2017 Syllabus Preparation and Teambuilding Workshop Key Takeaways

This year, eight Syllabus Preparation and Teambuilding workshops were held to prepare teaching teams for the upcoming semester of University 101. During these workshops, the University 101 Programs staff shared assessment findings and provided updates regarding resources. In addition, instructors and peer/graduate leaders engaged in discussion among their teaching teams.

1. What we Learned
   - For the 8th straight year, the quality of the UNIV 101 course continued to improve (see slide 4).
   - The seven factors on the FYSA that determine overall course effectiveness were explained. (Please see the attached document for a list of these factors).
   - We were successful in five of the seven areas, but did not do as well in utilizing course materials or helping students improve academic skills (writing and oral presentations).
   - In order to improve on these two areas, we identified top performing instructors in each category and asked them to share their strategies and recommendations on how to incorporate these factors into the classroom (see slides 7-8 for an overview of these recommendations).
   - This year we themed the qualitative questions in the end-of-course evaluations to gain a deeper understanding of what students think about the course. We identified the top five most and least valuable aspects of UNIV 101 (see slides 10-11 for these lists).
      - The biggest takeaway from the least valuable aspects list is that it is important to be intentional about the integration of each activity and assignment in UNIV 101. Students appreciated when instructors explained the purpose behind what they were doing in class.
      - Campus Partner presentations appeared on both the most valuable and least valuable aspects list. Students found these presentations to be less valuable when they felt like there were too many throughout the semester or that the content was repetitive. This emphasized the importance of effectively integrating Campus Partner presentations into the class and allowing time for students to process the content.

2. Syllabus Video Discussion
   - We created a video in order to hear students’ perspectives on a variety of components of course syllabi. Participants discussed the importance of explaining not only the content of the syllabus to students but also telling them how it will be utilized throughout the semester. You can view the video on our YouTube channel.
   - When you are constructing your syllabus, peer and graduate leaders can offer a helpful perspective in the review of the tone and language.
   - As a result of this video, we updated the office hours language on our syllabus template to align with the student feedback we received. You can view the updated syllabus template on Sharepoint.

3. Co-instructor Decisions to Make
   - Throughout the fall 2016 semester, our office wrestled with a couple of questions regarding best practices of the facilitation of the alcohol lesson and the use of the GroupMe application in UNIV 101 classes. Specifically, we discussed the implications of instructors’ presence in both the alcohol lesson and the class GroupMe. In order to gain clarity and insight into the topics, we assembled a taskforce of instructors and peer leaders. Please refer to the documents in your folder to view the takeaways from the taskforce.
4. Campus Partner Presentations
   • The full list of presentations that will be offered this fall is available on the U101 website. You can click on the title of the presentation to see the abstract, who will be presenting, and the outline of activities.
   • Beginning June 7, instructors can use ScheduleCenter to sign up for Campus Partner presentations.
   • New for this year: Campus Partner Summer Showcase on June 1 and 2. This is an opportunity to see presentations before signing up for them.
   • Reminders:
     o We recommend that you sign up for 3-6 presentations.
     o The instructor should be present during the presentation.
     o Avoid scheduling presentations back to back. Campus Partner presentations are more valuable to students when there is opportunity to both set up and debrief the content.
     o Please fill out the assessment for each presentation that is sent to you through ScheduleCenter.

5. First-Year Reading Experience
   • The FYRE book is *Callings* by Dave Isay. USC is using a custom version of this book, consisting of fifteen selected interviews.
   • Instructors will receive a copy of the book at the Building Connections Conference and we will email peer/graduate leaders when they are available for pickup from our office.
   • FYRE will be structured the same as last year. There will be a week of programming September 25-29 with President Pastides giving an address on Tuesday, September 26 in the Koger Center. Please require or encourage your students to attend.
   • We ask that all UNIV 101 classes talk about this book, either during the week of programming or throughout the semester. We will provide discussion questions, lesson plans and activities that will help support you through this.