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2009 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates

Front Row, left to right:
Kirsten E. Stoller, Marketing Manager, Wadsworth/Cengage Learning; **Jennifer Keup**, Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition; **M. Stuart Hunter**, Assistant Vice Provost, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition/University 101 Programs; **Nina Glisson**, Conference Coordinator, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition; **Shani Fisher**, Senior Sponsoring Editor, Wadsworth/Cengage Learning

Back Row, left to right:
D. Kim Sawrey, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; **Felicia L. Ganther**, Executive Director, Student Life, College of Lake County; **Gayle A. Williams**, Assistant Dean, University College, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; **Lisa Harris Bortman**, Associate Dean, Director of First-Year Programs, Academic Advising, & Assessment, Whittier College; **Jennifer Griggs**, Director, Learning Resource Center, Butler University; **Debra K. Borden**, Associate Professor of Psychology, Corning Community College; **Christy Price**, Professor of Psychology, Dalton State College; **Ralph J. Rascati**, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of University College, Kennesaw State University; **Steven Higgins**, Director of the Phillip A. Heath Learning Center, The Ohio State University at Lima

Not pictured:
Michele Rasmussen, Associate Dean & Director, Academic Advising Center, Duke University

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and Wadsworth/Cengage Learning announced the 10 educators who were selected as the 2009 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates at the 28th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience in Orlando, Florida. These educators share a common goal of improving the educational experience for entering college students. They have been awarded this distinction for their exceptional work on behalf of first-year students and for the impact their efforts have on the students and culture of their institutions. Their achievements can be viewed at www.sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/advocates/currentyear/.

The Big Picture

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Why Don't First-Year Students Do the Required Reading? Possible Causes, Probable Solutions

An oft-cited rule of thumb for college students is that they should spend at least two hours working on a course outside of class for every one hour spent in class (AAC&U, 2002). If students applied this rule to their reading assignments, more content could be covered through independent reading, freeing up class time for deeper coverage of course content via active and collaborative learning, or coverage of additional content and skills. Unfortunately, however, studies consistently show that fewer than one third of students complete the assigned reading due on any given day (e.g., Hobson, 2003), and an increasing number of students do not even purchase the textbook required for the course (Gilbert, 1996).

This article focuses on two specific strategies for promoting first-year students' motivation and ability to read independently: (a) setting the tone early that reading is a course expectation and (b) integrating textbook reading with classroom learning.

Setting the Tone Early

Students often do not understand why instructors place such great emphasis on independent reading or why a particular reading is important or pertinent to the course goals (Hobson, 2004). One major characteristic of courses in which students do not complete assigned reading is failure of the instructor to explain and justify the required reading (Grunert, 1997). This is why it is critical for instructors to set the tone early. Strategies for underscoring the importance of reading include:

- Providing a clear and explicit statement in the course syllabus about why the text was chosen and its relevance to success in the course, college, and in life beyond college. On the first day of class, the instructor should reinforce this printed statement verbally.

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- Assigning a short reading on the first day of class that students should complete by the next class session. This practice can develop good reading habits and reduce the risk of procrastinating and falling behind on out-of-class assignments.
- Before a reading assignment is due, reminding students of the assignment, reinforcing its importance, and previewing its highlights—to pique student interest and curiosity. Research indicates that if assignments are merely listed in the syllabus and not expressly articulated (or reiterated) near the date when they are to be completed, students are less likely to do the assigned reading (e.g., Lowman, 1995).

Integrating Reading With Classroom Learning

Establishing the connection between classroom content and the text is critical not only to encourage students to complete reading assignments but also to create a more holistic approach to the learning experience. Strategies to achieve this integration include:

- Explicitly indicating how and where the readings relate to concepts covered in the class or to specific classroom activities.
- Asking students non-threatening, open-ended questions about the assigned reading (e.g., What ideas in the chapter really "hit home"? or What sections do you think were most interesting or useful?).
- Open-ended questions, which call for more than one correct or acceptable answer, invite multiple responses and welcome a diversity of perspectives rather than one (and only one) correct answer (Cuseo, 2005).
- Rather than continually relying on student volunteers to answer questions, posing questions to individual students by name to provide an incentive for personal accountability, especially for nonreaders or shy students who may be content to sit back and let others answer all the questions. In addition to ensuring that all students are expected to do the reading, calling on students by name sends the message that the instructor is interested in students as individuals and transforms questions from anonymous queries into personal invitations. If a good base of rapport is established with the class early in the term, students should not feel "picked on" or threatened by answering open-ended questions about the assigned reading.
- Having students use the textbook during a portion of class time. Students will be more likely to read their text if they are expected to bring it, refer to it, and actually use it in class. The following practices support this recommendation:

    1) Preview the chapter in class and point out any unfamiliar terminology (e.g., an FYE text may refer to support services and programs by different names than those used on campus). Previewing provides an effective orientation to the reading and can lead to more successful class discussions.

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If students must read, expect them to complain.

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2) Before a reading assignment is due, ask students in class to survey the topics and subtopics to be covered and have them share their feelings or prior knowledge (or what they think they already know) about the topics. This strategy helps students find personal meaning with the reading, which should increase their motivation to read. It also helps students practice the effective reading habit of previewing the chapter's organization before beginning to read its content.
3) During class discussions and small-group work, remind students that they should draw from and build on ideas found in the textbook.
4) Reserve class time to show students how to pick out important textbook information and to begin reading assigned sections that contain high-priority information. This is particularly relevant to first-year students who may be struggling to negotiate new learning strategies for college-level content. As Maryellen Weimer (1989) warns: "If students must read, expect them to complain. They don't like to be held responsible for content in the book not covered in class [because] they don't think they'll be able to figure out what the professor considers important" (p. 1). A reading specialist from academic-support services may also be invited to class for this purpose.

This article focused primarily on strategies designed to promote students' intrinsic motivation for reading. In the next issue of *E-Source*, the focus will be on extrinsic motivational strategies that create clear and direct connections between textbook reading and course grades.

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PictureIt: Exploring the Undergraduate Experience Through Photography and Discussions

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James Madison University (JMU) is a comprehensive institution primarily serving traditional undergraduates. One of the responsibilities of the University's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is to collect student data that can be used to help faculty, staff, and students learn more about and enrich the undergraduate experience. Data are also used to help JMU meet its mission of "…preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives."

In 2006, OIR launched an innovative research project, PictureIt, to learn about the JMU experience through the eyes, images, and comments of first-year students. Based on the adage that "a picture is worth a thousand words," students used photography and discussion of the images as a means to document and reflect on their undergraduate experience, observe personal change, increase awareness of their lives and those around them, and share this information with the campus community.

"Playing 'Spoons'…with knives." Vicki Stratton – First Year.
(photo courtesy of the author)

"JMU Spirit - I just love this picture because of all the school spirit in it." Julie Irizarry – First Year.
(photo courtesy of the author)

Eighteen students (i.e., 13 women and 5 men) were randomly selected and invited to participate in the project. With innovation grant monies received from the division of student affairs, OIR provided each PictureIt participant with a $125 stipend per term and other incentives; students supplied their own cameras. During three two-week periods (i.e., after orientation, mid-November, and early April), students took pictures of what was important to them and uploaded the images to a picture-sharing web site. Students then met with OIR staff individually and chose 10 images to discuss. They also convened in a large group with other staff and JMU faculty where each student presented and discussed three photos.

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To assess the benefit of the program, the PictureIt students were surveyed on their JMU experience, queried for areas of campus improvement, and asked to rate how much they had changed through the project. Of the 16 remaining participants (i.e., there was some attrition with students leaving JMU and not being replaced in the study), all reported they are more reflective of their undergraduate experience and more aware of the people, places, and events happening around them. The majority also noted they were better able to identify how they have changed. As one student commented:

> I've learned that even the moments that, at the time, seem to be so insignificant can actually be very important and can remind you of what your year was all about. I try to think about that when I'm taking my pictures because even though something doesn't look important, I know it might be of huge importance later on.

"This is the beautiful view that I get from my townhouse. I never would have thought that it would be such a beautiful view, especially since the rent is so cheap, but I got lucky." Daniel Lanphier – Second Year. (photo courtesy of the author)

In addition, student discussions and survey results revealed an unexpected benefit—students valued having the opportunity to share their experiences with staff and feeling that staff cared about them personally.

Initially conceived only for a first-year cohort, PictureIt participants asked if they could continue into their sophomore year. The project was so well received by students, faculty, and staff that funding has been secured to follow these students until they graduate.

Interesting trends have emerged in the first two years of the project. The first-year students' photos tended to be *dorm-centric* or *campus-centric*. Images

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Students valued having the opportunity to share their experiences with staff.

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focused more on campus events and new friends; very few students documented their classroom experiences. The sophomore year images were profoundly different from the first year. As college studies became a higher priority and living situations changed (e.g., half the participants moved off campus), sophomore photos reflected these changes with images displaying more experiences outside JMU and more academic pictures.

"According to e-campus, he is Fred Laspina. According t his syllabus, he is FC La Spina. I know more than that. I've had him for each semester of my sophomore year and I enjoy him." Damodhar Mallya – Second Year. (photo courtesy of the author)

In addition to sharing the images in discussion groups, an article on the project appeared in the alumni magazine, selected images from each student were displayed in a diversity gallery exhibit in the campus center, and photos are displayed on the student portal for JMU and the University's PictureIt web site. Faculty are also encouraged to use the photos as talking points to initiate conversations with undergraduates. The PictureIt students love the attention and are excited when friends stop them to discuss the pictures.

While the observations and data OIR collected are not groundbreaking, the project has provided JMU with images—many that could only be taken by the students—that reveal much about students' lives. PictureIt can be a relatively inexpensive and interesting means for other campuses to provide faculty, staff, and students a creative way to enhance understanding of and improve the undergraduate experience.

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To learn more, visit:
http://pictureitjmu.pbwiki.com/
www.jmu.edu/pictureitjmu
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What's the Big Deal About Sweet Tea? Making Out-of-State Students Feel at Home

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The out-of-state student population is recognized and highlighted in many admissions and enrollment management offices but rarely in support programs and services focused on retention. While transitioning to campus life, both in-state and out-of-state students can face similar issues of being homesick, finding new friends, and adjusting to new cultures; however, the obstacles can be multiplied for students far from familiar faces and loved ones. Yet, few, if any, research studies have examined retention and academic or social success for out-of-state students.

The University of South Carolina's Retention Committee (made up of faculty and staff across campus departments) examined campus retention data in 2006 and noted that while initial out-of-state enrollment was on the rise, out-of-state student retention rates were steadily declining. This was of particular concern since out-of-state students represented some of the University's highest performing students. Two satisfaction/transition surveys have been administered to out-of-state students (i.e., randomly sampled from University 101 classes and academic advisor lists), and the results confirmed that many students felt "out of place" and their transition had been a difficult one.

Students in the most recent 2007 survey ($N = 211$) reported challenges (a) finding friends and social outlets (80%), (b) adjusting to South Carolina culture (68%), (c) overcoming homesickness (74%), and (d) obtaining academic advising and financial aid (32%). The following student comments illustrate these challenges:

> Most of my friends are from the north; South Carolina students already have their friends. Public transportation not being available, it's hard for those of us who don't have cars.

Gamecocks Across America out-of-state student mentors. Used with permission of the author.

When friendship and cultural adjustment were not indicated as challenges, out-of-state students responded positively to the friendliness of native South Carolina students, the amount of state pride, and the opportunity to live independently, as suggested by these comments from students:

> There is a lot of state pride too. There are Palmetto trees everywhere! This experience has taught me to be independent and live on my own without my parents.

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To address the transition concerns of this student population and to increase retention rates, the University has implemented several programs and services and created a staff position. The Coordinator of Initiatives for Special Student Populations works with out-of-state students in addition to other populations who have low rates of retention including transfer students, students of color, sophomores, and scholarship recipients. Out-of-state student retention rates are slowly increasing (e.g., retention data have been collected from one new initiative, *Gamecocks Across America*) as are as overall satisfaction scores. Students also report feeling more prepared in making the transition to Carolina. The services and programs include:

- **Gamecocks Across America**—Out-of-state upperclass students, representing northeastern, midwestern, and western states, volunteer to serve as out-of-state student mentors and share their personal experiences with new students and to assist in the university transition process. The mentors are required to meet or communicate with new students at least once a week for the first month and then biweekly for the remainder of the semester. Retention data from the first mentoring cohort showed an 86% return rate from first year to second year.
- **Seminars**—The seminars are designed to teach out-of-state students about their new home away from home and to address topics related to academic success (e.g., focusing on time management, advising, tutoring, and campus opportunities). The most popular seminar, titled "What's The Big Deal About Sweet Tea?", covers the area's culture and traditions, and students have the opportunity to taste southern foods such as grits, ham biscuits, boiled peanuts, and most importantly, sweet tea. Offered three to four times a year, the seminar attracts more than 150 students and has received favorable coverage in the local newspaper and on television.
- **Road Trips**—Columbia, South Carolina, is centrally located between North Carolina and Georgia and offers a variety of exploration opportunities ranging from mountains, swamps, beaches, scenic fall foliage routes, and historic urban centers, all within a relatively short driving distance. The road trips give out-of-state students the chance to develop new relationships with each other and explore the southeast while having fun.

Key components in developing out-of-state student retention programming include (a) data collection (e.g., from registrar, assessment, and retention offices); (b) issues identification (e.g., focus groups); (c) evaluation (e.g., surveys); and (d) identifying unique cultural, regional, and campus-specific characteristics. With creative modifications to include the cultural aspects of the campus and surrounding community, existing orientation and retention programs can be tailored to the specific needs of out-of-state students or new programming can be developed. As students become more engaged and successfully adapt to their new life and environs, the likelihood of out-of-state students succeeding and persisting increases.

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Related Articles in *E-Source*

Thacker, M. (2008). Welcome home: Programs for out-of-state students help ease their transition to college. *5*(5), 12.

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Transition to University: An Adjustment and Retention Program for First-Year Students

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In an attempt to facilitate the transition to university life for incoming students, most universities now offer support-group interventions in addition to orientation programs. Support groups, in particular, have been found to have positive effects on transitioning students, including reports of decreased depression levels, perceived stress, loneliness, and substance use, and higher social support and retention rates compared to students not involved in support groups (Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2005; Pancer, Pratt, & Alisat, 2006).

Recognizing the importance of student support on the successful transition of first-year students to university, Queens University of Charlotte, a comprehensive, private university located in Charlotte, North Carolina, initiated a pilot study in August 2006 of a peer support-group program. The pilot study involved six upper-class cofacilitators and three groups of first-year students ($N = 18$). In August 2007, the program expanded to include 10 cofacilitators and five groups of first-year students ($N = 54$).

To recruit students for the groups, all first-year students were contacted via mail in early August inviting them to participate in an online survey. Those who completed the online survey were then contacted and invited to voluntarily participate in the weekly discussion groups. Cofacilitators were selected from an applicant pool based on their interview and academic performance. New students met weekly, for the first nine weeks of school, in groups with upper-class students to discuss a number of relevant issues related to the transition to university life. The protocol for these meetings was based on The Transition to University (T2U) program developed at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (Pancer et al., 2006). Session topics included an introduction, new social ties, work and social life balance, peer pressure and personal values, relationship issues, diversity, previous social ties, expectations and reality, and home life and school life.

Meeting times were equally divided into four segments and included (a) a check-in that allowed participants to talk about their previous week, (b) exercises and strategies related to the topic of the week, (c) general discussion about the topic, and (d) evaluation and wrap-up. For the topic of new social ties, for example, the check-in might be "What were the best and worst social events so far?" followed by an exercise on meeting new people at the University (e.g., compiling a list of new acquaintances, sharing with the group the details of one encounter, and then exchanging other socializing strategies). The session concluded with an open discussion about the experience of meeting new people on campus (e.g., Have you ever met someone you didn't really like? How do you deal with that?). Topics were appropriately timed to

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correspond with transitional issues occurring during those early weeks (e.g., scheduling the previous-social-ties topic the week after students return from fall break).

The program also enabled student group facilitators to develop leadership and social facilitation skills such as directing a discussion, maintaining student engagement, and eliciting students' comments. Cofacilitators enrolled in a group dynamics course where the T2U program served as a practicum and learning opportunity.

Assessing the Program

In November 2007, first-year students were asked to complete an online questionnaire assessing variables related to the transition to university life. In addition, T2U participants completed a short weekly survey using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = least; 5 = most) to rate their comfort and enjoyment levels during each segment of the discussion as well as providing any commentary or feedback on their experience. Weekly survey scores were combined and averaged across all participants for each week's meeting. A fairly consistent trend in weekly average evaluation scores indicated a steady increase in enjoyment and comfort as the experience and semester progressed, ranging from 4.34 (Introduction-Week 1) to 4.77 (Home Life and School Life-Week 9). The overall mean across the nine sessions was 4.53.

Anecdotal evidence also supports the positive impact of the program as illustrated by the following comments from a T2U student and a cofacilitator:

> Through the first few weeks of T2U, I have learned not only what to do in situations I may find myself in during college, but also I have learned about myself through other people. I didn't have many strategies, but now I do. (T2U student)

> This was an incredible experience. I learned that even the students who didn't participate in the discussion very often were genuinely helped by attending group and listening to the experiences of others. (student cofacilitator)

With regards to retention, data from the fall 2007 cohort indicate that 33% more T2U students returned for a second year in the fall 2008 compared to a control group of students who initially expressed an interest in participating in the groups but could not meet during any of the group times (*N* = 34). Additionally, when compared to the entire first-year cohort, the T2U students were also 33% more likely to return for a second year than the non-T2U students (*N* = 238), suggesting this program successfully increased the retention rate among the first-year class.

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Moving Forward

With the support of the administration and backed by the success of the pilot study, the T2U program successfully grew in the fall of 2008 to include 16 cofacilitators who were responsible for leading 11 groups of first-year students (*N* = 96). In January 2009, Queens implemented a new pilot study extending the T2U program into the spring semester. Groups currently meet every two weeks to discuss topics relevant to the spring semester. These session topics include reunion (when students resume classes after winter break); an open-ended discussion on a subject of the group's choice; relationships (around Valentine's Day weekend); spring break plans; procrastination (during mid-terms); looking ahead (during fall registration); and finally, looking back. It is hypothesized that the spring sessions will serve as booster sessions and that students participating in these meetings will report greater overall adjustment and continue to demonstrate higher retention rates compared to non-T2U students and T2U students who only participated in the fall meetings.

At present, Queens is the only U.S. university to conduct the T2U program and collaborates with five Canadian universities, including Wilfrid Laurier University, York University, Memorial University, University of Guelph, and University of Toronto. This collaboration includes ongoing T2U groups at each site, regular phone conferences to review protocol, and multisite data collection and comparisons. When considering the diversity among these universities, including size and race, the continued success at each institution suggests that this program may be easily implemented on a variety of college and university campuses.

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A College 101 Program for At-Risk High School Students

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Oakton Community College in Des Plaines Illinois has offered an elective College 101: College Success seminar to new students for 17 years; however, at-risk students (e.g., first-generation, low socioeconomic status, poor learning skills) frequently did not enroll or enrolled after their first semester in college. As a result, many at-risk students had difficulty navigating college, maintaining coursework, and persisting to the next academic level. To better prepare these students and provide more effective outreach at an earlier stage, Oakton piloted a program to prepare at-risk secondary students for college during their senior year of high school.

The pilot program involved tailoring existing recruitment and admission activities to at-risk students attending area high schools and combining these efforts with a new College 101 seminar taught by instructors from the community college but offered onsite at the high school. Activities that were already in place included campus visits and onsite early bird placement testing, registration, and orientation. Modifications included adding financial aid workshops and utilizing the state of Illinois P-16 funding for dual enrollment, historically used primarily for advanced or AP students, to cover the College 101 seminar.

After a year of planning with high school counselors and college administrators, the pilot program was launched in 2004 at one district high school. High school counselors and other support staff selected 15 prospective college students from at-risk populations including those who spoke English as a second language (ESL), were first generation, had disabilities, were from families with low socioeconomic status, or had other characteristics that put them at risk for succeeding in college. Students needed to demonstrate a motivation to go to college and possess a minimum C-average GPA. Counselors at the high school worked with the college instructor in coordinating meeting times, rooms, student passes, and troubleshooting problems.

The pilot course was taught by a college instructor from the Learning Center at Oakton who provided face-to-face instruction. Blackboard, an online course management system, was incorporated to provide flexibility in meeting times and introduce students to an online learning experience. After an initial orientation session, the course met once each week during the lunch period for 12 weeks. Students used Blackboard to complete assignments during the week. The high school College 101 curriculum strongly emphasized first-generation concerns (e.g., cultural values in conflict, family values, balancing family obligations with studies, financing college through alternative means), cultural competency, and diversity issues. High school students also joined in the general on-campus College 101 course initiatives such as the common reading program and related college field trip. Students who completed the course earned three hours of college credit.

> …define personal and career goals, develop learning skills, enhance cultural competency, and prepare for future college success.

The specific learning outcomes of the program were to define personal and career goals, develop learning skills, enhance cultural competency, and prepare for future college success. As part of Oakton's College 101 assessment, the Learning

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Assessment Style Survey Inventory (LASSI) was used to assess students' learning styles at the beginning and end of the seminar. While it was hypothesized that pre- and post-test LASSI scores would show a difference, no significant change was noted. In fact, we learned that ESL students had difficulty understanding the LASSI questions, suggesting that other assessment methods might be more appropriate for this group. Students were then interviewed and asked to identify their preferred learning style and how they applied this knowledge to their studies. The interviews provided more concrete evidence that students were able to successfully express their preferred learning style and identify its relevance to their college and career futures. Self-assessment surveys demonstrated greater tolerance and understanding of culture and diversity issues. In addition, the majority of the pilot program students enrolled in college, and anecdotal reports suggested a smoother collegiate transition from high school.

Challenges encountered during the pilot program were related to students' computer literacy skills and their ability to work independently and manage an additional course. Staff assumed that students would have computer access and basic computer literacy when, in reality, several students did not have computers or Internet access at home. As a result, computer access on the Oakton campus was made available to students. Building a virtual learning community through Blackboard also proved difficult and required an assignment that students communicate with fellow students and the instructor via computer. Furthermore, several students were unable to manage their self-learning without daily contact with the instructor, and course material needed to be revised into smaller attainable units.

The pilot year brought the program an Innovation Award from the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators. The program not only proved successful for the students but enhanced the high school-community college partnerships, which had stagnated. After the initial pilot year, the program was expanded to include five high schools with more than 150 students participating. In 2008, state P-16 dual-credit funding became unavailable; however, Oakton and the participating high schools recognized the value of this initiative and now share program costs covering student tuition, fees, and faculty pay. Many of the students in the program have enrolled at Oakton or other institutions, and several students have been awarded scholarships and are active in student government and organizations. Those students who delayed college have a clearer picture of the skills required to be successful.

New funding opportunities and strategies are necessary to expand the program to seven additional schools. Other plans are to conduct a longitudinal research project to track students' success and persistence rates. Partnerships with federal grant programs are also being explored.

The high school College 101 program could be adapted by other higher education institutions that have cooperative relationships with feeder high schools. The Oakton program successfully demonstrated that high school students who participated in College 101 had a greater opportunity to attend college and a more realistic vision of college goals and expectations.

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Related Articles in *E-Source*

Strayhorn, T. L. (2009). Bridging the gap from high school to college for at-risk first-year students. *6*(3), 9.

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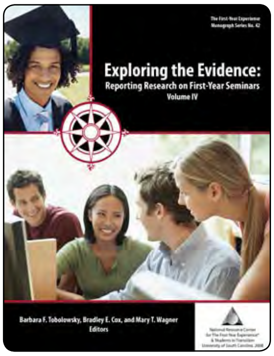
What's Happening at the National Resource Center

Call for Proposals

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is developing a new monograph, edited by Paul Gore and Louisa Phinney, to highlight evidence-based programs and services designed to promote the career development of students in transition. We are soliciting proposals for cases to be included in this monograph representing a variety of transition points (e.g., precollege, the first college year, sophomore year, junior year, senior year, and post-graduation). Proposals describing programs or services that promote the career development or preparation of students at any stage of education or transition will be considered. Submissions from postsecondary and secondary institutions of all types are invited.

Please visit www.nrc.fye.sc.edu/publications/cfp/ for proposal guidelines and to submit a proposal. Deadline for receipt of proposals is July 1, 2009. For more information, contact Dr. Paul Gore, volume editor, at Paul.Gore@utah.edu.

Publications



The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is pleased to make available the fourth volume of ***Exploring the Evidence: Reporting Research on First-Year Seminars***, edited by Angela M. Griffin and Jonathan Romm.

Case studies on first-year seminars from 21 different colleges and universities are included in the collection and report on a variety of variables such as course-specific learning outcomes, academic achievement, retention, student perceptions of and satisfaction with the seminar, and academic progress. Each case includes an overview of the institutional context and descriptions of the seminar, research methods, and findings.

Exploring the Evidence is available for download at www.sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr. The collection is available at no cost, but you will need Adobe Acrobat to download this resource.

Research

The National Resource Center has completed data collection for the 2008 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives. A summary of the findings will be available on the web site in summer 2009.

See HAPPENING, p. 16

E-Source Submission Guidelines

For complete guidelines and issue dates, see www.nrc.fye.sc.edu/esource/submission.

Audience: *E-Source* readers include academic and student affairs administrators and faculty from a variety of fields interested in student transitions. All types of institutions are represented in the readership.

Style: Articles, tables, figures, and references should adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) style. *E-Source* does not publish endorsements of products for sale.

Format: Submissions should be sent via e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment.

Length: Original feature-length articles should be 750-1200 words. Annotations of new resources should be no more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length. Photographs are welcome.

Please address all questions and submissions to:

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Conferences

Institute for First-Year Seminar Leadership

April 19-21, 2009 • Asheville, North Carolina

The National Resource Center invites first-year seminar directors to this unique event designed to engage participants on issues critical to first-year student success. A team of experts will examine current trends and practices in a collegial environment that will provide participants with the tools needed to help enhance the success of first-year seminars on their campuses. For more information on this and other National Resource Center events, please visit our web site www.sc.edu/fye/events/FYSdirectors/.

22nd International Conference on The First-Year Experience®

July 20-23, 2009 • Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Join educators from around the world as we explore approaches for enhancing the first-year experience for students. For more information on the conference or submitting a proposal for presentation, please visit www.sc.edu/fye/events/international/. Proposal deadline is March 15, 2009.

Initiatives

New Graduate Student Listserv

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is pleased to announce a new initiative toward a renewed focus on graduate student success. After publishing a monograph on graduate student transitions, the Center created a listserv to provide faculty, staff, and students with an outlet to discuss strategies and programs that address the challenges students face as they transition into and through graduate school. For more information on Monograph 50, ***Graduate Students in Transition: Assisting Students Through the First Year*** or to join this innovative listserv, please visit:
www.sc.edu/fye/publications/
http://listserv.sc.edu/archives/grad-list.html

HOME

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