

New directors for first-year programs

by Rico Reed, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and University 101 this year introduced new directors Jennifer Keup and Dan Friedman, respectively.

Keup, formerly director of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) at the University of California at Los Angeles, succeeded Mary Stuart Hunter, who recently was promoted to assistant vice provost for University 101 and the National Resource Center.

“Jennifer Keup brings a unique combination of knowledge and experience to our international work on the undergraduate student experience,” said Hunter. “We are enthusiastic about the leadership she will provide as the Center continues to advance our work.”

Keup earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology and master’s and doctoral degrees in higher education and organizational change from UCLA. She is actively involved in several national professional associations, including the Association for Institutional Research and the Association of College Personnel Administrators - College Educators International, for which she serves as chair of the Commission for Admission, Orientation, and the First-Year Experience.

“The [National Resource Center] staff and I share a passionate commitment to the understanding and success of first-year students and students at other points of transition in higher education, and I look forward to the work we will accomplish together,” Keup said.

Prior to her professional experience at SAIRO, Keup contributed to the national research agenda on topics related to the first-year experience and students in transition as the director of follow-up surveys at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. As director of the National Resource Center, Keup plans to draw upon the connections between research, assessment, and practice in her new work.

“I am very pleased to have the opportunity to build upon all of the excellent work that has been done at the National Resource Center,” she said. “Through my past experiences, I have enjoyed gaining a better sense of the activities and products of the National Resource Center, getting to know the staff, learning more about the first-year experience and students in transition, as well as contributing to our knowledge base in the field.”

Keup’s previous work with the center as a contributor to publications, conference presenter, invited faculty member of the Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment, and reviewer for the *Journal of The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* helped her establish a strong relationship with the center.

“Dr. Keup brings valuable expertise from her scholarship on first-year students, her experience in survey development and other forms of assessment, and her accomplishments at another world-class research university, UCLA,” said John Gardner, senior fellow at the National Resource Center. “She will make an excellent professional partner...in shaping the vision for the center’s exceptionally bright future, one of great impact on and importance to the international higher-education community.”

As director of University 101, Friedman follows Daniel Berman, who served from 1999 until his retirement in early 2008.

Prior to beginning his tenure at South Carolina, Friedman was a faculty member in the department of leadership and educational studies at Appalachian State University and was director of the university's freshman seminar and summer preview programs from 2004 to 2007. Prior to that, Friedman served as assistant to the director from 1998 to 2001.

"Dan Friedman brings a wealth of knowledge to the University following the great work he's done at Appalachian State," said Hunter. "We're extremely excited about the direction the University 101 program can take under his leadership."

Friedman earned a bachelor's degree in history and an education specialist degree in higher education administration from Appalachian State University and a doctoral degree in higher education administration from the University of Virginia.

He previously has collaborated with the National Resource Center as a regular presenter at the annual first-year experience conferences, as an invited faculty member at the Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment, and as a contributor to the *Exploring the Evidence, Vol. III* monograph. His most recent article was published in the spring 2007 edition of the *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*.

"It is well established that the first year of college sets the foundation for future success," Friedman said. "New college students need an approximate mix of challenge and support in order to make a successful transition to college, both academically and socially. First-year seminars are essential vehicles in helping students learn their new academic culture and transition into a new environment."

Friedman cites outstanding faculty development efforts, a strategic assessment focus, and institutional support as essential elements for a successful University 101 program like South Carolina's, which is nationally and internationally recognized.

"It is an honor to be able to work with the most prestigious and well-respected first-year program in the country," he said.