Appendix A

National Survey on First-Year Seminars 2006

This survey is dedicated to gathering information regarding first-year seminars. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may exit the survey at any time and return, and your responses will be saved. The survey will reopen on the first page. If you would like a copy of your responses, you will need to print each page of your survey before exiting. Your responses are important to us, so please respond by December 31, 2006. Thank you.

Background Information

Name of Institution: ____________________________________________
Your Name: __________________________________________________
Title: _________________________________________________________
Department Address: __________________________________________
City: _________________________________________________________
State: _________________________________________________________
Zip Code: _____________________________________________________
Telephone: ____________________________________________________

First-year seminars are courses designed to enhance the academic skills and/or social development of first-year college students.

Does your institution, including any department or division, offer one or more first-year seminar-type courses?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

Mark the appropriate categories regarding your institution:

☐ Two-year institution   ☐ Public
☐ Four-year institution   ☐ Private

Institution selectivity (entrance difficulty level):

☐ High
☐ Moderate
☐ Low
Appendix A

What is the approximate undergraduate enrollment (head count) at your institution? (Only numeric input, please.) 

What is the approximate number of entering first-year students at your institution? (Only numeric input, please.)

What is the approximate percentage of first-year students who participate in a first-year seminar course? (Only numeric input, please.)

Types of Seminars Offered

Approximately how many years has a first-year seminar been offered on your campus?

☐ Two years or less  ☐ More than 10 years

☐ Three to 10 years

Select each discrete type of first-year seminar that best describes the seminars that exist on your campus. (Select all that apply.)

☐ Extended Orientation Seminar. Sometimes called freshman orientation, college survival, college transition, or student success course. Content likely will include introduction to campus resources, time management, academic and career planning, learning strategies, and an introduction to student development issues.

☐ Academic Seminar with generally uniform academic content across sections. May be an interdisciplinary or theme-oriented course, sometimes part of a general education requirement. Primary focus is on academic theme/discipline, but will often include academic skills components such as critical thinking and expository writing.

☐ Academic Seminar on various topics. Similar to previously mentioned academic seminar except that specific topics vary from section to section.

☐ Pre-Professional or Discipline-Linked Seminar. Designed to prepare students for the demands of the major/discipline and the profession. Generally taught within professional schools or specific disciplines such as engineering, health sciences, business, or education.

☐ Basic Study Skills Seminar. Offered for academically underprepared students. The focus is on basic academic skills such as grammar, note taking, and reading texts, etc.

☐ Hybrid. Has elements from two or more types of seminar.

☐ Other

If you selected 'Hybrid,' please describe the type of first-year seminar.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

If you selected ‘Other,’ please describe the type of first-year seminar.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Specific Seminar Information

If you offer more than one first-year seminar type, select the type with the highest total student enrollment to answer the remaining questions.

That seminar type is:

☐ Extended Orientation Seminar
☐ Academic Seminar with generally uniform content
☐ Academic Seminar on various topics
☐ Pre-Professional or Discipline-Linked Seminar
☐ Basic Study Skills Seminar
☐ Hybrid
☐ Other

Please indicate the approximate number of sections of this seminar type offered in the 2006-2007 academic year. (Only numerical input, please.) ____________________________

Please answer the remaining questions for the seminar type with the highest student enrollment.

The Students

What is the approximate class size for each first-year seminar section?

☐ Under 10 students
☐ 10-15
☐ 16-20
☐ 21-25
☐ 26-30
☐ Over 30 (Specify approximate size below.)

Which students, by category, are required to take the first-year seminar? (Select all that apply.)

☐ None are required to take it.
☐ Honors students
☐ Learning community participants
☐ Provisionally admitted students
☐ Student athletes
☐ Students in specific majors
☐ Undeclared students
☐ Other ____________________________________________

If you selected ‘Students in specific majors,’ please list the majors. ________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

What is the approximate percentage of first-year students required to take the first-year seminar?

☐ None are required to take it. ☐ 79%-70%
☐ 100% ☐ 69%-60%
☐ 99%-90% ☐ 59%-50%
☐ 89%-80% ☐ Less than 50%
Are special sections of the first-year seminar offered for any of the following unique sub-populations of students? (Select all that apply.)
- No special sections are offered.
- Academically underprepared students
- Honors students
- International students
- Learning community participants
- Pre-professional students (i.e., pre-law, pre-med)
- Student athletes
- Students residing within a particular residence hall
- Students within a specific major
- Transfer students
- Undeclared students
- Other ___________________________________________________________________

If you selected ‘Students within a specific major,’ please list the majors. ___________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

The Instructors
Who teaches the first-year seminar? (Select all that apply.)
- Faculty
- Graduate students
- Undergraduate students
- Student affairs professionals
- Other campus professionals (Describe below.)
__________________________________________________________________________

If undergraduate students assist in the first-year seminar, how are they used? (Select all that apply.)
- They teach independently.
- They assist the instructor, but do not teach.
- They teach as a part of a team.

Indicate the approximate percentage of sections that are team taught.
- No sections are team taught.
- 100%
- 99%-75%
- 74%-50%
- 49%-25%
- Less than 25%

Please identify team configurations if they are used in your first-year seminar courses.
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Are any first-year students intentionally placed in first-year seminar sections taught by their academic advisors?
- Yes
- No

If ‘yes,’ give the approximate percentage of students placed in sections with their academic advisors. _________________
For faculty, how is teaching the first-year seminar configured for workload? (Select all that apply.)
- As part of regular teaching load
- As an overload course
- Other

For student affairs or other campus professionals, how is teaching the first-year seminar configured for workload? (Select all that apply.)
- As an assigned responsibility
- As an extra responsibility
- Other

If taught as an overload or extra responsibility, what type of compensation is offered for teaching a first-year seminar? (Select all that apply.)
- Stipend
- Release time
- Graduate student support
- Other

If you selected ‘Stipend,’ please indicate the amount. ______________________
If you selected ‘Release time,’ please indicate the amount. ______________________
If you selected ‘Graduate student support,’ please indicate the number of students/hours per week. _________________________________

Is instructor training offered for first-year seminar instructors?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ how long is instructor training?
- Half a day or less
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 1 week
- Other _________________________________

Is instructor training required for first-year seminar instructors?
- Yes
- No

The Course

This first-year seminar is offered for:
- One semester
- One quarter
- One year
- Other _________________________________
How is the first-year seminar graded?
- Pass/fail
- No grade
- Letter grade

How many total classroom contact hours are there per week in the first-year seminar?
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- More than five

Does the first-year seminar carry academic credit?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ how many credits does the first-year seminar carry?
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- More than five

How may such credit apply? (Select all that apply).
- As an elective
- Toward general education requirements
- Toward major requirements
- Other

Do any sections include a service-learning component (i.e., non-remunerative service as part of a course)?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ please describe the component.

Are any sections linked to one or more other courses (i.e., “learning community”—enrolling a cohort of student into two or more courses)?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ please describe the section.

Do any sections incorporate online components?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ please describe the online components.

Are there any online-only sections?
- Yes
- No

If ‘Yes,’ please indicate the approximate percentage of online-only sections.
Select the three most important course objectives for the first-year seminar.

- Create common first-year experience
- Develop academic skills
- Develop support network/friendships
- Improve sophomore return rates
- Increase student/faculty interaction
- Introduce a discipline
- Provide orientation to campus resources and services
- Self-exploration/personal development
- Encourage arts participation
- Other

If ‘Other,’ please describe the course objective for the first-year seminar. _______________________

Select the three most important topics that compose the content of this first-year seminar.

- Academic planning/advising
- Career exploration/preparation
- Campus resources
- College policies and procedures
- Critical thinking
- Diversity issues
- Relationship issues (e.g., interpersonal skills, conflict resolution)
- Specific disciplinary topic
- Study skills
- Time management
- Writing skills
- Other

If ‘Other,’ please describe the topics used to compose the content of the first-year seminar.

__________________________________________________________________________

Please list up to three elements or aspects of your first-year seminar that you consider innovative or especially successful.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The Administration

What campus unit directly administers the first-year seminar?

- Academic affairs
- Academic department
- First-year program office
- Student affairs
- Other _______________________

If you selected ‘Academic Department,’ please specify the academic department.

__________________________________________________________________________
Is there a dean/director/coordinator of the first-year seminar?
☐ Yes       ☐ No

If yes, is this position:
☐ Full-time (approximately 40 hours per week)       ☐ Less than full-time

If you selected ‘Less than full time,’ does the dean/director/coordinator have another position on campus?
☐ Yes       ☐ No

The dean/director/coordinator’s other campus role is as a/an:
☐ Academic affairs administrator
☐ Faculty member
☐ Student affairs administrator
☐ Other

Evaluation Results

Has your first-year seminar been formally assessed or evaluated since fall 2003?
☐ Yes       ☐ No

What type of evaluation was conducted?
Focus groups with instructors ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Focus groups with students ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Individual interviews with instructors ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Individual interviews with students ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Student course evaluation ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Survey instrument ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know
Use of collected institutional data ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know

If other than the types of evaluation listed above, please describe.
________________________________________________________________________

Did your institution create a survey instrument?
☐ Yes       ☐ No

Did your institution use an established instrument?
☐ Yes       ☐ No

If you used an established instrument, please identify. (Select all that apply.)
☐ First-Year Initiative (FYI)
☐ National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
☐ Your First College Year (YFCY)
☐ Other

If ‘Other,’ please describe the survey instrument used. ___________________________________________
What were the outcomes of your assessment and research? (Select all that apply.)

- Improved grade-point average
- Improved peer connections with peers
- Increased academic abilities
- Increased level of student participation in campus activities
- Increased out-of-class student/faculty interaction
- Increased persistence to graduation
- Increased persistence to sophomore year
- Increased student satisfaction with faculty
- Increased student satisfaction with the institution
- Increased student use of campus services
- Other

If ‘Other,’ please describe the outcomes of your assessment and research.

__________________________________________________________________________

Survey Responses

It is our practice to make available to all requesting institutions specific and general information gathered from this survey.

Please select the appropriate response.

- You may share my survey responses.
- Please do not share my survey responses.