National Conference on First-Year Assessment

October 12-14, 2008
San Antonio, Texas

Conference Program

Sponsored by
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition
University of South Carolina
Policy Center on the First Year of College
THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® is a service mark of the University of South Carolina. A license may be granted to registered conference attendees and others upon written request to use the term THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® in association with educational programmatic approaches to enhance the first year developed as a result of participation in this conference series. This license is not transferable and does not apply to the use of the service mark in any other programs or on any other literature without the written approval of the University of South Carolina.

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Purpose of the Institute

The National Conference on First-Year Assessment, formerly the Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment, provides a comprehensive introduction to the theory and practice of first-year assessment. Exploring both quantitative and qualitative assessment practices, conference concurrent sessions allow participants to gain a breadth of knowledge while workshops allow an in-depth examination of major issues.

Designed for assessment novices and seasoned assessment professionals alike, this conference will engage participants in understanding the role of assessment in improving the first year. The conference structure is designed to maximize opportunities for participant learning and networking and to create a cumulative learning experience.

Institute Sponsors

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. We achieve this mission by providing opportunities for the exchange of practical, theory-based information and ideas through the convening of conferences, institutes, and workshops; publishing monographs, a peer-reviewed journal, an electronic newsletter, guides, and books; generating and supporting research and scholarship; hosting visiting scholars; and administering a web site and electronic listservs.

Policy Center on the First Year of College

The Policy Center on the First Year of College has as its basic mission the improvement of the beginning college experience through enhanced learning, success, and retention of new students. This mission is grounded in the belief that an institution’s first-year policies and practices are the foundation for attainment of the larger goals of undergraduate education. The signature work of the Policy Center is the engagement of postsecondary institutions in a model for voluntary, comprehensive self-study and development and implementation of an intentional action plan designed to enhance the effectiveness of the first year.
Exhibitors

The University of South Carolina and the National Conference on First-Year Assessment welcome exhibitors. All exhibits will be located in Losoya Convention Center. Exhibitors scheduled to be present at the time of printing are:

It is a privilege for Bedford/St. Martin’s to publish the college success titles by Gardner, Jewler and Barefoot. These books fit well with our publishing philosophy, emphasizing innovation, quality, and a focus on the needs of students and instructors. Established in 1981, Bedford/St. Martin’s is a college textbook publisher specializing in the humanities.

AIR Fellows

Each year, the National Resource Center and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) partner to support the assessment of first-year initiatives through the conference fellowship program. AIR Fellows are selected from a pool of applicants by a special committee drawn from the staffs of AIR and the National Resource Center. As a group, they are knowledgeable about and interested in the first year of college and have presented plans to use information gained at the conference to improve current first-year assessment on their campuses.

Selena Castro, Program Director, Pathways to Academic Success Washington State University

Carrie Cokely, Associate Professor & Director of First-Year Seminar Curry College

Amy Dykens, Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Assessment Central Methodist University

Wanda Fernandopulle, Deputy Director of Career Advising John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

Anne Fulkerson, Enrollment and Retention Research Associate Owens Community College

Kristen McManus, Associate Director, Multicultural Academic Services University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Margaret Mosqueda, Dean of Students Delta College

ACT, Inc. is an independent, not-for-profit organization providing over a hundred assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education planning, career planning, and workforce development. Though designed to meet a wide array of needs, all ACT programs and services have one mission – helping people achieve education and workplace success.
**Sunday ★ October 12, 2008**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 9:00 AM</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast—<strong>Regency Foyer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 AM - 12:30 PM</td>
<td>Conference Registration—<strong>Regency Foyer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM - 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Getting Started: Primer on First-Year Assessment</td>
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**Regency East 1-3**

**Wendy G. Troxel**, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration and Foundations – Illinois State University

This “primer” on assessment of first-year programs will provide a broad overview of assessment fundamentals such as determining program goals, defining intended learning outcomes, developing assessment measures and techniques, incorporating feedback loops for program improvement, and organizing the assessment process for maximum benefit. The primer is provided as an introduction to assessment for institute participants who have limited experience in higher education assessment.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM - 2:00 PM</td>
<td>Opening Luncheon with Keynote Address:</td>
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Assessment as a Second Language: When Answers Aren’t Enough

**Regency East 1-3**

**Wendy G. Troxel**, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration and Foundations – Illinois State University

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2:15 PM - 4:15 PM</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 PM - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>Afternoon Break</td>
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</table>
1 Off-the-Shelf or Homegrown? Selecting the Appropriate Type of Survey for Your Assessment Needs

Bowie C

Jennifer R. Keup, Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition – University of South Carolina

Over the past few decades, the increased demand for accountability in higher education has led to the proliferation of national survey instruments as well as enhanced tools for the development and analysis of institutional assessment efforts. While the large number of surveys and services can be beneficial to institutional assessment efforts during the first year, it can also be overwhelming and further complicate the choice to participate in national survey efforts or to develop an institutional (i.e., “homegrown”) assessment effort. This session will discuss the benefits and challenges, resource implications, data application, and fit of both approaches for various first-year assessment interests. In addition, the presenter will facilitate a dialogue about some of the most prominent national surveys dedicated to first-year assessment as well as discuss examples of software and services currently available to facilitate the success of institutional assessment efforts that draw from “homegrown” survey instruments.

2 Using Qualitative Assessment Methods to Better Understand the Student Experience

Maverick A

Barbara Tobolowsky, Associate Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition – University of South Carolina

Assessment plays a key role in determining the effectiveness of first-year initiatives. Though many educators rely on quantitative assessment approaches (e.g., course/program evaluations), some programmatic objectives are best discovered through qualitative methods. This workshop explores a range of qualitative approaches to assessment and helps participants make a qualitative assessment plan to meet their specific programmatic needs.

3 Emotional Intelligence

Sequin

William Moses, Professor of Art and Coordinator of Emotional Intelligence – Gallaudet University

There is a growing body of evidence that success in college is connected to strong emotional intelligence (EI). Parker et al. (2004) found that students with GPAs of 3.0 or higher had significantly higher scores on most of the EI dimensions compared to students with GPAs below 2.0. They found that the intrapersonal adaptability and stress-management abilities
(as measured by the EQ-i) of students were important in contributing to students’ success. EI skills, unlike cognitive abilities measured by traditional IQ, can be developed throughout life. Shutte and Malouff (2002) demonstrate growth in EI for students enrolled in a college-transition course that incorporated these skills. This session will look at ways to assess EI using the EQ-i as well as other qualitative and quantitative measures.

4 Assessing General Education: Tricks, Traps, and Techniques

Stephen Zerwas, Director of Academic Assessment – The University of North Carolina, Greensboro

The assessment of general education presents the unique challenge of how to measure something that is by definition general. Workshop participants will engage in interactive learning experiences designed to enhance their abilities to develop meaningful assessment strategies for general education. Program participants will be challenged to analyze general education goals, articulate performance measures, evaluate model assessment activities, and develop assessment strategies that accurately measure the purposes and intents of general education.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 PM - 6:45 PM</td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Losoya Convention Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:45 PM - 8:45 PM</td>
<td>Dinner with Recognition of AIR Fellows</td>
<td>Regency East 1-3</td>
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</table>
Regency East 1-3

The colleague cluster breakfast has been designed to provide an opportunity for conference participants to connect with others who share similar roles or interest or who come from similar institutions. To that end, several tables will be designed for specific functional roles, institution type, topical interest areas, and others will be designated for open networking. Table numbers for each cluster are provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Types:</th>
<th>Roles:</th>
<th>Interest Areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-community colleges</td>
<td>5-first-year seminar directors</td>
<td>11-accreditation issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-liberal arts colleges</td>
<td>6-institutional research officers</td>
<td>12-learning communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-research universities</td>
<td>7-faculty</td>
<td>13-first-year seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-regional universities</td>
<td>8-academic administrators</td>
<td>14-qualitative assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9-student affairs administrators</td>
<td>15-reporting assessment results</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-assessment officers</td>
<td>16-general education assessment</td>
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9:00 AM - 10:15 AM Concurrent Sessions

5 Intentional Planning and Assessment of the FYE: Your Key to Success!

Sequin

Pamela I. Niesslein, Associate Vice President for Accountability and Accreditation – College of Charleston

In this era of accountability, we are often asked to prove that programs and initiatives add value to the institution. For first-year experience initiatives, we may be called on to respond to the following questions: How does the FYE support institutionally defined student learning outcomes? What are the benefits for the student in participating in your FYE? What are the benefits for faculty? What elements make the FYE unique? An articulated planning and assessment process is critical in helping individual units and the institution as a whole to respond to such questions systematically. This session will explore the elements of planning and assessment for FYE programs and services, the importance of accurate data integration, and of the role FYE assessment plays in larger institutional effectiveness.
Engaging Students in Assessment

Bowie C

Donald Whitaker, Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness – Ball State University
Sherry A. Woosley, Associate Director, Institutional Effectiveness – Ball State University

This interactive presentation will examine five key roles that students can play in assessment initiatives. Two traditional roles are those of subjects and informants, but students should also be viewed as users of assessment information and as collaborators or authors in the assessment process. General examples of each role will be supplemented by specific examples of emerging practices that several institutions have used to engage students in institutional research and assessment projects.

Looking at the First Year - Objectively

Navarro

Stephen Zerwas, Director, Academic Assessment – The University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Describing measurable student learning outcomes is recognized as the foundation upon which our assessment activities are based. With increasing demands on higher education to demonstrate learning outcomes, the need to describe student learning in a measurable form has assumed critical importance. Yet many of us find it difficult to make the transition from identifying goals to writing measurable objectives. Describing student learning outcomes requires a change of focus from looking at the educational opportunities we provide to identifying what students learn as a result of their participation in our activities. This session will focus on how to translate goals into measurable objectives. Participants will engage in a variety of interactive, hands-on activities, which will develop their abilities to write measurable objectives and challenge them to use their objectives as the foundation of a first-year curriculum.

Accreditation and the First-Year Experience

Sequin

Kay Smith, Associate Vice President for the Academic Experience, College of Charleston

This session will examine the trend for institutions to develop first-year experience plans to satisfy regional accreditation agencies. Particularly in the SACS region but also in other areas of the country, accreditation processes have required institutions to develop plans that...
enhance quality and lead to demonstrable student learning outcomes. Several schools have chosen to create or enhance their first-year experience programs to satisfy this requirement. Colleges and universities as different as the University of Memphis and Warren Wilson College, the University of New Orleans and Wesleyan College, Austin Peay State University and the Citadel have all been involved in developing first-year programs for reaccreditation. This session will examine the various approaches these and other institutions have taken to developing first-year experiences through the accreditation process, while taking an in-depth look at this process at the College of Charleston. The presenter will also evaluate the accreditation process as a motivating factor in first-year reform.

9 Assessment of Student Affairs Initiatives for First-Year Students

Navarro

Jennifer R. Keup, Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition – University of South Carolina

Many aspects of students’ transition to college and their first-year experience are designed and delivered by departments within student affairs. This session will discuss how to strengthen the connection between the delivery of first-year programs and effective assessment practices within student affairs. Using the “Models for Assessing First-Year Programs” proposed by Crissman and Upcraft (2001) as a foundation, the presenter will facilitate dialogue about the particular challenges of conducting assessment of first-year programs in student affairs units and strategies for designing manageable and meaningful assessments in spite of these challenges. Participants will also discuss specific tactics to conduct an audit of current first-year assessment activities in student affairs, identify measurable outcomes, and communicate and incorporate findings from first-year assessment activities.

10 Closing the Gap Between Data and Decision Making

Bowie C

Stefinee Pinnegar, Director, Teaching English Language Learners Project – Brigham Young University

Patricia Esplin, Director, Freshman Academy – Brigham Young University

Is there a difference between what you teach students about developing as a community of learners and the practices you follow in your first-year and/or student transition programs? Do you struggle to use data to plan, implement, and make changes? Participants in this session will use the learning cycle to develop as data-driven decision makers. They will identify guidelines for program development, learn strategies for data collection and management, and explore cases. They will be invited to think in new ways about using data to guide students in making successful transitions at the department, classroom, and student level.
Changing the Institutional Culture for Assessment and First-Year Students

Maverick A

J. Worth Pickering, Director, University Assessment, Institutional Research and Assessment – Old Dominion University

Changing the institutional culture for evidence-based decision making (assessment) causes conflict among faculty and administrators, especially when it asks faculty and administrators to do “additional” work and creates boundary conflicts for them. Changing the culture requires attention to both pressure we can apply and the payoff faculty and administrators expect, plus a plan to manage their resistance. Accomplishing this requires leadership, and servant leadership seems well suited to the task. The goal of this program is to discuss how we can use the concepts of conflict management, change theory, and leadership to change the institutional culture on our campuses to support evidence-based decision making for first-year initiatives. The presenter will share some observations and lessons learned through experience and encourage others to offer suggestions as well.

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM Lunch—Regency East 1-3
1:15 PM - 3:15 PM Workshops
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM Afternoon Break

Assessing First-Year Seminars

Navarro

Dan Friedman, Director, University 101 Programs – University of South Carolina

This workshop will focus on strategies, techniques, and tools for assessing first-year seminars. Using Astin’s I-E-O model as a framework, it will address the who, what, and how of assessing these seminars. Direct and indirect measures of effectiveness will be examined. Examples of effective current practices, including both quantitative and qualitative, will be shared. This presentation will discuss several different lenses or approaches to assessment, including value added, benchmarking, and peer referenced. In addition, common problems and challenges in assessing first-year seminars will be discussed.
13 Maximizing Your Assessment by Combining Results: EBI, NSSE, and CIRP

**Sequin**

**Jillian Kinzie**, Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE Institute – Indiana University

**Darlena Jones**, Director of Research and Development, Educational Benchmarking (EBI)

**John Pryor**, Director, Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) – University of California, Los Angeles

Multiple measures can strengthen campus assessment efforts and more effectively demonstrate student-learning outcomes. Assessments tools available through Educational Benchmarking (EBI), the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provide institutions multiple sources of evidence about the quality of the first year program. This session will provide an opportunity for participants to learn about each of these versatile research-based tools and explore the links between these measures and campus assessment plans, explore strategies for combining data sources, and consider application of these tools to explore student integration to campus, assess student learning outcomes, and guide first-year program improvement initiatives.

14 Encouraging Engagement: A Comprehensive Assessment Initiative for First-Year Students

**Bowie C**

**Thomas D. Burns**, Associate Provost for Academic Administration – Millersville University

**Frederick S. Foster-Clark** Coordinator of General Education; Faculty, Psychology Department – Millersville University

**Laurie B. Hanich**, Faculty, Educational Foundations Department – Millersville University

**Linda L. McDowell** Coordinator of the First-Year Experience; Professor in the Educational Foundations Department – Millersville University

**Daniel F. O’Neill**, Faculty, Department of Counseling and Human Development; Clinical Psychologist – Millersville University

**Carol Y. Phillips**, Associate Provost Emerita – Millersville University

**Lisa R. Shibley**, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Assessment and Planning – Millersville University

This workshop provides participants with an example of a comprehensive assessment program designed to determine the effectiveness of a living/learning community developed as part of the revision of the general education curriculum. Participants will explore an assessment program for the first-year living/learning community designed to foster student
engagement; investigate the use of quantitative assessment strategies, including na-
tionally and locally developed surveys to determine student achievement of program
learning outcomes; examine the value of qualitative assessment data obtained through stu-
dent writing samples and focus group findings in determining program success and areas
for improvement; describe methods of triangulating institution-based data with NSSE data;
and, begin to develop an institution-specific assessment strategy for their first-year program
initiative. Practical issues, successful strategies, and potential pitfalls in implementing and
assessing the FYE program are discussed and approaches to ongoing program development
to facilitate enhanced student learning outcomes are explored. Handouts will include copies
of the FYE course foundational syllabus and related living/learning community materials as
well as assessment instruments and outcomes, including surveys, rubrics to evaluate writing
prompts, prompts for focus group discussions, and other related materials.

Afternoon Options:

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>3:15 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>Free Time in San Antonio</td>
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<td>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>Follow up session for CIRP/EBI/NSSE</td>
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15 Maximizing Your Assessment by Combining Results: EBI, NSSE, and CIRP

Sequin

Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE Institute – Indiana University

Darlena Jones, Director of Research and Development, Educational Benchmarking (EBI)

John Pryor, Director, Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) – University of California, Los Angeles

All conference participants are encouraged to join Darlena, John, and Jillian for informal con-
versation and one-on-one time to discuss your interests in CIRP/EBI/NSSE assessment tools,
ask institution-specific questions, and share challenges and successes. Take advantage of
this special opportunity to get answers to your first-year assessment questions!
16 Assessing First-Year Writing Programs

Maverick A

Christy Friend, Associate Professor of English; Director of First-Year English and Director of the Writing Center – University of South Carolina

This session will summarize an ongoing initiative to assess the First-Year English Program at the University of South Carolina. Now in its third year, this assessment initiative has incorporated both qualitative and quantitative assessments, including a large-scale quantitative study designed to track changes in students’ writing performance from the last year of high school through two semesters of composition courses taken during the first year of college. The presenter will share preliminary results from this research, discuss plans for follow-up research, and note some logistical, methodological, and institutional challenges associated with the project. The session will conclude with a discussion of general considerations for choosing, designing, and administering assessments in first-year writing programs, focusing on best-practice recommendations made by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA), the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCC), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Several cases will be offered for discussion, and session participants will be invited to ask questions and share ideas from their own campuses.

17 MAP-Works: An Example of Best Practices in Assessment

Sequin

Sherry A. Woosley, Associate Director, Institutional Effectiveness – Ball State University

Darlena Jones, Director of Research and Development for Educational Benchmarking (EBI)

Surveys are often useful for campus administrators, but how often are they useful for the college student or the front-line faculty/staff? The best assessment projects involve multiple constituents, have clear links to practice, provide user-friendly reporting, move people to action, and impact student success. Making Achievement Possible Works (MAP-Works) is an example of a best practices assessment project. It provides customized feedback to help first-year students establish realistic expectations and connect with campus resources. It also provides interactive, information directly to front-line faculty and staff (e.g. residence hall staff, academic advisors, first-year seminar instructors, or retention committee members) to empower interventions with individual students or groups of students. This presentation includes concrete examples, small-group discussions, and general best practices ideas that are transferable to your campus regardless of whether your institution uses MAP-Works.
18 Critical Incident Interview

Bowie C

Donna Younger, Director of the Learning Center – Oakton Community College

Getting a complete picture of an individual’s capability may involve more than results of tests or inventories. The Critical Incident Interview can be used to complement other assessment data by eliciting evidence of skill and understanding in the context of a person’s specific past experiences. This session will introduce the Critical Incident Interview theory and practice and demonstrate how it can be used in an assessment setting. Participants will have the opportunity to practice using behavioral interview questions to assess a given competency related to work and academic success and will explore ways it might be used in their own assessment practice.

19 A Team-Based Assessment Model to Create Advocates for Change: Foundations for Excellence in the First College Year

Navarro

John N. Gardner, Senior Fellow, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition – University of South Carolina; Executive Director, Policy Center on the First Year of College

Assessment methods have greatly improved, yet many efforts still fail to produce action for improvement. For results to produce action, the process must create advocates for change. Participants will learn about a team-based approach, which honors local knowledge and professional judgment; serves as professional development; and develops advocates for change. This approach was developed and is guided by the staff at the Policy Center on the First Year of College.

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM Break—Losoya Conference Center

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM “Creating Your Assessment Plan” Session—Regency East 1-3

This concluding session is a capstone event designed to assist participants in pulling together the lessons learned at the conference. Small groups will consider key components of the steps for creating an assessment plan. This is an opportunity for participants to show what you know and relate the conference’s workshops and concurrent sessions to the real world challenges we each face in designing and delivering assessment on our home campuses.

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM Closing Session & Adjournment—Regency East 1-3
Conference Faculty

Thomas D. Burns is the associate provost for academic administration at Millersville University, assuming responsibility for the undergraduate programs of study, including both general education and the first-year experience initiatives. Previously, Burns served as an assistant dean for academic affairs in the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at Yale University and was chair of the Department of Chemistry and Physics at Florida Southern College.

Pat Esplin serves as the director of Freshman Academy and has been actively engaged in the learning community initiatives for first-year students at Brigham Young University since 1996. Under her direction, Freshman Academy operates as a model learning community program with collaboration and support from colleges, academic departments, and student affairs. Freshman Academy is constantly engaged in a cycle of design, implementation, assessment, reflection and improvement. Esplin has presented at numerous local, national, and international conferences, including the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, AAC&U, and various assessment conferences on issues related to student development, transition, mentoring, and assessment. Her training as a psychologist and rich experience in clinical practice, consultation, and teaching provide a unique perspective for understanding individual as well as organizational strengths, needs, and ability to change.

Frederick S. Foster-Clark is the coordinator of general education and a faculty member in the Psychology Department teaching in the areas of developmental psychology and research methods and statistics. Under his leadership, Millersville has undertaken an extensive review of its general education program and is finishing up a major revision of its curriculum including the implementation of a three-credit first seminar/living-learning community initiative, now in its fourth year. Foster-Clark has also helped to lead campus initiatives on general education assessment and the assessment of first-year programming as well as being involved in departmental assessment of learning outcomes.

Dan Friedman is the director of the University 101 program at the University of South Carolina, where he is responsible for more than 170 sections of the first-year seminar, as well a sophomore and senior seminar. Prior to this position, Friedman served as director of Freshman Seminar and assistant professor of higher education at Appalachian State University. His area of research is centered on the first-year experience, and he has made numerous presentations and published several articles or monograph contributions on this topic. Friedman has conducted a wide-range of assessment initiatives aimed at better understanding the efficacy of the first-year seminar.

Christy Friend is associate professor of English at the University of South Carolina, where she serves as director of First-year English and director of the Writing Center. Her scholarship and research work has appeared in College English, Composition Forum, Composition Studies, jac: A Journal of Composition Theory, and Rhetoric Review; and she is the co-author of several writing textbooks, including The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers and Beyond Words: Reading and Writing in a Visual Age. She is currently conducting a large-scale study assessing how students' writing changes from high school through the end of their first-year composition courses at the University of South Carolina.

John N. Gardner is the founder of two national centers to help American higher education improve student learning, success, and retention in the first college year. Currently, he serves as executive director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College and senior fellow of the University of South Carolina’s National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. He has been working on the issues, which are the focus of this conference for 40 years and looks forward to sharing his thoughts with conference participants.
Laurie B. Hanich, a faculty member in the Educational Foundations Department with expertise in research methods and design, has taught in the first-year seminar. She brings a strong assessment background to the team and draws on her experiences in instrument development, data collection, and analysis to facilitate determination of successful outcomes of programmatic interventions.

Darlena Jones is director of research and development for Educational Benchmarking (EBI). She received her Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University and has been a faculty member in the physics department at both OSU and Missouri State University. Currently, Jones conducts research on EBI’s studies and has published her findings in journals like BizEd, Perspectives, and E-SOURCE for College Transitions. She has presented results of EBI’s studies at many national and international conferences including IUPUI’s Assessment Institute, Association for Institutional Research (AIR), NASPA, and ACPA. Jones has also been an invited speaker for the past four years at the National Conference on First-Year Assessment.

Jennifer R. Keup is the director of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (NRC), where she is responsible for operational and strategic aspects of the Center and leads a team of professionals who coordinate the Center’s conferences, editorial projects, research and assessment, and public relations and resource development. Before joining the staff of the NRC, she had professional roles in the national dialogue on first-year assessment as a project director at the Higher Education Research Institute and was heavily involved in institutional assessment efforts as the director of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) at UCLA. Her research interests focus on students’ personal and academic development during the transition from high school to college; the influence of campus programming on adjustment to college; student development in college; and issues of institutional impact, responsiveness, and transformation in higher education.

Jillian Kinzie is the associate director, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice. Kinzie coordinates research and project activities to facilitate the use of student engagement data to promote educational effectiveness. Prior to this, she held a visiting faculty appointment in the Higher Education and Student Affairs department at Indiana University, and worked as an administrator in academic and student affairs at Miami University (OH), where she coordinated orientation, advising, and first-year experience activities, and Case Western Reserve University. Kinzie is particularly interested the effective use of assessment results to inform first-year experience planning.

Linda L. McDowell has served as the coordinator of the First-Year Experience since its inception in 2000. As a professor in the Educational Foundations department, she brings expertise on an array of learning strategies and assessment approaches. McDowell has been a regular contributor at the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience and the National Conference on Students in Transition, presenting workshops, concurrent sessions, and poster presentations regularly for the past six years.

William Moses is professor of art and coordinator of emotional intelligence assessment at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. For the past four years, he has been working with the first-year experience program teaching classes and training faculty, staff, and student teaching assistants in the use of active-learning techniques to address curricular goals. Moses is a certified trainer using the EQ-i assessment tool and a certified practitioner of group psychotherapy and psychodrama. At Gallaudet, he teaches art, theatre arts, counseling, social work, and clinical psychology. With Catherine Andersen, he is writing an emotional intelligence text for college students while continuing his research and professional presentations.
Pamela Isacco Niesslein is the associate vice president for accountability and accreditation at the College of Charleston. She has worked in higher education administration for more than 20 years, helping to create the Center for Academic Advising, coordinating the Freshman Seminar and Learning Strategies courses, working with students with disabilities, serving as head of campus-wide assessment and planning and as the liaison for SACS accreditation. She currently supervises the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment (AAPA) at the College of Charleston. Niesslein’s involvement in assessment has included extensive work in survey planning, assessment administration, and strategic planning.

Daniel F. O’Neill is a faculty member in the Department of Counseling and Human Development and a clinical psychologist. He has taught both one-credit and three-credit seminars and currently teaches a First-Year Perspectives course entitled, “Homes and Homelessness.”

Carol Y. Phillips, associate provost emerita, has recently retired from Millersville University. She has co-authored/presented more than 20 papers, presentations, and workshops on the first-year experience and learning communities, highlighting the university’s experiences in implementing a holistic living/learning community.

J. Worth Pickering is the assistant vice president for institutional research and assessment at Old Dominion University (ODU) where he has worked for more than 20 years. Prior to his appointment as AVP, Pickering worked in Institutional Research and Assessment, Student Services Research, and the Counseling Center as a career counselor. His primary research interest is in assessment of first-year students, particularly students at risk for academic difficulty and subsequent attrition. Pickering views his work in assessment as an opportunity to combine knowledge, skills, and interests in counseling and student development with those in research and assessment to enhance student learning and student success.

Stefinee Pinneger serves as the director of the ESL Endorsement Program BYU/Public School Partnership and acting dean of the Invisible College for Research on Teaching and Teacher Education, a research group that meets to examine research and innovation for teaching and teacher education. Since 1997, Pinneger has been researching, designing, and developing an innovative model for educating K-12 pre-service and in-service teachers for work with second-language learners. In this process, she developed expertise in collaborating with universities, colleges, departments, and public schools and drawing on multiple sources of data to design and implement effective programs.

John Pryor is the director of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), the longest-running and largest empirical study of higher education in the country. He is also the managing director of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), where the CIRP surveys are administered. Before coming to HERI in 2005, Pryor was the director of student affairs planning, evaluation, and research at Dartmouth College. His specific interests are in college student alcohol use, health issues, at-risk behaviors, and survey research methodology. As the director of the CIRP surveys, Pryor conducts longitudinal research on the changing nature of college students and the impact of college.

Lisa R. Shibley began in her role as the assistant vice president for institutional assessment and planning at Millersville University in 2007. Prior to her transition to Millersville, Shibley developed the Planning, Research, and Assessment Office at Berks College, The Pennsylvania State University. She offers many years of experience in quantitative and qualitative assessment of first-year experiences and the assessment of student learning outcomes.
Kay Smith has been the associate vice president for the academic experience at the College of Charleston since 2005. Smith came to College of Charleston to take on some exciting new challenges in developing teaching and learning experiences. She also supervises support programs for teaching and learning, including the First-Year Experience program, the Academic Advising and Planning Center, Orientation, New Student Programs, the Center for Student Learning, the Center for Faculty Development, and the Office for Student Retention. Smith also serves on the college-wide General Education Committee and was a principle writer of the College of Charleston’s Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS.

Wendy G. Troxel is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, teaching research methods courses in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and program evaluation and assessment. Her research interests are in the area of student learning and development in the first-year of college, as well as the use of formative assessment strategies by faculty and their impact on student learning (summative assessment) and resultant revisions in instructional strategies.

Donald R. Whitaker is executive director of institutional effectiveness and professor of mathematical sciences at Ball State University. He heads the university’s Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research. Whitaker came to Ball State in 1976 after completing doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with specialties in mathematics education, assessment, and curriculum design. He is co-author of a college-level textbook and an elementary school curriculum series and is author or co-author of more than 170 other publications and conference presentations. Earlier in his career, his research focused on the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Sherry A. Woosley is the associate director of institutional effectiveness at Ball State University. Woosley is responsible for numerous university wide assessment activities and provides assessment consulting to academic and student affairs departments. She has overseen the MAP-Works project at Ball State for more than 10 years. She has published articles in the Journal of College Student Development, the NASPA Journal, the Journal of College Student Retention, the College Student Journal, and Assessment Update. Woosley has also been an invited faculty member at the National Conference on First-Year Assessment for four years and made numerous presentations at NASPA, ACPA, the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, and GLACUHO annual conferences.

Donna Younger currently serves as director of the Learning Center at Oakton Community College in suburban Chicago. In addition, she has worked for the past 20 years as a consultant for the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning on prior learning assessment and use of behavioral interviewing to assess the abilities of job candidates and college applicants. She currently teaches the College Success Seminar at Oakton and a variety of courses at the School for New Learning at DePaul University in the area of emotional intelligence and soft skills development.

Stephen C. Zerwas is the director of academic assessment at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Zerwas has worked in academic affairs, student affairs, and as a faculty member for more than 25 years. He has presented workshops in the areas of academic assessment, academic advising, counseling, testing, and student affairs research and has taught courses in research, assessment, and evaluation and statistics. Zerwas has provided a wide range of consultation services and workshops on topics including academic assessment, goal analysis and objective building, and general education assessment at the institutional, state, regional, and national level.
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