

## **Appalachian State University**

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### **The Appalachian Way: Partnerships for Success**

Developing meaningful partnerships with different programs on campus is the key to a successful Freshman Seminar program. This session will share partnering strategies that have worked at Appalachian State University over the past three years. Representatives from Freshman Seminar and Freshman Learning Communities at Appalachian State University will present an overview of the coordinating efforts of Freshman Seminar, Freshman Learning Communities, Academic Advising, the Summer Reading program and the Learning Assistance Program as we seek to enhance academic success of students and avoid duplication. Additionally, the presenters will discuss assessment of these efforts and problems associated with this coordination including dealing with personality conflicts, avoiding turf problems, and gaining support from the administration.

At Appalachian, one of Freshman Seminar's most successful partnerships is with Freshman Learning Communities. Students are co-enrolled in a Freshman Seminar and a freshman level course (usually a core curriculum class). The two classes focus on a common academic interest or theme such as Education, Interior Design, or Business. The purpose of these communities is to make it easier for students to form study groups and integrate class material while making friends, exploring majors, and transitioning to college. Additionally, we will discuss the integration and success of the Summer Reading Program. All incoming freshmen at Appalachian are provided with a common reading as part of their orientation to the university. These efforts, combined with learning assistance instruction and academic advising have allowed us to develop a nationally recognized system of support for both our students and our instructors.

### **Art Institute of Dallas**

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### **Faculty Development: Specific Strategies for Instructors of First-Year Courses**

A study of entering freshmen persistence beyond the first quarter of attendance showed the Art

Institutes International that students likelihood of dropping out was highly correlated with cumulative grade point average at the mid-point of the first quarter. Even though the study looked at only one of AII campuses, the results were compelling enough to begin immediate implementation of faculty training concerning earlier intervention measures, specifically the inclusion of several assessments of student work before Week Five of the quarter along with follow-up strategies when early grades indicate a need for intervention. For an institution at which the majority of classes are hands-on and project-based in order to develop competencies students must demonstrate at courses end, this was a shift in thinking for many faculty.

One of AII regionally-accredited campuses, the Art Institute of Dallas, begins this component of faculty training for new instructors at their orientation to the college. With the recent addition of an online faculty development curriculum, the college has expanded this training in early intervention by weaving it into the curriculum. Additionally, multiple intervention strategies, after at-risk students are identified early, have been found to be effective, but only when working in combination with each other. Faculty engage in developmental activities to help them navigate successfully and in concert with colleagues as the entire campus attempts to assist struggling first-quarter students.

The session will describe this interplay, a sort of checks-and-balances approach, as well as the training faculty receive concerning “what to do” to make this dance successful. Participants will get a look at the online curriculum and the components of AiD’s first-quarter student early-warning program. The system is not perfect, but it has helped AiD improve persistence among first-quarter students.

### **Auburn University**

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### **The Impact Of A First-Year Orientation Course On At-Risk Students At A Large, Public Research University**

The investigated the effectiveness of a first-year experience orientation course at a large, Southeastern, public research university on students in general, and at-risk students specifically. Students were categorized as being in one of eight different groups: High-risk, moderate-risk, low-risk and no-risk, who took the course, and high-risk, moderate-risk, low-risk and no-risk, who did not take the course. Each treatment risk level was statistically assessed as equivalent with its control counterpart based on comparing academic, psychosocial, and nonacademic data collected prior to the first-year experience orientation course intervention.

The dependent variables were cumulative GPA at the end of the first year and retention as measured by the fact that participants were either enrolled in good standing at the beginning of their sophomore year, or they were not enrolled in good standing. It was hypothesized that the high-risk and moderate-risk groups are those students who would benefit most from taking the course as measured

by significantly better GPA's at the end of their first year in college and higher retention when compared with their matched control group.

The study used an archival research design that analyzed existing student records. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-tests, and logistic regression were the primary statistical techniques used to analyze the data.

A total of 324 student records were included in the present study. Results indicated that taking the first-year experience orientation course significantly and positively influenced first-year GPA's for moderate-risk and high-risk students. Taking the course also significantly and positively influenced retention, even for the low-risk and no-risk groups, which was not expected. The identification of four risk levels did not improve the researcher's ability to predict first-year GPA's or retention, but the data did support the hypothesis that the moderate-risk and high-risk groups would benefit most by taking the course.

GPA's of academically highly qualified students (no-risk and low-risk groups) were not significantly improved by taking the first-year experience orientation course, but GPA's of the moderate-risk and high-risk groups did significantly improve as expected. Retention was improved by the course for all groups. In spite of the limitations of this study, the data strongly supported the effectiveness of the first-year experience orientation course to increase retention and improve the GPA's of at-risk students and agrees with most other research on the value of these type courses (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996).

### **Avila College**

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### **Challenges and Successes of Maintaining a First Year Seminar**

Our presentation will discuss the challenges and successes in designing and maintaining the First Year Seminar program at Avila College, a four-year private Catholic institution. Our program was initiated under Student Affairs in 1989 as a transition course for first year students aimed at improving student success and retention. Since that time, Seminar has transitioned from a zero credit, optional course to a one credit, graded course required for all full-time freshmen. The course is now administered by Academic Affairs and a joint task force made up of faculty, Student Affairs staff, and students.

While student success has been a common goal, there have been mixed beliefs on how to attain the desired outcome. Additionally, since the program was initially started under Student Affairs, building credibility for the course with faculty has been one of the greatest challenges, but one that has been successfully met. Many faculty have taught as co-instructors on the teaching teams, made up

of one faculty, one student affairs staff, and one student. Additionally, the joint task force addresses questions and issues around Seminar and student retention.

One of the main tasks of the task force is to revise the curriculum each year in light of data collected through various assessments, including end-of-semester evaluations by students and instructors, focus groups and student-needs assessments. The curriculum of the Seminar began in 1989 addressing common student transition issues. These common issues continue into the Seminar course today but with a different learning approach. Currently, the curriculum is based on a service-learning model that fits with the college mission and values. The college campus community assists the teaching teams by providing workshops for students to address specific student needs. Workshop choices are based on results of a student needs assessment and are negotiated between the instructor and student.

### **Babson College**

Rob Major, Director, Foundation Program  
Keely Bethel-Penny, Program Coordinator

### **Evaluating Student Strengths and Weaknesses Prior to The First College Semester**

After the introduction of a competency-based curriculum in the fall of 1996, Babson College has been assessing new students' skills in a variety of academic areas prior to their arrival on campus. The assessments accomplish two important goals:

Provide the college with important data for curriculum planning in the upcoming academic year.  
Provide students with the opportunity to develop their skills if they demonstrate a weakness in a particular area.

The students complete the assessments during a one-day pre-orientation program titled the Foundation Assessment Program. The students are required to complete assessments in the following areas:

- ◆ Writing
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ Foreign Language (optional for placement purposes)

The assessments are conducted exclusively on computers using a combination of network and web-based applications. Students not attending the program on campus complete some (but not all) of the assessments from their home using a secure, web-based application.

The immediate assessment results can give students some important feedback as they plan their course schedules during the assessment day. Some of our practice options for students include software applications to help bolster mathematics skills and web based programs to improve technology skills. In addition, the results of the writing assessment can be used for placement in writing tutorials led by faculty during the fall semester.

The results of our continuing efforts to prepare our students academically by assessing their skills

during the summer have been encouraging. The data (i.e. grades in specific subjects where students were asked to practice) supports our goal of leveling the academic playing field as best as possible. This session will highlight the struggles, rewards, and future possibilities of skills assessment.

### **Bemidji State University**

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### **A Formula for Success: College Orientation + Life Career Planning = Successful First-Year Students**

The Educational Development Center (EDC) is a collegiate program sponsored by Bemidji State University (BSU), funded through the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO program. It is one of seven TRIO programs originally funded under the Higher Education Act of 1965 to help students overcome class, social, academic and cultural barriers to higher education. The EDC was recently awarded a five-year funding cycle and ranked in the top 10% nationwide for Student Support Services/TRIO programs.

The primary goal of our program is to increase the likelihood that participants will be retained at the institution through to graduation by providing them with a solid freshman year experience and support throughout their remaining years at BSU. Our program is comprehensive in that there are prescribed courses that all of our students take during their freshman year. College Orientation is offered fall semester for one credit. College Orientation is designed to introduce students to the University, including the academic, personal and social aspects of BSU. Our second semester Life Career Planning course is our answer to extending the first-year initiative beyond the first semester of college.

During spring semester our students take Life Career Planning taught by the same College Orientation instructor. This course is two credits and is designed to provide students with assistance in making effective career decisions. Through the use of values clarification exercises, career interest inventories, personality assessments, interviews and guest speakers students learn about the process of career decision-making. How their own interests, values and personality traits may lead them in a certain career direction is the end result. The connection that the students establish with their advisor/instructor during these courses increases their likelihood of academic and personal success and retention at the university. It is the combination of all of these factors that has made the Educational Development Center/TRIO one of the best in the country.

### **Central Connecticut State University**

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### **Getting Out The Facts On High-Risk Drinking: Peers Make The Best Messengers**

Research done on many college campuses, including our own, reveals that students believe heavy drinkers are in the majority, when in fact, moderate drinking is the true norm. This misperception of norms is much more likely to be seen in first-year students whose impressions are based on distorted media stories about campus life.

Four years ago we began a social marketing campaign aimed at first-year students. Accurate messages about the drinking norms and the negative consequences were delivered through the communication channels suggested by students as the most effective way to reach other students. Student focus groups were used to define the high risk consequences of drinking, including effects on health, safety, and academics.

Peers also assisted in developing the elements of the media campaign such as posters, newspaper ads, mugs, and other give-aways, all carrying accurate norming messages. Peer educators held meetings in residence halls and staged various other campus events to reach commuting students. Media messages were consistent throughout the campaign.

In addition to the media blitz described above, the key information was delivered to academic classes with a special focus on our First-Year Experience (FYE) courses required of all new students. In most cases the Prevention Specialist and/or a trained Peer Educator delivered a social marketing unit which included the use of Alcohol 101, a norm-based interactive CD-ROM. The response from FYE instructors has been quite positive, leading to many repeat invitations year after year. We found that this channel was the most successful in reaching and changing the attitudes of first-year students.

Data collected over four years indicates that we have been able to alter students' perceptions to more closely reflect the true, lower norms. In addition, one-third of our first-year students report a reduction in alcohol use. These and other findings demonstrate the positive impact of our program.

Our conference presentation will focus on the key role peers play in all aspects of the campaign. We believe that our success rests on peer involvement in planning and delivering the messages that best resonate with students. We will share our strategies in the presentation and discuss how they might be transplanted to other institutions.

#### **Central State University**

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### **Intensive English 105: An Alternative Approach to Enhancing Writing Skills for “At Risk” Students**

Under pressure from The Ohio Board of Regents, parents, and students, Central State University eliminated its developmental English course several years ago. Since then, students scoring in the lower third on their writing placement exam have continued to struggle in their introductory writing course. To address the needs of these students without reviving old problems, CSU set out to find a new approach. Building on a workshop model in use at The Ohio State University and utilizing its Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program, CSU created an intensive version of its “regular” introductory writing course. The new, intensive course presents the same content requirements and satisfies CSU’s general education requirements the same as the regular course, but requires two additional contact hours. During these two hours, students are required to attend workshop sessions where their instructors and trained peers from the SI Program provide intensive, one-on-one writing instruction. Students may also receive additional assistance from SI peers outside of class and workshop meetings. Challenges in developing this course included:

- ◆ Overcoming the history of basic/developmental writing at CSU
- ◆ Developing a suitable model
- ◆ Convincing the registrar and faculty in other departments to accept this course as equivalent to the existing course
- ◆ Convincing faculty in other departments to accept two additional two credit hours in the gen. ed. core
- ◆ Staffing the course with experienced, full-time faculty
- ◆ Identifying and training peers for the class

Although the course is being taught on only a pilot basis in Fall 2001, preliminary responses from faculty and students involved in the course are positive. The English faculty hope that these outcomes will enable us to have the course adopted as a permanent part of the curriculum in winter, 2002.

#### **Clemson University**

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#### **Learning Actively: Writing, Thinking, and Doing**

This session will cover four topics: five-minute writings, object lessons, activities, and self-assessed multiple-choice questions.

Five Minute Writings: I begin each of my classes with a short writing to get the students focused on the topic of the day, to take roll, and to give the students an opportunity to write a little informal prose for every class. During this time, I also return papers and take care of other minor administrative tasks. All assignments are due when I collect these papers. I find that this daily assignment accomplishes many goals, including provision of feedback for me and motivation for attendance and timeliness for students. Not only do I benefit, but student evaluations also regularly praise the benefits of this little assignment.

Object Lessons: When introducing each chapter in our text, I try to involve the students in a relevant object lesson for the main topic. Whenever possible I use a student volunteer for this performance. I will share object lessons for the following topics: time management, reading, and diversity, and briefly describe several others.

Activities: My students like to do things. They enjoy group activities, puzzles, and applications of the concepts covered in lecture and text. I will discuss some of the exercises we do for these topics: health, money, note-taking, thinking, and tests. I will provide in hard copy or CD format copies of the exercises and object lessons I use.

Self-Assessed Multiple Choice: This year I have started using self-assessed multiple choice questions as part of my exams and quizzes. After the students have selected an answer on a multiple-choice test, they then assess their own confidence in that answer. I find that this technique improves their grades by forcing them to think about their answering process. I will share my experience and student comments on this method.

After 50 minutes of presentation and demonstration, we will have a ten-minute question-and-answer period.

### **Coastal Carolina University**

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### **Footprints on the Sands of Time: An Inside Look at the Coastal Carolina University Peer Mentor Program**

Since its beginning in 1996, the Coastal Carolina University Peer Mentoring Program has enjoyed success by recruiting outstanding students to serve as mentors to first-year students involved in the freshman success seminars. This program pairs exceptional students with a Faculty Mentor to provide unique, personal support to students during their first year of college through the planning and instruction of a freshman success seminar. Mentors are involved in all aspects of course instruction such as syllabus planning, facilitating class discussions, assisting in the evaluation of students' work, and committing to out-of-class time with students. While earning three hours of course credit



as a reward for their services, mentors also have the opportunity to explore the possibility of becoming a professional in higher education while gaining valued resume experience in leadership, presentation skills, and teaching on the collegiate level.

Peer Mentors are selected through a challenging process that requires that they be in good academic standing with the University, exemplify a strong interest in helping students become involved and academically successful, and indicate a willingness to work closely with a Faculty Mentor in the planning and instruction of a success seminar. Students selected to be Peer Mentors are required to enroll in *University 300: Principles of Peer Mentoring*, an interactive workshop designed to prepare mentors for teaching a success seminar. Mentors also are required to enroll in *University 301: Applied Principles of Peer Mentoring*, a course that examines important first-year issues, during the fall semester that they co-teach a success seminar.

This presentation will provide a detailed examination of the Peer Mentor Program, including the recruitment and training process, the various challenges associated with administering an effective mentoring program, resources created to assist mentors in their duties, comments from current mentors, and program assessment.

### **Colorado State University**

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### **First Year Seminars: What Do New Students Need to Know About Career Development?**

In the fall semester of 2000, Colorado State University implemented a First Year Seminar as a required component for all colleges. Projections were for 204 sections in that fall semester of 2000 and in our second year, 2001, we have grown to 214 sections serving 3,898 students! The Career Center began a pro-active approach to deliver a consistent message and serve the needs of these students in their classes.

During the summer of 2000 The Career Center developed a 5-minute CD-ROM that is used in each section as an overview of the career center and the services we offer. In conjunction with this CD-ROM, The Career Center developed a web site on their home page for first year seminar students and instructors. Services showcased here include a virtual tour of the career center, four-year career development plan, on-line assessments and career information. This comprehensive site delivers information to the student when they need it.

A follow up assignment can be given to the class that is web based. This allows the students to get back into The Career Center web site and do more exploration either in selecting a major or explor-

ing their chosen major. It also allows them to gather additional information on graduate schools and career paths they may follow.

This year a quick student evaluation form is being collected at the end of each class and instructor evaluations are being gathered for a second year. Results will help us refine and revise the information that we present and what students feel would be beneficial. Costs for developing the CD-ROM were under \$3,000 and it is easily up-dated each year. The web page was developed in house and does require maintenance. (<http://career.stuser.colostate.edu>)

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### **Concordia University, Wisconsin**

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### **On the Edge of Success: A Class and An Attitude for Students on Academic Probation**

What are we going to do with our students on academic probation? Concordia University Wisconsin has developed an intervention for transitioning students off academic probation. We view them as students on the edge of success. As educators and student-service personnel, we have a tendency to attribute a student's probationary status to an internal deficit such as poor work ethic or inadequate intellectual horsepower. For many students on probation, this explanation is inadequate.

This presentation will briefly outline the course and the topics covered, identify the goals of the class, and discuss exercises and assignments that have been effective. Perhaps most intriguing will be the information about why students have failed, and what they have learned from their failures and successes. Anyone interested in student success will find this presentation both practical and interactive.

### **Cumberland College**

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### **Establishing a High Service Profile: The Key to Student Retention**

This program is based on material from Service America: Doing Business in the New Economy by Karl Albrecht and Ron Zemke. "Establishing a High Service Profile" is designed to introduce participants to the barriers and opportunities of developing a superior service profile in their institution.

It addresses the principles involved in attaining a superior service profile and examines how to implement those principles.

#### **TRAINING OBJECTIVES**

Participants will have the following opportunities:

- ◆ To understand the financial impact of service on the “bottom line”
- ◆ To determine how to assess the customer’s perspectives of service
- ◆ To identify the key organizational dynamics underlying good or service
- ◆ To acquire new ways of creating a real commitment to good service and improving real and perceived service

#### **East Stroudsburg University**

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#### **Fostering Healthy Habits and Practices In the First-Year of College: holistic Approach to Student Adjustment and Retention**

This presentation will primarily focus on promoting a holistic approach to working with college students during the first year. Students experience a tremendous amount of stress due to uncertainties, responsibilities, changes and challenges they face in college. Since freshmen are most at risk to be vulnerable to these stressors, it is important for colleges and universities to start addressing these issues and begin taking the “whole” student into consideration.

The importance of the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual adjustment of the college student will be emphasized. The presentation will also address the impact stress has on student success and how learning to cope with everyday stressors can empower students and give them a sense of control over their rigorous academic endeavors.

#### **Ferris State University**

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#### **On Leading Horses to Water . . .**

The University College at Ferris State University was formed in 1997 to provide academic support services for all students enrolled at the university. Programs include developmental courses, educational and career counseling, tutoring, Structured Learning Assistance, disabilities services, and first-year seminars. During the first three years of operation, the staff in each of these programs worked diligently to help students be successful at Ferris. Although many students were served well, it was clear that the neediest students were not necessarily taking advantage of the services provided. Beginning in 2000-2001, the staff initiated a new approach to providing services to students who were enrolled in study skills courses, on academic probation, and dismissed and readmitted. These new initiatives were modeled after the Ferris approach to supplemental instruction, Structured Learning Assistance to make sure that the students were connected to the support services at Ferris. All four of these enhanced transition programs will be briefly described and results shared.

### **Florence-Darlington Technical College**

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### **A Learner Centered Approach to Teaching Organizational Skills, Goal Setting, and Time Management**

This session was designed to illustrate an approach to teaching, from a learner centered approach, the skills of organization, goal setting, and time management to first year students. Examples of the exercises that can be used to capture students' interest at the same time identifying their strengths and weaknesses will be demonstrated and provided for practical application. Participants will be engaged in the same processes and will have a chance to experiment with forms, exercises, and questionnaires that the first year student would encounter in taking this approach. Included are The Wheel-Daily Time Analysis; A Weekly Time Analysis, Identifying Time-Management Strengths and Weaknesses, a Ten Point Diagnostic Checkup and Goal Setting Forms.

### **Florida Memorial College**

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### **Beginning Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Strategies in the Freshman Seminar**

While many students today start college with writing deficiencies, our society, especially places of employment demand proficiency in writing. This session focuses on how colleges can accomplish that, starting in the freshman seminar.

The main purpose of the session is to show how we can begin strategies for WAC, so that students will be better writers when they graduate. I will use an actual syllabus to show the infusion of writing assignments. I will use the resources Florida Memorial College used to discuss writing in the various disciplines as this is also a problem. That will include how to write Science, Business and papers, for other disciplines, how to include graphs and other technical information.

Using actual rubrics, I will show how this is used to standardize and grade students' writing. This involves using a standard and grading system agreed on by the professors.

Finally I will review the writing process, showing how students can create their own rubrics for grading. This empowers them to improve their writing. Handouts will be provided. I will see if the publishers will give some free texts of the resources to be used.

### **Florida State University**

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### **Training A La Carte: An Effective Instructor & Peer Leader Training Model at a Large University**

After rapidly growing from 13 sections in 1997 to 50 sections in 2000, the First-Year Experience program at Florida State University was challenged with adding an additional 20 sections for an anticipated total of 70 sections for the 2001 term. With the accepted and much needed growth, the program had to consider the following issues:

- 1) Training over 170 instructors, assistant instructors, and peer leaders.
- 2) Ensuring that essential as well as supplemental topics were discussed in training sessions.
- 3) Effectively working with a minimum amount of time for staff and students to receive the proper training.
- 4) Ensuring that all program participants received continuous training and up-to-date information regarding issues and trends dealing with the program.

As a result of these challenges, the program, with the help of several on-campus administrators, developed a dual-track training program for instructors and peer leaders that ensured the proper dissemination of information and training for instructors and peer leaders. Evaluation results demonstrated positive results from both new and returning FYE instructors and peer leaders regarding the model.

It is our intent to provide a concurrent session that outlines the planning and implementation processes for the training model developed. Managing the effects of a rapid-growing program such as the case with FSU is critical, particularly at a time when freshman seminars continue to grow. We will share basic concepts that will allow session attendees to develop ideas relevant to their own institution - old or new, big or small. We will also discuss some of the benefits that the new program has had for the program overall. These benefits will include the notion of increased instructor confidence and satisfaction with participating in the program, to increased exposure and support of the program throughout the University.

### **Francis Marion University**

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### **Strategies for Decreasing the Aspirations/Skills Disparity in First Generation College Students**

The National Commission on the High-School Senior Year reported recently (October, 2001) that the majority of U.S. students are not prepared for the rigors of college academics. Many colleges and universities have known this for some time and have implemented programs designed to narrow the distance between students' achievement and collegiate expectations. Such summer led "bridge programs," while gaining in popularity, are still attended by too few students and are not yet widely offered. Furthermore, one neglected area of the college-student persistence literature concerns the emotional and behavioral outcomes faced by underprepared matriculators when confronted with the disparity between their career and college aspirations and their academic skill levels. From assessments conducted with first year students enrolled at Francis Marion University, a small public institution in rural South Carolina, a pattern in many students has emerged. Students' initial excitement over entering a new phase in their young lives, and their aspirations to perform well academically, are too often replaced in a matter of weeks by varying degrees of discouragement and withdrawal. While some of these observed reactions and adjustments to the realities of college life are to be expected in even the most well-prepared students, more monitoring is warranted to promote academic success and persistence. Strategies for easing students' emotional adjustment to "disparity shock" include early identification of those students most at-risk (e.g., the student with a high highschool GPA and low standardized test scores who is a first-generation student), working with them to clearly state their academic goals (What GPA do they expect to earn in their first semester? First year?) and identifying their academic strengths and limitations, among others. In these ways, we can replace disparity shock, and its concomitants feelings of isolation, inferiority, and failure, with perseverance, hope, and determination.

### **Genesee Community College**

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### **Technical Education: Learning a Trade or Making a Trade-off? College Success and Lifelong Learning for the Career Oriented Student**

Many career specific students enter the experience of higher education with a type of “educational myopia” and strongly resist and question the need for learning outside of their major. Four years ago, SUNY Alfred School of Applied Technology began to wrestle with this issue. Realizing that learning should really be a universal lifelong experience the faculty set out to develop a program to help their students develop a broader definition of learning and to acquire the skills and mind sets to become active learners. This session will explore the collaboration between the SUNY Alfred faculty, staff, administration, advisory groups and an outside consultant who worked together to develop a college success course entitled, “College and Life Skills”

Integrating the college success course into this conservative, traditional technology-oriented school pays dividends but has required many changes..... particularly in the schools fundamental approach to education. Breaching the walls of this staid, established form of education has provided excellent insights and anecdotes which should be helpful to participants.

Technology schools present some unique and specific challenges for a variety of reasons. This session will delve into those challenges and suggest some options. The session will trace the conception of the idea for the course offering, the three-day required faculty training, curriculum and course development, and the assessment of the course from both a student and faculty perspective. Participants will leave the session with an overall view of the college success efforts, including motivation, objectives and experiences. Participants will be able to transfer the insights gained into development (or revisions) of course offerings at their own institutions.

#### **Georgia Institute of Technology**

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#### **Student to Student Academic Advising and Mentoring: Student Initiatives in Providing Support in FYE Programs**

Under the sponsorship of Success Programs at Georgia Institute of Technology, two organizations begun and maintained by students have developed programs to meet the many needs not mentioned

by first year students. Within the competitive environment, students are reluctant to seek much-needed transitional help available on campus. Georgia Tech is a highly technical, scientific research university that demands intense dedication by all faculty and students, especially those first year students in transition to college life.

Students Providing Academic Assistance, Resources, and Communication (SPAARC) began in 1994 when a student surveyed classes and found that Tech students prefer to talk to classmates about class options and requirements, academic major transitions, and campus life before approaching professional advisors and faculty. In addition, most faculty are heavily involved in scientific research and have limited time to assist students in issues not directly pertaining to class. Since that time, SPAARC has been instrumental in the semester conversion project and in sponsoring Registration Fairs for students.

The Team Leader Advisory Board was created early in 2001 as a voice of the students in the first year seminar class. This group modifies the curriculum, trains instructors, and recruits teaching assistants for the class that over 1,300 students participate in annually. The Board plans to increase faculty involvement, develop a text for the course specific to Georgia Tech, and improve training for instructors and team leaders.

Students from SPAARC and Team Leader Advisory Board will describe the history and purpose of their organizations, illustrate their function and program commitment, and discuss barriers to their groups' efforts to aid first year students. Presentation participants will gain knowledge relating to recruitment, training, and communication with faculty and academic advisors that will enable them to establish similar programs specific to their university communities.

### **Georgia Southern University**

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### **Realizing the Potential of Linked Courses for the First Year Experience**

In a recent study, Nancy Shapiro and Jodi Levine argue that learning communities offer activities crucial to the success (and retention) of first-year college students. One of the ways Georgia Southern University attempts to foster this success is through First-year Interest Groups (FIGs), living/learning communities for students with a common interest or purpose which involve a cluster of linked courses: University Orientation, a content area course, and a writing/reading course.

To a history teacher and a writing instructor participating in one such FIG (one for students with an interest in American history and politics), linking the Survey of American History and Composition 1 seemed like a wonderful idea. We would be able to share assignments and perspectives, teaching students how the disciplines inform one another. Students, in turn, would draw from their growing knowledge of American history to write informed, balanced papers in their composition class; and



from their growing awareness of writing practice to submit focused, carefully revised essays in history. Best of all, the concentration of study would open up richer veins of discussion and inquiry than any single course can usually afford.

In practice, the linked courses presented us with surprising challenges. First, we found that articulating the linkage on a day-to-day basis required more discussion and revising of plans than we had ever expected. More importantly, our frequent contact with each other and with the students forced us to address unanticipated learning issues that would not have emerged in either course alone. While reading a text to studying for a test, students, encouraged by the linked environment, voiced concerns and manifested difficulties that both instructors had to address, changing our assignments and adapting our curricula as the courses evolved.

Our presentation will focus on the ways that the linked environment illuminated learning issues that lie at the heart of students' success in their first year experience. While the teaching and learning dynamic in linked courses will almost always be unique, we offer general observations—meant for both faculty and FYE administrators—for realizing the potential of linked courses, along with descriptions of activities, assignments, assessments for evaluating the linkage, and samples of students' work.

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### **Georgia Southwestern State University**

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### **Ensuring Student Success: A Team Approach**

With retention figures consistently below state and national levels for like institutions, the leadership at Georgia Southwestern State University called for improvement in student success. The Associate Dean for Academic Services and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs accepted the challenge of reviewing and changing environmental processes with minor increase to the budget. A critical look at the first year brought significant change.

The first component implemented was a residential experience designed to ease the transition from high school to college. Grouping freshmen in one residential area contributed to the facilitation of academic and social interventions. The retention of residential students increased eleven percent in the first year alone.

The second intervention, blocked scheduling of core curriculum courses, was designed to reach commuter students as well as residents. A cohort of fifteen to twenty students in the same three to four core classes developed friendships, formed study groups. Sharing among classmates became the norm. Data collected from participating students verifies the impact of this intervention strategy.

The freshmen orientation course, which was begun in the early 1980s, had not seen significant

revision since its inception. The format of this course was critically analyzed and revised to meet the needs of today's students. This required class was expanded in length and content. Emphasis has been placed on self-awareness and personal motivation as well as the usual topics of learning strategies, survival skills, and campus resources.

Annual retention reports revealed that GSW was losing just under 60% of freshmen who had not declared a major. The critical components lacking in their experience were identified as consistency in advisement and exploration of academic and career opportunities. As a result, GSW's first professional advisor was hired to oversee all undeclared majors and fulfill the role of freshmen advocate. The attrition rate plunged dramatically.

These interventions coupled with other intrusive strategies led to an eight percent increase in retention in four years.

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### **The Relationship Between Academic Advisor Verbal Behavior and Student Information Seeking Strategies**

Information seeking is the process whereby individuals proactively acquire feedback through the use of overt and monitoring information seeking strategies (Ashford and Cummings, 1983). People tend to use these techniques to understand, predict, and control their environments, increase task mastery, and reduce role ambiguity (Myers and Knox, 2001). This program will examine the information seeking behaviors of students and apply them as they are relevant to the academic advisement setting. Strategies for overcoming potential obstacles to the effective delivery of academic advisement sessions will be discussed.

#### **Golden West College**

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### **Multiple Intelligence and Employability Skills: Helping Students Meet the Demands of a Challenging Economy**

This session will help faculty give first year students strategies on how to learn, how to link learning to career and lifeskills, and how to critically think through their choices and lifelong options. We will

provide interactive strategies to motivate students with best practices which can be used immediately to help make this valuable connection. Knowledge is power. In this case, self-knowledge, knowledge of the economy and knowledge to anticipate and prepare for the future are the golden keys.

If students have a better understanding of how their learning is linked to their lifelong options, they are more apt to stay in school and commit to the follow through needed to be effective as a student, i.e. overcoming their personal barriers to learning. In addition, they will have the wherewithal they need to round out their academic knowledge with the requisite leadership skills and work experience to be a valuable employee in even the toughest economy.

### **Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA**

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### **Using a National Survey to Enhance Local Assessment Efforts: A Discussion of Your First College Year (YFCY)**

Although many campuses prefer to administer locally-developed survey instruments to assess the experiences of their first-year college students, several national instruments are available to provide institutions with normative data. Your First College Year (YFCY) is one such instrument. With the support of The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Pew Charitable Trusts, YFCY was designed by principals at the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA and the Policy Center on the First Year of College at Brevard College. Because several items on YFCY directly posttest items on the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, YFCY can be used as a follow-up questionnaire. YFCY also can be administered as a stand-alone instrument to students who did not complete the CIRP Freshman Survey. YFCY is administered as a paper- or web-based survey to students at the end of their first college year. Institutions may distribute the survey to a self-selected sample, and may implement response incentives of their own design.

In this session, the roundtable facilitators will briefly introduce YFCY, discuss its background, and raise several topics for discussion. These include:

- (1) How relevant is YFCY and other national surveys to local assessment needs?
- (2) Which types of data services are most useful to institutions that administer national surveys?
- (3) Are national data of interest to campus constituents? If so, to whom? How are these data used?
- (4) How have institutions used YFCY data in the past?
- (5) Which groups do institutions prefer to be “benchmarked” against?

The objective of the roundtable is to generate discussion about the value and future of national surveys, and how these types of assessment tools may be of even greater assistance to individual campuses going forward.

## **Horry-Georgetown Technical College**

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### **“Skills for College Success” on the Internet: The Challenges of Planning and Implementing Meaningful Online Experiences**

Horry-Georgetown Technical College has been attempting to implement a true Orientation course for several years and has finally had several programs commit to including a course as part of their degree requirements. The problem of a tight budget coupled with the issues of limited instructor and classroom availability proved immediate challenges to those given the task of course development; however, a little ingenuity and a lot of hard work resulted in a course that met the needs of the college, which is now proud to say it has two courses: a traditional three-hour course and a hybrid one-hour online course. The session will walk participants through the process of combining the academic plans with the technology necessary for meaningful delivery of this unique course. Others who have been involved in online instruction of this nature are encouraged to come and share their ideas with the group.

## **Indiana University, Bloomington**

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### **Intensive Freshman Seminars: Personalizing the First-Year Experience at Indiana University**

In September of 2001 Time magazine selected four “Colleges of the Year,” largely based upon institutional emphasis on student success and quality of experience during the freshman year. Indiana University, Bloomington was the top choice among Research I institutions, due to its comprehensive web of programs designed to personalize the first-year experience on a campus of 36,000 students. Among the IU initiatives cited by Time as fostering student success was the Intensive Freshman Seminar (IFS) program, an optional academic living-learning summer program, now going on its twelfth year.

The IFS program provides the opportunity for any regularly admitted student to make a positive connection to the campus and to get a head start on university life in the summer before the fall semester begins, by taking a three credit-hour course, taught as a seminar, which meets distribution requirements. The program is structured as a fully integrated, seamless learning community, providing students with a template that they may use to view the larger academic world. The effectiveness

of the IFS approach is largely rooted in the strong relationships that these beginning students develop with faculty and upper-class peer mentors, as well as the opportunity to form connections with other incoming students.

We will use this presentation time to detail the faculty seminar development sessions, training and utilization of student mentors, and learning-based out-of-class activities, all of which are fully integrated with the central mission of creating an effective learning community. We will also review other components of the IFS program that enhance the overall success of the experience, such as the use of computing and library resources, writing tutors, campus “cultural treasures,” and marketing and recruitment efforts. Finally, we will discuss outcomes of the program, including retention rates, academic success, and student and faculty evaluation.

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### **A First Step in Student Success: The Critical Reading Guide**

Are your students prepared to learn when they come to class? Have they read the assignment or do they expect to go home after class and develop their understanding by reading the material? Are you frustrated by their level of preparation or their unwillingness to enter into discussion? Perhaps, as their instructors, we should be explicit about topics and concepts we think are sufficiently important that we expect our students to master them. Perhaps we should tell them at the beginning of the course. Perhaps then our classes could become a discussion of important principles and concepts, evaluation of issues and extension of ideas, debate about the ethical implications of implementing new discoveries. Then class time would not be just a lecture and rehash of information or facts that they can learn by reading the material, before or after class. It could be a worthwhile discussion of how we find our data, organize and analyze it so that the conclusions follow in some logical pattern. Perhaps we could create value for our students and for ourselves, as instructors, in their preparation for class time. Several years ago I began working on a solution to these problems and developed The Critical Reading Guide. The Critical Reading Guide has helped me and my students work on mastery of important concepts, on development of classroom discussion of topics of interest, on the ethical implications of the advancement of science, on improvement of their writing, on selection of important concepts and, perhaps, on critical thinking. The Critical Reading Guide attempts to generate that value for our students in carefully and thoughtfully preparing for class time. You might want to invest the time to develop a Critical Reading Guide for your courses to maximize student study time and improve the use of time in class. The guide has helped my students' mastery of topics in the earth sciences. This idea seems so simple that I wonder why it took me twenty-five years to think of it.

### **Iowa State University**

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### **The Multicultural Vision Program: A Recruitment And Retention Commitment to Diversity**

The successful recruitment and retention of all students requires a community effort. Iowa's history and demographics provide an interesting and challenging environment in which to build a successful program to accomplish institutional diversity goals. This presentation will examine the development and implementation of a comprehensive program - the Multicultural Vision Program (MVP) to link recruitment and retention, and ultimately, the graduation of minority Iowans from Iowa State University.

The presentation will provide participants with a fast-paced historical overview of Iowa with particular emphasis on the changing ethnic mix of Iowa's residents. The overview will provide the context necessary to develop an understanding of Iowa's current demography and the reasons behind the creation of the MVP. Additionally, the program's development and launch, and the challenges of operation will be detailed.

The MVP program was developed by staff within Enrollment Services; more specifically, staff from Admissions and Special Recruitment worked cooperatively to design a program, using as a model Iowa State's remarkably successful Hixson Opportunity Award program. MVP program information and application materials were mailed to all Iowa minority student prospects and their families contained within the university's admissions inquiry database.

Statewide interviews with prospective students and their families were scheduled to publicize the MVP at the community level in areas with concentrations of minority populations. Prospective minority students in these areas were personally contacted to participate in the interviews. Representatives from the Office of Admissions, Minority Student Affairs and the undergraduate colleges hosted the interview sessions and interviewed prospective students.

A first-year seminar, monthly programs, and parent programs were created for the program. Results of a one-year review are very encouraging. Minority student prospects and enrollment have significantly increased. Student academic progress is well above the freshman minority cohort and persistence is above the freshman cohort.

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## **The Residue Reward: Linking Recruitment and Retention**

The term's enrollment management aptly describes the process of recruiting and retaining students. The visual model on the organizational chart readily shows the enrollment manager as the connecting point for three institutional leadership areas—academic affairs, student affairs and marketing/communication. Yet, in many institutions, these units war among themselves -all in the name of what's best for the faculty, students and image of the college— respectively of course. However, true regard for those we serve, can only be measured and tested by our institutional outputs. True regard for those we serve, can only be measured by ensuring the successful learning experience of the students that we all so admirably serve. For this reason, the faculty and administrators of the academic affairs unit and the students and staff of the student affairs unit of Ivy Tech State College-Bloomington campus put aside our unit wars and worked together for 15 months to develop eight learning modules under the umbrella of College Orientation and Career Enhancement: College Culture, Computer Literacy, Resource Utilization/Distance Learning, Career and Life Strategies, Study Skills, Money, Wellness and Critical Thinking. While the overall goal of the course is to improve student retention which we will not be able to adequately measure for one year, there are three other significant outcomes that can help enrollment managers in their efforts to develop strong orientation programs and establish strong internal partnerships between student and academic affairs.

First, actively listening to each other on subjects like student's needs, values, and ideas. This dialogue also included discussions on why students failed in terms of institutional, situational and dispositional barriers. This discourse took place for two semesters which began with the development and administration of a student needs survey. The findings basically validated earlier discussions as well as garnered more support from faculty. These findings also strengthened the connection among group members which included representatives from both student and academic affairs (including the deans of both areas), and also, drew the support of the program area chairs. In fact, the faculty from the technical divisions developed the material and on-line application methods for the critical thinking modules all of the exercises were integrated or threaded with career enhancement information, knowledge, and skills.

Second, an outcome of actively listening is learning. Several barriers to student learning were eliminated. The course which relies heavily on technology exposes students to computer essentials, distance learning-courseware and data mining; critical thinking with an emphasis on problem solving and analysis; and finally, goal setting with an emphasis on career, personal and educational goals.

Lastly, the course places emphasis on skill assessment with pre and post assessment measures in all three of the aforementioned areas. The information collected is reviewed, analyzed and adjusted so that course modules reflect student needs, interest and learning. Students are required to take College Orientation and Career Enhancement during their first or second semester.

The overall impact that the process of jointly developing a course that facilitates recruitment and is designed to ensure retention has had on breaking down invisible institutional barriers or turf wars between academic and student affairs was not the natural intention of the committee. However, retrospectively the partnership or significantly enhanced relationship between academic and student affairs has been the greatest residual reward.

## **James Madison University**

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### **Got Theory? Yes, But Do We Milk It For Everything It's Worth?**

Your First-Year Experience needs improvement—where do you go for inspiration?

Campus demographics are changing—how does your First-Year program respond?

Your First-Year Experience budget is shrinking—what guides your fiscal decisions?

Where do good ideas come from? In our hectic environment thinking about and discussing theory may appear to be a luxury. Practitioners who work with the First-Year Experience are fortunate, though, to have access to a broad and impressive array of theories and research studies on first year students and factors that promote first year student success (Barefoot, 2000). Although scholarship and research endows our work with meaning, how often do we draw on this rich foundation to solve our programming dilemmas?

When seeking new ways to implement first year initiatives it is more convenient to simply take an idea from another campus and adjust it to fit our own. It is too easy to attend national conferences, read journals and engage in our daily routines and never have an earnest conversation about theory. Theory, though, provides practitioners with the tools to truly address our unique institutional characteristics. Theory can be an exciting avenue to innovation, program improvement and personal renewal. Theory sustains us in ways that best practices cannot because it can be applied to changing demographics, budget forecasts, administrative structures, and institutional initiatives. Theory challenges the practitioner to reflect, ask critical questions, and develop creative responses. Using theory to inform our practice however requires support from colleagues, organizations and publications.

This roundtable offers administrators and faculty collegial support to intentionally use theory to inform our practice. The discussion will address topics like:

- Current use of theory
- Barriers to effectively using theory
- Evaluating theories
- Approaches to learning more about theory
- New theories informing our practice
- Examples of First-Year scholar-practitioners
- Linkages among disparate theories



## **Johnson C. Smith University**

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### **Enhancing Institutional Retention: Integrating Mentoring into the Freshmen Seminar Course**

Understanding the nature of institutional retention and what specific programs can have the greatest impact can be of significant value for faculty, staff and administrators. This workshop will provide a brief overview of issues and trends relative to mentoring, student retention and persistence patterns. Additionally, this session will provide participants with information relative to the development of a Mentoring/Orientation Seminar Course format that involves faculty, staff, a case management system and an intensive communication process. The importance of establishing cross-campus partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs will be discussed. This session will also provide participants with specific strategies for recruiting and maintaining a faculty/staff group of instructors for the Mentoring/Orientation course. Other information that will be disseminated includes the utilization of inventory and assessment tools to evaluate and modify annually the course to suit the needs of incoming students. Participants will be asked to share ways mentoring can support the needs of students on their respective campuses in the freshmen seminar course.

## **Juniata College**

Sarah May Clarkson, Director, Academic Support Services

### **The Summer Reading: Not Just for First-Year Students Anymore**

The required freshman reading is much maligned by students and faculty. It need not be so. Juniata College has experimented the last two years with a summer reading, but . . . it was open to every member of the College community as well as townspeople. The summer reading was extended as an invitation and recommendation, not compulsory, neither a requirement nor a mandate.

Much of a first-year student's learning is prescriptive, but what Juniata's first-year students find when they come to our learning community is that people discuss books, ideas, and thoughts because that's what thoughtful and educated people do. And they do such things even when there is no academic requirement connected to it. There is flexibility — students may embrace the reading or not, faculty may adopt the book for classroom use or not. Families of first-year students are encouraged to read the book as a family. Or not. But first-year students who participate find themselves more engaged as thinkers sooner.

Juniata's summer reading program is still in its fledgling stages, but attendees can learn how: 1) the idea developed, 2) how it was announced and publicized, 3) about follow-up gatherings and discussions, 4) how a summer reading can be adapted for use by faculty, residential life staff, and others,

and 5) what the challenges and struggles have been. Attendees will be encouraged to develop ideas out loud for how a shared campus reading might be adapted and used on their campuses. The presenter hopes attendees will bring favorite books and favorite book stories.

Any learning community can benefit from a shared reading and the exchange of ideas that is generated in classrooms, in dining areas, in the student union, at jobs, in the dorms, on the playing fields, and beyond campus. It is well worth the risk.

### **LaGuardia College**

John Chaffee, Director, NY Center for Critical Thinking

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### **Evaluating Critical Thinking Abilities In a First-Year Program**

Many students entering colleges and universities are plagued by high failure rates and rapid attrition, in part because they lack the thinking abilities and critical attitudes required to adapt successfully to the college environment and to negotiate rigorous college courses. Teaching freshman students to become critical thinkers, a key to college success, requires a comprehensive educational approach, and evaluation plays a central role in this effort. This session will explore every phase of critical thinking evaluation: Identifying the critical thinking abilities to be evaluated, devising appropriate activities to assess these abilities, applying criteria to evaluate student progress, and creating an environment in the classroom in which evaluation is embraced as a tool for learning. Participants will have the opportunity to evaluate sample activities from their own programs, and will also assess their own critical thinking abilities as measured by a critical thinking test. The Critical Thinking program at LaGuardia involves 30 faculty and 1800 students annually. The cornerstone of the program is Critical Thinking Skills, an interdisciplinary course specifically designed to help freshman students develop a foundation of thinking, language, and problem-solving abilities needed for academic and career success. The LaGuardia program rests on the conviction that sophisticated thinking abilities and complex language abilities are best developed through a process of synthesis, giving students the means to understand themselves and the world in which they live. When thinking and language abilities are taught within a context of self-awareness and personal growth on the part of students, the result is accelerated skills development and improved attitudes towards education. The Critical Thinking Program at LaGuardia has been subject to ongoing evaluation, characterized by ETS as “A mature educational program which has succeeded with a wide spectrum of students,” and evaluated by NEH as “A very enlightened approach to undergraduate instruction.” Specific assessment has documented the program’s success in the areas of critical literacy, critical thinking, and critical attitudes. In terms of critical literacy, students enrolled in Critical Thinking courses have consistently demonstrated accelerated development of language skills, using language with a depth, insight and sophistication unusual for students at the freshman level. Students have also displayed improvement in critical thinking abilities such as problem-solving, analyzing issues, decision-making, reasoning, and perspective-taking; and they have demonstrated the ability to transfer these newly developed skills to other academic courses. Using The Measure of Intellectual Development, based on the work of William Perry, students have demonstrated an intellectual sophistication more typical of college seniors than freshmen. Students have also revealed a clear evolution of their critical attitudes, demonstrating enhanced qualities of maturity, initiative, self-awareness, seriousness

about course work, commitment to excellence, and increased self-confidence.

### **LaGuardia Community College/City University of New York**

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### **Launching a First-Year Experience Program**

LaGuardia Community College has one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation, with students coming from over 140 different countries and speaking over 100 different languages in addition to English. To help meet the challenge of improving learning outcomes and retention for this diverse group, the College's Division of Academic Affairs and Division of Enrollment Management & Student Development constituted a joint First-Year Experience Committee. This session will present how committee members built upon the knowledge gained through attending the Summer 2000 First-Year Experience Conference to design and implement a collaborative first-year program during the last academic year. We will identify the keys to launching, within a short time span, a comprehensive program that includes an "Opening Sessions Day" for incoming students, a freshman common reading, a mentoring program, and a new learning community model, the Freshman Interest Group. We will also provide a detailed description of each component in the program, including which aspects of each activity worked and which did not, and how we are evaluating, refining, and expanding the program's activities in our second year.

### **Loras College**

Cheryl Jacobsen, Associate Vice President Academic Affairs

Joan Fiscella, Bibliographer for Professional Studies and Associate Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago

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### **Emerging "Best Practices" in Interdisciplinary General Education.**

Integration is a fundamental process in first-year seminars, where it may refer to content, transition to college, pedagogies that rely on instructional technology, or academic-student affairs collaboration. Many first-year seminars also engage students in topics and issues that cross disciplinary boundaries, creating an institution's "first" experience with both the richness and added demands of

interdisciplinary approaches to learning and teaching. Since these seminars may be or become part of interdisciplinary general education programs, faculty and administrators will benefit from introductions to the “best practices” and standards emerging in interdisciplinary general education.

The Association for Integrative Studies is a national professional organization for interdisciplinary teachers, scholars, and researchers dedicated to the exchange of scholarly and pedagogical information on integrative study in undergraduate and graduate education. AIS Board members will share “best practices” guidelines recently developed as part of a larger accreditation project of the AAC&U. The guidelines provide a brief overview of the issues in interdisciplinary general education. In an interactive session, participants will focus the guidelines on first-year experiences, exploring how interdisciplinarity can inform integrative pedagogy, create a learning community out of a cluster of courses in general education and the major, or strengthen other models of first year courses. Finally, participants will analyze a case study that highlights issues related to program development, faculty support, and administration of interdisciplinary general education.

### **Loyola College in Maryland**

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### **Assessment of the Short-Term and Long-Benefits of Participating in First-Year Seminars**

Successful college transitions depend on students establishing healthy relationships with individuals who connect them to the institution (e.g., Barefoot & Gardner, 1993), and first-year seminars can help to facilitate these connections. However, few studies have examined the short and long-term adjustment resulting from first-year seminar participation. The present study examines how students’ academic, co-curricular, and social lives are enhanced by participating in first-year seminar programs. A sample of 679 undergraduates at a parochial Eastern college completed an extensive survey of attitudes and behaviors, including which, if any, first-year seminars they participated in.

Sets independent t tests were conducted, followed by ANCOVAs to control for selection biases. Results comparing seminar participants and non-participants across four undergraduate classes showed more favorable outcomes for participants in terms of more hours of studying, higher levels of importance placed on participation in activities, service, and leadership, higher levels of participation in activities and service, and less drinking. Similar results were found when examining benefits for first- and second-year students only and for third- and fourth-year students. Short-term findings also included more frequent class attendance, less weekend alcohol consumption, and lower levels of distress for participants. Other analyses showed that findings were similar for students taking different types of seminars (1-credit extended orientation versus 3-credit academic) and that most findings held up after statistical controls were included. (Several tables show specific findings.)

Results support the notion that first-year seminars provide an atmosphere that enables and encourages students to become involved in the co-curricular life of college and make healthier decisions

regarding alcohol consumption. In addition, the benefits are realized immediately and can continue into later years of college. The results also suggest that extended orientation seminars and more academically oriented seminars provide important benefits for students that can enable them to succeed in college.

### **Madison Area Technical College**

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### **SmartStart: An Orientation to College for Students with Disabilities**

Drastic differences exist between high school and college, and for students with disabilities, this transition can be extremely difficult. They are leaving an environment where they have traditionally been mothered, father or “done for” and entering an environment in which person responsibility and independence become critical. To assist individuals with disabilities to transition and succeed at Madison Area Tech College (MATC), Disability Resource Services (DRS) provides SmartStart, an orientation to college while learning necessary post-secondary level skills. The goals of SmartStart are to prepare students with disabilities to be successful in college and increase student retention/persistence. The desired outcomes of the SmartStart program are to:

1. Give students an educational experience similar to what is expected in higher education
2. Move student from a state of dependency to one of independence
3. Provide opportunities so students gain an understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and needs as they relate to the post-secondary environment
4. Enhance the students self-advocacy, organizing, studying, time-management, and problem-solving skills

Participants in this session will learn about recent trends regarding college students with disabilities and will hear feedback from students who attended SmartStart. DRS staff will share the components of SmartStart as well as the recruiting, evaluation, training and logistics plans, and budget.

Time will also be allowed for discussion so participants can share best practices.

### **Marist College**

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### **Self-Motivation for College Students**

An approach to teaching college students self-management, and self-motivation, in particular will be the subject of this workshop. A self-management model will be presented that integrates topics traditionally taught as separate modules. The model focuses on the ABCs—the affective, behavioral, and cognitive underpinnings of topics such as motivation, time management, study skills, assertiveness, and self-esteem. Since most situations that students encounter are experienced in three interrelated way: emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively, the ABC model enables instructors and counselors to discuss any student issue, whether personal or academic. The goals of the workshop are: 1) to introduce a self-management model that can be adapted to most student success or personal development courses; 2) to demonstrate the benefits derived from a holistic and systematic approach to self-management, and self-motivation in particular; 3) to demonstrate the uniqueness of the method by having workshop participants experience for themselves the assessment and change techniques that are taught to students; 4) to provide a brief overview of the results of outcomes assessment data collected over the past 12 years. Time will be reserved for participants to review materials and evaluation instruments as well as for questions and comments.

#### **Marymount College**

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### **Faculty: Can't Live With Them, Can't Live Without Them**

This session will be comprised of a series of focus questions designed to promote meaningful discussion and specific strategies relating to the general issue of faculty support for, and involvement in first-year programs. More specifically, the session will solicit participants' ideas in relation to the following issues: How can we more effectively recruit faculty to become involved in first-year initiatives? What incentives can be provided to initiate their interest? What forms of recognition or reward might be used to reinforce their efforts? How can we enlist the support of influential members of the academic community (e.g., central administrators) to help us garner faculty involvement?

What can student development professionals do to “win friends and influence people” among the faculty? How can we capitalize on naturally occurring “intersection points” (i.e., educational or administrative areas/functions where academic and student affairs overlap) to initiate dialogue and stimulate partnerships? What structured alliances could be forged between these two historically divided units of college organization that would promote the advancement of each unit's objectives while simultaneously promoting the advancement of first-year students?

#### **Marymount College**

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### **Marymount College First Semester Seminar: An Academic Hybrid**

Marymount College requires all freshmen to take the First Semester Seminar (FSS) during the semester they enter the college. This academic course is a hybrid that combines a set of common readings and common activities in “labs” for all students with section-specific topics developed by the faculty member. It is staffed by full-time faculty with a particular affinity for Freshmen, supplemented by two qualified academic administrators. Because of the additional time in the labs it awards four credits. Designed to introduce the college’s mission themes (women, work, globalism and diversity, and ethical, religious and spiritual values), the overall thematic focus and specific common readings have changed from year to year. The course works on an annual cycle: offered in fall semester, comprehensive evaluation by the students at semester’s end, a January meeting of the FSS faculty and staff to go over the evaluation carefully, and a series of meetings during the spring to make revisions based on the evaluation. Then, the FSS faculty and staff meet biweekly during the fall to offer feedback and support to each other and to make last-minute changes in the common elements if deemed necessary. The hallmark of the FSS is its responsiveness to changing student needs. The program evaluation has included identically worded questions to permit comparison. This poster will feature graphic summaries of the extensive quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the FSS from 1996 through 2001.

These results will be flanked by a general description of the FSS program, lists of the thematic foci and the readings and activities related to them, examples of syllabi, quotes from students’ responses to the labs, and examples of the course Handbook created by the FSS faculty and staff. Handouts will be available.

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### **Student Retention: The BIG PICTURE**

This session will begin with an examination of the major causes of student attrition, namely: (a) lack of involvement/engagement in the college experience, (b) lack of social integration into the college community, (c) academic boredom, (d) perceived irrelevance of the college curriculum, and (e) personal adjustment problems.

Secondly, the major target areas of institutional retention efforts will be outlined, such as: (a) assessment (e.g., student satisfaction/opinion surveys), (b) early-warning systems (e.g., midterm academic-

progress reports), (c) academic advisement (e.g., developmental academic-advisement training and development, (d) academic support programs (e.g. supplemental instruction), (e) learning communities (i.e., block scheduling strategies), (f) co-curricular involvement strategies (e.g., co-curricular or student development transcripts), (g) psychosocial support programs (e.g., faculty and/or peer mentoring), and (h) targeted support for “at-risk” students (e.g., first-generation and commuter students).

Lastly, a case will be made that effectively designed and delivered programs are: (a) theory-driven, (b) intentional, (c) proactive, (d) intrusive (e) personalized (customized), (f) comprehensive (holistic), (g) developmental, (g) systemic, (h) durable, and (i) empirical (evidential).

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### **Residence Hall Research Ambassadors: Libraries and the First Year Experience**

The Residence Hall Ambassador Program provides research assistance to first-year students in their residence halls, when they need it, from their peers. Undergraduate students are hired and trained as Research Ambassadors to provide basic information and research advice and to connect students with Librarians for further in-depth assistance when necessary. After 2 periods of intensive training, Ambassadors work 8 hours in the residence halls and receive 2 hours of training each week. Typically, pairs of students are on duty between 7 pm and midnight, Sunday through Thursday. Each Ambassador is equipped with a laptop computer connected to the Internet and is strategically located in the lobby or other prominent, public place. The residence hall staff is also on duty during those times.

For the Fall 2001 pilot program we selected a co-educational, first year residence hall. The director of Residence Life and New Student Programming, Dr. Todd Holcomb supported the program concept and assisted with the initial planning and implementation. The First Year Advisor, resident in the hall, assists with daily business.

The safety of the student employees and the residents is very important. Therefore, the Ambassadors work in teams of two. We do not allow them to travel to any individual room. We are marketing the service both as it started up and as it is ongoing. We debuted the program with an informal presentation, which introduced the service to residents. Additional promotional events as well as an awareness survey, and an evaluation of the service from those who have used it are planned.

Currently, we are still in our Pilot program, but are seeing increasing use of the service and support by the residents for continuing it. Hiring and training more Ambassadors to provide the service in additional residence halls is in the planning stages.



## **Michigan Technological University**

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## **Supporting Precalculus Students Through Introductory Engineering Courses**

Approximately one-quarter of the first year engineering students at Michigan Technological University (MTU) are not prepared to take calculus during their first semester, however, calculus is the first math course required for all students. In Fall 2000, these students were given the option to participate in the Excellence in Science and Engineering Learning (ExSEL) program. This program included two pilot study courses: a college Algebra course, ENG0900-Engineering and Science Applications in Basic Math in the fall and an introductory engineering course, ENG0950-Engineering & Science Applications in Precalculus in the spring. Students who participated in the ExSEL program and had Math ACT scores below 22 were placed in ENG0900 in the fall and took ENG0950 along with their precalculus course in the spring. This presentation will focus on ENG0950. The goals of ENG0950 were: to develop proficiency in problem organization and problem solving, to develop proficiency in the use of computers in solving engineering problems, to improve engineering communication skills, and to understand the integration of mathematics, engineering, and science through use of engineering applications. ENG0950 also prepared the students for future engineering courses by introducing them to important engineering topics and tools. The course topics included: linear, exponential, and power functions; growth and decay; electrical circuits; unit conversions; and projectile motion using trigonometry. Upon completion of ENG0950, students were able to organize the solution to a problem in such a way that an engineer would be able to easily check their work. This presentation will show how student performance in Precalculus was enhanced due to participation in the two pilot engineering courses, particularly ENG0950, and will discuss participating student performance.

## **Millersville University**

Ralph G. Anttonen, Chairman Developmental Studies, Director Undecided Program  
Lynn Marquez, Professor of Earth Science  
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## **The Growth of an Undecided Program: 1986 - Present**

Since 1986 Millersville University has had an Undecided Program directed by Dr. Ralph G.

Anttonen. The growth of this program will be visually presented from its inception in 1986 to its present status. This evolution will demonstrate how a program can begin with very little funding and the help of many other individuals to a fully supported college wide venture involving all components of the institution. A panel presentation will include the current Freshman Seminar and Housing available to Undecided Students. In addition, a Getaway Weekend program will also be presented. The process of building and maintaining such a program will be highlighted. Also, procedures for training Undecided Advisors, videos available for every major, and contact people in various major departments and student service components will be discussed. A special program for Undecided Students who fall below a 2.00 GPA will be explained. Finally, the funding of such a program and the compilation of statistics will be emphasized.

The underlying theme throughout the entire program will be the emphasis on bringing about change in a higher education institution. The concepts of leadership, empowerment, coalition building, working across boundaries, and insuring the continuation of higher education ventures will be a crucial component in this presentation. Student involvement in the Freshman Seminar, housing, and undecided committee will be explained. Also, administrations role in the development of the entire program will constitute a KEY component in the process of bringing about change in a college or university.

The session will be highly interactive and participants who want to develop programs for undecided, undeclared, pre-major, or general studies students are encouraged to bring questions with them concerning the process of the development, nurturing, and the continuation of such programs.

### **Millersville University**

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### **Lessons Learned in Creating a Holistic Freshman Year Experience**

Millersville University, a comprehensive, regional public university, is currently implementing the first year of a two-year pilot program that has targeted undecided freshmen students. This pilot program utilizes a holistic approach, providing a unique living and learning community, including:

1. A year-long residential experience in a designated freshman hall, which includes special programming designed by students for entering students.
2. Scheduling of students as a learning community in three of the same classes, including freshman seminar and composition.
3. A one credit freshman seminar, which includes a) a service-learning component, b) inclusion of participation in co-curricular and extra curricular activities as a course requirement, c) emphasis on cultural diversity with a unique on-line experience, d) a real life problem-based learning activity, e) on-going student, faculty and peer mentor assessment, and f) team-building activities.

4. A team of faculty who also serve as student advisers and peer mentors who reside with freshmen in the dormitory under the direction of a faculty coordinator.

This program exemplifies a unique marriage between student and academic affairs personnel and university students not only in the initial planning but also in implementation and follow-up analysis. This presentation will include a panel composed of the FYE Coordinator, the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs responsible for Residential Life, a freshman seminar faculty member, a Peer Mentor, and the Associate Provost, who will provide an in-depth discussion of the lessons learned in the first-year pilot and plans for the second year of implementation.

### **Mississippi State University**

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### **Proven Particulars Across Many Models: THINGS THAT WORK in First-Year Seminars, in First-Year Core Curriculum Courses, and Beyond**

After fifteen years of experiments using seven different models of FYE courses, we have identified course elements and teaching techniques that create successful first-year seminars no matter what: *things that work* equally well in University 101-style courses, academic core courses that serve as first-year seminars, etc. The magic is in the teaching *method*, not the course content; thus there are multiple, viable options for providing a first-year seminar experience on any campus, and several purposes can be served simultaneously.

This presentation includes extensive handouts, summaries, and sample course materials. We speak to: selecting and training faculty; optimal and feasible class size and lecture/discussion mix; “sure-fire” outside readings that can relate to many courses; testing methods; aids to good writing; making a demanding course a fun course; “sure-fire” papers and assignments usable in many courses; assignments for writing journals, which we consider to be the single most powerful tool; ways to increase student use of campus helping resources; innovative approaches to introducing students to cultural literacy and cultural diversity; and programs of parent contact that generate enormous institutional goodwill.

Relative pros and cons of traditional first-year seminars versus those incorporated into existing core courses are discussed, based on experience with each. The traditional first-year seminar is immensely valuable; but when for reasons of budget exigencies and/or campus politics this approach is not feasible, the use of other courses to accomplish many of the same goals is a satisfying alternative that maximizes “bang for the buck.”

This work suggests ways of extending valuable teaching techniques into upper level courses, as well. Usually, what’s good for first-year students is good for all.

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## **Loving the Learners as Well as the Learning: 250 Not-So-Random Acts of Kindness Toward Students**

Alexander Astin reported extensive research showing clear, positive correlations between faculty-student interaction and student satisfaction. Students at small colleges tended to be more satisfied with their experiences than students at large universities; but the difference in satisfaction disappeared when the variable of faculty-student *interaction* was controlled. These data imply that if we devised ways of ensuring a similar quality of faculty-student interaction, then those of us at large universities could achieve student satisfaction levels like those at much smaller institutions.

Mississippi State University is a comprehensive research university (one of the top 75 nationally), drawing Mississippi's largest, most talented student body; yet we also have a longstanding tradition of being a friendly university with a personal touch.

In the classroom, many specific techniques can create a "family" feeling. Such an atmosphere is not merely pleasant; it also helps students respond positively to heavy workloads and learn more. Many kinds of faculty-student interaction can take place outside of the class, as well.

The best methods we have found are simple, even old fashioned. More than once, we have had that "Ozzie and Harriet" feeling. Yet student response has been *extremely* positive. Clearly, many students have unmet needs or desires for relatively personal faculty-student interactions and greatly appreciate kindnesses large and small. Such interactions and "random acts of kindness" are neither difficult nor expensive to provide and are also highly satisfying for the faculty and staff involved.

We will share a list of "250 random Acts of Kindness Toward Students" gleaned from our own experience and from the suggestions of colleagues and students. You are invited to make your own contributions to expand this list.

## **Moody Bible Institute**

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## **Connection, Communion and Commitment: Does the FYE Program Help Develop Student Leaders?**

Many educators attribute attitudes of apathy and disconnectedness to this generation of students. We have seen them struggle with doubt and test authority. They question, they search, and they hesitate to commit to ideas, to relationships, and to student groups.

Three years after the implementation of the FYE program at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, we noticed a dramatic number of our FYE alumni were doing just the opposite. Many were taking significant positions of leadership.

We asked: Does the FYE experience foster an environment that encourages students in roles of leadership? Specifically, does the FYE program provide a classroom environment that models and fosters connections between students and professors and among the students themselves? Does it naturally lead to an increased willingness and ability to participate in leadership roles?

At Moody, our pioneer group of students in that First Year Experience program were unique. They were extroverts, willing to plunge into school head-first. But, several mentioned that they were nervous about entering the community at MBI.

Andy Miliken, now student advisor for the FYE program, says, “When I came in I didn’t know too many people. The relationships out of the FYE program were some of my stronger ones. We spent time together inside and outside of class.”

Susanna Weiss, who is actively involved in the campus drama group and the yearbook, was not sure she wanted to be in the program. “My mother signed me up,” says Susanna. “She thought this would be the in-group. I wasn’t sure I wanted it.”

But Susanna adds, “In some ways it felt like a family. You didn’t appreciate until the start of your sophomore year how nice it was to know everyone in your class.”

That emphasis on community, developed a strong, almost instant, family type bond among the students. It also encouraged relationships with faculty members.

This presentation will include video interviews with four of our student leaders, all of whom participated in our FYE program. We will follow their testimonials with some research on the making of student leaders, and encourage discussion on how a FYE program can encourage students to fully engage in academic life inside and outside the classroom.

### **Morehead State University**

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## **Honors Leadership Residential College**

The Honors Leadership Residential College (HLRC) grew out of the close alliance and somewhat overlapping membership of the Academic Honors Program and the Leadership Development Program. A group of faculty, staff, and students from Academic Affairs and Student Life was formed to research the possibility of developing such a residential college. The task force read about residential college programs throughout the nation. In order to see one in operation, the entire task force visited Central Arkansas University. After gathering as much information as we could, we began the plan for the HLRC as a first step in a larger initiative to create an Honors Leadership College.

During the last planning year, the Office of Retention from Academic Affairs worked with the Office of Student Housing to select and modify the chosen Residence Hall. This also involved working closely with the Physical Plant Office in order to make the necessary modifications to the facility. These ranged from landscaping to creation of a classroom.

It was decided that each resident would have 2 or 3 classes in the HLRC. Prior to advisement during summer orientation, the students were placed in these courses. The classroom was filled from 9:10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. In the evening, the room is used for tutoring or seminars. On each of the four floors, a study room was created. Each resident advisor tutors and there are two student residents who only tutor.

Learning Communities were created as the students attend classes with other residents of the HLRC. They study together and can also help each other when needed. Two of the faculty also have office hours in the HLRC. An office for the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs is opposite the hall Student Housing Office to provide further academic assistance and to coordinate activities.

### **North Carolina State University**

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### **Teaching as an Extension of Advising**

The First Year College seeks to combine the best in higher education research, understandings of adolescent development, and cognitive developmental counseling to provide comprehensive services to first year students. Through a program that melds a first year seminar with academic advising, First Year College has shown clear results in impacting student retention, academic performance, selection of a major, progress towards graduation and student satisfaction.

The dual role of the professional adviser serving as instructor of the first year orientation course provides a singular point of contact with students around issues most central to the student's adjustment and development. Over its five years in existence the staff of the college have developed tools and techniques to extend the advising role into the classroom and in turn to bring classroom exercises and assessments back into the advising relationship. This continuum of advising and teaching

has been particularly effective in aiding student adjustment, major selection and career decision-making, increasing student responsibility, and engagement in critical reasoning. FYC has developed a curriculum and advising tools which compliment and create a seamless first year program for its students.

### **North Carolina State University**

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### **The Success Project: It's a Student Thing You Need to Understand**

An in-depth analysis of retention/persistence and graduation rates revealed the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) African American students' rates were an alarming 45.7% compared to 60.2% of the CHASS entire student population. The largest minority population retention rates were 14.5% lower than the overall rate in CHASS, therefore it became vitally important to address this issue immediately. After discussions it became clear that supporting our largest minority population was a critical issue.

This project will gauge the performance of a cohort of students from the beginning of their freshman year through graduation to increase their persistence and retention rates. One of the goals of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) Academic Affairs team was to examine the educational pipeline and the transition of African American students.

This research project is a longitudinal study of a cohort of African American students at a predominately white institution. It consists of the students' commitment to participate beginning with their freshman year and continuing through graduation. These students have participated in focus group sessions each semester, attended seminars, attended consultations and advising with faculty and administrators, and completed questionnaires. It also includes a qualitative analysis of the expectations of African descended students both at this institution and a Historically Black Institution. This analysis will provide more insight into what 1st year students, particularly, and other students in general expect from their professors, instructors and other teaching staff.

Understanding our students through both qualitative and quantitative assessment measures will provide valuable information for recruiting, retaining and ensuring success of African American students at both types of institutions of higher learning. Upon successful completion of this project, we hope other institutions will use it as a model for successfully graduating African American students at predominately white institutions and historically black institutions.

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### **Engaging Faculty, Engaging Students: a Living Learning Model at NC State University**

A commitment to undergraduate education reform at North Carolina State University in the past ten years has led to the creation of two programs which have quickly gained a reputation for excellence. The First Year College is an advising program with combined with a traditional first year seminar class The First Year Inquiry Program seeks to transform first year general education courses through the creation of small classes led by faculty trained in teaching pedagogies to increase critical reasoning and student inquiry.

In the fall of 2001 a living learning program was created which brought together these two programs into a comprehensive experience for students and faculty. Presented from a faculty perspective, this presentation delineates the impact on faculty philosophy, teaching practices and engagement with students resulting from participation in the training, teaching, and living-learning community experiences. Specifics of faculty training and assessment structures will be presented and common vocabulary and teaching strategies across disciplines will be demonstrated.

### **Northeastern University**

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### **Mission Possible: Get Off your Island? Challenges and Opportunities When You Simply Must Change Something**

It was June. Fall loomed. We were tired. We'd run a successful first-year seminar for *decades*. Were we really going to do it the same way yet again? After taking ourselves out for a fine lunch we decided – No way! And so it began...

Our Challenge: Present the same old useful, effective materials in new and exciting ways. Let us show you how!

We will present our challenge and our solution: "Survive, thrive and get off your island!" Join us in the adventure!

Our adventure began in June of 2001, when we realized that we didn't want to approach this entering first-year class the way we had for the past decade. While our current First-Year Seminar had all the earmarks of success (increased retention, positive assessment, strong advisor/student contact, etc.)



we were, quite simply, tired of teaching the same old material in the same old way. Our Challenge was not only to recreate our course, but also to maintain faculty, administrative and student buy in. So much to accomplish, so little time.

Our traditional First-Year Seminar course had always presented a wealth of material for the entering college student: Decision-Making, Time-Management, Study Skills, Academic Policies, Ethics and Diversity. Throughout the summer of 2001 we wrestled with ways to present this essential material in an innovative and interesting new way. By fall we had the course organized and ready – or did we?

Join us as we discuss the journey we experienced and share in the fruits of our labor. We will present our audience with all the information they will need to design and implement a change of this kind in their own first-year seminar. In addition we will reveal the elements that have made this the most rewarding fall seminar program we have ever experienced. We are off the island and the results are fantastic!

### **Northern Illinois University**

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### **Using the Input-Environment-Outcome Assessment model to Examine Student Growth During the First Year of College**

Several researchers have advocated the extended freshmen orientation course as a vehicle to enhance student success, increase student/faculty interaction, and foster students' affiliation with their campus. Further, there is research evidence suggesting that students who participate in a freshmen orientation course show higher persistence rates and grades than students who do not take such a course. In an effort to address the issues of retention and transition into the university experience, a course (University 101) was designed to promote the establishment of relationships between peers and the instructor and to include enriching outside-class activities and assignments. The course is intended to facilitate students' learning about the university and about their interests, abilities, and expectations in relation to their choice of a major field of study. Course context includes three major areas: (1) an introduction to the university and adjustment to a new lifestyle, including topics about strategies for academic success, (2) strategies for decision-making concerning career opportunities, and (3) an introduction to the organization of graduation requirements of the university. For several years, the grade performance and persistence outcomes of freshmen who take the University 101 course have been assessed. As part of those assessment efforts, grade performance and persistence has been compared to other freshmen who do not take the course. In our most recent assessment of over 6,500 students who began as new freshmen, students who took the University 101 orientation course showed significantly higher persistence rates and significantly higher grades. We also conduct assessment by students' major college to identify specific academic areas where course activi-

ties prove particularly effective. In this poster presentation, we will more fully elaborate the freshmen course content, the assessment activities and findings, and how those assessment results are used to continuously improve the first-year experience.

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### **A Community College First Year Experience Program with Study Group Leaders and Self-Regulated Learning**

In this presentation, a systems approach to academic support and outcomes assessment in a community college first-year experience program will be described. This approach includes entry-level assessment that provides data and course recommendations based on students' strengths and weaknesses. Student assessment data along with faculty input resulted in the creation of a Study Group Leader Program for traditional and high-risk courses. The intent of the Study Group Leader Program is to facilitate student self-efficacy, performance, re-enrollment, and retention. In addition to participation in study groups, students may also participate in a secondary support activity entitled Student Success Seminars. These seminars reinforce study skill acquisition, knowledge of campus resources, and personal development.

Data was collected on over 3,500 students in over 350 courses at this multi-campus, two-year college. This data determined student perceptions of grade expectancy, motivation, and study skill acquisition as related to participation and attendance in study groups and at Student Success Seminars. Research results from the past five years will be presented assessing the effects of student-led groups and seminar attendance as related to use of personal organization skills, campus resources, and self-regulated learning.

This systems approach to academic support, outcomes assessment, and self-placement is especially effective. Data presented will substantiate the efficacy of this approach.

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## **Teaching Critical Thinking in the Freshman Year**

Over the past decade, Dr. Timothy Walter and Dr. Glenn Knudsvig have developed a validated instructional program of basic critical thinking strategies which may be taught across the curriculum. Between 1985-2001, several thousand students received instruction in basic critical thinking strategies while enrolled in Freshman Year courses, academic support courses, and traditional courses at colleges and universities. The critical thinking strategies which these students have learned are those basic strategies upon which much higher level critical thinking is based.

One of the problems that first-year students face is that much of what they are expected to do requires what are called “higher order” thinking skills-but most students haven’t had the opportunity to learn or refine some of the basic “lower” and “mid-level skills” upon which higher levels build. Without systematically learning these basic strategies, students struggle or fail to learn higher level skills.

The presentation will initially focus on introducing the participants to the intellectual model upon which these strategies are built. The participants will then see how instructors in the classroom can engage students in interactive classroom exercises which facilitate the learning of basic critical thinking strategies that are applicable across the curriculum to all courses.

Participants will leave this presentation with the skill to teach students in the Freshman Seminar or any other course, basic critical thinking strategies upon which higher level thinking is built and which make the thinking process more orderly and effective. Participants will learn how to teach students to apply these strategies to any information, whether written or spoken. They will specifically learn how to teach students to apply these strategies to their texts, readings, lectures, and class discussions.

With the increased emphasis on the teaching of critical thinking in our colleges, we have found the freshman year course at many colleges is the perfect point at which to introduce the students to basic critical thinking strategies. It provides students with an opportunity to learn the strategies in a “user friendly” environment and then apply the strategies across their curriculum.

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### **Enhancing the First-Year Experience of Ohio University Students by Tying Together Assessment, Planning and Accreditation**

In Fall 2001, a visitor to the Ohio University’s residential campus for 27,000 students would be greatly impressed with the activities surrounding the institution-wide push for enhancing student engagement and the first-year experience on campus. The concept of student engagement and how it

relates to Ohio University first-year students is a frequent topic of conversation among staff and faculty. Issues surrounding student engagement are on the agenda for campus-wide meetings, dean's councils, department chairs meetings etc. Faculty Senate, Student Services, and Administrative Services are working together with a new eagerness to provide Ohio University Student's with a distinctive undergraduate education. This proposed concurrent session would cover how assessment was linked with existing strategic planning and accreditation to produce a superior campus experience for first-year students.

The session covers initial assessment in 1999, using the National Survey Of Student Engagement, which revealed a need for strengthening the first-year experience of Ohio University students. Other independent indicators found in internal student-involvement surveys further corroborated these results. Institutional research data available on class size and faculty teaching loads was also used to understand the scope of the problem.

At the same time the campus community became increasingly aware that our first-year students were not doing as well as their counterparts at peer institutions, there was another momentous activity taking place, i.e. Ohio University General Education requirements were under review. The assessment that showed our first-year students to be less than optionally engaged was linked to the General Education revision. This has resulted in many changes geared towards raising the level of rigor in classes. The proposed new curriculum revolves around pedagogical changes in teaching that call for frequent student faculty interactions in small groups, both in and out of the classroom setting.

To implement the new General Education curriculum was going to require many additional faculty lines. The University has funded these new positions through creative initiatives, and the goal is to have additional faculty who will assist in making the first-year experience of our students a rewarding one. This year the President, in his state of the union address, called for active participation of all the University departments in creating an engaged student body.

Tying all these initiatives together is Ohio University's participation in a new accreditation process offered by the Commission of Higher Learning of the North Central Association. This new approach to accreditation is called the Academic Quality Initiative Project (AQIP). By participating in AQIP, Ohio University has been able to involve the accreditation agency in joining hands with the campus in pushing for on-going improvement in General Education, and first-year experience of students.

This presentation will highlight how one large Research University was able to bring together assessment, strategic planning and the process of accreditation to advance the needs of first-year students.

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## **Undecided: An Ideal Academic Beginning**

The status of undecided, we propose, should not merely be seen as an educational placeholder where students mark time until they declare their majors. Instead, being undecided can allow students an unparalleled opportunity to explore learning in an interdisciplinary way. To do so, however, we must re-evaluate how we view undecided students: not as “lost” or “directionless,” but as “open to possibilities,” and “beginning a lifelong educational journey.” Once we as institutions change how we see these students, then we can better empower them to see themselves that way.

We wish to demonstrate the importance of this outlook through an interactive workshop, where the attendees will engage in a variety of learning centers that all serve to illustrate the value of cross-disciplinary thinking and lifelong learning. Each learning center will take present a short lesson from a different field — e.g. Liberal Arts, Computer Science, Business, Allied Health, Education — that a person from any walk of life would benefit from knowing. Once we have the attendees participate in the learning centers and discuss their experience in engaging the new material, we will then make the connection to undecided students: that, for the student with no major, all of their college experiences are like the ones in this workshop.

We will provide participants with supplementary materials regarding the issues of lifelong learning and undecided students.

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### **Creating a New Perspective in Understanding How to Teach Today’s Freshman**

Each generation perceives the world according to the way we were brought up. This influences the way we live, the way we make decisions and even the way we teach. What worked for me when I was in school should work today. Right? Today’s students are very different from what we were like - but why? What has changed? What influences their lives now? How can I teach more effectively in order to reach my students?

In order to answer these questions for today, we must be able to answer them for ourselves when we grew up. It is important to understand how things have changed in order to change. This highly interactive presentation is designed to create a new perspective in understanding how to teach today’s first-year student.

Participants will explore their environment at the time they graduated from high school by listing two characteristics of: a) Family life; b) The external world - threats, major influences; c) communi-

cation/media influences - radio, TV, movies, newspapers, songs and computers; d) School life; e) what were kids like.

2. Compare CHANGE in each of the above by decade. (1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2001) Learn the necessity of varying teaching strategies to meet the needs of the 2001, college first-year student.

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### **Reach to Teach— Partnerships in Education and Transition: Transitioning Dual-Enrolled Students from High School to College to Teaching**

The K-12 teacher shortage is a growing concern to educators, legislators, and community leaders. There are many contributing factors: the disparity in economic compensation, the exodus of older instructors, and the disillusionment of new teachers. State legislatures and school districts recognize the importance of devising incentives to attract and retain teachers.

The community college system has historically expanded its focus to meet changing social and economic conditions, reaching within the organization to develop or modify programs that reach out to diverse populations and community needs. Therefore, given the demand for qualified teachers, it is most appropriate that community colleges meet this challenge by devising creative programs and innovative partnerships. Reach to Teach is such an initiative.

Developed as part of the National Institute for Leadership Development Leaders 2001 program, the project goal is to provide a coordinated and comprehensive set of interventions and incentives that promote successful movement of dual-enrolled students from high school to community college to university in preparation for careers in teaching. The transition model is based on students' needs, preferences and interests; it is an outcome-oriented process designed to increase enrollment, improve retention, and encourage completion of dual-enrolled students at community college.

Specific goals, objectives and activities for each component have been identified. At the secondary level, the focus is on information, awareness, and preparation for the transition to college; campus visitations and informational programs are scheduled both at the high school and college. The postsecondary level emphasizes academic success, personal assessment, and self-advocacy; it also provides opportunities for mentorship.

This project will strengthen community partnerships, provide accessible and affordable education for dual-enrolled students, and contribute to meeting the need for qualified K-12 teachers. The Reach to Teach partnership is an innovative model of education transition.

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### **Challenging Myths, Confirming Realities: Investigating the First Year in American Higher Education**

This session will report results from a national survey, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, that documents how the first college year is structured and implemented in the curriculum and co-curriculum. The presenter will also link the results to theoretical constructs that support student retention and “good practice” in undergraduate education. This national survey was administered electronically in the fall of 2000. Results paint the first empirically validated picture of the first year in the classroom and in co-curricular activities.

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#### **Research Universities and First-Year Students: Now for the Good News**

Carnegie Classification Doctoral/Research-Extensive Universities, about 150 in total, are widely acknowledged as significant aspirational models for much of higher education, not only in the US, but in much of the world. Yet the sector is not broadly noted for its focus on undergraduate students, particularly new students, and in fact is often accused of placing a low priority on new student success. While evidence from individual institutions suggests that this broad characterization is unfair, little information has been gathered on Doctoral/Research-Extensive Universities as a whole to inform—and possibly counter—this perception.

The Policy Center on the First Year of College has launched a research and dissemination program, designed to collect and make available brief descriptions on first-year programs at these universities. Although not every program meets every criterion for inclusion in the project, emphasis has been placed on programs that: have improved instruction and learning outcomes in introductory courses of traditional disciplines; are linked by philosophy and outcomes to classroom goals, even if centered outside of the classroom; have quantitative or qualitative assessment data available to suggest effectiveness; have been targeted to a significant number of first-year students rather than to a small cohort; and have been emulated by other institutions, gained external financial support, been cited by external evaluators as exemplary, or otherwise been identified as a “best practice.”

The session will highlight a few, particular programs of note, will bring to the fore trends that are emerging on research-university approaches to first-year education, and will solicit from the audience, through discussion, further directions for this inquiry and its dissemination.

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**W (h) ither Expectations?: Expectations Versus Reality For First-Year Students**

This session will explore the expectations of entering college and university students and examine how those expectations match with actual first year experiences. Data from the College Student Expectations Questionnaire will provide a framework for discussing entering students' views of their academic, social, personal, and cognitive experiences. Literature on student expectations will be shared and resources for further reading will be recommended.

Participants will have an opportunity to share information about student expectations on their own campuses, and engage in a lively discussion about what colleges and universities do (or don't do, but should do) to narrow the gap between student expectations and the realities of campus life. They will also be asked to reflect on programs, policies, procedures, marketing and promotional materials, and other elements of the campus environment that might serve as potential areas of conflict between student expectations and student experiences.

Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss the nature by which students develop their expectations about college life, and explore the messages that colleges send, both intentionally and unintentionally, about the nature of the collegiate academic and social experience. Finally, session participants will generate methods and practical procedures for addressing these issues on their own campuses as they try to reconcile the discrepancy between student expectations and experiences.

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**Benchmarking First-Year Seminars: Early Results of a National Survey**

At the time of this writing data collection is ongoing for the First-Year Initiative (FYI) project. FYI, is a partnership between The Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. The research is funded by grants from The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Pew Charitable Trusts.



The research plans calls for the first outcomes to be released by mid January and for secondary analyses to continue after that time. By the annual conference there will be ample results to fill a concurrent session about this project. In the first round of analyses we will determine the mean levels of student satisfaction and self-reported learning from participation in first-year seminars.

In subsequent analyses we will compare results based on specific course formats (length of course, number of hours of credit, etc.). We hope to have some early results by the time of the conference. A portion of the session will be devoted to future analysis plans and how audience members may receive future updates as results are released.

Each participant will receive a handout on assessment structures, a copy of the benchmarking instrument, and information about the initial findings from the first analyses of these data.

### **Purdue University**

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### **The Effective Coexistence of Faculty, Student Affairs, and Peer Leaders in the FYE Classroom**

The Department of Freshman Engineering at Purdue University offers a 16-week, 1 credit, graded course titled “ENGR 195D – Introduction to Engineering.” Traditionally, either faculty members or peer leaders have taught the courses. In the fall of 2001, a new model was implemented on a trial basis with faculty, student affairs professionals and undergraduate peer leaders team-teaching the course. This model was used with five divisions of the course, with two divisions being part of the Freshman Engineering Learning Community. These five divisions ranged in size from 24 students in the learning community divisions to 18 in the others.

The instructional team collaborated to develop the course syllabus. While there were difficulties to overcome, team members treated each other with professional respect, and each member contributed his or her experience and expertise.

The course covered a number of topics, including learning strategies, time management, diversity, ethics and problem solving, as well as utilizing a panel discussion with practicing engineers, current students and hands-on engineering activities. The Learning Community classes also included a service learning project and field trips.

It has been perceived that faculty members place the strongest emphasis on the cognitive outcomes of student development, such as academic and intellectual development and that student affairs professionals generally emphasize the affective outcomes such as personal and emotional adjustment. Undergraduate peer leaders are able to bring a fresh and realistic perspective along with the ability to establish relationships with the freshmen. By encouraging the course to be team-taught by all three, students would receive both cognitive and affective aspects of development and peer leaders to deliver it in a relevant and realistic manner.

The ultimate goal is to include peer leaders (from an engineering student organization) in the instructional team and to offer this course model to the entire Freshman Engineering class of over 1600 students. The experience and lessons learned in this process have served as building blocks for future collaboration within our department and have demonstrated how the first-year seminar facilitates collaboration between faculty, student affairs professionals and student leaders.

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### **David meets Goliath: Adapting Learning Communities to a Large Public University**

Learning Communities have been successful across the United States in promoting community, enhancing learning, and fostering the personal growth and success of first-year students. Two varieties of this approach used at Purdue West Lafayette to enhance student integration and commitment are Learning Communities and Residential Learning Communities.

Learning Communities at Purdue is one of a number of programs that are funded by the Lilly Endowment Retention Initiatives, a five-year, \$5 million grant to fund efforts that improve student learning and as a by-product, retention. The grant proposal was based on Tinto's (1993) model of student retention, which focuses on student commitment and integration based on experiences in the university setting. Alexander Astin (1975), a noted scholar and the Director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, defines community as a small subgroup of students with a common sense of purpose. Using Astin and Tinto's ideas to help define its effort, Purdue West Lafayette's Learning Communities focus on the development of faculty-led, academic-based communities.

Purdue launched its first learning community, the Explorers, in Fall 1998 with 47 students. In Fall 2001, approximately 675 students were enrolled in one of twelve Learning Communities.

This session will review challenges that were encountered on the road to establishing Learning Communities at Purdue West Lafayette, due to a highly decentralized environment where school autonomy is stressed. Strategies will include, but are not limited to: simplifying the registration process, kick-starting a campus awareness campaign, improving marketing programs, assessment approaches, results, and implications, and calculated expansion. Participants are welcome to add to the discussion with their own experiences.

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**Purdue Summer Start: Building Foundations for Success**

For years, colleges and Universities have been making concerted efforts to examine and meet the needs of their students in order to increase student learning and retention. These efforts have led to the conclusion that the first-year experience is crucial to enhancing the students' initial and continued commitment to higher education. In September of 1997, Purdue University received a five-year, five million-dollar grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. The grant is being used to sponsor ten programs that are based on Tinto's (1975) Model of Student Retention, and aimed at increasing the overall six-year baccalaureate completion rates by five percent within six years of full implementation of the grant.

One of these programs is Purdue Summer Start (PSS), a residential summer school program based on research that shows the effectiveness of summer bridge programs in easing transition and improving retention (Ackerman, 1991; Koch, 1995). While many summer bridge programs target specific "at-risk" populations, however, PSS targets all first-year students. Purdue Summer Start's initial goal is to enhance the first-year experience by providing students with a supported transition from high school to college. Summer Start participants are immersed in college life during an eight-week program that occurs in the summer before the fall semester of their first-year. They attend the program with other first-year students, live in a residence hall, enroll in six to nine hours of regular Purdue summer classes, and participate in co-curricular and social activities with the support of Peer Assistant Leaders (PALS).

This session will provide participants with an overview of the goals and implementation of PSS. The academic, co-curricular, and social aspects of the program will be discussed; and much attention will be focused on the assessment plans and outcomes associated with the program. Finally, participants will be encouraged to share their approaches to similar programs on their campuses.

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## **An Overview and Results of the Assessment of First-Year Seminars at Purdue University**

The nature of student persistence at the post-secondary level remains a topic of much interest (Allen, 1990; Fidler, 1991; Tinto, 1990). For instance, models of student persistence continue to be proposed and revised (Allen, 1999; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Fidler, 1991). In an increasingly competitive market, Universities must have the ability to retain the majority of students admitted, as well as demonstrate that students can graduate in a timely fashion (Johnson, 1997). In order to increase student persistence and graduation rates, various programs are being developed, refined, and evaluated. A longitudinal study, funded as part of a five year, five million dollar initiatives grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., consisting of over 4000 participants from Purdue University campuses across Indiana, began in Fall 1999 to examine the impact of various formats of first-year seminars on student success and persistence.

An overview of the system wide assessment efforts of first-year seminars, including assessment instruments, data collection, and results will be presented for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 student cohorts. Main outcome variables, such as academic performance and persistence rates were examined for students enrolled and not enrolled in a seminar. Comparisons also were examined across various seminar formats for different academic disciplines. In general, results were favorable for those students enrolled in a seminar. For example, students enrolled in a seminar were 1.24 times as likely to persist compared to students not enrolled in a seminar. In addition, noncognitive variables (i.e., academic intrinsic motivation and institutional integration) and traditional cognitive variables were examined in a preliminary structural equations model. Results indicate that a successful college career requires more than academic knowledge and capabilities.

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### **One Size Doesn't Fit All! Measuring Impact and Diagnostic Planning: Tailoring a Supplemental Instruction Program to a Campus**

A the heart of the ideology of the Supplemental Instruction Program lies the premise that students who regularly attend SI peer-led study sessions will improve their grade in the course, improve their methods of studying, and will graduate at a higher rate than those who do not. Supplemental Instruction is part of a broader grant-sponsored effort at Purdue University designed to provide academic know-how to first and second-year students enrolled in historically difficult courses. Purdue University piloted the program in the summer of 1999 with two freshman courses in connection with Purdue Summer Start. In the fall of 2001, the program was expanded to eight courses with fourteen student facilitators.

Tracking the impact this peer-assisted learning program has on students is done in a variety of ways. Assessment findings, which are essential for the determination of the future of the program, will be

emphasized. The primary focus will be examples of the assessment methods and findings and discussion of how those findings help to determine the selection and make-up of the program. Session attendance cohorts, student classification, SAT scores, and persistence rates are effective forms of feedback for administrators, department heads, faculty, and program coordinators.

Qualitative results will also be examined. Surveys given to students at the end of the semester are measured in terms of key words and phrases providing insight into the students' perspective of the effectiveness of the program. These comments as well as quantitative results can be used to shape the design of the program in successive semesters.

### **Purdue University**

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### **Attaining Consistent Instruction in a Peer Led Freshman Seminar through the Development of a Peer Leader Training Course**

ENGR 104- Introduction to Engineering and Purdue, is a first year seminar course that is instructed by upper-class engineering peer leaders. The Purdue Student Engineering Foundation, a student-run organization, has been responsible for selecting peer leaders and providing coordination for ENGR 104 since 1995. While the course has received strong evaluations, the Department of Freshman Engineering observed that both the consistency of information and the quality of instructor preparation varied across the divisions.

In an effort to minimize these variations, a peer leader training course, ENGR 404- Instruction and Leadership, was developed as a required course for all ENGR 104 peer leaders. The learning objectives for ENGR 404 state that successful completion of this course will enable peer leaders to:

- Identify, seek, and acquire skills and knowledge required to lead others confidently in a well-defined context.
- Effectively lead others to successful achievement of goals.
- Use appropriate teaching techniques to prepare, conduct, and evaluate a class.

The first two learning objectives are addressed through the ENGR 404 classroom activities, which focus on student success topics such as resume development, time management, learning styles, and cooperative education opportunities. The last learning objective is met through peer leader development of class outlines and reflections. Class outlines consist of a detailed agenda and class objectives, while reflections allow the peer leaders to critically evaluate the achievement of the class objectives and the quality of interaction among the students and peer leaders.

Extensive quantitative and qualitative data was collected in Fall 2001 for both ENGR 104 and ENGR 404 through formative and summative course evaluations. Additional qualitative data is

collected through the peer leaders' outlines, reflections, and weekly evaluations of the training they receive in ENGR 404.

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**THE EFFECTS OF ROWAN SEMINAR ON SOPHOMORE RETENTION**

For the past seven years Rowan Seminar (RS), the first year experience at Rowan University has been offered to incoming freshmen. We have tracked sophomore retention rates every year since 1996. In that time students who have taken the RS course in their first year have returned for their sophomore year in greater percentages that students who did not take a RS course. The following table presents the data for 1996 through 2000.

YEAR	TOTAL COHORTN	% retention	ROWAN SEMINARN
1996	1135	84%	436
1997	1039	81%	442
1998	1114	84%	505
1999	1121	84%	572
2000	1049 481 568		

% retention	NON-ROWAN SEMINARN	% retention	% DIFFERENCE
90%	699	80%	10%
85%	597	78%	7%
88%	609	82%	5%
87%	549	79%	8%

We also examined the graduation rates of RS students. The first cohort of RS students to graduate where the class of 2000, this group of students was 17% more likely to graduate in four years than

students who did not take a RS course. For the class of 2001, RS students were 10% more likely to graduate in four years than their non-RS counterparts.

It is evident that the RS experience has a beneficial effect on our students when we use retention and graduation rates as indicators. The RS students are more likely to come back in their sophomore years and to graduate in four years than the non RS students.

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### **Information Competence in the Freshman Seminar**

The Educational Mentoring Team Program of SSU is an advising and orientation program offered to all first-time freshmen. The program includes the Freshman Seminar, a one-semester course taught by a team of instructors (a faculty member and/or a student services professional, and a peer mentor). Among the 29 sections are several “themed” sections focusing on a specific discipline or student interest. A subset of these specialized sections has been incorporated into the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) Program, which offers freshmen the opportunity to participate in a living-learning community. The Freshman Seminar serves as the nexus for appropriate training in a variety of study and research skills related to the theme of the FIG.

In April 2001, we received a grant from the CSU to facilitate a program of collaboration among librarians and FIG instructors which may eventually be used as a model for the curriculum of all sections of Freshman Seminar. The program goals are: to increase information competence among a select group of faculty and peer advisors; to increase collaboration between librarians and those faculty, resulting in course-specific student project descriptions which further the ACRL Information Competence standards; to increase librarian contact with freshmen in the form of targeted interventions; and to give students a forum in which to display their newly acquired skills. In developing this program, we defined learning goals specific to both students and instructors and are assessing pre- and post-knowledge of information competence among all participants.

This session presents all program activities training, collaboration between librarians, instructors, and students, and assessment tools and will incorporate a discussion of learning objectives. We will present syllabi, project descriptions, examples of student work, and a program evaluation.

**Southeastern Louisiana University**

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**Great Expectations: Student and Faculty Perceptions**

Do you often wonder why students and their professors do not get along? This session will focus on ways to build better relationships between the two. Through an ice breaker activity, the participants will discuss the roles that both “likes” and “dislikes” play in forming expectations.

The presenter will explain how students were selected to participate in the making of the video and what questions were asked as the student was being filmed. We will also discuss how the video is used during new faculty orientation. The lesson plan used by the instructor in the classroom will be given to each participant. Examples of the FS 101 students’ responses to the lesson activities will be disseminated to the audience. Using a flipchart, the partnered participants will do the “Top 10” rank order activity, “What students dislike about professors,” and compare the FS 101 responses to those of the upperclassmen in the video. The participants will then rank order the “Top 10-What professors dislike about students.”

The session will conclude with an open discussion about the student’s role and responsibility in meeting expectations, and specific behaviors students can do to encourage professors to exhibit more “likes.”

**Southern Illinois University**

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**Career Development in FYE Seminars: Attending to Career Development Theory and Research**

Many FYE instructors choose to include a “career” component in their seminars. This section of the course may take many forms, from assigned readings and discussion, to in-class exercises, to formal assessment and interpretation. The extent to which instructors cover career-related concepts may vary from one-shot discussions of career interests to more comprehensive approaches where multiple career variables are discussed and integrated over a series of class meetings. We suggest that recent



advances in career theory, research, and assessment, should drive decisions regarding both the content and process of career development within FYE seminars.

Historically, trait-factor and developmental theories have driven career research, assessment, and intervention. Holland's Hexagon and Super's Career Rainbow are two examples of concepts from those theories that are frequently used in the process of career exploration and decision-making. More recently, however, research has supported a social cognitive theory of career growth and development. This theory (a) compliments existing career theories, (b) extends those theories by highlighting the important role of cognitions and goals, (c) focuses on the interaction between the persons and their environment, (d) has spawned new assessment strategies, and (e) is easily incorporated into leading theories of student development.

In addition to recent theoretical advances, researchers are now focusing on identifying the effective components of career counseling and education. These researchers are asking questions like, "is computer-assisted career guidance effective and for what type of student", "are there differences between individual and group career interventions", "how important is teaching the use of career information sources", and "what is the role of social support in the career exploration and decision-making process?"

This session will provide participants with (a) an overview of recent developments in theory, assessment, and research, and (b) suggestions for how to incorporate recent advances into the career component of their FYE seminars.

### **Southwest Missouri State University**

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### **Fun Ways to Teach Communication Skills That "Make a Difference"**

Communication skills make a big difference in a student's success in college and throughout life. The importance of communication skills has been reported by employers, research studies, and professors. Various creative activities can be incorporated into student success courses to help students improve their communication with professors, classmates, roommates, family member, administrators, academic advisors, and others.

The objectives of this session are to demonstrate the impact of communication on college success and to show instructors how they can guide students in:

Choosing the appropriate communication means (e-mail, telephone, letter/memo, or in person) for various types of first-year experiences.

**Communicating effectively by e-mail, by telephone, in a letter or memo, and in person (both verbally and nonverbally).**

The session will begin with a communication icebreaker. Throughout the presentation the audience will work individually on self-assessments and in small groups as teams. They will analyze case studies, perform role-playing scenarios, and critique communication practices (demonstrated on overhead transparencies, provided on paper in their handout, and enacted by the role players). Finally, the entire group will work together “to earn bonus points” that can be taken home to use in their classes.

A number of enjoyable activities for interactive learning will be demonstrated, and you will leave with handouts that can be used in your student success classes. Helping freshmen develop effective communication skills enables them to maximize their potential in college and throughout life.

### **Southwest Texas State University**

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### **Restructuring for Success: A Comprehensive New Student Experience**

In 1998 Southwest Texas State University President Jerome Supple created a quality team (Freshman Academic Success Team) charged with reexamining the university's efforts to retain freshmen. Given 90 days to complete their study and to develop action recommendations, FAST proposed a completely restructured orientation and new student experience. The University's administration approved the FAST report and allocated \$120,000 in continuing strategic funding to implement their recommendations.

In fall 1998 Vice President for Student Affairs James Studer charged the Orientation Committee with revamping and reducing summer orientation from a 3-day program to a 1.5 day program. Simultaneously, he and University College Dean Ronald Brown created a committee to implement a “just-in-time” experience for new students. Meeting nearly weekly from early in 1999 until the beginning of the new student convocation in August, the committee developed a name for the experience (PAWS Preview), a distinctive logo, and a program that incorporated six required “just-in-time” elements (notetaking, library introduction, computer ethics, computer environment, diversity, and alcohol awareness). The committee decided to organize the participants (2500 freshmen) into “dens” that corresponded in membership to the University Seminar classes. SWTs New Student Convocation became the initial event in the PAWS experience.

PAWS was designed as a 3.5-day program, which began on Saturday afternoon and continued through Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Classes began on the following day. The committee decided to employ comprehensive assessment to evaluate and to reconfigure PAWS, and to link PAWS to SWTs half-semester University Seminar courses. PAWS successes, failures and continuing assessment have led to experimentation with both technology (card scanners for attendance taking) and programming. The presenters will share information about the uses of assessment in the evolution and qualitative improvement of both PAWS and University Seminar. In 2001 PAWS has become a

model for assessment and a “tradition” at SWT.

### **Southwest Texas State University**

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### **Creating a Freshman Seminar Class for Special Admission Athletes**

University and colleges have begun to recognize the value of creating separate freshman seminar classes for various special populations. Residential college, at-risk, and first semester transfer students are all examples of special groups that currently have classes designed especially to meet the needs of these populations. One group that may not have equal consideration is special admission student athletes. Most institutions allow preferential admission status for some athletes who do not meet the published admission standards of the institution, and these student athletes enter an academic playing field that is both challenging and at times unfriendly.

The uniqueness of their presence, role and identity on campus requires another look at providing a freshman seminar experience designed especially to meet their needs. Student athletes are under stricter academic standards than non-athletic students, they have outside commitments that are time consuming and the demands to serve two masters (academics and athletics) is often too difficult for 18 year-olds to master.

Creating a class designed only for freshmen athletes could help these students to adjust to their environment, learn academic strategies, which will serve them throughout their academic career, and help to promote an academic awareness in an otherwise athletic environment. Developing more than a note-taking or life skills course could be difficult, but possible. Framed in an academic setting, athletes could begin to learn how to define their role in the university setting, understand their responsibility towards their non-athletic peers, learn how to establish a sound academic base, and create amongst themselves a sense of teamwork in an academic setting.

This session is designed to create an awareness of the special needs of special admission student athletes, help advisors and administrations formulate a freshman year experience that meets the needs of this population. Examples of class sessions, which incorporate the responsibilities of meeting university and NCAA rules while maintaining academic balance, will be part of the presentation.

### **State University of New York, Cortland**

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David Miller, Professor; Chair of Geography

Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwu, Associate Professor of Geography

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### **TechFirst and PeopleFirst: Pre-Majors in Developing Learning Communities**

This session will look at a newly created learning community at SUNY Cortland. The TechFirst program resulted from the brainstorming of participants as they tried to deal with the specific needs of pre-majors, retaining students in the school of Arts and Sciences, and providing a creative teaching experience for the faculty involved. The faculty cohort was eager to collaborate on teaching, and thought students might benefit from their enthusiasm. The common ground, despite disparate research, was personal and professional interest in technology and combined realization that the graduating classes of the 21st century needed a strong background in computers regardless of chosen discipline. The first TechFirst program ran in Fall of 2000 was essentially the pilot. It proved to be extremely rewarding to the faculty and especially helpful to the pre-major cohort. The Dean of Arts and Sciences supported the second year of TechFirst through a Title III grant. Some adjustments made in the original format will be discussed in more detail during the session. A PeopleFirst group with support from the Dean has followed for pre-majors “interested in working with people” but uncertain and unprepared to commit. The hope is that a positive experience in the first program will encourage some students to stay with a major and a mentor from the Arts and Sciences. The Provost has recently vocalized that she hopes to see eventually all first year students in a similar learning community, to help with the student retention concern at the university level. The participants in the session will discuss how they created a cohort of faculty, struggled with registration and orientation logistics, developed a sense of community and experimented with new pedagogical strategies. The presenters will invite the audience to share their own ideas for first year programs in a learning community format and their tips for active teaching and learning.

### **State University of New York, Oswego**

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### **The Preceptor Program: Integrating First Year Success Elements into Classes in the Core Curriculum**

The Preceptor Program, a unique and innovative program at SUNY Oswego, was initiated in Fall of 1996 to offer key components related to first year student success within courses already imbedded in the core curriculum of the campus.

The goals of the program are the following: 1) to develop essential academic skills (including note-taking, studying, critical reading, and research),

2) to improve attitudes toward the teaching/ learning process and those responsible for it; 3) to provide an orientation to campus resources, opportunities, and facilities; 4) to ease the adjustment and transition of students to the college environment, 5) to foster academic self-confidence and personal responsibility, 6) to develop academic support groups, and 7) to develop a sense that learning on a campus takes place both inside and outside the classroom. Full time faculty in a number of departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, including Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Spanish, Theater, Music, English and History, assisted by undergraduate peer educators, offer these courses. Course enrollments are capped at 25 students to allow for closer interaction between students and faculty. Faculty participants receive specific training in the needs of first year students, strategies to help first year students be successful, and the effective use of peer educators. Peer educators receive training in corresponding areas through the Office of Experience-Based Education and receive college credit for their participation. This program has been actively assessed for the last four years. In each year, retention and student success were significantly better for students in the program. In addition, single and simultaneous probit models that account for self-selection variables like previous academic success and aptitude show the success rate and retention of students in the program to be a function of the program itself, rather than any measurable pre-existing variables.

### **Stony Brook University**

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### **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective First-Year Seminar Instructors**

Developing a comprehensive instructor-training component is integral to the success of first-year seminar courses. Yet, instructor training is an area of first-year seminar development, which is often overlooked, or at the very least neglected. Although the content and delivery of seminars and instructors vary from institution to institution, it is possible to draw on some of the common habits that highly effective first-year seminar instructors employ.

#### **Conceptual/Theoretical Bases for Program:**

In *Solid Foundations: Building Success for First-Year Seminars Through Instructor Training and Development*, Joseph Cuseo writes that although the primary goal of the first-year seminar is to increase student retention, an outcome of the pedagogy associated with seminars can result in improvements in the quality of education for undergraduates. He expands on this concept by stating “A substantive training program that provides a highly visible teaching enhancement experience may serve to stimulate campus-wide attention to and interest in effective undergraduate education”

(1999). With this in mind, it is also important to acknowledge first-year seminar instructors, as well as other faculty and staff are engaging in exciting teaching and learning initiatives, and in doing so are improving the quality of undergraduate education on their campuses.

Intended Learning Objectives:

- ◆ To help participants gain practical “tricks of the trade” they can adapt and use in their first-year seminar classes, or use in their own seminar instructor training
- ◆ To share ideas about seminar instructor training what it takes to become a “highly effective” first-year seminar instructor
- ◆ To put theory, or at least the tips into practice through role-play and case studies

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Attendees will gain insight that will be helpful to them as they plan and develop or participate in first-year seminar instructor training

### **Surry Community College**

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### **Infusing Cooperative Learning Activities into a Community College Student Success Course**

An abundance of research literature supports cooperative learning as an effective teaching strategy. It is a way for students to learn essential interpersonal life-skills and to develop the ability to work collaboratively. The results show that students who have opportunities to work collaboratively, learn faster and more efficiently, have greater retention, and feel more positive about the learning experience. Cooperative learning; however, is not simply assigning students into a group for completing an assigned project. Rather, there are very specific methods to assure the success of group work, and it is essential that both teachers and students are aware of them.

The poster session will provide detailed information on how to structure cooperative learning situations. Materials will provide an overview that includes (a) an understanding of what cooperation is, the basic elements that make it work, and the research validating its use, and (b) practical applications using cooperative learning in a community college student success course.

### **Texas A&M University**

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Zachry 204, College of Engineering

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### **Can A Half-Day Time-Management, Study Strategies, and Study Skills Workshop Impact A First Semester, First-Year Students Academic Performance?**

A half-day time management, study strategies, and study skills workshop has been developed that can be presented to students before the semester begins to help them get off to a good start academically. A group of 150 “at risk” freshman, engineering students at Texas A&M University who took this workshop in August 2001 are being compared to a control group of 150 “at-risk” freshman engineering students who did not take the workshop. The assessment tool will determine the degree to which all 300 students are applying basic principles of time management, study strategies, and study skills to determine the degree to which their grades correlate with their application of each of these principles. A multiple regression analysis will be used to statically analyze the data. The group who took the half-day workshop will also be compared to the control group to see to what degree the workshop increased their practice of the key principles (as determined from the multiple regression analysis) that correlate with academic success. Finally, the grade point average and distribution for each group will be compared to determine to what degree a half-day workshop before the freshman year begins can impact a student’s first semester academic performance.

#### **Texas A&M University**

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#### **The ExCEL Student Success Program**

The ExCEL (ExCELlence uniting Culture, Education and Leadership) Student Success Program is an effort by the Department of Multicultural Services at Texas A&M University to achieve academic and social integration of first-year minority students. The retention area is responsible for assisting in the retention and graduation of students by developing retention initiatives that are culturally relevant to the populations we serve. The retention area provides services for, but not exclusive, African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American students. Through the following components, we promote the academic success of our students and the molding of our future leaders. The program components are ExCEL Summer Bridge, Conference, Seminar and Plus. The program components include activities to integrate new minority students into the university life, workshops, mentoring, and academic success. Learn more about how the comprehensive program resulted in an increased retention rate and improved academic performance.

#### **The Boyer Center**

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### **Bridging the Great Divide: Effective Partnerships in the First-Year Experience**

Using exemplary models from a national study of partnerships between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs at 18 institutions, the session will identify the best practices related to forming, sustaining and assessing partnerships in First Year Experience Programs. Explicit earmarks of best practices in Academic Affairs/ Student Affairs partnerships will be identified as well as tools and approaches for assessment. The presentation will demonstrate how partnerships are important for bridging the “Great Divide,” in order create successful and effective First Year Experience programs.

#### **The Ohio State University**

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### **Teaching “Study Skills”: The Effectiveness of the Strategies-for-Achievement Approach**

An educational psychology-based training program was developed to teach learning and motivation strategies (“study skills”) to college students. It involved teaching students four major achievement strategies (each divided into two substrategies): 1) taking reasonable risk (empowering strategy: setting goals, breaking tasks down); 2) taking responsibility for outcomes (belief strategy: thinking positively, planning); 3) searching the environment for information (action strategy: asking questions, using visualization); 4) using feedback (reaction strategy: self-monitoring, self-instructing). Each strategy was used to teach students to overcome procrastination, build self-confidence and responsibility, manage their lives, learn from lecture and text, prepare for exams, write papers, and build relationships. For example, students were taught to view information that is either heard in lectures or read in text as “answers” to implicit questions. Making those questions explicit through the construction of “Q & A Outlines” helped students prepare for and take tests. The training was provided as a 5-credit course using a “hybrid” instructional model called Active Discovery And Participation thru Technology (ADAPT). It combined important features of traditional classroom instruction: required attendance, a printed textbook (Learning and Motivation Strategies: Your Guide to Success; Tuckman et al. 2002), presence of an instructor, and those unique to computer-based instruction: class time spent doing computer-mediated activities rather than listening to lectures, a large number of performance activities (actually 216) rather than just two or three exams, self-pacing with milestones rather than a lockstep pattern. ANCOVAs of quarter-GPA using prior cumulative-GPA as a covariate showed that students who received the training earned significantly higher grade point averages in comparison to a matched control group, both the quarter they received the training



and the quarter after receiving the training. GPA differences favoring the trained group ranged from .5 the quarter the course was taken to between .2 and .4 for the quarter following.

### **The Ohio State University**

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### **The Orientation Welcome Leader Program - The FIRST Experience for Ohio State First-Year Students**

The Orientation Welcome Leader Program is an innovative program that makes move in day at Ohio State smooth. More importantly, it is a two day orientation program that immediately precedes the beginning of classes. The orientation aspect is aimed at helping students feel at home at Ohio State before the rest of the students arrive.

The poster presentation will be an explanation of how we do this at Ohio State, and how one might adapt it to other campus'.

### **The Ohio State University**

Mabel Freeman, Assistant Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience  
Mathew Wawrynski, New Student Programs and Research  
Alice Lanning, Coordinator of Freshman Programs

### **The Ohio State University**

Mabel Freeman, Assistant Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience  
Susan Schnell, Senior Assistant Director, Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience

### **The First Year Success Series: University-Wide Collaboration Is a Key to Success**

Historically, institutional expectations to provide new students with information on issues such as leadership, sexuality, and alcohol awareness have existed at The Ohio State University. Offices such as Academic Advising, Student Activities, Student Health Center, Student Financial Aid, Minority Affairs, and the Counseling Center worked independently to capture the attention of first year students, with mixed results. First Year seminars are often seen as the quickest avenue to reach new students, but academic advisors teach most first year seminar courses at Ohio State, with their area of expertise being academic issues, not the many non-academic issues. This session details how collaborative partnerships at Ohio State resulted in programs such as a First-Year Success Series, a set of 90 thematically linked programs delivered by the campus departments who had been anxious to find direct access to these students, and the development of a web-based system to facilitate 5900 students' signing up for all this. Also, the importance of collaborating across campus to plan and fund events like New Student Convocation for 5,900; the Buckeye Book Community, a common reading experience featuring small faculty discussion groups and author visits (Bebe Moore

Campbell and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel), and the sale of more than 4,000 books will be highlighted.

Especially important to the Success Series was a web application which proved invaluable for tracking interest in the sessions. Thousands of students were directed to the web to view each week's offerings and register for sessions. Using the information captured during registration, reminder e-mail messages were sent to students 24 hours before each event, and lists of registrants were provided to the instructors. At the conclusion of each session, students completed One-Minute Reflection papers, which were collected and distributed to the advisors.

### **The Ohio State University**

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### **Not Just Automobiles—The Ford Living Learning Program**

Interested in learning how corporate sponsorship has been integrated into the Ford Living Learning Program, one of the strongest LLPs at Ohio State? In this session, you will learn about the strongest components of the Ford LLP and how students are able to integrate the out of classroom experience with what they learn inside the classroom.

I am planning to run through the major components of the Ford LLP by providing participants with a condensed packet of information and also giving them a CD of the information presented. The presentation will include a brief introduction of the genesis of the program, the faculty involvement, the common or linked courses the students are enrolled in, the programming, fieldtrips and email mentor component. Although I won't be able to focus on each of these in detail, I will provide specifics for some of the more important and strongest components. However, the CD will contain detail on the entire program.

### **The University of Georgia**

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### **Mentoring First-Year Student Athletes**

For many student athletes it is difficult to determine which role takes precedence: student or athlete?

It is critical that first-year students address this question and learn to balance the responsibilities related to both roles. The purpose of this round table session will be to generate discussion surrounding how to facilitate athletes' growth as students. Topics for exploration will include understanding the purpose of higher education, instilling a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, establishing goals and priorities, developing problem solving skills, managing time and stress, and defining academic integrity. Participant will be encouraged to share information regarding programs and policies at their own institutions. Together, presenters and participants will brainstorm mechanisms for enhancing the academic experience for student athletes. One goal of this round table might be a collaboration among participants for an article for the Journal of the First-Year Experience.

One of the presenters is employed as an academic counselor by a Division I NCAA athletic program. The other is a faculty member who has taught first-year experience courses for almost 20 years, and has also served as a mentor for high-risk student athletes. Together the presenters have examined some of the conflicts that arise not only for student athletes, but for higher education professionals who understand the tremendous pressures placed on these students to perform both in the classroom and on the court or playing field, including the conflicts between their own roles.

### **The University of Tampa**

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### **University 101: “But, What About the Second semester”?**

For the past several years, colleges and universities have been developing “first year” programs that assist students in making a successful transition from high school into the college community. But what happens in the second semester? Many of us involved in freshman success programs realize that this has become an increasingly vulnerable time. The University of Tampa has been developing a freshman success curriculum that continues to assist students through this time, as well as offer increased opportunities for major exploration and the development of long range career/professional goals.

Most first year “freshmen success” type programs follow a similar format of teaching the basics: Time Management, Learning Styles, Test Taking Strategies, etc. However, little if anything is done to assist students better understand career and/or professional opportunities. How do most colleges and universities assist students with the selection of a major that may eventually foster a professional career?

The University of Tampa has recently instituted a required “second semester” freshman success program that assists students explore possible careers/professions and develop long range career/professional goals. In this experience students are taught to develop a professional résumé; begin development of a Career Services file that will be added to throughout their four years; they will participate in online assessment tools (The Self-Directed Search Inventory and the Myers-Briggs

Type Indicator); they will make initial “professional” contacts for an “Informational Interview” with someone in their chosen (or anticipated) profession; and finally, they will participate in “mock interviews” that will better equip them for the actual “Informational Interview” process.

It is through this second semester freshman success curriculum that students at The University of Tampa are able to make a more rational decision about college majors/minors and begin the development of long-range educational goals.

### **Tidewater Community College**

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### **A Step in the “Write” Direction**

Collaboration between high school English teachers and college composition instructors has resulted in the successful use of a portfolio model to improve the students’ first year in college. High school students who participated in the model were better prepared for freshman college composition as demonstrated in qualitative and quantitative measurements. This collaboration, supported by the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), provided opportunities for interaction between two traditionally separate institutions, colleges and high schools. Cooperatively planned and enacted activities at the high school led to students’ success as they transitioned to first year college courses. Innovative writing process activities were developed and shared among faculties at both institutions to align and improve writing instruction. In workshop sessions, teachers cooperatively developed guidelines, rubrics, and anchors for portfolio evaluation. To evaluate student portfolios for college placement, college and high school faculty were trained in authentic writing assessment strategies. The portfolio model yielded direct, valid data for continuing reform in instruction and assessment.

### **Towson University**

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### **A First-Year Advising Program: A Vehicle for Change in Undergraduate Advising**

Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland is a comprehensive, suburban institution of approximately 14,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students. The undergraduate academic advising center underwent a major and dynamic revitalization in just four years that resulted in being awarded a 2000 NACADA “Outstanding Institutional Advising Award.”

The main focus of the change is an advising system that empowers the newest, most vulnerable students. Incoming freshmen at Towson University are pre-registered in appropriate courses, including a course that assigns them to a first-year advisor. A special pre-orientation program, TU CARES (Towson University Campus Advising and Registration for Entering Students) is held in the summer, where developmental advising begins. Students work with the same advisor throughout their first year. Advisors are suitably trained, supported, and rewarded to encourage and maintain their participation in the program.

The presenters of this concurrent session will share their experiences and factors that facilitated this substantive shift in advising first-year students, the reaction of the campus community, and the results from the first three years of this innovative program. The partnerships with academic departments, special populations (Athletics, Honors College, Learning Communities, Developmental Placement Office, etc.) and student affairs will also be discussed.

The advising staff at Towson University considers their program to be a “work in progress.” The changes we have undertaken are part of a larger vision for the university, which includes the potential for a Freshmen College, an expansion of the Learning Community program, and a component for newly admitted transfer students. As a “work in progress,” we hope that participants will share their programs and ideas as well.

### **United States Military Academy at West Point**

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### **Translating Technology Into A Teaching Tool: Is It Worth It?**

Despite years of commitment to creative and innovative teaching and learning, sometimes those of us in higher education ask “is it worth it?” This is especially true as we have fought our tendencies to be Luddites and actually moved forward to incorporate technology into our curriculum and teaching strategies. This roundtable will facilitate discussion concerning ways in which technology is applied in a number of classroom settings across a variety of disciplines. In this interactive session participants will specifically explore the use of technology within a freshmen cohort. Participants

will share how they have integrated video and computer projection: systems; the worldwide web; multimedia presentations; hypertext; collaborative learning environments; and distance learning into their classrooms. The session will conclude with a discussion of the pros and cons of infusing the teaching environment with this technology.

### **University of Central Florida**

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### **University Outreach to Community College First-Year Students**

UCF is committed to helping students succeed in higher education by not only creating programs for our current FTICs, but also by assisting our partner community colleges in helping their first year students to be successful and to plan ahead for their academic future. The Office of Transfer Services collaborates with regional community colleges to encourage students to plan early for their transfer to UCF. These programs assist the community colleges in retaining their students to completion of the A.A. and assist students in preparing for transfer to the university.

Throughout the year, Transfer Services participates in four outreach programs to assist new students in making decisions about their academic future and progression to the university. UCF staff members (1) present at new student orientation at Seminole Community College as part of a joint admission agreement, (2) speak in student success courses at Brevard Community College, (3) participate in co-advisement programs at both Valencia and Seminole Community Colleges, and (4) collaborate with Brevard and Lake Sumter Community Colleges in helping high school students transition to college.

These programs are designed to assist students in establishing their educational goals and planning their academic careers at the community college and preparing for their transition to the university. Providing structure during their first two years enhances students' understanding of the progression from the community college to the university.

Through these collaborative early intervention programs, students become aware of the importance of completing specific (prerequisite) courses and degree requirements, how their transition between the community college and university can be easier, and how the two pieces of their academic careers will fit together.

### **University of Central Florida**

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### **Immersing First-Year Students in Career Development: Collaborations that Work**

Undecided first-year students continue to be significantly at-risk for attrition, with students citing a lack of career focus as the most frequent reason for leaving the university. Students identify career goals as their top reason for attending college but most first-year students are undecided about or will change their academic and/or career goals. For these reasons, effective career development programming is an essential component of successful first-year transition programs. The University of Central Florida (UCF) has responded to this imperative by bringing several campus offices together to plan and implement seamless and integrated career development programming. These offices include Academic Support and Advising Programs, the Counseling & Testing Center and the Career Resource Center. This session will present the rationale for such programming, provide a review of national campus trends and other model career development programs and a description of the collaborative UCF career development program model.

Participants will learn about how the initiative was funded and the challenges in successfully implementing a collaborative effort as well as engage in some practical exercises on how to develop a program in their environment. Representatives from each office will describe their programs and the perspectives they bring to this effort. The various program delivery systems will be discussed, including the internet, program outreach efforts, individual and small group counseling, career information and handouts, computer assisted career guidance systems, career assessments, and interactive workshops, as well as integrating major and career exploration content into the freshmen success courses. Finally, suggestions for effective marketing and outcomes assessment will be shared.

### **University of Connecticut**

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### **Teaching and Case Studies**

The concept supporting the use of case studies is to use classroom discussion to analyze problems and develop potential solutions. Case studies promote active learning, student interactions and

critical thinking, which moves students from passive recipients of information to active participants in the learning process.

As we move from instructor centered classrooms with a focus on teaching to student centered classes with the focus on learning, case studies have become a valuable mechanism to promote student involvement in the learning process. Although highly effective, case studies require a particular set of skills to maximize their effectiveness in an FYE course. This workshop will address some of the pedagogical issues encountered when using case studies and provide possible solutions. Possible topics include:

- Selecting/creating an appropriate case study
- Teacher as a facilitator of learning
- Developing and managing discussion
- Directing discussion to achieve case study goals
- Handling problems, e.g., nonparticipation, arguments, etc.

With the use of specific strategies and techniques case studies can have a positive influence on an FYE class. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss problems specific to their classes.

### **University of Connecticut**

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### **Using Web-Based Technology to Enhance First Year Experience Programs**

The First Year Experience Program at the University of Connecticut has experienced tremendous growth over its five-year history, with 66% (2,100) of the current first year class enrolled in one credit seminar. Program growth has placed an increasing burden on the 100+ staff and faculty volunteers who serve as seminar instructors as well as the “content experts” (learning specialists, health educators, academic advisors and diversity specialists on campus) who serve as guest presenters. To meet the challenges of our growing FYE program and to better prepare first year students for the technological skills needed to be successful, our FYE program now uses a web-based delivery model to enhance the face-to-face teaching and learning in our FYE courses.

Our session will demonstrate how this model:

Improves teaching and learning in FYE by allowing instructors to develop a rapport with the class and deliver information to meet student needs outside of class time

Allows us, in partnership with “content experts” across campus, to create a dynamic, interactive



online textbook which has eased the need for resource personnel to make presentations in over 80 sections of classes

Enables us to work with and train instructors in teaching and in using technology, through our Instructor website

Enables FYE to reach students beyond their first semester, through our First Year Interactive portal website

The session will incorporate interactive web demonstration of actual course sites developed by our First Year Experience Program for use in FYE seminars.

### **University of Florida**

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### **Using Photographs To Examine Environmental Perceptions Of First-Year College Students**

Perka, et al., (1992) found that differences exist in the way African-American and white Greek-affiliated students perceive their educational environment. When asked to photograph what the university meant to them, African-American and white students accentuated academic enrichments, interaction with other fraternity and sorority members, and extracurricular activities. Both groups photographed a large number of university buildings. However, when asked to explain the significance of the photos, African-American students emphasized challenging situations and cultural diversity while white students noted the importance of aesthetics and historical meaning.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) discussed the impact of the first year on new college students. This presentation will reflect environmental perceptions of students at the end of their first college semester. Participants were asked to take photographs of what the university means to them. In written descriptions, students explained the content of the photo as well as the photo's significance. The researchers theorized that ethnic/racial differences exist similar to those found by Perka, et al. The researchers also theorized that the photographs would reveal the extent to which the student is acclimated to the campus environment. Follow-up studies will compare these results to acclimation and retention during later years of college.

### **University of Maryland, Eastern Shore**

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**Collaborative First Year Experience Seminar: A HBCU Perspective  
(Alias: Its Ain't Heavy/It Ain't Easy.... But Its Working)**

This presentation is a celebratory overview of retention activities developed via departmental collaborative efforts, at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a historically black university (HBCU), which used the first year seminar as the focal point and center for student service delivery. These retention activities included, but were not limited to: 1) academic support, 2) financial aid counseling, 3) personal counseling, and 4) career counseling. The first to second year retention rate jumped to 82.3%, which is higher than the national average for a four-year institution designated as having liberal SAT score admissions selection criteria (ACT, 2001 data).

The service delivery was established in three phases: 1) creation of uniform course syllabus for the first year experience course, 2) creation of retention specialist positions, and 3) creation of referral monitoring and tracking process.

The initial phase required the establishment of a university-wide task force to create a university-approved syllabus for the first year experience seminar. All departments approved the course content, goals and objectives and all departments agreed to teach to these objectives. Additionally, this task force jointly created personalized first year experience textbook.

Phase two required the establishment of six new positions (retention specialist). These positions required the creation of job descriptions and hiring of three counselor/advisors, one career counseling, one financial aid counselor, reading and study skills specialist and one probation counselor.

Phase Three involved the identification of “ at-risk” students by administering the Noel-Levitz, College Student Inventory (CSI). Data analysis of the CSI was used to develop diagnostic and prescriptive student centered support programs. The first year experience seminars were used as focal point for contacting and providing students information about available and required services.

**University of Maryland**

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## **Enhancing First-Year Student Seminars with Undergraduate Teaching Assistants**

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (UTAs) add a unique perspective, a combination of both expertise and peer connectedness to first-year student seminars. There is a great deal of research that supports the use of UTAs to enhance the first-year seminar but how can a university establish a program such that the relationship amongst the UTAs, the faculty that the UTAs work with, and the first-year students, is mutually beneficial? Following a review of the literature, this presentation will highlight the path taken by the University of Maryland in the development of its UTA program in first-year student seminars, from gaining the support of the university, to recruiting the students that would serve as UTAs; from UTA training institutes to the UTA course syllabus; from how the program administrators see the progress of the program, to the story told by student course evaluations. Participants will then be given the opportunity to ask questions and engage in a discussion about how a similar program might be developed at their own institutions.

### **University of Maryland**

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## **A Walk in the Woods: Using Wilderness Orientation Experiences to Ease Students Transitions**

Wilderness orientation programs are quickly becoming a new method of helping students ease their transition to colleges and universities. Yet, few studies exist in the literature to measure the benefits of these types of programs for new students in their transition. Institutions that have implemented or are thinking of implementing wilderness orientation experiences must be able to demonstrate that these types of programs are assisting students in their transition to college. The research guiding the development of this presentation focuses on the evolving use of these programs to help students in their transition.

The University of Maryland has offered a wilderness orientation program, T.E.N.T.S. (Terrapin Expeditions for New and Transfer Students), for the past two summers and employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to assess the program. Results from these studies, when coupled with previous research on student engagement will demonstrate how one institutions program leads to the following student expectations and outcomes: a strong desire to interact with faculty, a stronger connection to the university, and a greater likelihood of interacting with students different from themselves, among others.

The presenters will (1) discuss the theory behind the development of T.E.N.T.S., (2) discuss the implementation of the program, (3) provide an overview of the program, (4) discuss the research methodologies utilized, (5) summarize selected outcomes from the findings of the research, and (6) discuss how other universities can implement the methodologies to assess and evaluate their current or future programs wilderness orientation programs.

## Learning objectives and outcomes

Participants will further their knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of offering wilderness orientation experiences to enhance a student's transition to the university.

Participants will learn how to effectively assess the wilderness orientation program by gaining knowledge of how one institution used quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Participants will begin to explore how they might implement a wilderness orientation program on their own campus.

### **University of Minnesota**

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### **Changing the Cycle of the First-Year**

In 1995, the University of Minnesota, under the leaderships of the Provost for Arts, Sciences and Engineering and the Vice President for Student Development and Athletics, launched a campus-wide First Year Experience Project initiative. The purpose of the initiative was to address key issues related to undergraduate students, such as: improving the overall quality of the undergraduate experience, developing a sense of community and belonging for first year students, increasing student satisfaction with their college experience, and providing students with critical connections to both curricular and co-curricular faculty and staff. This initiative began with a collaborative and cross-disciplinary team faculty, staff, student development professionals, students and administrators from across the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus.

Last year at the FYE-West Conference, we reported our findings from a series of discussions held with collegiate units and various student support units working with first year students. From those discussions the themes of continuity and length of the first year continuously emerged. It became quite clear that the first year did not start with students coming to Orientation or when students arrived on campus to begin classes, but when the students made a commitment to the University, usually in January, February, or March of their senior year in high school.

During the summer of 2001, the University made the decision to facilitate this concept by combining the Office of First Year Experience and the Office of Orientation and New Student Programs into a single unit: the Office of Orientation and First Year Programs.

This presentation will discuss the outcomes and progress of this new office, discuss the process used to merge the offices and staffs, and our recommendations as to how institutions can support and sustain similar initiatives. Specifically, we will share what we have learned, where we are going, and will provide potential support strategies.

We would also like to engage the participants with opportunities to ask critical questions to help us and others who may attempt similar ventures.

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### **Using Film to Explore Diversity Issues in Freshman Seminars**

A recent article by Seyforth and Golde titled “Beyond the Paper Chase: Using Movies to Help Students Get More out of College,” which appeared in *About Campus*, supports the value of using film to facilitate student participation in the construction of meaning, enhance the development of higher level thinking skills, and promote understanding of diversity issues among first-year students. This workshop will enable participants to explore specific activities and assignments designed to assist faculty in discussions regarding multiculturalism.

The presenter has taught multiple sections of a writing intensive freshman seminar title “Celebrating Diversity in 20th Century America through Fiction and Film” for three years. As the course has evolved, she has experimented with the use of a variety of films to explore issues of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and disability. In this workshop the presenter will show a variety of film clips from films such as “A Raisin in the Sun,” “Rosewood,” “School Ties,” “West Side Story,” “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner,” “Bennie and Joon,” “Snow Falling on Cedars,” “Philadelphia,” and “Love and Basketball” and engage participants in discussion of the principles they illustrate. She will also share examples of students’ responses to class activities, including papers written from the perspective of characters in films like “Joy Luck Club,” “A Time to Kill,” “Sabrina,” and “Men of Honor.” Handouts will include samples of students’ work, a course syllabus and summary of assignments, and a list of film ideas.

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### **Creating, Fostering and Maintaining Faculty Interest in First-Year Experience Programs**

Five years ago I ask a colleague what he thought the role of student affairs was on our campus. His reply was “I know they plan parties that result in my students missing class on Friday’s”. This presentation will start with a basic examination of the informal design differences between student affairs division and academic affairs divisions. Faculty look like they are at the bottom of the organizational chart on paper, but operate in a very different capacity by both their nature and the design of the profession. What does that imply when recruiting faculty to make commitments to first-year programs that often originate out of student affairs divisions? How can they be effectively approached? Once faculty have indicating an interest, how is that maintained?

Although most first-year experience programs claim as one of their goals the connection of the curricular with the co-curricular, most see these responsibilities as separate and often competing. Historically, student affairs professionals are charged with the responsibility of the co-curricular and faculty with the curricular. Only a true collaborative approach to this endeavor will create the seamless transition and environment most institutions seek for their first year students. The faculty leaders on a campus are not always the department chairs although on paper they may play a “supervisory” role. Identifying faculty leaders that are student centered requires looking “around” the organizational chart of academic affairs, educating them about the qualities of student life professionals, and discussing goals that can only be met through collaboration.

Creating faculty interest in roles historically seen as the responsibility of student affairs requires educating faculty. A good education naturally leads to a respect and appreciation of the goals, a realization that they are not competing and a breakdown of the barriers between the two groups.

#### **University of Oklahoma**

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#### **Residence Hall House Call**

A number of reports on the undergraduate years have called our attention to the often fragmented and unclear experience of many of our students. These reports have alerted us to the need to integrate the in-class and the out-of-class in order to offer students a seamless experience of college. According to Schroeder & Mable, efforts to reform higher education have overlooked the educational potential of residence halls. Ignoring the potential for change in the dorms seems to be a waste

of an opportunity

since as Teranzini and Pascarella (1994) suggest residence halls are the place where students spend most of their out-of-class time. In other words, if change is desired then the residence halls should be part of the strategy to achieve it.

At the University of Oklahoma about 70% of the freshmen students live in the dorms. Like many other colleges and universities, traditionally these students have been served by units or offices located away from the residence halls. In other words, the programs were offered outside their neighborhood. Moreover, these programs, often of high quality, were developed by staff rather than responding to expressed concern of students.

In fall 2000, under the leadership of University College, various units at the University were willing to “go where the students were.” How would the students respond to a visit from a Provost? Why should staff be going door to door after 7pm? How do we evaluate the effectiveness of knocking on every door? These were some of the basic questions related to the birth of the Residence Hall House Call.

This presentation will describe the close collaboration among the many offices that came together and the organization of the event in terms of time and resources. In addition, it will discuss the major concerns expressed by students, the resolution of their complaints, and preliminary evaluation data.

### **University of Pittsburgh**

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### **The Point-and-Click Generation Meets the Wizard of Oz: Developing Life Skills and Facilitating Student Success**

Our first-year students are members of the Millennium Generation, which consists of approximately 30 million. This is largest generation since the Baby Boomers. Ironically, these are the children of the Baby Boomers. Both generations grew up during periods of economic prosperity. Both parents and their children have very high expectations: the Millennium Generation for higher education, teacher performance, and employment and the Boomers for their children’s academic performance and career choices. Unfortunately, with such high expectations, reality is blurred by visions of automatic prosperity and instant success.

We will discuss the Millennium Generation and their unmistakable affinity to their parents to determine how the characteristics of the Baby Boomers and their offspring influence the challenge of joining life and career goals.

Setting Themselves Apart from their Parents

While examining the disconnect amongst freshmen between values, priorities, and career, we will

consider the role that the struggle for identity development plays in the rise in career dissatisfaction experienced by recent college graduates.

#### Action Plan

How can we, as student service professionals, tangibly address this quandary? We will look at the model instituted by the University of Pittsburgh and suggest a specific method for implementation, requiring both active participation and thought from students and collaboration between student service personnel, to enhance the First-Year Experience.

#### Questions, Discussion, and Wrap-Up

#### **University of South Carolina**

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#### **Process and Product: Literature as a Teaching Tool in a First-Year Seminar**

The general reader approaches literature and walks away with an increased understanding of the human experience, in general, and of his or her own experience, in particular. Recognizing the potential for short stories to provide students with an opportunity to reflect deeply on their own experiences, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors, the University of South Carolina added six short stories to the primary textbook for its first-seminar course. Instructors were asked to use the short stories as tools for addressing any of a number of content areas in University 101.

This session will open with a brief description of the creation of “a reader” for a campus-specific first-year seminar textbook. The presenter will also describe training provided to instructors on strategies for incorporating the short stories into the course.

In fall 2001, a study exploring how the short stories were used in the University 101 course and gathering information on student and faculty perspectives on the effectiveness of the short stories in achieving course content goals was conducted. The study incorporated text analysis of course syllabi, writing assignments and handouts, and selected student writing samples; a web-based survey of instructors; analysis of student course evaluations; and instructor focus-groups. In addition to exploring the benefits of using short stories as a teaching tool in University 101, study results will be used to generate a list of teaching strategies and assignments for future instructors and make recommendations about the inclusion of short stories in future sections of the course. This session will present preliminary results of that study.

Beyond that, the presenter will discuss some of the challenges she encountered in designing and conducting the study. This reflection on the practical and political considerations of course research is intended to help guide the research efforts of participants planning to conduct similar studies on their home campuses.



## **University of South Carolina**

Dan Berman, Director, University 101 Instruction and Faculty Development  
Rebecca Lerch, Graduate Assistant, University 101

### **University 101: Thirty Years of Student Success**

Since its inception in 1972, University 101 has helped thousands of students succeed at the University of South Carolina. This informative session will begin with a brief overview of how and why University 101 began at USC. The presenters will then discuss in detail the major changes implemented in the past 10 years.

During the past decade, University 101 has changed dramatically. The course has moved from being a pass/fail, communication-based course to one that is letter-graded, discipline-specific, and much more academic than its predecessor. In addition, University 101 instructors have been given more support, training, and resources than in the past. Instructors must attend an extensive training session before being eligible to teach, and must attend a refresher course each spring. Each instructor is required to cover several “common course requirements” in his or her section and have a copy of his/her syllabus on hand in the University 101 office. These things have been done to insure each student in the course is receiving a similar education, regardless of his or her section or instructor.

Another change implemented in the past ten years has been the addition of the Peer Leaders Program. These undergraduate juniors and seniors are selected through a review process and co-teach the course with their faculty instructor. Each Peer Leader also completes an extensive training workshop and is given materials to help him/her lead class sessions, work efficiently with his/her instructor, and feel confident serving as a mentor to first-year students. The presenters will discuss how Peer Leaders are recruited, trained, and supported, and will talk about the benefits of using Peer Leaders in first-year seminar classes.

There are numerous other changes, such as uniform support materials (“Toolkits”) developed for instructors, Peer Leaders, and Graduate Leaders, extensive programming completed by the University 101 office for each section, and the development of an extensive textbook, *Transitions*, by the University 101/National Resource Center offices that have improved the course. The presenters will discuss these, mention the expansion of University 101 into other courses, including a senior capstone course and a sophomore level research-based course, and allow time for questions from conference participants. University 101 is expanding from a single course to a multi-level program that has the potential to reach students from first-years to graduate students. The presenters are looking forward to sharing this journey with you!

## **University of South Florida**

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## **Using CLAQWA to Improve Assessment, Writing Skills, and Cognitive Levels of Students in First Year Programs**

The Cognitive Level and Quality of Writing Assessment (CLAQWA) instrument is used as an assessment and instructional tool in the University of South Florida's first year experience program. CLAQWA was designed to provide instructors with the foundation for evaluating writing skills and cognitive levels exhibited in student writing. Participants in these connected sessions will learn how CLAQWA facilitates the clear communication of the instructor's expectations, encourages a consistent assessment of students' papers, and provides a framework for identifying strengths and weaknesses. Faculty teams representing departments such as English, measurement, university experience, and social sciences were involved with the development and validation of the two-scale instrument. Each scale can be used separately or can be combined to evaluate students' writing. The scale for cognitive level assessment addresses the development of the writing prompt and the assessment of students' cognitive level reached. The scale for cognitive level assessment, based upon the 1956 work of Bloom and his colleagues, is comprised of four levels; (1) knowledge, (2) comprehension, (3) application, and (4) analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The quality of writing assessment scale is based upon skills commonly found in writing texts, but is organized and presented for any instructor who evaluates students' compositions, with operationalized scale points provided for each skill. The use of CLAQWA facilitates the clear communication of the instructors' expectations, encourages a consistent assessment of students' papers, and provides a framework for identifying strengths and weaknesses.

I am proposing two sequential concurrent sessions in which the development of the scale will be described, each of the two scales will be explained, and the scales will be applied. The first 90-minute session will be devoted to instructing conference attendees on the appropriate use of the instrument. They will learn to develop writing assignments which encourage the level of writing and thinking the instructor expects. In the second 90-minute session, attendees will apply the scale to students' papers and will role-play simulated instructor and student feedback sessions.

### **University of Texas at Austin**

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### **A Community of Collaboration: Bridging the Gap between Academic and Student Affairs in a FIG Program**

The University of Texas at Austin is the academic flagship and largest component of the 15 institution University of Texas System. UT Austin is a major research university that supports 118 undergraduate degree programs, 196 graduate degree programs and two special professional programs through 15 colleges and schools. UT Austin, the largest single-campus institution in the nation, is

home to 50,610 students, 2,700 faculty, and 17,000 staff members. Approximately 7,000 new freshmen and 2,000 new transfer students enrolled in the Fall 2001.

Research across the country has proven that FIG clusters are successful in building community among its first-year participants. The FIG program at UT-Austin has been successful both in promoting a sense of community among its first-year participants and within the campus community of staff, faculty and administration.

Since its inception, the FIG program at UT-Austin has relied upon a collaborative spirit within the University to reach its goals. Although the program is coordinated out of the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, it relies heavily upon the support of the academic community - mainly the 10 undergraduate college and schools. Additional support for the program is found within the Division of Student Affairs and within the Office of the President and Office of the Provost. The programs success in improving retention rates from 87% to 92% in 4 years has become a proud badge for all contributors to the program.

Session participants will learn about the FIG model at the University of Texas at Austin. Opportunities for collaboration across academic and student affairs will be discussed. Presenters will share strategies for fostering collaboration and rewarding the campus for building community. Participants will have the opportunity to share their use of learning community models to build campus community.

### **University of Texas at Austin**

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### **FIGs, SPRIGs, TRIGs and RIGs: Using Peer Mentors with Multiple Interest Groups**

The University of Texas at Austin is the academic flagship and largest component of the 15 institution University of Texas System. UT Austin is a major research university that supports 118 undergraduate degree programs, 196 graduate degree programs and two special professional programs through 15 colleges and schools. UT Austin, the largest single-campus institution in the nation, is home to 50,630 students, 2,700 faculty, and 17,000 staff members. Approximately 7,000 new freshmen and 2,000 new transfer students enrolled in the Fall 2001.

Creating a sense of community among new students has always been a challenge for the institution. In 1998, the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) program was created to integrate the academic and social experience of new students. Since then, the program has grown to 150 FIGs, representing all undergraduate colleges and majors. Data collected support both increased retention and institutional satisfaction among FIG participants. The program now includes interest group clusters for Spring students (SPRIGS), transfer students (TRIGS), and students in the residence halls (RIGS).

Much of the success of the program is credited to the peer mentors who facilitate the weekly seminar

associated with each cluster. These upper-division students are essential players in building a community of learners and in helping students make meaningful connections to the institution. Our successful recruiting, selection, training and evaluation program is an essential part of maintaining the peer mentor staff of 150.

Session participants will learn about the FIG model at the University of Texas at Austin. Program components and peer mentor staffing will be discussed. Strategies for successful implementation at other institutions, as well as program materials will be shared. Participants will have the opportunity to share their use of learning community models.

### **University of Texas at El Paso**

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### **Sharing Success: Outreach to Public Schools**

First-year students at any institution of higher education face major challenges. To transition successfully, students must become familiar with their campus and its resources, know strategies necessary for academic success, and connect with fellow students and with school personnel. First-year high school students face many of the same transitional issues that first-year college students face.

Since the mid-90s, The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has focused on addressing the needs of its first-year students. UTEP, a public institution with an average enrollment of 16,000, is largely a commuter campus with a significant minority population (69% Hispanic). Moreover, many UTEP students are the first in their family to attend college. Recognizing the importance a student's first year in terms of retention, UTEP created the Entering Student Program in 1998 to address the particular needs of its first-year students. Through a variety of efforts, the Entering Student Program has helped students make a successful transition. As a result, this Program has proven effective in improving retention at UTEP.

The success of the Program has served as incentive to expand the efforts of the Entering Student Program beyond the University itself. Since approximately 83% of UTEP's first-year students come from the El Paso region, outreach efforts to area public schools have become a logical next step for the Program. Working with the Socorro Independent School District and their Ninth-Grade Success Initiative, UTEP's Entering Student Program provided a series of workshops designed to help administrators, teachers, and students work together to improve retention of students in their first year of high school.

In our presentation, we will examine the importance of outreach and the role the university should play in such efforts. We will also summarize similarities between first-year students in high school

and those in college, and share how the similarities determined the content of the workshops. Finally we will discuss the benefits (beyond the obvious) of such outreach activities.

### **University of Virginia**

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### **Library Mentors: An Innovative Outreach Program for Enhancing Student Research Skills**

First-year students' grades may suffer because they are unaware of library services and resources available to improve their research skills. Librarians and faculty are faced with the challenge of teaching web-centric students how to find and evaluate materials appropriate for academic coursework.

With the goal of enhancing scholarship, the University of Virginia's undergraduate library has instituted a pilot program in which library staff are assigned as mentors to selected first-year students. The librarian will stay in touch with the student through his or her first two years at the university, offering tours, instruction, research help and updates on new materials.

To assess the need for such a program, the library staff met with a focus group consisting of faculty, administrators and students from various departments. After one year, the focus group and the mentored students will be surveyed. The program will be deemed a success if the following are achieved:

- ◆ Students can evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- ◆ Students are familiar with the resources offered by the library.
- ◆ Students make more efficient use of research time.

If the outcomes are positive, the program will be expanded to cover all incoming students.

Our presentation will include how the program was developed, strategies for contacting students, enlisting support of other academic departments and publicity.

### **University of Windsor**

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### **First-Year Experience: Starting from Scratch**

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Windsor offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs to approximately 6000 full- and part-time students. Until now our programs targeted specifically to first-year students have been limited to our University 101 course, which was first offered in 1998, and the traditional discipline-specific introductory courses. A first-year experience committee was formed in the 1999/2000 academic year. The deliberations of that committee were significantly informed by the July 2000 FYE conference in Reading, England. This concurrent session will focus on the work of that committee following the conference to introduce first-year experience programs to our campus. This presentation will consider our attempts to plan and implement a first-year seminar program, including our research on funding strategies at various academic institutions. This will be followed by a review of barriers inherent in fostering change in our climate of financial constraint, strong discipline identities, and comprehensive contractual definitions of teaching rights and responsibilities. Some of the problems and successes we have experienced will be illustrated by a description of the evolution of our University 101 course since its inception in September 1998 and by a review of the process we have followed in developing a first-year seminar series, scheduled for implementation in September 2002. We will conclude with a discussion of our view of the future of the first-year experience beyond University 101 and the first-year seminars at our university as we try to balance program needs with budgetary realities and institutional culture.

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### **Coming of Age Film and Fiction in an Interactive First-Year Experience Class**

An effective way to prepare first-year students for the college experience, in all of its variety, is to offer them popular films and readings about college. Students can then begin to imagine what college will be like and to explore their ideas through discussing, researching, and writing about college.

Many students enter college emotionally unprepared and academically under-prepared for the rigors of college life. Statistics show that even the best high school students struggle their first year in college as they adapt to new expectations. Though universities provide an array of student support systems, there are some aspects of university life that new students must work through on their own.

Presenters will focus on preparing students for university life by using a critical analysis of film—a medium with which they seem to be the most comfortable—as a way to begin to explore their own experiences at college. Using clips from such films as *Dead Poets Society*, *Higher Learning*, and others, as well selections from their book *Higher Learning: Reading and Writing about College* and a “filmography” of coming of age movies, presenters will discuss how to integrate the academic with the personal, the thinking with the feeling, the intellectual with the experiential. Some topics include time management, goal setting, individuality/conformity, and recognizing difference.

These suggested movies and readings provide good and bad examples, some broader views and alternative takes of individual experiences, parables of the admirable, cautionary tales, and just funny stories. Presenters will model interactive exercises based on the film clips as well as offer works by student writers and professionals, techniques for using the pieces in the first-year classroom, and suggested writing assignments and class exercises.

### **University Systems of Georgia**

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### **Potential for Learning—Can it be Assessed? A Report on a two-year Pilot Study Using Feuerstein’s Learning Propensity Assessment Device (LPAD)**

Although the Learning Propensity Assessment Device (LPAD) has been used extensively with individuals and small groups to assess cognitive functioning for special needs students in clinical settings, to this presenters’s knowledge, there are no reports on using the LPAD with college students in a classroom setting.

This presenter carried out a two-year Pilot Program to establish a Paradigm for using the group form of LPAD with math anxious college students who were enrolled in a two-quarter hour “Learning to Learn Math” course at a community college in metro Atlanta. Ten of twenty contact hours for the course were used to administer selected instruments of the LPAD. The rationale for selecting instruments, and the specifics of group administration in a college setting, will be discussed in this presentation.

Following analysis of the data gathered, descriptions for four profile levels were written. However, it became apparent that more detailed profiles were needed for each individual student.(Samples of profile levels and individual profiles will be shared at this presentation.)

The major out-of-class project of the course was for each student to develop a “Success Plan for College Mathematics”. End of quarter conferences with each student provided an opportunity to discuss the student’s performance on the LPAD instruments, his/her success plan, and how this information could be used to improve performance in future math courses.

## **Valdosta State University**

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## **Making A Difference: The Freshmen Year Experience Program at Valdosta State University**

In October 1998, the President of Valdosta State University (VSU) appointed a committee to collect and analyze data and information pertinent to student retention and to recommend new strategic measures to improve current practices. The committee was alarmed to find that persistence of all first-time, first-year students was 66 percent after the first year and less than 50 percent after the second year. Also, VSU had one of the lowest graduation rates of any college or university in Georgia. Careful analysis of the data on retention indicated that students who left VSU were less likely than their peers to be performing adequately in their academic studies. However, many students who were in good academic standing had also left the university. An internal study on student retention exposed five reasons why students did not persist beyond their first year. Whatever the reasons for staying or leaving, it was clear that students were at greatest risk of leaving VSU during their first year. The committee recommended and the President approved the implementation of a Freshmen Year Experience (FYE) Program.

In its third year of implementation at VSU, FYE serves approximately 350 students. FYE is a voluntary yearlong program, and most of the participants are “Undecided” on a major. The goal of FYE is to maximize every student’s potential to achieve academic success and to adjust responsibly to individual and interpersonal challenges presented by collegiate life. Specific program components include: (1) Freshmen Seminar - a two-semester course that students take with an assigned faculty member. The faculty member also serves as the student’s academic advisor. Freshmen Seminar I focus on academic skills development, goal setting, time management, critical thinking, and personal/professional development. Freshmen Seminar II includes student leadership development, service-learning, electronic portfolios, and career development; (2) Learning Cohorts - FYE is divided into 14 learning cohorts, and each cohort has approximately 25 students. The students take at least three courses together, viz., English, History/Political Science, and Freshmen Seminar. The courses are linked thus providing an intellectually rich interdisciplinary experience; (3) Learning Assistance and Supplemental Instruction - Every FYE student is assigned a faculty advisor that they see a minimum of two times a week in class. Students receive additional tutoring with core classes through our Supplemental Instruction Program. First year retention of “Undecided” students has increased nearly 20% since Fall 1998. In addition, retention of “Undecided” students who participated in FYE last year was 9% higher than ‘Undecided’ students who did not participate.

## **Valencia Community College**

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### **How Learning in Community (LinC) Works**

As part of Valencia's Strategic Learning Plan, one of the college's seven goals is to help students Start Right. Essentially, to concentrate resources on improving their learning at "the front door." To that end, the objectives of this LinC pilot were to help students make connections between disciplines and begin to apply skills learned in one class to another subject area. Building relationships among peers, faculty, and the college were intended by-products of this effort.

Based on the experiences of 15 Valencia professors over the Fall 2001 semester, this session will provide an overview of how to set up LinC courses. Significant planning and resources were devoted to the creation of 16 LinC sections, paired as follows: College Prep English II with Introduction to Humanities, Freshman Composition I with Introduction to Humanities, Intermediate English and Reading with Introduction to Humanities, Fundamentals of Speech with College Prep English II, Advanced Writing for Non-Native Speakers of English with Fundamentals of Speech, Intermediate Algebra with Student Success, Freshman Composition I with Introduction to Film

The concurrent session will focus on:

- ◆ Rationale for establishing LinC courses
- ◆ Administrative challenges in setting up LinC courses
- ◆ Faculty development issues (training teams from cross disciplines)
- ◆ Using the principles of developmental advising
- ◆ How to recruit and register students effectively
- ◆ What methods of assessment are effective
- ◆ Results of assessments (formative and evaluative)
- ◆ Students' reactions to LinC courses

Presenters will not only share the successes, but the bumps encountered along the way in undertaking this project.

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**Active Learning and Assessment Strategies for Improved Teaching/Learning and Critical**

## **Thinking in First Year Experience Courses**

The goal of this presentation is to give participants an opportunity to view and experience several methods of instruction and assessment. Participants will begin with an activity to introduce the four major areas to be covered: improving teaching/learning, assessment, active learning, and critical thinking.

Improving teaching and learning will showcase several classroom assignments that have students using the skills learned in Student Success and applying them to other courses. This has proven to be very helpful in student retention and application of the techniques in the areas of reading, notetaking, learning styles and test preparation. Results of this classroom research will be shared using the “Flashlight” assessment tool.

Active teaching techniques will be evident throughout the presentation. Participants will be collaboratively involved in an active review session entitled “Memory Madness”. They will participate in assessing “Profiles of Admirable Individuals” and develop a “One Minute Paper” assessment that could be used in their own classroom.

There will be time to discuss how to use the various assignments, assessments and activities to increase students critical thinking abilities such as: looking for learning patterns, drawing supported conclusions, and integrating facts and ideas.

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## **Learn How First-Year Students can Dazzle an Audience with Computer Pizzazz**

This workshop is designed to encourage participants to use technology effectively and creatively in the classroom. The value of classroom technology in a first-year course such as Fundamentals of Speech is that it levels the playing field for students with communication apprehension. As stated in *Overcoming Your Fear of Public Speaking*, “The number one fear among American adults—ranking above the fear of snakes, heights, disease, financial problems, or even death—is the fear of speaking before a group.” James McCroskey, Professor and Former Chair of the Department of Communication at West Virginia University and leading researcher on communication apprehension states that, “we have learned through research that 15 to 20 percent of the U.S. population experiences high levels of “trait” communication apprehension. Trait apprehension means that some people seem to be predisposed to be apprehensive and will show high levels of nervousness in all forms of speech, including public speaking, interpersonal communication, and group communication.” As students begin to increase their self-esteem with computer-generated presentations, I’m finding their communication apprehension for public speaking to be reduced, thereby empowering them to successfully finish the course. In this interactive workshop, participants will begin by solving a “Mind Bogglers”

puzzle that shows how students can utilize email as an alternative way to sharing information while working on team projects. Next, individuals will help create a PowerPoint presentation outline while simultaneously developing slides and use it as an attachment to an email assignment. Also, participants will view videotapes of final group projects using PowerPoint. Handouts detailing activities and assignments will be provided.

### **Wayne State University**

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### **Civility on campus: Facilitating Understanding of American Indian Students**

The primary goal of this seminar is the promotion of civility on campus as it pertains to the American Indian student. This seminar will assist in facilitating a better understanding of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences and value differences between the American Indian student and the non-Indian student. With the advent of increase in the population of minorities into higher education, it is paramount that we embrace this change, and aim toward dispelling the myths about American Indian students. As educators we need to examine ourselves and make an institutional commitment to teach college students how to move on the continuum of social relationships from prejudicial—toward respect and cooperation. Only through education can we foster campus civility in college students by actively promoting understanding of the American Indian.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

The participants should expect to glean a brief historical perspective on American Indians, as well as truth/facts versus myths about American Indians. The attendees can expect to participate in an American Indian awareness test, which may allow us to become cognizant of some gaps in our knowledge of American Indians. Additionally, we will review and discuss Gordon Allport's Continuum of Social Relationships, noting where we are now and where we expect to be in the near future, and beyond. Discussion will center on how to educate students to help them identify their civic responsibility toward populations 'other' than themselves. To that end, the discussion will address the global perspective and its impact on students. The theoretical framework for this seminar includes the theory that multicultural education moves beyond the "rhetoric in education about the human potential and the need for equality of opportunity" and "recognizes that the potential for brilliance is sprinkled evenly across all ethnic groups" (Bennett, 1986). Anthropologist Margaret Gibson acknowledges, "cultural conditioning is so strong that people who have not been exposed to other cultures simply cannot understand a communication based on a different set of norms and cannot even comprehend the misunderstanding" (Bennett, 1986). In other words, education is necessary in order to bridge that incomprehension gap. Furthermore, this seminar assumes Gordon Allport's reasoning that prejudice among different ethnic groups can be replaced by respect and cooperation, through education.

#### **Program Format:**

Implementation outline:

1. Introduction
2. Administration of American Indian awareness test  
—Answers to test, and discussion
3. Allport's Continuum of Social Relationships model  
—Discussion
4. Myths about American Indians
5. Truths/facts about American Indians
  - a. Map of American Indians at time of conquest
  - b. Map of reservations-present day
  - c. Education
    - i. Map of Tribally owned colleges in the U.S.
    - ii. List of Tribally owned colleges
  - d. Comparison of values
6. Observations, summary, discussion

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Instructor Training Made Easy

UGE 1000: Information Power is a general education course at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan required for all entering freshmen and students who transfer twelve or fewer credits. Approximately 2300 students per year take the course that is taught year round with two complete 7-week sessions offered each semester.

The course is designed to focus on development of learning skills, familiarity with the organization of and services within the university, and active use of the research facilities of the University libraries. The data cards developed within the library weeks of instruction support a final class presentation of a debate. The debate format allows the student to conduct research for academic argument, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, and learn to work collaboratively with other students. A flexible training approach has been developed to encompass faculty from divergent academic backgrounds. The training includes review of a faculty guide, course map, syllabus and other course content materials. Special emphasis is placed on the interface between UGE 1000 and library instruction.

A collaborative approach involving UGE administrators, librarians, Academic Success Center counselors and media representatives supports the framework of the faculty training seminar. The course Director and the course Coordinator review the Faculty Guide and Student Success Manual

written specifically for the course. Since the third and fourth week of class are held in the library computer labs, the librarians train the faculty in this portion of the course. The Academic Success Counselors speak to the faculty about the services available to students in their area and they review the Student Success Inventory form which is administered to all students during the first week of class. Finally the media representatives demonstrate the equipment (laptop computer and VCR) used in the classroom and give faculty the opportunity to have hands-on experience with the Smart Cart prior to the first class meeting.

The flexibility of a team taught training session allows for changes resulting from on-going course development and affords the Instructors a chance to participate in the training structure. This process has inadvertently become an important component of the recruitment of new faculty. Presently there are more volunteer Instructors than are sections to teach.

### **West Virginia University**

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### **A Case Study in Implementing New Academic Standards for First-Year Students**

The West Virginia University Commission on Academic Standards and Expectations recommended changes in the first-year academic experience to build-upon Operation Jump-Start, a highly successful student-life program for first-year students at WVU. This presentation will discuss the efforts undertaken to increase academic standards for first-year students with a focus on the implementation process.

Areas addressed included:

- **Critical Thinking.** A common definition of critical thinking was developed and adopted. Faculty, especially those who teach first-year courses, were urged to incorporate critical thinking into their courses.
- **A required Orientation Course.** Effective study skills, time management skills, responsible behavior and academic planning are the focus of WVU's Orientation course, UNIV 101. Effective Fall 2002, all first-year students not transferring at the sophomore level will be required to take UNIV 101 their first semester at WVU.
- **Class Attendance Policy.** The following statement has been added to WVU's attendance policy. "There is a strong correlation between regular class attendance and academic success. Faculty are strongly urged to require attendance in all 100-level classes."
- **Learning Communities:** WVU has developed residential learning communities for first-year students, the "Live and Learn" floors in the residence halls. In addition, WVU is supporting the development and implementation of linked courses for first-year students.
- **Academic Plans for First-Year Students.** All advisors of first-year students were instructed to

work with their advisees to develop an academic plan that will be reviewed regularly for continued progress.

An ad hoc committee representing Academic Affairs; the Faculty Senate Curriculum, Student Instruction, and Liberal Studies Program Committees; together with college/department academic administrators moved these recommendation forward by proposing several steps that were approved by the Faculty Senate. Lessons learned will be shared to aid others leading a change process that requires input from a broad set of constituents.

### **Western Kentucky University**

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### **Covering Hot Topics Without Getting into Hot Water: Managing Controversy in the Classroom**

Freshman Seminar courses are replete with opportunities for students to express their opinions on a wide variety of topics, ranging from sexuality and drug and alcohol use to religious, ethnic, and racial diversity, morality, political ideologies, and current events. All of these areas have the potential to be controversial and to lead to emotionally charged discussions in which students express opposing views. There is value in allowing for a free exchange of ideas on “hot topics” in the classroom, but instructors need to be aware of potential pitfalls and work to establish an atmosphere and protocol that protects the participants. Why bother to introduce hot topics if you can get into hot water? The benefits of addressing controversial issues include: a) illuminating the diverse opinions and backgrounds of students; b) analyzing the relationship between perspective and decision-making; and c) developing critical thinking and communication skills. Instructors often worry, however, that discussions of sensitive issues may lead to tempers and tears, silence or reticence, inappropriate self-disclosure, or a monopoly on the conversation by the most assertive students. Teachers can minimize these risks by being prepared and anticipating problems, understanding the role of facilitators, cultivating an atmosphere of safety and respect, and appreciating the value of neutrality. In this poster we present strategies for accomplishing these objectives and improving the quality of classroom exchanges. In addition, we provide a list of potential topics for discussion along with lesson plans and exercises to introduce several key controversial issues in Freshman Seminar classes.