

2000 National Survey of First-Year Seminar Programming
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Name of Institution _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Your Name _____ Title _____

Department Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

1. What is the approximate undergraduate enrollment (head count) at your institution? _____

2. What is the approximate size of the first-year class at your institution? _____

3. Does your institution (including any department or division) offer one or more first-year seminar-type courses? yes no

(If yes, please attach a current sample syllabus or course description with the returned survey.)

4. If **no**, do you plan to offer such a course in the future? yes no If yes, when? _____

IF YOUR INSTITUTION DOES NOT CURRENTLY OFFER A FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR-TYPE COURSE, PLEASE DISREGARD REMAINING QUESTIONS, AND RETURN SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE.

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IF YOUR INSTITUTION CURRENTLY OFFERS A FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR-TYPE COURSE, PLEASE COMPLETE THE REMAINING SURVEY QUESTIONS.

5. Check each discrete type of first-year seminar (a, b, c, d, e, or f) that exists on your campus.

a. **Extended orientation seminar.** Sometimes called freshman orientation, college survival, or student success course. May be taught by faculty, administrators, and/or student affairs professionals. Content will likely include introduction to campus resources, time management, study skills, career planning, cultural diversity, and student development issues.

b. **Academic seminar with generally uniform academic content across sections.** May either be an elective or a required course, sometimes interdisciplinary or theme oriented, sometimes part of a required general education core. Primary focus is on academic theme but will often include academic skills components such as critical thinking and expository writing.

c. **Academic seminars on various topics.** Specific topics vary from section to section, may evolve from any discipline, or may include societal issues such as biological and chemical warfare, urban culture, animal research, and environmental issues.

d. **Professional or discipline-linked seminar.** Generally taught within professional schools or specific disciplines such as engineering, health sciences, business, or education. Designed to prepare students for the demands of the major and the profession.

e. **Basic study skills seminar.** Generally offered for academically underprepared students. Will focus on basic academic skills such as grammar, note-taking, and reading texts, etc.

f. **Other** (Please describe in detail.) _____

Please note:

IF YOU HAVE CHECKED MORE THAN ONE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR TYPE, SELECT THE SEMINAR (a, b, c, d, e, or f) WITH THE **HIGHEST TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT** AND ANSWER SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR THAT SEMINAR ONLY.

6. I am answering the remaining questions for seminar: ____a ____b ____c ____d ____e ____f

7. In your opinion, what are three primary course objectives of this first-year seminar?

8. If your seminar has a common curriculum across sections, what, in your opinion, are the most important topics that comprise the content of the first-year seminar? **(List up to 5 topics.)**

9. Please provide titles and authors of books or other reading materials that are currently required either prior to (i.e., summer readings) or during the first-year seminar.

10. Please list up to three instructional activities implemented in the first-year seminar that you consider to be **innovative or especially successful**.

11. What is the total enrollment for the first-year seminar program (all class sections)? _____

12. What is the maximum number of students allowed to enroll in each first-year seminar section? _____

13. Who teaches the first-year seminar? **(Check all that apply.)**

- a. ____ Faculty
- b. ____ Student affairs professionals
- c. ____ Other campus professionals (Please identify.) _____
- d. ____ Undergraduate students
- e. ____ Graduate students
- f. ____ Other (Please identify.) _____

14. Is the course team taught? ____ yes ____ no

15. If yes, who comprises the team? _____

16. Are all first-year students assigned to sections of the first-year seminar in which the students' academic advisors serve as instructors? ____ yes ____ no

17. How is the first-year seminar graded? ____ pass/fail ____ letter grade

18. What college, school, department, or unit administers the first-year seminar? _____

19. Is there a director/coordinator of the first-year seminar? _____ yes _____ no

20. If you answered yes to the previous question, is this a:

_____ full-time position (approximately 40 hours per week); or,
_____ less than full-time position?

21. Has a formal program evaluation been conducted that attributes any of the following to the first-year seminar? **(Check all that apply.)**

- a. _____ increased content knowledge or other improved academic abilities
- b. _____ student satisfaction with course/instructor
- c. _____ student satisfaction with the institution
- d. _____ increased persistence to sophomore year
- e. _____ increased persistence to graduation
- f. _____ improved grade point average
- g. _____ increased use of campus services
- h. _____ increased level of student participation in campus activities
- i. _____ increased out-of-class interaction with faculty
- j. _____ increased number of friendships among first-year seminar classmates
- k. _____ increased levels of campus involvement
- l. _____ other (Please describe.) _____

(If written results of your research are available, please enclose them with the returned survey.)

22. Administratively, how is teaching the first-year seminar configured for workload? **(Check all that apply.)**

- a. _____ as part of a faculty member's regular teaching load
- b. _____ as an overload course for faculty
- c. _____ as one of the assigned responsibilities for administrator/staff seminar instructors
- d. _____ as an extra responsibility for administrator/staff seminar instructors
- e. _____ other (Please describe.) _____

23. If taught as an overload or extra responsibility, is financial or other compensation offered for teaching a first-year seminar? _____ yes _____ no

24. Is instructor training offered for first-year seminar instructors? _____ yes _____ no

25. Is instructor training required for first-year seminar instructors? _____ yes _____ no

26. If instructor training is offered, over what length of time does it occur? _____
(e.g., few hours, one day, two days, five days)

27. How long has the first-year seminar been offered on your campus? _____ years

28. What first-year students are required to take the first-year seminar? _____ all _____ some _____ none

29. If you answered "some" to the previous question, which first-year students (by category) are required to take the first-year seminar?

- a. _____ Academically underprepared students
- b. _____ Student-athletes
- c. _____ Undecided students
- d. _____ Students in specific majors
- e. _____ Ethnic minority students
- f. _____ Learning community participants
- g. _____ Honors students
- h. _____ Other _____

30. Are different sections of the first-year seminar offered for any of the following unique sub-populations of students? Check all that apply.

- a. Non-traditional aged students
- b. Ethnic minority students
- c. Commuting students
- d. Student-athletes
- e. Students with disabilities
- f. International students
- g. Students residing within a particular residence hall
- h. Learning community participants
- i. Academically underprepared students
- j. Students within a specific major
- k. Honors students
- l. Undecided students
- m. Other (Please identify.) _____

31. Over what length of time is the first-year seminar offered?

one semester one quarter other (Please specify.) _____

32. Does the first-year seminar carry academic credit that counts toward graduation? yes no

33. If yes, how many hours/credits does the first-year seminar carry?

- a. one
- b. two
- c. three
- d. four
- e. five
- f. more than five

34. How many total classroom contact hours (clock hours) comprise the entire first-year seminar course? _____ contact hours per student

35. If the first-year seminar carries academic credit, how does such credit apply?

- a. toward core requirements
- b. toward general education requirements
- c. as an elective
- d. toward major requirements
- e. other (Please describe.) _____

36. Is the first-year seminar linked or clustered with other courses (i.e., a "learning community" approach)?

yes no

(If a written description of your learning community is available, please enclose with this survey.)

37. Have special sections of the first-year seminar been created for transfer students new to your campus?

yes no

38. What do you believe to be the level of overall campus support (from students, faculty, staff, administration) for the first-year seminar?

low moderate high

Thank you for your response.

Please mark which, if any, of the following items you are enclosing.

syllabus/course description research results learning community description

A written report of the results will be available in Fall 2000. For more information, call or write the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 1629 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29208. Phone: 803-777-6225, FAX: 803-777-4699. E-Mail: carriew@gwm.sc.edu