Preliminary Findings from the 2005 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives

Methodology

After pilot testing in July 2005, the web-based survey was officially administered in October 2005. Invitations to participate in the survey were successfully e-mailed to 1,139 chief student affairs officer at regionally accredited public and private four-year baccalaureate-granting institutions in the 50 US states. After two reminders and data clean up, a total of 382 institutions (33.5%) successfully completed the survey. It should be noted that because the survey was sent to student affairs professionals, survey findings may under-represent academic affairs initiatives. Finally, while the sample is not fully representative of the nation’s colleges and universities (large and public schools are over-represented) the collection of this data from 382 schools represents the most substantial portrait of sophomore-year initiatives currently available.

Current Sophomore Initiatives

Table 1: Institutions with Initiatives Specifically or Intentionally Geared Toward Sophomore Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th># Yes</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one sophomore initiative (n=382)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Planning (n=120)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs to Assist with Selection of Major (n=121)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising (n=123)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Events (e.g., trips, dinners, dances) (n=121)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentoring by Sophomores (i.e., sophomore students mentoring other students) (n=117)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government (e.g., sophomore council) (n=119)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Life (e.g., sophomore-specific living arrangements) (n=119)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service / Service Learning (n=116)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and Staff Mentors for Sophomore Students (n=118)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Initiatives (n=77)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit-Bearing Course (e.g., Sophomore Seminar) (n=114)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to Co-Teach or Assist in Teaching a Class (n=116)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid (e.g., sophomore scholarships, loans) (n=119)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Enrichment (e.g., plays, musical events, multicultural fairs) (n=117)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Learning Communities (i.e., linked courses) (n=113)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications for Sophomores (e.g., sophomore newsletter or website) (n=119)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentoring for Sophomores (i.e., students mentoring sophomores)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Initiatives (cont.)

Private schools are more likely than public schools to have any sophomore initiative (38.5% vs. 26.8%, \( p < .05 \)).

Of those schools with sophomore initiatives:
• Private schools are more likely than public schools to have sophomore-class events (56.8% vs. 25.6%, \( p = .006 \)).
• Private schools are more likely than public schools to have student government initiatives for sophomores (48.1% vs. 20.5%, \( p = .014 \)).
• Small (FTE<5,000) schools are more likely than larger schools to have student government initiatives for sophomores (47.3% vs. 25.0%, \( p = .025 \)).
• Positive correlation between academic advising, career planning, and programs to assist in the selection of a major (PHI values of .434, .241, & .477).

Future Initiatives
• 37.3% of responding institutions are planning some type of future sophomore initiative.
• Schools with current sophomore initiatives are more likely to be planning future sophomore initiatives than those schools without current initiatives (51.4% vs. 31.0%).

Assessment of Sophomore Initiatives
• 29.5% of institutions with sophomore initiatives have assessed their initiatives.
• Locally developed surveys, focus groups, and institutional data analysis are the most popular assessment methods (58.8%, 54.7%, & 57.1%)
Introduction

Why Sophomores

Sophomore Slump

National Research

2005 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

Institutional Examples

Participant Examples
What am I doing at this particular University?

Why do I have more questions now than when I first got here?
Why are these people I hang around with that I thought were my friends?

Why am I majoring in this, if I don’t even like it?

Why am I completely overwhelmed all the time?

Why don’t I have any time to relax?

Why don’t I have any idea what I’m gonna do when I grow up?

Why don’t my parents leave me alone about not knowing what I want to do when I grow up?

How could I have acted like that last year?

Why am I not having nearly as much fun as last year?

Does everyone think I’m weird?

Why do I feel like I could cry if someone looks at me the wrong way?
If you said **YES, I HAVE HEARD THIS FROM MY STUDENTS** to 3 or more of those questions…

…then they could be struggling through their Sophomore experience.

**WHY SOPHOMORES?**

What does this graph represent?
1. Student Grades?
2. Student Persistence?
3. Institutional Support?

Graph is a dramatization

1. Gardner, Pattengale, & Schreiner, 2000; Pattengale, 2000; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000
2. Freedman, 1956; Richmond & Lemons, 1985
3. Boivin, Fountain, & Baylis, 2000; Gaff, 2000; Juillerat, 2000; Margolis, 1976; Pattengale, 2000; Schaller, 2005

**WHAT IS THE SOPHOMORE SLUMP?**

- Idea at least 50 years old (Freedman, 1956)
- Recent examinations (Graunke & Woosley, 2005; Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000; Schaller, 2005)
- **Development**: identity, purpose, goals
- **Academic**: grades, persistence
To what extent were institutions developing sophomore-specific initiatives?

What type of initiatives were used?

How were the initiatives related (to each other, to school size/control)?

Key Definition:
Sophomores are “students in their second year of post-secondary education”

METHODS

2005 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives

- Web-based survey, yes/no/don’t know responses with text boxes for description

- 382 responses (33.5% response rate) from 1,139 CSAO at regionally accredited 4-year institutions in U.S.
CURRENT SOPHOMORE INITIATIVES

33.5% of respondents had sophomore initiative

Most Common Initiatives
• Career Planning (74.2%)
• Major Selection (65.3%)
• Academic Advising (61.0%)

Least Common Initiatives
• Learning Comm. (17.7%)
• Soph Publications (16.8%)
• Peer Mentoring for Sophomores (15.4%)

INSTITUTION SIZE & CONTROL

• Private institutions more likely to offer a sophomore initiative (p=.019)

• Private schools more likely to have class events (p=.002) & student govn’t (p=.004)

• Small schools (<5,000 FTE) more likely to have student government initiatives (p=.025)

ASSOCIATIONS B/W INITIATIVE TYPES

Selection of a major, career planning, & academic advising (phi =.434, .241, & .477)

Sophomore class events &
  • Student government (phi = .412, p<.001)
  • Community service (phi = .323, p<.001)
  • Cultural enrichment (phi = .306, p<.01)
  • Publications for sophs (phi = .340, p<.001)
**ASSESSMENT & FUTURE PLANS**

- 29.5% of responding institutions with initiatives have assessed their efforts
  - Locally Developed Surveys (58.8%)
  - Focus Groups (57.1%)
  - Institutional Data Analysis (54.3%)

- 37.3% of respondents are planning future sophomore initiatives
  - Those with current initiatives more likely to be planning future initiatives (p<.001)

**LIMITATIONS & IMPLICATIONS**

- Limitations
  - A priori identification of initiative types
  - Overlap between initiative types
  - CSAO’s (or designee) as respondents

- Implications
  - Assessment is key to sustained success
  - Sophomore initiatives can be simple and/or grow out of FY initiatives

Sophomore-Specific Initiatives

**INSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLES**
COMPREHENSIVE INITIATIVES

- Beloit College (Wisconsin)
- Stanford University

Beloit College
http://www.beloit.edu/extension.php

- Welcome-Back Dinner
- Sophomore Retreat
- Major Fair
- Sophomore Website
- Sophomore Guidebook
- Venture Grants

Beloit: Venture Grants

- 13 grants:
  - $500-$1,500 each
- Apply as FY, do as sophs
- “Entrepreneurial, self-testing, or intellectually challenging activities in which the winner(s) attempt something (academic or non-academic) that benefits others”
BELOIT: SOPHOMORE RETREAT
- Confront Personal Academic Issues
  - Major Selection
  - Study Abroad
  - Career Planning
- Identify Campus Issues
  - Recycling Initiatives
  - Coffee House
  - Library Hours

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
- Sophomore Seminars
- Residential Learning Communities
- Direct coordination with their FY programs

RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES
- Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- EKU
- U of Central Arkansas
- Southern Arkansas
- U of South Carolina

http://fso.stanford.edu
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
EKU
U of Central Arkansas
Southern Arkansas
U of South Carolina
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- Live together in residence hall
- Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes explained
- Academic Planning
- Community
- Autonomy
- Explanation of “Soph Slump” (nationally and at Cal Poly)
- Potential ramifications of poor academic success
- Strategies for how to be successful

Eastern Kentucky University
- Sophomore Overdrive dedicated to providing a living environment to help with the transition specific to the sophomore year.
- Next Steps Residence Hall
  - For Sophomore, Junior and Senior students
  - Focuses on the next steps of college career including internship, graduate school, and career exploration, as well as offering programs to support personal and academic growth.

University of Central Arkansas
- The Sophomore Experience Program will provide programs specifically designed to prepare sophomores to be leaders and active members of their community in Stadium Park and campus wide.
- Programs that deal directly with the issues they are currently facing:
  - Building Leadership skills
  - Deciding a Major
  - Creating a Community
  - Civic Participation
  - Building Life Skills
Southern Arkansas University

- Focuses on students' academic and personal success.
- Opportunity to interact more directly with faculty in classes and in residence halls to enhance learning
  - Learning community: common block of classes
  - Focus on involvement: active role in planning and initiating activities on their floors and within the hall; encouraged to participate in campus activities

University of South Carolina

- S.L.U.M.P. Retreat
  - Sophomores Learn, Understand, and Map a Plan
- The Sophomore Initiative (TSI) Planner

Macalaster College

- College of the Holy Cross
- Texas Christian University
College of the Holy Cross

- Second Year Opportunities
  - 2YO
  - The Academic Planner
  - 2YO Dessert and Academic Extravaganza
    - Lecture by the author of the 2YO summer book
  - Part of the Lily Vocation Discernment Initiative

Macalester College

- Soph Fiesta
- Majors Fair
- Sophomore Interview
- Part of the Lily Project with the Career Development Center

Texas Christian University

- Sophomore programs and services: principle of ethical leadership
  - Inward Bound

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MENTORING INITIATIVES

- Indiana Wesleyan (coming soon)
- Kennesaw
- U of Louisville

Kennesaw University

- Year 2 Kennesaw
  - SophYE Peer Leaders is a program that provides leadership training for rising sophomores and uses their experience as first-year students in KSU 1101, our first-year seminar.
  - One of their primary functions is to help build a sense of community among the students enrolled in a section of KSU 1101, which is usually connected to two or three general education courses in a larger learning community (CLASS: Communities for Learning Success).

University of Louisville

- REACH Ambassadors
  - mentor first-year and transfer students
  - help students negotiate transition to UofL community
  - provide support, friendship, advice and help new students connect to university faculty, staff and services.
**ACADEMIC COURSE INITIATIVES**

- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Indiana Wesleyan
- University of Indianapolis

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**University of Texas at San Antonio**

- **Sophomore Seminars**
  - small group discussion with faculty from a variety of academic disciplines
  - provides an opportunity to learn more about research within their chosen discipline or explore interests outside of their current major
  - Part of a learning community
  - Secondary intent: create bonds within major

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**Indiana Wesleyan University**

- **LDR 150: Life Calling, Work and Leadership**
  - 3 credit hour course
  - Part of the Leadership Major, housed in the Center for Life Calling & Leadership
University of Indianapolis

- Required of all sophomore students
- Opportunity for students to attend programs of intellectual and/or cultural significance outside of the normal classroom setting.

University of Indianapolis

Additional Unique Initiatives

- Furman University
- St. Michael's College
- Brandeis

Furman University

- An informal initiative begun by the Vice President for Student Services
- Students receive a letter from him offering assistance with issues typically faced by sophomores
St. Michael’s College
Office of Sophomore Programs and Development
- focuses on academic, social, and personal issues.
- a supportive and caring environment where students can take advantage of individual help sessions, workshops, group activities, and referral services.
- also offer a comprehensive transfer orientation program.
- The office serves as a safety net for transfer students making the transition into their new environment.

Brandeis University
Sophomore Year Experience
- An intra-department initiative to engage Brandeis sophomores and help them make the most of all resources available.
- Sophomore portal includes information about:
  - Events for sophomores
  - Academic Resources
  - Study Abroad
  - Career Development
  - Resources for Family and Friends
- Actions to consider (broken into 4 categories)

Known Sophomore Initiatives:
- Albright College
- Brandeis University
- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
- College of the Holy Cross
- Colorado College
- Duke University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Emory University
- Florida State University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Gettysburg College
- Harvard University
- Indiana Wesleyan University
- University of Tennessee
- Kansas State University
- Macalester College
- Moravian College
- Northeastern State University
- Pace University
- Saint Louis University
- St. Michael's College
- Southern Arkansas University
- Southern Methodist University
- Stanford University
- Stony Brook University
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Southern University
- Trinity Western University
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Denver
- University of Georgia
- University of Indianapolis
- University of Louisville
- University of South Carolina
- Washington University
- Yeshiva University
- PLUS others we can't fit on the slide
- Over 230 identified
FINAL THOUGHT

It seems, therefore, that efforts to establish and enhance initiatives for sophomores require a reallocation of institutional **FOCUS** more than any reallocation of institutional **resources**.

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SOPHOMORE RESOURCES

- **Shedding Light on Sophomores**
  - Monograph from NRC
- **SOPH-List**
  - Email discussion listserv
- **Sophomore Year Resources Webpage**
  - [www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph](http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph)
- Slides will be available on website soon!

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THANK YOU

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