orientation, Freshman Convocation, personalized advisement, the Freshman Reading Program, a University Student Success three-credit hour class, UVCommit, and a Freshman Year-End Celebration. These programs and our marketing plan for them will be described. Our early intervention system includes Early Alert (designed for faculty), Stoplight (designed for advisors), and Retention Mentors who provide outreach and personal assistance to our “at-risk” students. Our culture changing campus campaign includes marketing, training, recognition, and assessment. Samples of each will be provided. Most importantly, lessons learned will be shared and time for discuss encouraged.

A Comprehensive Mentoring Program That Maximizes Campus Collaboration and Student Development

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Mentoring programs face many challenges that could be viewed as significant obstacles or that could even lead to extinction. The purpose of this session is to see these challenges as opportunities and to leverage existing human and other resources to increase the mentoring and other developmental opportunities that will preserve or even take mentoring programs to the next level. This session will attempt to model for attendees what could be done with other departments and with the mentors to generate collaborative ideas and pool available resources to meet needs. As a mentoring program becomes strategically involved in collaborative partnerships with other departments, especially when there are positive student and departmental outcomes that align with college/university initiatives, this increases justification and possible further funding for the mentoring program (i.e. if too many departments need the mentoring program then it will be much more difficult politically for a college/university to get rid of it). Additional mentoring opportunities abound (between mentoring program administrators, faculty
or other staff) when the student mentors are given opportunities to conduct research, write grants, lead service-learning experiences, create trainings, or other activities that will increase the reach of and justification for the mentoring program. Attendees will explore principles of a comprehensive mentoring program in action, have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss how these principles could be applied to their own setting (in small groups) and then some will have the opportunity to share their ideas, which will be captured and shared with the entire group. This will definitely be an interactive session where attendees will walk away armed with ideas and an assignment to report back to the presenter on successes. In other words, attendees will walk away with an invitation to act on ideas conceived in the session and report back on successes or other ‘opportunities’ that emerge as a result of their attempts to implement the ideas. As a result of reporting back, this is intended to produce an additional conference presentation as well as a publication that deals with how we manage and implement information sharing from conferences.

**Beyond Learning Communities: Using Action Learning to Engage**

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Utah Valley University was founded in the 1940’s, as a technology school focused on providing certificates and two-year degrees in trades and skills. Today Utah Valley University is the state’s largest public university with a creative and diverse student population. One of our central challenges has been our “commuter campus” feel, as students over the years have only visited class to earn a certificate or degree. The full experience that is possible through a dynamic and rich social-learning life has not been possible. In 2007, the University made a focused and directed effort to expand the possibility of engaged learning to facilitate a much deeper learning experience. One of those efforts has been the creation of Action Learning Communities. Action Learning Communities bring together students who have a similar passion for learning in a targeted area and create a sustained learning experience where students have the opportunity to learn through doing with the best on campus and in the community. Action Learning Communities engaged students at multiple levels (social, academic, professional, mentor-mentee), thus creating a strong bond in each area. The natural result is being a better student in and out of the classroom. Attendees will learn to engage new and returning students through action learning and Action Learning Communities. This session will focus on recent experiences of students, faculty and community partners. We will detail the foundation, building, early best
practices and challenges in creating Action Learning Communities on your campus. Participants will learn and discuss the use of Action Learning Communities to build social networks that increase a student’s desire to complete their degree program and substantially enhance their student life experience. Participants will learn the finer details of working with students, faculty and community partners to build rewarding and engaging Action Learning Communities.

Creating the Conditions in Which Students are Motivated to Act

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This research-based presentation will share a new model that could impact the way we look at what causes students to be motivated to do well in K-12, higher education and in life. Picture yourself standing in front of a mirror. Your view is defined only by what you see in the mirror. You cannot see behind or ahead of you because you only see yourself. What you see in the mirror represents who you are and what you have become to that point in your life. However, you are unable to contextualize this process of how and what you have become because it is as if what you see in the mirror (i.e. you) stands in way of you contextualizing and learning from the past. As you look into the mirror you are also unable to see yourself in the future, or the possibilities of what you could become, because once again, you only see yourself as you are in the present. Thus your motivation level and vision for success and development may be limited to a focus on you in the present (like so many youth today focus on themselves as they are in the present). This metaphor represents life without any relationships that contextualize how you have become what you see in the mirror. While there may have been social and cultural capital influences, among others, that attempted to help you along the way, they may not be contextually important because all you could see is you and the present with little to no perspective on or motivation for the future. On the other hand, imagine that an additional mirror is inserted behind you so that you are now standing between two mirrors. As you face the mirror in front of you, you can also see the mirror behind you. Specifically, as you look into the mirror in front of you, the mirror behind you enables you to see what some might describe as an infinitely recurring image of yourself looking backwards and forwards. The insertion of the second mirror represents the triggering relationships in this model. The relationship (second mirror) triggers your ability to recognize positive and negative experiences, decisions and influences at different points in your past and present, enabling you to be successfully and serve as a motivation as you look forward to the future, including success in K-12, higher education, and in life.

Librarians as Key Partners: Information Fluency and the First-Year Experience

Donna E. Coghill
First-Year Programs Librarian
Virginia Commonwealth University, a research institution with over 32,000 students, has implemented numerous first-year student programs. These programs, housed in the University College (UC), promote a sense of community for approximately 3,800 first-year students. Through academic advising, tutoring, writing assistance, a summer reading program, and courses introducing students to university academics, the UC fosters student success. In partnership with the UC, VCU Libraries offers services and resources designed to enhance all UC courses. VCU Libraries, one of Virginia’s largest research library systems, contains more than 2.25 million volumes; 60,000 serial titles; and media, comic, and book art collections. A team led by the First-Year Programs Librarian works closely with UC faculty members. The cornerstone of VCU’s three-tiered Core Curriculum, Focused Inquiry (FI, UNIV 111 and 112), was implemented in 2007. This year-long class emphasizes five skill areas: written and oral communication; critical thinking; collaboration; information fluency; and ethic/civic responsibility. Interdisciplinary and thematic course readings include a summer reading selection, a holiday reading, and a custom text designed by FI instructors. The FI curriculum includes exit requirements regarding information fluency to help students navigate library services and resources as well as to evaluate source and information legitimacy. Students are introduced to the academic library in UNIV 111. In 112, students find sources using the VCU Libraries Search, a discovery tool for books, articles and other media. The goals and objectives of all courses are addressed through targeted library services including research and course guides, a Study Skills collection, online and on-site resources, and library instruction for UNIV 112. Upon completion of FI, students have a solid foundation in information fluency that will continue to be built upon during their college career. VCU Libraries is an integral partner to the University College and the courses and resources the UC provides. FI faculty members focus on maximizing student learning, working directly with librarians to align information fluency needs with library services. The UC faculty and the library demonstrate exceptional teamwork by sharing information and teaching techniques. Throughout the presentation, illustrations of the involvement in University College by librarians will be offered, including suggestions for integrating information fluency into your FYE. Examples of integrated services such as exercises, course guides, and orientation assignments will also be discussed and participants will be encouraged to discuss their own information fluency integrations into FYE.

Early Alert System: Developing and Assessing Timely Interventions for Students At Risk of Failure

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West Chester University is committed to developing a systemic and integrated approach to student retention. An Early Alert System recognizes the importance of easing the new student’s transition into the college environment; early systematic identification of those students who may be academically at risk; early identification of students who may be having difficulties in the classroom; and establishing a common communication link between students and their instructors, faculty advisors, and department chairperson. The American Association for Higher Education has identified prompt feedback as one of the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. According to the Policy Center on the First Year of College, “early feedback on academic performance is important during the first semester.” Results from the Second National Survey of First-Year Academic Practices Survey (Policy Center, 2002) found that over 50% of institutions in all Carnegie categories report mid-term grades to students themselves and to a central office. After analyzing characteristics of students placed on probation, WCU learned that more than three quarters of the students who were placed on probation each fall semester had less than 15 credits, which indicates that most of these students performed poorly during the first semester of enrollment at the University. Just as troubling is the fact that 10-15% of those students do not enroll in the following spring semester, indicating that poor academic performance is an important factor in student attrition. At the recommendation of the Student Success/Retention Committee, we started a pilot project for the Early Alert System in fall 2008. The Early Alert System moved to a web-based inputting and data generation system two years later. All instructors of introductory courses with high percentage of first-year student enrollment are asked to refer students who are earning C- or lower grades to date. This information is gathered by the EAS Coordinator and a graduate assistant who, in turn, contact unsatisfactorily performing students and provide referral and support. Additionally, the system automatically sends an email to the student’s advisor and the referral data is shared with the residence life staff and academic support programs. Assessment methods are integrated into the system and results show that 57% of the students who connect with the program improve their grades. This presentation will discuss the strategies for developing the system, engaging faculty in the process, working jointly with student affairs staff, and gathering data to assess impact of the program on student performance.

Getting Engineering and Student Affairs to Speak the Same Language: Enhancing Student Success

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At Western Michigan University (WMU), the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Division of Student Affairs have increasingly worked together since 2006 on programs to support student success. Collaboration acknowledges the fact that students generally spend a majority of their time outside the classroom and that the cognitive and affective development of students are intertwined. Writing in the journal Change, T.W. Banta and G. Kuh argue that “[A] faculty cannot by itself accomplish the college’s objectives for students’ intellectual and personal development; it needs the cooperation of others who work with students where students spend the majority of their time – in employment settings, playing fields, living quarters, and so on.”

One example of academic and student affairs collaboration at WMU is the effort between CEAS and the Office of Residence Life on Engineering House, Student Success Centers, and Engineering Peer Mentors. Another example is the collaboration between CEAS and Careers and Student Employment Services (CSES) on Alumni Mentoring. A third example is the collaboration between the faculty coordinator for Technical Communication, a first-year writing course required for all CEAS students, and CSES on Career Preparation. The presentation will also describe the collaborative efforts underway, explore the way various collaborations unfold, and situate these efforts in the continuum of collaboration using the Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric of R. Gajda, and the lessons learned. Finally, the presentation will include reflections from the collaborators at the senior administrative level (the Vice President of student Affairs and the CEAS Associate Dean) as well as reflection at the programmatic level by CEAS faculty and DOSA staff.

Promoting the First-Year Experience Program by Publishing Digital Student Scholarship

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This poster presentation will look at the history of the First Year Experience Program at WOU since 1996, including the events, decisions, and iterations that helped shape the current program. The poster will describe WOU’s FYE Program and WOU’s unique student population of underrepresented populations (85% from Oregon, over 50% of undergraduates are first generation to college, and 1 out of 2 incoming students receive Pell grants) and how that affects topics covered in FYE classes. This poster will also consider how the partnership and the pilot project between the FYE Program and the Library came to be; how the Library assisted with the Symposium and captured student work in multiple formats, including traditional papers, PowerPoint presentations, posters, brochures, creative arts, and video; and how the Symposium was successful among students, faculty, and administration. This poster will address both the FYE Program and the Library’s perspective and the pros and cons of the pilot project. Examples of the students’ work, permission forms, process, and the final display online will be showcased. An outline of what other campuses can learn from our pilot project will be available, including the nuts and bolts of digitally documenting student work, collecting student permissions, balancing and converting physical and digital formats, sampling methods, and the overall development of the digital collection. We will link the digital scholarship to helping support student retention, student confidence, and using the final product in alternate ways, including new ways of marketing and promoting the FYE Program on campus to incoming students and faculty volunteers through the creation of videos and websites using materials from the FYE Symposium. The poster will include lessons from all stakeholders.

The Residence Education Model: Changing The Cultural Landscape of How Students View Academic Success, Social Identity, and Diversity

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Western Washington University's Residence Education Model (REM) is guided by Baxter-Magolda's theory of Self Authorship and the Learning Partners Model in which staff receive
training to conduct a series of intentional conversations that involve roommate relationships, academic success, social identity, reflection, and integration. Specifically, the model is designed to help students learn about themselves and how to work and live with others by focusing on four areas: Self, Others, Relationships and Community. These conversations are connected to the following outcomes: Learning About Self: Students will examine, develop and live according to their personal strengths, interests, goals, beliefs, feelings, value and identities; Learning About Others: Students will explore and respect the similarities and differences in the personal strengths, interests, goals, beliefs, feelings, values and identities of others; Learning About Relationships: Students will develop interpersonal skills to create and maintain healthy relationships with others; and Learning About Community: Students will explore their roles, responsibilities and the mutual impact within various communities. Once the conversations have been completed; Resident Advisors log the data and assessment of the REM takes two forms: 1) Measuring Program Outcomes – Did we do what we said we would do; and 2) Measuring Learning Outcomes – What did the student learn? Determining whether outcomes have been achieved is based on: 1) student responses from each conversation (average across campus response rate is 90%); 2) feedback from resident advisors that implemented the lesson plans and conducted the conversations; and 3) direct responses from 2 surveys disseminated in Fall and Spring quarter (50% response rate). Analysis of the data will demonstrate that outcomes have been achieved and confirm Western Washington’s belief that institutions of higher education can offer students more than just intellectual growth but also the opportunity to learn and gain life lessons from each other and the diverse populations they reside in. Based upon the assessment plan we have developed, the data gathered, the reports generated and the use of the data; we see that students are engaging in reflection about themselves, others, relationships and their communities and integrating such reflections into their overall decision-making.

Then What? Extending the First-Year Experience Across the Undergraduate Curriculum

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Westminster College has designed a comprehensive General Education curriculum that extends over four years the interdisciplinary emphases of its twelve credit first-year core. The curriculum design is educationally effective, in that provides for intentional, integrated study throughout a student's undergraduate experience. The design is also responsive to economic constraints that pose a threat to promising integrative programs in this period of limited resources. Westminster's curriculum meets this dual challenge by providing an alternative to the compartmentalization of learning and knowledge. The curriculum has a clearly defined beginning. All first-year students take a fall interdisciplinary course (Inquiry) linked throughout the year with courses in writing and oral communications. These three courses provide students and faculty with a common experience via a substantial core of shared readings and assignments. This commonality allows for strong faculty development and establishes a learning community among first-year students.
Additional curricular components extend students' learning through their middle two years. Integration and community continue in Clusters. Two courses taken from different disciplines are explicitly linked by faculty who design each cluster. The structure encourages students and faculty to investigate the connectedness of knowledge and to demonstrate the ability to use concepts from one discipline in pursuing the study of another. The same group of students takes both courses in the cluster, thus developing a shared conversation. The Intellectual Perspectives requirement provides a second extension of learning. This seven course requirement differs from the more traditional distribution model by emphasizing epistemological, rather than purely departmental, goals. Provided a course meets perspective guidelines, it may be offered by any department on campus. This shift puts student learning at the center and invites all disciplines to contribute. The four-year curriculum culminates in the required Capstone experience. In Capstone, students combine their disciplinary studies with the ongoing interdisciplinary emphasis of the General Education Program. Westminster's emphasis on interdisciplinary goals makes the curriculum responsive to economic constraints as well, in that it provides staffing flexibility to the College. Faculty from each discipline teaches Inquiry, design clusters, and offer Intellectual Perspective courses. The curriculum also streamlines offerings by fostering cooperation between general education and major programs. The Capstone and Intellectual Perspectives requirements are met in part by major courses that must also meet general education guidelines. Finally, because the curriculum establishes the structure, rationale, and objectives for integration but remains flexible in content, it is a model that will continually evolve.

**Time Perspectives and Academic Success**

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Psychologist Philip Zimbardo (2008) published a book entitled "The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life." In the book, Zimbardo suggests that that people take several different time perspectives in looking at life. These perspectives include "past-negative," "present-hedonistic," "future," "past-positive," and "present-fatalistic." Additionally, he argues that people take a "transcendental-future" time perspective. Each of these perspectives influences human behavior and motivation. As such, the present research examines the hypothesis that each of these time perspectives would affect new student work, specifically academic progress, as they would affect the ways that students might approach college. The 350 students beginning study at Westminster in fall, 2010 were surveyed, using the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (ZTPI) and Transcendental-Future Time Perspective Inventory. Overall ACT scores, used by the college in admission decisions, were also collected. GPAs at the end of the first and second semesters were used as the dependent variables, and regression and correlation analyses were done to determine the predictive validity of time perspectives on academic success.
Understanding the importance of and strategies for maintaining a high standard of academic integrity in university scholarship is often a daunting prospect for first year students. Faculty, librarians, university administrators, teaching assistants, and peer mentors face many challenges when explaining the pedagogical importance of academic integrity to first year students and when encountering breeches of academic integrity. It is often when students write their first paper that challenges with the transition to university writing and referencing becomes evident, especially in relation to academic integrity. Many first year students struggle with the unexpected requirements of properly citing sources, using different bibliographic styles, paraphrasing properly, as well as expressing concepts and ideas in their own words. Confusion and conflict may also arise with respect to group work and acceptable levels of collaboration on assignments. Invigilators face their own set of academic integrity issues associated with tests and exams. This roundtable session will explore current and future issues, trends, and best practices associated with fostering academic integrity in the first year. It will also explore strategies to facilitate the integration of academic integrity into student learning and scholarship. Facilitators will consider a pedagogical approach to academic integrity that treats it as a complex multidimensional issue, and which includes information literacy, ethics, academic integrity tutorials, quizzes, and various online resources. The group will explore the value of having unified, multilevel and integrated approaches that are “pan university/college”. Finally, group members will be encouraged to explore the role of technology both in promoting academic integrity and in facilitating academic dishonesty (i.e., through on-line essay mills and other similar services). Overall, the purpose of this roundtable session is to explore challenges and solutions associated with integrating academic integrity into the first year experience, and to encourage the development of new and innovative strategies to address this crucial element of successful scholarship and a crucial element of university life.
This roundtable session will explore current and future issues, trends, and best practices associated with peer education in the first year and beyond. There will be a focus on the literature as well as what best practices have been successful. This session will also examine strategies that facilitate integrating peer educators into university life and the classroom. We consider the parameters of peer education, expectations of peer education and mentees, as well as retention and student success as a result of peer education. Furthermore, the impact of peer education training will be explored, with a focus on in-depth training. Other issues such as a “peer education cycle,” will be examined. Through exploring how mentees become peer educators through the mentoring process. Overall, the purpose of this roundtable session is to understand the challenges and solutions associated with integrating peer education into the first year experience and throughout the university transition. We will also consider the development of new and innovative strategies to address successful peer education and what could be done to further best practices and scholarship in this area.

Supporting Student Success in the First Year: Peer Mentorship in the Classroom

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Located in Toronto Ontario, York University is a large comprehensive university with 50,000 undergraduate students, the vast majority of whom commute and spend less than 5 hours a week on campus outside of class time. Situated within the University is the Faculty of Health, which is home to four academic programs and approximately 10,000 students. The Faculty of Health Student Caucus created the idea of the HealthAid Network in a proposal that addressed their observations and concerns about first year students. They noted that a student survey conducted within the Faculty noted that 73% of students did not engage in student organizations and one third of respondents reported not taking advantage of academic advising. Based on the data and suggestions provided by the Student Caucus, the HealthAid Network Course-based Peer Mentorship was developed. The theoretical underpinnings of the program were extracted from the literature on student success, peer mentorship and student leadership. The literature related to student success is clear. When students engage in and outside of the classroom, they will be more successful academically, personally and socially. The research related to peer mentorship is less clear in terms of impact on student success. What is known is that peer mentorship programs are more successful when they are clearly defined and when they are highly structured. We conceptualized the student roles within the program as leadership roles providing first year and upper year students with the opportunity to develop leadership knowledge and skills. These three theoretical lenses formed the foundation for the design of the program. Given the student population and size of the university itself, we designed the peer mentorship program so that it would reside within first year courses. First year and upper year students were recruited. Three days of initial training were provided followed by bi-weekly meetings focusing on leadership skill development. The teams identify opportunities for student engagement and academic resources that are relevant to course content, assignments and exams. This information is provided to students in the courses by way of an announcement during classes and that is posted on their course website or lecture recording. The aim is to support first year student success by funneling relevant, timely and useful information to students when and where they need it. Evaluative data support the effectiveness of this program. Survey findings of 950 first year students in addition to 51 Peer Mentors and Class Representatives suggest that students: 1) are gaining awareness of academic resources to help them succeed in first year classes, 2) feel more confident recommending resources to peers, 3) report joining at least one additional club and participating in on-campus events, and 4) express gaining concrete leadership skills through participation in the program. The experience of implementing this program has generated important lessons for academic and student services personnel regarding the design and infrastructure required for a structured, evidence-informed peer mentor initiative. Peer mentorship has been associated with fostering student success although the research has been somewhat equivocal. The key to success appears to be the structure of the program and clarity of purpose. The HealthAid Network course-based peer mentorship program is a highly structured program that uniquely inserts mentorship into the first year classroom in order to foster engagement, support academic success and build leadership capacity.