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Turning the Revolving Door into the Staircase of Academic Success for Basic Skills Students

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During our presentation, we will cover national retention data provided by ACT as well as data produced by the U.S. Department of Education reporting on U.S. college students needing remediation. Colorado and Aims Community College basic skills data will be also shared to provide an overview and context for the need of the Emerging Scholars Program. Institutional specific data will reveal the increase of students who need three levels of remediation in reading, English, and math as well as the improved retention rates for students who took the appropriate remedial courses their first term. In addition to utilizing our data, we drew upon the work of Tinto (retention) and Sanford (challenge and support) to help shape the framework of the Emerging Scholars Program and will highlight those elements. An overview of our successes in other institutional and federally-funded programs (TRIO and Title III) will be shared to show how we absorbed these best practices into this program that is institutionally funded. The primary focus of our presentation will cover the specific elements of the Emerging Scholars program that make it unique and successful. In Fall 2007, 95 students opted to participate in this program. The students were required to be new to Aims (unless concurrently enrolled in high school when they took their courses), degree or certificate-seekers, and had two or more basic skills needs (reading, math, and/or English). A comparison group of 366 students were identified by our Institutional Research & Effectiveness department. Results of the program for Fall Semester 2007 revealed that participants had higher GPA's (2.35 vs. 2.01) and retention rates (76.8% vs. 58.6) compared to the control group (it would be our intent to present data from spring semester as well) in addition to taking more credit hours (full time vs. 3/4 time). Lessons learned from our first year in the program will be shared as well as a DVD showcasing four of our Emerging Scholars students and their experience in and opinion of the program.

The transition to Aston: Enhancing the Learning Experience for First-Year Students, with a Focus on Local and Mature Students

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The University has invested significant WP resource to identify the needs of students from under-represented groups, including students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN), mature students and local students.

Research findings and recommendations included:

- The importance of study support and supporting students early on in the student life-cycle
- The need to help local students to make social connections, to support friendship networking and in particular for mature students
- Local students (West Midlands region) are less likely to do an optional placement
- LPN students are less decisive about doing a placement (an early decision is associated with a positive outcome) and seem less sure of the value of placement

The session will outline evidence-based interventions in response to research recommendations. These include peer mentoring to aid student transition and employability; specific support for mature students and the Learning and Skills Centre.

The peer mentoring programme is in its third year and builds upon a pilot in 2005-06. Under the Transition Strand first year students are matched with second year students and are helped to settle into university life and under the Placement Strand second year students are matched with final year students with a focus on placement support.

In 2006-07 the programme was expanded to all four academic Schools, working with subject areas where some form of peer mentoring had been run before; providing additionally through training and review. Following the success of the pilot and selected expansion, the programme was expanded across the university in 2007-08. To date a total of 764 students have engaged in the programme; a total of 360 mentors and 404 mentees.

Mentees from the Transition Strand have expressed a reduction in anxiety, being able to settle into the university more quickly and that the programme has helped students to study and learn together too.

Student feedback from the pilot, and beyond, has informed the development of the peer mentoring model. The integration of peer mentoring with the Induction process is currently being explored along with accreditation for mentors engaging in the programme.

Developments to support mature students includes the provision of exclusive social and study space, a tailored welcome event with student handbook, drop-in sessions to support and gather feedback from students, and dedicated support with the Learning and Skills Centre.

The Learning and Skills Centre provides an evidence-based and targeted learning support for Aston's diverse student community, including foundation level and mature students; which aims to ease the transition of entrants to the University through pre-entry and early post-entry learning support. The Centre provides learning development opportunities including maths, study skills, academic writing, and programming.

Implementing a Common Reader Program on Your Campus: 10 Years of Insights

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This presentation will provide materials and discussion designed to assist a university in implementing a common reader program. The presentation will begin with a description of Ball State's common reader program inception and current goals. The majority of the time will be spent taking participants through a "typical fall semester" beginning with how one might articulate program learning objectives, solicit titles, continuing through the formation of the selection committee, the first round elimination, the actual reading and assessment, the solicitation of community feedback, the final selection, the author contact, the book ordering, the creation of support materials, the on-line discussion, the book distribution, the discussion groups, the fall programming and finally ideas on how to structure the author's visit. The presentation will address challenges and discuss how the program has changed over time and why. The presentation will include "decision points" where participants will be alerted to alternative approaches that might also be considered. There will be time for participants to ask questions and share their own insights. The materials that will be provided include sample title solicitation wording, a timeline of the process, assessment tools, a sample list of titles, a book selection committee participant survey, a discussion group leader survey, sample book support materials, and more.

Using Faculty Development to Improve Learning in First-Year Living-Learning Communities

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In spring 2008 Drs. Concepción and Messineo, co-directors of Ball State University's first-year living-learning community program 'Freshman Connections,' implemented a faculty development seminar designed to enhance faculty's ability to provide students with what L. Dee Fink calls "Significant Learning Experiences." In this roundtable we will discuss and evaluate the structure and content of the seminar. This discussion will be informed by (i) materials used in the seminar and (ii) evaluation data provided by workshop participants.

Learning Objective of this Roundtable:

Participants will evaluate and begin developing a "best" seminar concerning teaching and learning of first-year students in a living-learning community that is appropriate to their institutional setting.

Learning Activities of this Roundtable:

Problem-Based Learning – We will ask participants how an ideal faculty development seminar regarding teaching and learning of first-year students in a living-learning community should proceed. After participants briefly write individual reflections we will facilitate a conversation. We will inform the ensuing discussion with our experience.

Characteristics of the Ball State Seminar:

• Topics Included:

- The mission of Freshman Connections in the Ball State context, including a discussion of campus resources
- Generalizations regarding the cultural and intellectual development of current traditional students
- Goals of first-year instruction, including learning how to learn
- Various pedagogical options that are especially effective with first-year students (e.g. how to motivate students to do out-of-class work, how to create active classroom environments, efficiently giving educative feedback)

• Texts Read By Participants:

- B. L. Erickson, C. B. Peters, & D. W. Strommer, Teaching First-Year College Students (Jossey-Bass, 2006)
- L. D. Fink, Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to

Designing College Courses (Jossey-Bass, 2003)

- Participants were diverse across demographic characteristics, rank, and discipline

The First-Year Soft-Skills Retreat

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Students' soft-skills were assessed prior and after attending the retreat. 87.4% felt that their soft-skills improved in all areas targeted. 15% more freshmen who attended the retreat increased their GPAs from their first to second semester than those who did not attend. 70% of retreat participants reported that they had become more engaged in college life after attending the retreat.

When beginning college, first year students need to develop a whole new set of intra and interpersonal skills. This presentation will begin by revealing some of the difficulties students face: we will showcase inappropriate emails students have sent to their professors, share stories of students with immature self-awareness, and video footage of students who are unable to speak in front of a group. With this in mind, along with data from a survey conducted prior to creating this program, we will begin to discuss the Freshman Soft-Skills Retreat ran by the SEEK Program at Baruch College in March of 2007.

We will review the blueprint for this initiative in a number of ways. All workshops will be described in such a way that audience members should be able to replicate each one in the future. Video footage of the actual retreat will be screened, and one workshop will be modelled with audience members.

Assessment will play a central role in this presentation. This program was assessed in a number of ways, and audience members will learn of the benefits and uses of each. For example, prior to the retreat, we ran focus groups and conducted on-line surveys. During the retreat, students completed self and peer assessments. Two months after the retreat, students took another on-line survey. We also gathered qualitative feedback.

This appropriateness of this program for various institutions as well as possible variations will be discussed.

Understanding Factors Influential to Successful Curriculum Development and Delivery for a Non-traditional First-Year Experience Seminar

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Introduction

The intent of this session is to identify profiles of the emergent nontraditional student audience in higher education today and to connect that information with methodologies for developing FYE curricula and assessments that meets those student's changing needs and interests. This information session will discuss the foundations upon which a nontraditional student FYE Seminar should be established, maintained, how to gain institution support, monitor course progress and assess learner & faculty evaluation of course expectations, experiences, and success confirmed.

The presenter will balance information presented to elicit good discussions, suggestions, and recommendations of others' experiences with nontraditional FYE course leadership, teaching, coordination, and assessment.

Presentation

This session will recognize merits of having course materials developed by instructors and experienced nontraditional students and the potential success of those efforts. Perspectives on the benefits of a required FYE course versus non-mandatory status will be presented.

While course topics, information delivery, and planned events for each nontraditional FYE class may vary dependent on cohort interest, there are course components that help support a semblance of congruity amongst all sections. The utilization of a common textbook and common syllabi with both curricular and co-curricular topics can be influential to course satisfaction nontraditional students experience.

The influence of a nontraditional FYE course assessment on course maintenance and new program initiatives will be featured. Nontraditional students will gain the most from their education if they actively participate in the assessment of their learning. The quality and relevance of the evaluation measurement is equal to a well developed course syllabi. Both the syllabi and course assessment together create the needed framework that support FYE course goals and guide students in the successful achievement of those goals.

Goals and Benefits to Session Participants

This session will showcase benefits of having a common nontraditional FYE Seminar syllabi, instructor and student created materials and presentations, success of those efforts, and lessons learned. Professionals seeking to establish and maintain

nontraditional FYE programs reflective of today's nontraditional student audiences will benefit from presenter's topics, professional perspectives, discussions, and materials provided.

Dashed on First-Semester Rocks: The Consequences and Interventions for First-Year Students who Academically Sink

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The presentation reports the consequences for highly prepared first year students who experience academic failure during their first semester at a selective university and the outcome of two interventions to assist comparable students.

The authors established that students placed on an unsatisfactory academic standing after their first semester, despite being as equally academically prepared as their peers, subsequently exhibited a significantly lower rate of academic success than a sample of their peers who were on satisfactory academic standing. The baseline data suggested that students with an unsatisfactory first semester were more likely to be academically suspended than to graduate from the institution.

An initial, modest intervention to work with a group of similar students appeared to have little effect on the students' academic performance, although it fostered hypotheses about the nature and intensity of intervention necessary to assist the students and the likelihood that highly capable students would seek assistance after their first enrollment.

The authors developed and implemented a more intrusive, aggressive intervention to assist students who demonstrated an unsatisfactory academic performance for their first semester. The results were a higher level of response by the students to seek assistance, more data on the nature and breadth of reported factors that contributed to first semester difficulties, and interventions better designed to meet the needs of individual students.

Subsequent to the aggressive intervention, the authors were able to provide a comparison between levels of intervention and subsequent academic success.

Using a Power Point presentation and handouts, the authors will provide details about the baseline data collected from their institution and the outcomes from each of two interventions. Plans for future interventions and possible institutional policies will be reviewed. Session attendees will be given an opportunity to present their perspectives on the data and interventions and provide further recommendations.

Working with First-Year Students with Mental Health Issues: Best Practices

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Research indicates that the number of students with psychiatric disabilities attending our college campuses have tripled over the past several years (Disability Compliance in Higher Education, 2003). Besides the numbers of students with mental illness increasing so is the severity of the emotional issues the students present with (Gallagher, 2003). Little has been offered to help the university advisor or faculty member meet the needs of these students while at the same time maintaining academic integrity. This presentation will offer ideas on how university personnel can work with freshmen students with emotional illness via video role-plays and overheads.

1. Introduction to mental health issues on campus (2 mins)
2. Sharing data from our national survey conducted through the National Academic Advisement Association (NACADA)

- a. We surveyed 1500 college and university advisors throughout the United States to examine concerns and issues advisement professionals encounter when working with students with mental health issues.
- b. College advisement professionals reported that of all students with disabilities they assist, advisors were least comfortable and had the least training in the area of mental health disability.
- c. We found 48% of advisors reported that they had worked with students who reported self harm or desire to commit suicide.
- d. A third of advisors reported that they had felt threatened by students.
- e. Other data will be shared as desired by the audience and as time permits.

3. The majority of the session (40 mins) will focus on pre-recorded video role-plays portraying first year students with various disabilities (such as depression and asperger's disorder) who are seeking help through an advisement professional. Audience members will be asked to make suggestions on how that professional could best help the student.

4. The presenters will offer suggestions and examples of "best practices" when helping these students transition to college.

The Highs and Lows of Emotional Well-being for the First-Year Student: Trends, Issues, and Solutions

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Research indicates that the number of students with psychiatric disabilities attending our college campuses has tripled over the past several years (Disability Compliance in Higher Education, 2003). Not only is the numbers of students with mental illness increasing, but also the severity of the emotional issues the students present with is also increasing (Gallagher, 2003). In order to assess this trend with first year students, the presenters, psychologists, advisors and clinical professors, examined the archived presenting problem checklists and Outcome Questionnaire (OQ-45) data completed at intake for 2500 first year students presenting at a large university counseling center over a 10-year period (1997-2007). An exploratory factor analysis of the presenting problem checklist resulted in an 11-factor structure which enabled us to compare first-year students with more advanced students. Results indicated that first year students reported greater difficulty in the areas of self-esteem and social relationships, body image, depression, anxiety, concerns about academic performance and adjustment to the university. Although first year students presented with a greater number of presenting concerns, their initial level of overall distress as measured by the OQ-45 was comparable to that of other students seeking counseling services.

The presentations will proceed as follows:

1. Brief introduction to mental health issues on college campuses (2-5 minutes)
2. Introduction and description of the archival data (10-15 minutes)
3. Interpretation and discussion of the implications for providing for the emotional well being of first year students in transitioning and remaining on campus. Including video scenarios (Video scenarios will demonstrate the following: Advisement scenarios where an advisor is in session with a first year student with a mental health issue, i.e. depression, self harm).
4. Implications for support services and training issues. (3 and 4 will take the remainder of the session). (40mins)

Encouraging Deep Learning by Integrating Coursework and Life Experience

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When most freshman enter the university they are self-focused, surface learning oriented, and interested in doing the minimum needed to get the A grade they expect. They do not believe that the things they learn at the university will actually relate to the decisions they face in their daily life. To address the challenges of an interdependent global society,

freshmen must be engaged in integrating their coursework and their life experience in ways that lead them to take a deep approach to learning. This does not just happen. Learning experiences must be carefully designed to bring about these changes. Experiences must require students to use what they learn in courses to examine their own lives and the communities in which they participate. These issues can be addressed through a project-based learning course which asks students to apply what they are learning to themselves, the people they live with, and then to the larger community. The projects ask students to respond to the issues of poverty, diversity, health, literacy, and families by drawing on general education courses, supported by group work, service learning, and reflection. Students are asked to suggest ways to improve the various communities in which they participate. This study reports the impact of this course on students' learning. The presentation will report results of the components of the course and the analysis of students' bi-weekly academic surveys and reflections on their service and learning experiences. It includes video clips of student responses that reveal the themes of civic engagement and individual and community development that emerged during our analysis of the experience. This project-based approach is easily transportable to other higher education settings. Participants in the session will have the opportunity to design project-based learning experiences that engage students in integrating coursework and life experiences.

Remembering and Recovering as Themes of the First-Year Transition

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The purpose of this analysis is to isolate the potential problems of transition that might be more attributable to a temporary academic disorientation than to more generic issues of transition. Research on transition and students' success actually demonstrates that students come to the university with past experiences in applying strategies for learning and transition that lead to success. Indeed, transitioning is not so much a matter of learning new skills, but more a matter of remembering and noticing where to apply things students already know how to do. Part of this process of remembering may be hindered because of the disintegration of study and life skills in the final semester of high school. This descriptive study begins by identifying the learning habits and strategies of students during their senior year. It also asks students to identify successful and unsuccessful learning experiences and report on what they learned from those experiences and how they responded to them. The study then considers the results of the analysis of these self-

reports against the issues of transition and learning identified in the Freshman Academy Integration Model, a series of questions described by Bigelow, S., Bunting, B., et al (FYE Conference, Dallas, 2007) that mentors use to prompt metacognitive reflection on the part of students about key issues of student success. Data suggest that students' learning habits disintegrate during the second semester of their senior year once they receive admission letters from colleges and universities. This suggests that the more rapidly students can be prompted to recall and recover the habits of success they already know, the more rapidly they will transition and become integrated into the university.

Peer Mentors Making a Difference in First-year Seminars

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Peer mentors continue to be a popular intervention in the first-year experience of many colleges and universities. Do peer mentors have a positive impact in discipline based first-year seminars? Disciplinary seminars present special challenges in the context of a college wide first-year experience. Participants in this session will discuss the effectiveness of peer mentors in classes and disciplinary first-year seminars overall.

Buffalo State retained its discipline based first-year seminars even in the wake of its overhaul of its first year experience. The need to allow part time students and students in restrictive majors to receive the goals of the first year experience motivated keeping the seminars as an aspect of the FYE. However, the unique challenges of the disciplinary seminars remained. This presentation will review these challenges and why Buffalo state believed that peer mentors could be an effective way to overcome them. This presentation will review the model of peer mentor in use at Buffalo State College. It will provide an overview of job expectations, recruitment processes, length of training, and compensation. Peer mentors were deployed in the disciplinary first-year seminars program as well as in specific sections of a mandatory Foundations of Inquiry course required for all first-year students that serves as the college's introduction to the liberal arts.

The presentation will present results of three semesters of evaluations of the peer mentor program. The specific programmatic goals were to increase student satisfaction and increase student learning. After this review participants should have a better understanding of how to improve peer mentor programs and discipline based seminar programs at their institutions. The presentation will allow attendees to offer feedback as well as provide models to inform program development for their institutions.

The Naked Truth: Students' Perspectives of their First-Year Learning Community

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An exciting opportunity for conference participants to hear directly from first-year students. A panel of approximately 5-7 first-year students from Buffalo State College will share their experiences in a learning community. These students spent the past year together, learning, discussing, and writing about jazz and rock foundations, the history of American life, sociology, and library research.

Once again this year, these first-year students' experience will be culminating with an international visit to Dublin to study the works of James Joyce and other Irish authors and musicians who influence the American culture.

These students were exposed to a scholarly community that engaged them in ways that significantly differed from their peers who were not in learning communities. Hear how this diverse group of students made meaning of all they were learning through integrated discussions and reflective writing.

The evolution of learning communities in higher education during the last decade is one

of the most exciting, academically challenging, student friendly developments in years. A learning community at Buffalo State is a block of courses that explores a complex theme through four or five classes. Naked America includes Sociology, History, Humanities, English and a research course. The faculty work to demonstrate how their particular course reflects the theme and connects to the learning in the other courses. Students form friendships that last beyond graduation because of the strong connections they form. Equally as important, students learn the material at a deeper level because students spend more time discussing ideas and working to master the lessons. They become more successful and deeper learners.

A highlight of the panel discussion will include a creative presentation by the first year students that represents the integrated learning that took place.

Faculty from the Learning Community will also be present to answer questions.

Student Development Theory in Film

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Presenter will review each of the seven vectors that constitute Arthur Chickering's Theory of Identity Development. After each one is described, a brief movie clip will be shown that highlights some aspect of that vector. For example, the fourth vector involves developing mature interpersonal relationships and an appreciation of differences. A clip from Remember the Titans shows two characters, one black and one white, on a high school football team forced to integrate under a federal mandate. The two students at first don't get along, but we eventually see an increased tolerance for and acceptance of differences, and an increased capacity for a mature relationship.

Following each movie clip will be a discussion on ways we can promote the development of each vector and how we can apply the theory to enhance our first-year students' personal and academic success.

The vectors and movie titles are as follows: Developing Competence in Dead Poet's Society; Managing Emotions in Waiting to Exhale; Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence in St. Elmo's Fire; Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships in When Harry Met Sally and Remember the Titans; Establishing Identity in Torch Song Trilogy; Developing Purpose in Say Anything; Developing Integrity in Jerry Maguire.

Chickering saw the establishment of identity as the core developmental issue with which students tackle during the college years. Faculty and staff can play a major role in helping first-year students resolve issues, contribute to their growing sense of identity, and more

systematically enhance student development.

Creative Collaborations: Embedding Information Literacy into the First-Year Experience

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The motivation to develop articulated information literacy (IL) programs at the curricular level is led by the imperative to equip freshman students with fundamental, interdisciplinary research and critical thinking skills and to enable them to apply new sets of knowledge to further their learning. The mission of an embedded IL course is to explicitly ensure that all freshmen students develop strategies that will facilitate their first year experience and assist them in making a successful transition from high school. This roundtable invites discussion about successes and challenges in developing strategic campus collaborations that embed an IL course into first-year experience programs.

Information literate students are equipped with the competencies and abilities that support lifelong learning. These students demonstrate fluency in accessing, evaluating, and using information effectively. They consider legal and ethical issues surrounding access and use. They apply IL skills across disciplines, throughout higher education and in real world settings. In an effort to develop and promote local and global citizenship, first-year faculty members are partnering to investigate environmental issues, the IL course serving as the culminating element.

The binding aspect of the embedded IL course is the “learning contract”, a formal written statement whereby each student must select one freshman foundation course to act as a beneficiary for skills acquired in the IL class. A beneficiary encourages students to apply critical thinking and research skills to other courses or research projects. Embedding IL into the first-year curriculum also allows students to see the benefits of self-direction and discovery in the learning process early in their academic career. The learning contract is easily expandable to include elective courses, and allows for easy integration into future degree programs offered at any university.

The outcome of this roundtable is to develop innovative methods for faculty partnerships, using IL as a key component.

Assessment of a Successful Science-Based Learning Community Utilizing a Combined Supplemental Instruction Approach

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In fall 2007, thirty-seven College of Charleston students enrolled in a nonresidential freshman learning community (LC) that included English composition (ENGL 101), introduction to cellular and molecular biology (BIOL 111), and either pre-calculus (MATH 111) or calculus (MATH 120). This LC emphasized inherent connections between these courses. Mathematical instruction included many biological examples. Biology instruction emphasized mathematical concepts. English students targeted their writing to scientific and layperson audiences. An interdisciplinary pH laboratory was utilized in which students collected data, analyzed it and wrote up the exercise by addressing mathematical and biological implications of the asymptotic behavior of pH when adding base to acid. The English 101 courses in this community were composed exclusively of LC students while they formed a cohort within biology and math classes which also contained an approximately equal number of non-LC students. Students in biology and math were seated in mixed groups consisting of both LC and non-LC students. Learning community students were required to attend weekly 1 hour supplemental instruction (SI) in both math and biology that was strongly encouraged but optional for non-LC students. Because LC and non-LC students received identical classroom instruction in math and biology, statistical comparisons were possible. Student performance was analyzed between LC and non-LC students that attended SI; LC and non-LC students that did not attend SI; LC and non-LC students that attended optional walk-in writing lab tutorials versus those that did not. Statistics indicated LC students out-performed non-LC students. There was also a positive correlation between student performance and SI attendance.

Preparing Faculty for an FYE Class: An Examination of a Successful Faculty Training Program

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At the College of Charleston, the First-Year Experience consists of two elements: Learning Communities and First-Year Seminars. Depending on their academic needs and personal interests, students choose either a Learning Community - linked courses of

regular classes accompanied by a Peer Facilitator hour, or a First-Year Seminar – small, special topics-type courses. Faculty who will be teaching in the First-Year Experience program for the first time participate in a four-day training session designed to provide them with relevant pedagogical material and with focused time to prepare their syllabi for the coming semester. Training has five major parts: 1) demographic and analytical material to acquaint them with who first-year students at the College are and with learning patterns of millennials; 2) discussions of learning objectives (faculty are reminded of FYE goals and their own learning objectives that they chose when they proposed their course) and pedagogical tools that can help them achieve those goals; 3) discussion of assessment and presentation of relevant tools; 4) introduction to the Peer Facilitator element of the FYE and the common content of the courses; 5) planning time for Learning Community faculty to work together and for First-Year Seminar faculty to incorporate “introduction to college” material into their courses. This presentation will discuss the training process and its assessment, and provide attendees with some of the materials used in training.

Maximizing the Impact of a Student Retention Plan: The Effective Use of Attrition Data

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The session will begin with a broad overview of what we know about our retention statistics. There are substantial amounts of quantitative data which have contributed to the current state of our Retention Plan. In this context, there will be a brief overview of this Retention Plan. The session will then address the gaps in knowledge – what we don’t know about our student attrition. In particular, we know little of the qualitative story of the students we have lost. Previous attempts to gather data have focused only on students who actively withdraw, and have not been successful in gathering a great deal of information. We have had little information about the large numbers of students who leave more or less “passively” by simply not re-enrolling; and we know little about those who are required to leave because of academic failure. The session will then present an overview of the qualitative project carried out December 2007 – March 2008 which sought to gather rich data from a large sample of these former students. How these data inform the further development of our Retention Plan to maximise the impact of our interventions will then be discussed.

Learning Academic Integrity with Audience Response Technology

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The dean of the first year program at Dickinson College sought the support of the library in addressing the component of the program relating to plagiarism. Beyond the information printed in the student handbook, and more consistently and concretely than that provided by individual faculty, a program that would incorporate basic information, institutional policy, and address consequences directly and frankly was needed. While it was not expected that this program would reduce the cases of plagiarism at the college, it was intended that this program would give all students the information they needed to make informed decisions about their academic behavior. It was also a goal that over the course of four years, all students at the college would have shared the experience of this presentation, and the message work become part of the common culture. The librarians incorporated what is known of best practices in information literacy instruction into their approach. The sessions were to be required; students would attend with their classes (although in an evening session, rather than during class time); faculty would be asked to accompany their students. The groups would be a maximum of 45 to facilitate questions while maintaining the atmosphere of anonymity of responses. The sessions would take place early enough in the semester to be of use to students commencing their first college level work. Most importantly, an interactive technology would be employed to engage the students and to permit assessment (and the visible display of composite responses) throughout the sessions. A post test would require students to apply what they had learned to various scenarios. The first step was to determine which elements and topics were most important to include in this fifty minute session. Assessments were also devised (including questions to be tallied by the computer program, a post test that asked students to apply what they learned, and an attitude survey) Next, the tone and the theme of the presentation were devised; "seven deadly sins" was selected because it suggested visual design and audio accompaniment to the presentation. The elements were storyboarded to assure the flow; for example, students would often be polled about their knowledge or experiences, following which a definition or information would be presented and then illustrated with examples. Students would be asked to vote (register responses with clickers) at several junctures; the clickers served to gather data AND to keep the students engaged. The presentation was tested on student workers, and refined. Librarians learned how to use the technology and rehearsed the timing and flow of the presentations to assure consistency and adhere to the time limits. Prior to the first implementation, all first year seminar faculty and administrators of the program also attended a special session of the presentation, and their feedback was incorporated. Following each student session, response cards were collected which provided excellent qualitative feedback on how students felt about the experience. Students were overwhelmingly positive about the sessions, making comments such as "the clicky things rocked" and thanking us for using humor to convey serious information. However, many students suggested that the presentation be shortened. For the second year, a group of

librarians reviewed the program and the data. Problematic questions were eliminated, redundancy was removed, and some reordering of presentation was made. For example, information on the incidence of plagiarism cases at the college was brought to the beginning, to underscore the immediate relevance of the topic to the students in the room. Among the lessons learned was that this technology offers many advantages: it relies upon a PowerPoint design, already familiar to many of us. It gathers, organizes, and displays response data both for pedagogical value and for analytical purposes. And, it engages students through their participation and through the immediate feedback it provides. After this, the second year, faculty and administration express satisfaction that the institution now has an effective mechanism to impart critical information to students about plagiarism and academic integrity.

The Birth, Growth, and Maturation of a First-Year Program

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Eastern's two semester, First-Year Program (FYP) is embedded in the new Liberal Arts Core curriculum and part of the five-year Master Plan. The fall 2008 enrollment will be 600 first-time, first-year students in 24 to 26 ³learning communities.² Enrollment (850 students) will be mandatory in fall 2009. A learning community clusters two required courses with a one-credit first-year experience seminar. Funding is available for faculty development, field trips, student/faculty social gatherings, etc. A trained, upper-class peer mentor is assigned to each cluster to offer support and assistance.

A three to four-credit, spring Liberal Arts Colloquium is already mandatory. Freshmen in these small classes work closely with faculty members. These colloquia are designed to help students think critically and develop the highest standards, for research, analysis, writing, discussion, and integration of skills necessary for study in a field of their choice.

It has taken Eastern many years to get to this point. In fall 1996, at the request of the University President, the University Senate created the FYP Committee. Over the next several months, the curriculum and a quarter-time Program Director were put in place. In fall 1998, a learning community-based pilot program was launched. For a number of reasons it was not completely successful. Modified for fall 1999, the program improved and was continued on a provisional basis for fall 2000. Positive student assessments and increased sophomore retention rates of FYP participants contributed toward final Senate and Administration approval of the FYP in spring 2001.

Continued budgetary, administrative and faculty support allowed the program to grow. Management of the program by a quarter-time Director became impossible necessitating some direct management of the FYP by the Committee from 2004 to 2007. There was

some lack of operational oversight. With a full-time director since June 2007, the program is being actively managed and continuing to grow and mature.

Course Renewal and Revitalization in the First-Year Seminar

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Our first-year seminar course began in 1994, when FIU was a young regional-comprehensive university that just a decade before enrolled its first freshman class, having been established as an upper-division school for students who complete their associates' degrees on the community college level. Significant changes to our institutional mission since then, to High Research Activity with the addition of medical and law colleges, and the need to better prepare our often underprepared minority-majority student population for success inside and outside the classroom, compelled a thorough review of all aspects of the course—student learning outcomes, curriculum, instructor training, assessment, and the textbook, to name but a few.

This workshop will explore the issue of keeping apace of the changing and challenging landscape of higher education; discuss how a curriculum grounded in current student-development research promotes the transition from high-school to, in our case, a research university; and promote a highly interactive exchange of ideas and experiences in renovating and rejuvenating a course that began at the University of South Carolina 35 years ago and is now well established in higher education throughout the world.

Advising the 21st-Century Student

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During the introduction to the presentation, the presenters will use an engaging power point presentation that integrates characteristics of the 21st century student with current research about expectations, needs and retention strategies of first-year students. For example, Richard Light, in his book, *Making the Most of College* (2001), found that students who connect with a faculty or staff member during their first semester are more likely to stay in college and report the most satisfying college experience.

The next part of the session will show a model of advising undecided students using specially trained First-Year Deciding Advisors (FDAs). Presenters will integrate research from the latest NACADA publication, *Academic Advising: New Insights for Teaching and Learning in the First Year* (2007) to explain why they believe this particular model has been successful.

The session will end with 20-25 minutes of guided discussions designed to help participants think about their institution and set goals for how they may enhance or transform the first-year advising experience for their students. Handouts will include materials used to train First Year Deciding Advisors and an annotated bibliography on advising first-year students

Improving the First Year: The Role of First Year Advisors (FYA)

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The presentation focuses on university-wide multi-dimensional initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of first year student experience and improving learning and teaching within the institution. The initiatives have top-down support in the form of long-term personal and financial commitment from senior administration, as well as bottom-up schemes which recognise, develop and support the local capacity to work towards effective and collective institution-wide cultural shifts. Qualitative and quantitative data drawn from first year students as well as University staff involved in First Year Advisor (FYA) roles supports the effectiveness of the reported initiatives.

These initiatives have developed in the context of spiralling attrition rates across the Higher Education sector, changes to Government funding, and Australian based research highlighting tertiary student experience, especially the first year student perspective (Burnett, 2007; Krause, 2006; 2005; Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005; Kuh & Vesper, 1997; Lizzio, 2006¹; 2006²; Lizzio & Peters, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Yorke & Thomas, 2003; Zepke, Leach & Prebble, 2006). Central to the cultural change process at Griffith University have been the Griffith Retention Project (Lizzio & Peters, 2004) and the instigation of multiple FYA roles within each of the University's four organisational groups in 2006 (Lizzio, 2006¹; 2006²). Part of the institution-wide cultural change work in 2007 and 2008 has focused on establishing and growing the FYA roles. The University's four organisational groups have established the FYA role within different timeframes. Each of the groups has identified varying needs, issues and student cohorts that have informed and shaped work at the local level. Given this, the FYA role is uniquely outworked within each group context and not surprisingly has varying levels of integration and acceptance.

This presentation will report on the growth and innovative practices which have occurred over the last twelve months, focussing primarily on exploration of the First Year Advisor role at a program level. Data and vignettes of successful local level FYA initiatives as well as strategic institution-wide activity will be presented.

A Centralized Approach to Student Engagement: Building a Sense of Belonging

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Addressing 'student detachment' or, as some say, 'student disengagement' continues to concern universities (James, 2001). 'An increasingly competitive higher education environment makes it necessary for Griffith University to find ways to more effectively use limited resources to maximise outcomes for individual students and the institution as a whole' (Student Retention Project, 2003, p.5). Griffith Honours College (GHC) is a strategy to attract and retain high-achieving students through an enriched educational experience. The presenter at this session will provide data on students' perceptions about university study and the influence that their involvement with GHC has had on their sense of belonging to the University community and engagement with their learning. What these high achieving first year students are seeking from university study and what influenced them to voluntarily agree to additional workload that has no credit points have been identified. The interactive session will focus on how participants might use the student feedback to increase student engagement at their own university, and most importantly, what strategies might be used in the future to build on the outcomes achieved to date. To achieve a win-win result, the University needs strategies that will encourage students to increase their sense of belonging to the University community and

become ambassadors for Griffith. On the other hand, the students need to become engaged with their own learning and maintain their excellent academic achievements.

The Honours College has been created to allow students to reach their full potential and differentiate them from their peers upon graduation. Thus, the aim of GHC is to offer activities that will quickly engage the students in their university studies. It is a virtual college, with no fees, advised by academics volunteering their services, that invites high-achieving students to participate in optional activities in conjunction with their undergraduate studies.

From Theory to Practice: Improving First-Year Student Experiences

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The Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education provides a systematic, longitudinal investigation of the multiple impacts of the first year of college across a range of institution types (2-year, 4-year, public and private), learning outcomes and student experiences both within and outside the classroom.

Based on early data from the Study, we will argue that most first-year students could be more engaged and make more significant gains on several cognitive and affective outcomes, such as critical thinking, openness to diversity, and socially-responsible leadership. We also present data suggesting that although there is ample evidence of good practices on every campus we studied, we need to find ways to increase the percentage of our students that enjoy the most transformative experiences we offer.

We conclude by discussing specific campus initiatives suggested by the Study that will enhance several aspects of the first-year experience in an attempt to connect the theoretical perspective supported by our research with feasible campus programs and practices.

Assessment and A Model Program for Successfully Facilitating Students' Persistence

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This presentation will describe and present an overview of a comprehensive retention initiative that targets entering minority freshmen and related scholars. Providing a wide-array of academic and personal development support services that uses the students' own unique cultural backgrounds and learning styles as a focus, the presentation will cover the history and background of the program, its goals, objectives, and philosophies, program design and methodologies, including participant's enrollment, eligibility and participation requirements, services provided, program, student, and learning outcomes, and the assessment techniques and strategies that have facilitated those outcomes and have helped program improvements and have led to continuing funding and being the only program that has been consistently funded throughout the institution. Considerable attention will be given to the assessment strategies employed along with assessment philosophies that should demonstrate that assessment is not only vital to a first-year retention program but can be done in a more painless fashion. In sum, this presentation presentation will also help participants to better understand what assessment is and is not, how it is probably already occurring in their program, how this can be built on, and how a successful program has addressed it and has been able to receive continued funding by demonstrating its overall outcomes.

The Student Experience for Entering Students: Contexts for Experiential Learning Outside the Classroom

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In this interactive session, the presenters will share a model for the first-year seminar taught by an instructional team of a faculty member, academic advisor, student mentor, and librarian, developed and enhanced over a decade as a function of program review and ongoing assessment. The seminars, embedded in learning communities, follow a template of learning outcomes, pedagogical techniques, and cocurricular engagement show a consistent impact on retention of 9%, adjusting for background characteristics. The presenters will share the essential elements of the model and work with participants

to identify transportable elements for their institutions. The context of the seminar, building on orientation and bridge programs and followed by advisor contact for students, will be described—building toward a coordinated and supportive context for students beginning before matriculation and continuing over the first several semesters of study.

The use of the instructional team, stressing the importance of peer learning and active leadership by students reaching out to other students and stressing the model for incorporating advising for first year students in the classroom will be articulated.

The cocurriculum, particularly on an urban campus where most students are commuters, is critical. Programming for engaging students, over time, will be described, with participants encouraged to address contexts for service learning and other cocurricular engagement on their campuses. Active participation in service learning and the introduction of other experiential learning contexts (undergraduate research, study abroad, and internships in addition to service learning) is highlighted for entering students.

The presenters will share summary data giving the significant impact not only on one-year retention rates but also on six-year graduation rates as a function of student participation in the program. Particularly important are the engagement data (from the NSSE) showing enhanced student engagement as a function of participation in the programs.

The Summer Bridge Program: A Successful Intervention Model for First-Year Students

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Many entering students at our university have characteristics that place them at great risk for academic failure; they did not complete a rigorous high school college-preparatory

curriculum, they are first generation college students, they live off campus, and they often commit to a significant off-campus work schedule. We will describe how these realities necessitated a broad-based and multi-faceted approach to increasing the likelihood of success for our entering students.

Presenters will engage in an interactive discussion and describe how a summer bridge program was created to introduce entering students to collegiate-level expectations for writing, mathematics, communications, critical inquiry, technology, library resources, and study skills. During the two-week intensive experience, students get to know their faculty members, advisors, and peers, and they learn about the requirements and career opportunities in their majors. Presenters will describe how qualitative and quantitative assessment methods were employed to comprehensively assess the impacts of the summer bridge program and how the results were utilized to enhance the program impact.

This session will also describe some best practices in conducting assessment of summer academic programs. Quantitative assessment results have suggested that student participation in the summer bridge program does positively impact academic performance and qualitative studies have shown that students have positive reactions to the program. Our assessments have shown that the bridge program is particularly helpful for students in the following areas: getting acclimated to campus academic resources, adjusting to college life, understanding college and faculty expectations, and establishing friendships with other students.

Considerable efforts were implemented in 2006 and 2007 to help increase the focus on an at risk group via the summer bridge intervention: First-Generation college students. We will describe how effective the bridge program was in helping these First-Generation college and conditionally admitted students adjust to college and attain academic success.

Philosophy before Logistics: A Case Study on Institutionalizing a Key Component for the First-Year Experience

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In 1998, Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) utilized an institutional-wide strategic planning process to identify life purpose as the cornerstone around which other programs should be built to help students gain a better chance for success as they enter college and in life beyond college. During the 1999-2000 school year, IWU initiated the creation of purpose-guided discovery process and culture on the IWU campus designed to start students out in their first year at IWU with a strong conviction of life purpose and the commitment to carry this out in world-changing leadership. As part of this process, students (1) complete serious reflection about the transcending implications of their purpose for life, (2) make the important college-related decisions concerning their life based on this purpose, (3) become equipped to continue making important decisions concerning their life purpose beyond college, and (4) develop into educated, engaged citizens committed to changing the world through a sense of conviction and purpose. This initiative garnered grant support for the Lilly Endowment which enabled acceleration of the process.

From its earliest stages, IWU considered this effort as requiring a strong collaboration between academic affairs and student life. To accomplish this institutionalization, IWU employed four key developmental qualities which will be examined in this presentation.

1. Ideation: A strong theoretical foundation that addressed conceptual, philosophical, and developmental issues led the process and subsequent policies.
2. Intention: The philosophy that emerged became central to the university mission and serious strategies were developed to bring this about. This has been accompanied by assessment and accountability.
3. Integration = A comprehensive approach was adopted that look for collaboration and synergy between curricular and co-curricular aspects of the first year experience, and personnel from each area were given training and support to carry it out.
4. Infusion = The initiative was both broad and deep, reaching some level in first year experiences in all disciplines, and finding places for in-depth examination that went beyond just superficial introductions in the first year seminar (a common experience for all first year students) and a companion common course on Life Purpose for all first year students entering with no major declared.

Leaning into the Future: Tested Dynamics and Best Practices for Talking to Students

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An engaging session that will provide participants with tested practices for engaging and beneficial conversations with students, and ways to institutionalize them. Both professors and student development personnel have constant places of interaction with new students (first-year and transfers). There already exist informal places where talks about future plans occur, whether in dorm lobbies, cafes, department parties, hallway discussions, class questions, etc. This session will show how one institution has created intentional systematic ways of discussing the students' future, from curricular assignments such as their own "I Have a Dream" speech and "Letters Home" to structured times over coffee. The "Endowed Chair Program" is nearly ten years old and funds a chair in a local cafe dedicated for these discussions between faculty and students--from their first year seminar (with access to these funds for the next three years). With the main criterion for tapping this resource being at least one question about the student's future, the research team has been able to assess both the quantity and quality of these discussions, from the various topics to effectiveness and enjoyability. Accenting this program is a strategy for personal discussions utilizing the presenter's "wedge" and "crossroads" approaches--with survey results from over 20 educators at as many universities. Accenting these reflections will be summaries of related research studies and best practices. Participants will leave with both an overview of the assessment of this approach and handouts and worksheets for easy adaptation at their home institution. There is also a section that will look at the applicability of "leaning into the future online" and in with variable modes of educational delivery.

Part-time Teachers as the Driving Force of Core Courses

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J. F. Oberlin University is located in Machida city, Tokyo, Japan. The university is known as "OBIRIN" in Japanese, but our university was named for Jean Frederic Oberlin, as is Oberlin College, a notable liberal arts college in Ohio. Oberlin College and our university have a partner relationship for many years.

J. F. Oberlin university consists of four colleges : Liberal Arts, Business Management, Visual & Performing Arts, and Health & Welfare. Each college has its own

disciplinary/interdisciplinary educational programs. We also established a shared college called “College of Cornerstone Education (CCE).” CCE provides university wide cornerstone programs with several packages of selected courses and workshops. The main package is called “core. It contains writing, speech communication, and computer literacy courses.

For this package, we didn’t ask our faculty to teach the courses. Instead, our faculty “find” available teachers outside the campus from the fields of newspaper publishing companies, TV stations, and computer companies. The directors of each course are our faculty, but the teachers are all part-time teachers who have professional experiences in the fields.

This was a big shift from teaching academic discourses to what we metaphorically say “run alongside with students” in teaching writing, speaking, and computing. We found that the teachers’ experiences are very persuasive to the first year students. We put academic discourses off until the second or third semester, but students write and speak much more that they used to do in class.

In the presentation, we also talk about the program of foreign languages as another major part of the cornerstone education. This academic year more than 300 students first year students went studied abroad a semester as part of their foreign language courses. We combined in-class face to face teaching, e-learning, and GO program (global outreach program) as one package.

Using the Wellness Model to Better Understand and Help First-Year Students Succeed

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I will begin by giving an overview of our Learning Community program including its history, linking of courses, themed proposals and faculty participation. I will define “wellness” and explain the six interconnected, yet separate dimensions of wellness – physical, social, intellectual, occupational, spiritual and emotional. Next I will discuss how the First-Year Seminar course is organized around the six dimensions and give an overview of all wellness-related assignments. I will then discuss the general education linked courses that are also a part of the learning community (Health & Physical Science 1000 and English 1101) and give examples of integrated wellness-related assignments.

I will then move into the research aspect of my presentation by sharing what 100 KSU students had to say in response to several final exam short-answer/essay questions about the different dimensions of wellness and how their strengths or weaknesses in those

dimensions impacted their ability to be successful students. The students' answers to these questions are what led me to formalize my research in Fall 2007. I will then share the results from that research (a ten item survey administered to 75 students who were in three different wellness themed learning communities.) The questions on this survey ranged from demographic data to asking students which dimension of wellness most negatively affected their ability to succeed as a student. Next I will compare the data analyzed from my own students to related data gathered from the 539 KSU students who took the Your First College Year instrument.

I will conclude my presentation by talking about how the Wellness theme helps students explore issues that are important to them, students can not just be viewed from an academic lens and what goes on outside the classroom can ultimately determine the level of academic success a student achieves.

Getting Students Engaged: Effective Common Reader Strategies

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The National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA's) November 2007 report, *To Read or Not to Read*, revealed several "unsettling" conclusions: "Americans are spending less time reading; reading comprehension skills are eroding; [and] these declines have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic implications" (p. 6). In an attempt to combat this trend, KSU instituted a Common Reader Program as a primary component of its first-year seminar. This program not only encourages students read but also addresses many of the stated objectives of the course and links to other campus initiatives. In particular, the books used in our common reader program have contributed significantly to the course objective of promoting global perspectives among our first-year students. Additionally, the Common Reader Program seeks to link to the university's annual "Year of" Program, in which the institution celebrates a selected country or region of the world for an entire academic year. Our 2007-2008 common reader, *Not for Sale*, has been an excellent tie-in to this year's "Year of the Atlantic World" in that it focuses not only on that vast region but also deals with the issue of modern-day slavery, a prominent theme in the "Year of" program. To assess our common reader program, we gathered quantitative and qualitative data from students for the past two years. The data reveal that our common reader program effectively combats the NEA's "unsettling conclusions" by increasing the time students spend reading, enhancing comprehension and critical thinking skills, and promoting engagement in the issues explored. In this session, presenters will provide practical information on developing a common reader program and incorporating it into FYE curricula, discuss the selection process used to determine the common reader, offer ideas for related out-of-class engagement opportunities, talk frankly about budgetary and campuswide buy-in challenges, and provide assessment instruments and results.

Reversing the Trend: A Learning Module to Combat the Rise in Plagiarism

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While Turnitin has effectively led the crusade to reveal instances of plagiarism in student writing, uncovering extensive, wholesale copying from online sources, some studies suggest that not all students caught plagiarizing are doing so intentionally but are rather committing acts of academic dishonesty because they lack a complete understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. For example, a student featured on the television show 48 Hours claimed he did not plagiarize because he had divided the original sentence into two separate sentences. This is only one indicator of a trend toward increasing incidents of intellectual property violations resulting from ignorance. There is an apparent need for instructors to educate students about how to avoid plagiarism. This is particularly important, today, as our campuses become increasingly international. With students from multiple countries in the same classroom, it is our responsibility as instructors to convey clear standards for maintaining academic integrity. This presentation will focus on a multi-media learning module created by presenter and program chair Lesia Schnur that provides students with a thorough, detailed, and engaging explanation of plagiarism. In this module, video clips provide examples of high school students who are caught cheating, cartoons poke fun at the misdeeds of James Frey and Jayson Blair, and case studies invite students to consider particular scenarios and determine whether plagiarism has occurred. Also included in the module is a PowerPoint presentation that defines plagiarism, cites studies that demonstrate its prevalence, and presents data showing the rise in instances of plagiarism at the presenters' home institution. The learning module has been used by two of the presenters in their classrooms, and it has been well-received by students. Results of a pilot study to assess the effectiveness of the module will be presented at this conference.

Student Leadership Development: Connecting Academic Affairs and Student Success and Enrollment Services

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The Center for Student Leadership at Kennesaw State University serves as a unit of University College and Student Success and Enrollment Services. This partnership presents unique challenges for the staff, with dual reporting lines but also results in opportunities for exceptional programming and experiential education for its students both within and outside of the classroom.

LINK (Leaders IN Kennesaw) is the flagship program of the CSL. It is a three-year leadership development experience that integrates peer mentoring, university orientation services, and undergraduate research & scholarship into the on-going development of students. The capstone experience in LINK is a 2-3 week international civic engagement project & experiential education trip abroad at the end of the 3rd year. Past trips have included Ghana & Brazil and planning is underway for South Africa in May, 2009.

The CSL has had huge success integrating activities traditionally associated with first year student success with active leadership development for involved students. In addition during the 2006-2007 academic year, KSU created a Quality Enhancement Plan entitled Get Global. The CSL stands at the forefront of the global education effort and is forming partnerships with different university colleges to enhance students' learning in this global context. While many leadership theories and programs take into account global learning and perspectives, the campus-wide focus on this topic allows the CSL to draw upon a wide array of support and resources for its students.

Presenters will cover current programming efforts and the ways in which students learn both in and outside of the classroom in CSL programs and provide research findings for how this unit has impacted student retention and progression. The future direction of the CSL and the Get Global QEP will also be discussed.

Undergraduate Program Evaluation of a Two-Year Leadership Development Program at Kennesaw State University

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During 2007-2008, five students completed a comprehensive program evaluation to determine the future direction of this initiative. Research students evaluated the current leadership model, conducted focus groups with participating students and students impacted by the LINK program, compiled and evaluated recruitment and retention data and measured student learning in order to assess the LINK program's effectiveness.

The research study resulted in a re-development of the LINK's program outcomes creating a more holistic leadership development focus and provided recommendations for the further integration of experiential activities into the on-going leadership development

of participating students. Poster presentation will outline the process for evaluating the program, results collected and present recommendations for the program.

Challenges Faced By Academic Advisors: Understanding and Serving the Millennial Student

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LaGuardia Community College of The City University of New York located in Western Queens, links Queens the most ethnically diverse borough, with the world center of finance, commerce and the arts. The college provides access to higher education and serves New Yorkers of all backgrounds, age and income.

The college has managed to increase its enrollment headcount by more than 9% in just 3 years from 2004 to 2007 and similarly a 9.2% increase in FTE's. One of the main reasons for the success is attributed to LaGuardia's innovative approach to enrollment. The Enrollment Services Center (ESC), LaGuardia's one stop center was created in May 2004 and houses Student Financial Services, Educational Planning, and the Registrar's Office. The Enrollment Services Center with staff cross trained in all of the various areas provide students with the most complete and accurate information for success.

Transitions: Making the First Year in College a Success for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD

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This roundtable will share the innovative curriculum of Landmark College's First Year Studies course. This course is specifically designed for students with LD or AD/HD to maximize their learning about their own learning. It focuses upon the development of meta-cognitive skills in developing realistic goals, strengths and weakness as a learner and adaptive strategies that can emerge for first year students with LDs and/or AD/HD. Among the topics covered are recent neurobiological studies of how we learn, specifics of behaviors that effect learning, studies of emotional intelligence and attention, and material to build self advocacy skills such as a review of the laws that protect those with LD in the United States.

Using a best practices model, the presenters will model the hands on methods used with the students. They will provide examples of instructional approaches that foster student meta-cognition through the use of universal design principles to create learning opportunities for learning disabled students to access course content.

This approach builds upon research findings as well as institutional experiences at Landmark College that underscore the importance of three critical areas for a successful transition to college for at risk students, particularly those with diagnosed learning disabilities. These are:

- (1) The climate of the classroom and the institution at large, including the emotional tone in the classroom - which ideally should supports students without enabling them;
- (2) Providing opportunities for students to connect with peers and faculty in meaningful ways in and out of the classroom; and
- (3) Strategies and skills development, most importantly realistic goal setting and development of self understanding.

Executive Function and the First-Year Transition

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This presentation will begin by outlining the neurocognitive construct of executive function. This overview will include a delineation of the domains in which executive function challenges may have an impact, as well as specific examples of how these impacts may play out in practical terms in areas such as class attendance, work

completion, medication management, roommate issues, and the like. The relationship between executive function challenges and a variety of behavioral, learning, and psychiatric disorders will be covered. In the second part of the session, general methods and specific strategic for addressing executive function challenges in a variety of contexts will be discussed. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences in working with students with executive function challenges, and to use these examples as a focal point for shared problem-solving. Results of a recent Landmark College survey of postsecondary disabilities support personnel will be shared as a basis for describing the magnitude of the challenge as well as specific features of the issue as related to various types of institutions.

The Reflective Student

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The poster session will be co-presented by an undergraduate student and an academic member of staff from the same institution. Individual perceptions of a wide range of student, pre and post first year will be presented and themes identified.

A Peer-Mentor Program: From Pilot Program to Profound Impact

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The Peer Mentor pilot program was implemented in fall 2004 in one-half of the freshman seminar courses at Maryville University of Saint Louis. In 2006, the program was implemented in every freshman seminar course. For 2008, the entire freshman seminar course is being restructured and the only thing that remains is the Peer Mentor program. This poster session will illustrate - the steps taken to get started, including recruitment of mentors, gaining buy in from faculty, and training for both mentors and faculty; the course syllabus that peer mentors are required to enroll in; the various assessment tools used to enhance the program over the past four years and ways we used assessment to

expand the program into all courses; testimonials from first year students, peer mentors, and faculty who have worked with a Peer Mentor; and the various components of the peer mentor program including recruitment, training, compensation, and assessment. Although our program was implemented at a small, four year private institution in the freshman seminar course, the steps I will share to get started can be implemented at virtually any university and in virtually any course. The poster session will allow conference delegates to inquire about the specific components of a peer mentor program that apply to their needs/interests. In addition to being able to discuss the various components of the program, handouts will include syllabi from the freshman seminar course and the Peer Mentor course.

FYS As Locus for Faculty Development: Creating Mini-Learning Communities

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Established in 1988, the First-Year Seminar Program at Middlebury College has, in its 20-year history, become a locus for faculty development in pedagogy and for curricular experimentation. That should not have surprised us; however, it was not an anticipated outcome when we voted in the FYS program as a "curricular reform." But because seminars are required of all entering first-semester students, and because they are taught by full-time regular faculty across the curriculum, it turns out that every faculty member teaches in the program on average every 3.5 years. So as the program experiments and grows, so do the faculty teaching in it. Beginning in 1998, for example, we began housing students by seminar in Commons (what we call our dormitory clusters), and affiliating seminar instructors with the Commons in which their students were housed. More recently, in 2004, we integrated teaching and learning services into resource teams of professional staff and student peer mentors. Each team includes a reference librarian, an educational technologist, a peer writing tutor, and an "ACE" or peer academic consultant for excellence. Each seminar instructor has the option of choosing a full team or any part of one. In this presentation we will look at the synergy that results when such

cross-campus collaborations as we are developing work well. We will present an overview of the program, and then two faculty will show how their seminars in particular and their teaching in general have changed and grown as a result of the combination of challenge and support that the FYS offers both their students and them. We will discuss how this team approach to integrated teaching/learning support can prod seminars to become mini learning communities in which both faculty and students take more risks, are more ambitious in what they ask of themselves, and move more naturally toward giving back to the communities from which their resources are drawn.

Making Connections: Using E-Learning to Support Retention in the First Year

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Bringing together key issues of e-learning and student retention this session reports on the Higher Education Academy funded project "Making Connections: using e-learning tracking information to improve retention rates in Higher Education."

This project attempts to identify whether students at risk of withdrawal from their programme in Higher Education exhibit certain behaviours that are demonstrated online. We are interested in seeing what are the characteristics of 'at risk student' in a virtual learning environment and in what way they differ from students who are not at risk. Furthermore this research explores student engagement with e-learning at university up until their early departure (focusing upon early withdrawal from enrolment to first semester) in order to detect critical points of importance in a student's journey during the first year.

An aim of this project is to assist higher education institutions in improving their learning experience for their first year students, particularly focussing on those students at risk of withdrawal, in order to aid their progression. This session will outline the project outcomes to date, focussing upon the ethical aspects of using tracking information on the VLEs, of which students are unaware. More importantly this session will also be exploring possible interventions higher education institutions can undertake in learning from this research.

Parents: Playing a Positive Role with First-Year Students

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There has been an increasing amount of information published in both professional publications and the news media regarding the role of parents in their first year student's college education. These "helicopter parents" have presented first year staff with a new set of challenges that often conflict with the mission of the institution. Recent publications have, however, put another slant on the subject of parent involvement in their freshman son/daughter's college education. Mullendore & Banahan (Empowering Parents of First-Year College Students: A Guide for Success, 2007) and Smith & Gordon (A Family Guide to Academic Advising, 2003) have highlighted the importance of partnering with parents and obtaining their support in a positive manner. Once parents understand that both they and the student must go through a transition stage and that with university guidance and support, they will all succeed.

This session will discuss the origin of "helicopter parents" in grades K-12 and its continued growth as parents see more and more areas of entitlement. Included will be a discussion of online accessibility of grades, test scores and homework assignments that are becoming the norm in elementary and secondary schools. This presentation will also provide participants with an extensive bibliography of what other colleges and universities have developed to address this growing phenomenon of parent involvement in both the academic and student affairs areas. Presenters will discuss the various federal laws pertaining to disclosure of student information of personal, educational and medical nature.

This session will present the utilization of web pages, emails, parent newsletters, orientation programs and parent councils as some of the approaches that can be employed. Hopefully, these approaches will aid the parent in understanding how they can be a positive influence on their child's success during their higher education years. Participants in this discussion session will be encouraged to consider ideas they might take back to their institutions and ways in which these procedures might be implemented

and evaluated.

Extended Orientation vs. Content-Rich FYE Seminars: Contrasting Models

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More than fifteen years ago, Millersville University began offering discipline specific one-credit seminars for students in selected majors. In 2001, findings of the drug and alcohol taskforce generated implementation of holistic living/learning communities anchored by a one-credit freshman seminar for exploratory freshmen. Students participating in the program lived in the same residence hall with an assigned upper class peer mentor and were block scheduled in a one-credit seminar with either their freshman English or communications course. This FYE experience met with great success as evidenced by increased enrollments in the program, expansion across campus to students in more majors, and higher retention and student satisfaction rates. Assessment findings indicated that, while the seminars were successful in engaging students with the University and faculty typically enjoyed teaching the seminars, some students were unhappy that the course did not count for general education credit and faculty often found it difficult to engage students in meaningful dialogue on liberal arts issues. In 2005, to address these concerns and enhance learning, the University piloted three-credit “passion” courses. The courses were proposed by faculty who had a passion for both teaching a subject that did not necessarily fall within typical disciplinary bounds and encouraging students to engage in the University community. These seminars have also met with great success among both students and faculty. Starting with five “passion” seminars in 2005, enrollment has grown and fifteen seminars enrolling approximately 300 students were offered in the fall of 2007, with an additional two seminars, enrolling roughly 50 students, offered in spring 2008. Three-credit courses allow students to engage with faculty on a disciplinary subject, participate in the community through service-learning, and learn the typical (or exceptional) expectations of college life in a more relaxed and informal academic setting. The strengths, challenges and lessons learned from this process will be shared.

Intentional Collaborative Programming Fosters Institutional Change

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This poster session will provide an historical framework that documents the collaborative efforts between academic and student affairs to create intentional programming for first year students. Developed over a seven-year period this partnership has provided a holistic approach that facilitates successful transition into university life. Piloted in 2001 as an extended orientation seminar this initiative included both a one-credit seminar class, that focused on problem-based learning, weekly journaling, service learning, team building and participation in co-curricular and extra curricular activities as well as a strong residential life component that included special programming, peer mentors and designated freshmen housing. Over the next two year period the one-credit seminars grew in numbers, as did the residential programming opportunities. There was also a marked increase in university wide initiatives to support the first year students. By 2004, the one-credit seminars were approved and the FYE initiative was expanded to include the piloting of five 3 credit content-rich seminar courses that complimented the liberal arts core and were part of living-learning communities. A freshmen convocation was implemented as well as extensive faculty professional development including the utilization of the expert knowledge of notable FYE pioneers John Gardner, Randy Swing and Stuart Hunter. The emphasis on service learning, residential programming, freshmen

housing and the use of peer mentors continued to play an key role in the FYE initiative. In 2007, the entire university faculty voted to approve the 3 credit seminars for general education credit. A common reading program was implemented as well as a new student orientation program including diversity training, and participation in the Choices program. To date the new general education guidelines are in place and all First Year Inquiry seminars must go through a common approval process and adhere to several common course objectives. Currently over 380 incoming freshmen participate in this partnership. It is our hope that we will continue to move this initiative forward to eventually include all incoming freshmen in a first year seminar experience.

Keys to Success

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What is Keys to Success?

Keys to Success consists of a series of developmental workshops, either offered to students as part of a personal management plan after assessment conducted by Student Counselling, or on a voluntary basis. Keys is the operationalisation of Roadmap to Success1, culminating in the development of a student's Portfolio.

Most importantly, Keys also forms a central part of an ongoing orientation programme for first-year students.

The experiential learning approach underpins the Keys workshops.

Keys aligns itself with the NMMU vision of the transformation and development of our communities by offering interventions which provide support for all students.

Background

Concerns over student retention rates continue to dominate Higher Education debates. Orientation programmes are vital institutional strategies that underpin retention initiatives. However, research has shown that the influence of the initial orientation period on student retention is minimal, but that once extended, significant increases in retention have been reported. Several studies (amongst others, Mullendore & Banahan 2005, and Pascarella & Terenzini 1991) show evidence that positively links extended first-year orientation programmes with first year persistence and ultimately with degree completion.

The NMMU attracts a diverse student population, comprising mainly students from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose needs are mainly financial, and academic, social and cultural adjustment. These needs necessitate pedagogical interventions from university

support programmes.

The Department of Education has stipulated that the NMMU has to grow its success rates by around 7% by 2010. Keys to Success is a university-wide retention strategy to address the challenge of improving student success rates.

Statistics from the Student Counselling Ukubamba2 Data Base informed the selection of topics for Keys workshops.

Evaluation

The qualitative evaluation of Keys shows that students find the workshops beneficial. The quantitative assessment is still in progress but will be ready by June 2008.

References

- Mullendore, R. H., & Banahan, L. A. (2005). Designing orientation programs as found in Challenging and supporting the first-year student in Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., and Barefoot, B. O. National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student in Transition (2005). <http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfinding/surveys/survey03.html>. Retrieved 28 February 2008.
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Roadmap to Success

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What is Roadmap to Success?

Roadmap to Success is a proactive NMMU initiative which provides students with opportunities for their holistic development. Students are introduced to the concept of Roadmap at each Faculty Welcoming Ceremony for first years and are presented with a strategy to enable them to develop themselves intentionally in some areas beyond the classroom

The process of this purposeful development involves the following steps:

An intake interview is conducted by Student Counselling.

The Learning Enhancement Checklist (LEC) is administered – this is an assessment tool developed by Student Counselling to assess the needs of students.

Through co-involvement of counsellor and student, the appropriate intervention strategies are mapped.

Attendance of Keys to Success workshops form an integral part of the intervention strategies.

Ongoing monitoring of the student's progress is conducted by both counsellor and student.

Evidence of learning for portfolio development and future employability, is strongly encouraged.

Background

Concerns over student retention rates in higher education (HE) continue to dominate institutional, national and international HE debates. Orientation programmes are vital institutional strategies that underpin retention initiatives - the most important strategic goal of an orientation programme is that it promotes retention and throughput rates. (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) show evidence that positively links extended first year orientation programmes with first year persistence and ultimately with degree completion. The NMMU envisions Roadmap as an extended orientation programme available to the entire student population.

The NMMU attracts a diverse student population, comprising mainly students from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose needs necessitate pedagogical interventions from university support programmes.

The Roadmap to Success initiative aligns itself with the NMMU vision of the transformation and development of our communities by offering interventions which provide support for all students.

References:

Mullendore, R. H., & Banahan, L. A. (2005). Designing orientation programs as found in Challenging and supporting the first-year student in Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., and Barefoot, B. O. National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student in Transition (2005). <http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfinding/surveys/survey03.html>. Retrieved 28 February, 2008.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Faculty-Driven Inquiry of the Impact of the First-Year Experience

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The New England Consortium on Assessment and Student Learning (NECASL) began collaborating on this work in Spring 2002. From the Fall 2006 to Spring of 2010, the project has implemented a four-year longitudinal interview panel and survey study addressing the quality of student experiences at high reputation liberal arts colleges in New England. Seven colleges participate in this consortium with the support of the

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The seven participating institutions are: Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Middlebury, Smith, Trinity, and Wellesley. The three principal investigators leading this effort are Lee Cuba - Professor of Sociology and former Dean at Wellesley College, Jill Reich - Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Bates College; and Robert Froh - Associate Director at CIHE-NEASC. At each college, faculty investigators guide a group of upper-class students who serve as interviewers of a sample panel of students. Institutional researchers collect and analyze student surveys and institutional data. In addition, faculty sponsors at three of the colleges analyze writing samples as one form of outcomes assessment data. Members of the consortium meet at three points throughout each academic year to coordinate their efforts and contrast findings. Training sessions sponsored at Wellesley College guide the student interviewers and researchers in their work.

Teaching Critical Thinking and Learning to First-Year Students: 30 Years of Experience and Research

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Dr. Walter has developed a validated instructional program of basic critical thinking and learning strategies that are viewed as general education outcomes by many institutions of higher education. These critical thinking and learning strategies are typically taught across the liberal arts curriculum. The critical thinking strategies that these students have learned are those basic strategies upon which much higher level critical thinking is based, as described in Bloom's Taxonomy. One of the challenges that first year students face is that much of what they are expected to do requires what are thought to be "higher order" thinking skills, but most students haven't had the opportunity to learn or refine the basic "lower" or "mid-level" skills upon which higher levels build. The presentation will focus on introducing participants to the intellectual model upon which these strategies are based and 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. Participants will leave this presentation with the skills to teach students in all courses, including the FYE seminar, the critical thinking strategies upon which higher level thinking is developed and which make thinking more orderly and effective. Participants will learn how to teach students how to apply these strategies to 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. The experience provides students with an opportunity to learn strategies in a "user friendly" environment and then apply the strategies across the curriculum.

Personal and Academic Support System (PASS) in the School of Life Sciences: An Integrated Approach to Student Support Within an Academic School

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UK Government directives to recruit students from non-traditional backgrounds (Widening Participation) has changed the profile of the student body in many universities and revealed the need for restructuring student support. PASS is being developed to settle and support all first year students. There are currently three strands under the umbrella of PASS:

PASS Tutorial Programme: Proactive personal tutoring has been developed over the last 3 years to build tutor-tutee relationships while delivering study skills instruction. First year students meet with their tutor every 2-3 weeks in subject-specific groups that help build cohort identity. This face-to-face approach also unearths students with non-academic problems who are referred to the School Head of Student Support. I invite the student in for a chat and arrange support and referral to specialised help (counselling, financial advice, disability support, accommodation, etc) as appropriate.

PASS Resit Support: Individualised support for students who fail modules but are awarded resits. We email resit students with personalised feedback on what they did well in their assessment, where they went wrong and how they can improve. Students are encouraged to meet with their tutor to discuss this advice.

PASS Intervention: In 2007 we introduced an effective intervention programme to turn around students with poor academic results at the end of their first semester. Students with multiple failures were called for interview to discover the cause of their failure and an individualised recovery plan devised. They were mentored, held accountable and given guidance throughout semester 2 to help them manage their workload. Through mentoring they were enabled to turn round their academic performance so that by the end of semester 2 most of them were passing their modules. 65% were able to progress into their second year studies, while the remainder are repeating the first year (rather than being expelled).

Creating a Landing Strip for Helicopter Parents

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This session will introduce the concept of helicopter parents and address both the institutional perspective and the parent perspective. This has become a much publicized issue for institutions in the United States and other countries including Ireland, England, and India. The term made its way into the higher education lexicon when the millennial generation began reaching college age. Even more dreaded are the “black hawk” parents whose “hovering” actions can be unethical.

Cultural shifts in parenting styles and advances in technology (cell phones, IM, and email) are often cited as reasons for increased parental involvement. Concerns for students safety on campus has also become a concern and cause for checking in with students more often. As college is no longer considered a luxury, parents are acting as consumers who want to ensure that they get the most out of their investment. And some parents feel that their student is not yet ready to handle admissions, financial aid and other major decisions on their own.

From writing their student’s admission essay to telling the student which class to enroll in, to calling professors about poor grades, parents have made their voices heard all over campus. For US institutions, FERPA privacy regulations are clear and must be upheld. Colleges are now finding ways to create an environment that encourages students to make decisions more independently and provides opportunities for parents to be involved in more appropriate ways such as parent associations and parent orientation. In addition, colleges and universities can work with feeder high schools to provide educational workshops for parents to help them begin the transition early by intentionally allowing their child more and more personal responsibility.

The presentation will conclude by addressing the pros and cons of parental involvement and encourage audience discussion and questions.

Educating for Social Justice in the First Year

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At Rivier College, first-year students participate in a series of seminars in writing, reasoning, and religion, where they reflect on what it means to be an individual in today’s society and their ethical responsibility for others. Students become part of a cohort coming together to study, discuss, experience, and explore these concepts as part of the

larger dialogue between faith and reason, central to a Catholic liberal arts education.

We have found that at the end of this first year experience students report themselves to be far more aware of the social and economic justice issues confronting people within the surrounding community and better able to connect those to larger global issues. Through such programs as the City Services Scavenger Hunt, the Poverty Simulation, required extra curricular presentations, and discussions of theme-focused films, students learn the need for civic engagement and begin to see the face of the “other” around them. Each semester culminates in a Symposium where students role-play about controversial issues in order to experience the effects of actions and policies on the “other.” In response, each group develops an action plan and presents it to the community.

As a result of these experiences, students report themselves more motivated to participate in service learning placements outside their major. We are now in the process of gathering longitudinal data from juniors involved in a required junior year seminar focused on global issues to determine the amount of carry-over from freshman year. We are particularly interested in the impact these programs have on mission awareness and an understanding of faith-based approaches to issues of social justice.

Lessons Learned: Peer Mentoring

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Determining the need for the Peer Mentor Program was based on several surveys conducted by various Student Affairs departments and a third party EBI, which uncovered several deficits within student services. In most cases, new students expressed the need for details on navigating the “how to’s” at Rutgers-Camden and a sense of belonging within our community. The Peer Mentor Program was created to enhance the academic success of the mentee, encourage positive self discovery through campus involvement, enable mentees to navigate through Rutgers departments for appropriate support services, and increase the mentee’s relationship within the community through programs and activities.

Our discussion will review the creation and implementation of the program. Highlight the importance of university support of the program while bridging essential gaps and involving stakeholders. An overview of our process of engaging mentees, monitoring

mentors, and creatively addressing various student issues through a holistic approach will help to unravel the “learning to unlearn” process that we went through. For example, redefining our terms in regards to first year emotional connection and how understanding that when emotions of stress, acceptance and anxiety are decreased the first year student will have a greater collegiate experience. Finally, we will discuss the various assessments conducted and how the results affected change within the program.

We will offer examples of how our campus is experiencing an increase level of civility, awareness of classroom etiquette and engagement in co-curricular activities all due to the awareness of the university structure and understanding of the community culture. We have experienced an increase in use of campus services as a result of the cross programming occurring. Furthermore, our campus was experiencing an increase of new students presenting psychological issues and addictions than in the past, the Peer Mentor programs assisted this cohort with managing fears and pressures through resources that were not present before the inception of the program. We are proud that our Peer Mentor Program has been instrumental the areas of academics, health, money and balance.

Mentoring with a Multi-Generational Lens

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Peer Mentor programs have a positive effect on retention and increase the connection with the campus. Programs also encourage engagement in and out of the classroom, utilization of campus services, increased communication skills and skills to best deal with emotions attributed to transitioning within a collegiate setting. Is there a one-size fits all? As the demographic of new students change, understanding differences within generations is paramount to the success of the program.

As generations change priorities so do the needs of students and reflecting on those differences is essential to the success of programs. The 2007 National Freshman Attitudes Reports claims that 95% of all freshman have a desire to complete college, 60% plan to have a ten to forty hour a week job, 61% want career assistance, 44.3% indicate that they have a financial hardship that may effect their academics- with these attitudes in place, universities have a lot of work to do. Millennials are known to have more “I” priorities, feel that they can go anywhere and get what they want and know that it is ok to change careers, unlike their parents. Various reports indicate that the needs are much

different than those of Gen X, and definitely different than Baby Boomers, however, the same four key concepts- academics, health, money and balance- apply to all generations. The question becomes how to utilize these generational differences to enhance the mentoring relationship? Analyzing work on the generations, mentoring philosophy, and our own experiences, participants will have a clearer understanding of mentoring with multi-generational lens.

Literacy Activities for Building Classroom Communities

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Teaching freshmen who struggle with a solid grounding in English to truly comprehend reading assignments as well as writing projects is no easy task-ask any educator. The question arises, ‘What needs to happen in today’s university classroom to ensure literacy for students who enter with weak English skills?’ This demonstration will provide hands-on literacy strategies and techniques to promote instruction to the diverse first-year student population in the United States. English language learners (ELLs) most often struggle with literacy in general, especially vocabulary and comprehension. Through the modeling of innovative literacy methods all participants will have the opportunity to actively engage in strategies and discussions. It is the goal of this demonstration to foster a deeper understanding of the relevance of vocabulary and comprehension strategies for all university students, especially ELLs. Modifications for ELLs will be suggested to ensure all students become fluent and be comprehending readers. Ways to connect literacy instruction for ELLs in meaningful ways will be presented in order to build on literacy development, reading comprehension, and vocabulary strategies. The question ‘What needs to be done to ensure that ELLs are successful?’ will also be posed. Some techniques will be modeled and others will be available in the packet of hand-outs with specific directions to implement in the classroom. The session will include: strategies for word study, vocabulary, listening, pre-reading, during reading, and post reading. Through the application of these strategies participants will walk away with a better understanding of the demands on and struggles of ELLs in learning to comprehend higher education materials and text requirements.

A “Toolkit” for Dialogue in the First-Year Experience

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As part of the Ford Foundation's "Difficult Dialogues Initiative" (see www.difficultdialogues.org), San José State University (SJSU) developed a "toolkit" to help instructors introduce dialogic communication in first-year courses, including the first-year experience seminar and a public speaking course typically taken by freshmen. We viewed this as a strategic initial step in a plan to infuse the skills to participate in reasoned dialogues about controversial issues throughout our general education curriculum. "Dialogic" communication differs from debate in its goal to create mutual understanding of diverse viewpoints rather than winning an argument. Drawing on the work of philosopher Martin Buber, we defined dialogue as "a form of communication that enables participants to stay in the tension between holding their own ground and being open to others."

The "toolkit" was developed by a team of faculty and administrators from both student affairs and academic affairs. It includes: background information on dialogic communication; student learning outcomes; guidelines for facilitation; recommendations for preparing students through increasing their awareness of self and others and developing listening skills; suggested classroom activities and support materials; and additional resources. It was field-tested in three first-year experience (FYE) classes. It was also introduced to peer mentors who assist in FYE classes and to graduate teaching associates who lead sections of the public speaking course.

This poster session will highlight the "toolkit" contents and describe its development, field-testing, and implementation. Samples of the "toolkit" will also be available for participants' review.

First Things First: An Exploration Into the Meaning of Mentoring

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Mentoring first-year students, by both faculty members and peer mentors, has emerged as a key activity to support students' success. In fact, "the professional literature, the popular press, and students themselves...agree that mentoring is a critical component of effective undergraduate education" (Jacobi, Review of Educational Research, V61). Given the importance of mentoring to the experiences of incoming students, there is a need to assess mentoring in first-year experience programs.

While assessment often addresses the outcomes of program initiatives (ratings of student satisfaction, ratings of mentoring support received, increased GPA/retention rates), a thorough review of the literature illustrates there is a great deal of conceptual confusion about the meaning of mentoring. With variations in the meaning of the term from author-to-author and mentoring program-to-mentoring program, it is preemptive to “assess” mentoring without first developing a clear sense of what “mentoring” means in the specific institutional context.

The purpose of this session, therefore, is to share the procedures used in this critical, first step of the assessment process at one four-year, liberal arts college. The exhibit will describe, in detail, the literature, rationale, and development of surveys that were used to gather data. These surveys listed 26 functions of mentoring that emerged from the extant literature and that measured (with construct validity) which functions were agreed upon as highly relevant to the meaning of mentoring in the college’s FYE, as well as which were which were not relevant or were disputed. Results will be shared of the quantitative and qualitative analyses that resulted in a comprehensive definition of mentoring for this college’s FYE program. Finally, this session will describe how these results can be used by other schools to open a dialogue on mentoring in the FYE, to fine-tune program materials and orientations, to assess mentoring, and to better serve first-year students.

FYE Assessment: Ways and Means for Internal Assessment and External Validation

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As background to the discussion, the first presenter explains to the audience the kind of institution he represents, where it is located, the specific region it proudly serves, and the mission it strives to fulfill. He briefly outlines the process employed at his institution to assess the university’s first-year experience, defined in its broadest sense. He details how the team was formed and amended, how the members went about their work, the objectives of the project and the progress made on the project, the timeframe for completing the self-study, and lessons learned from the process.

The second presenter describes the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year self study, its genesis and background, and the validation process undertaken by the staff

of the Policy Center on the First Year of College to establish an aspirational model that enables institutions both to confirm their strengths and to recognize the need for improvement. As an aspirational model, the Foundational Dimensions statements provide general guidelines for an intentional design of the first year. The process includes an extensive, guided self-study process and written feedback provided by Policy Center senior staff members.

Together, the two presenters suggest to participants how the two processes might work together to provide a well-managed longitudinal study of the effectiveness of first-year programming at their institutions. Finally, they lead participants in a discussion of the advantages and possible disadvantages of the two approaches.

Assessment of Academic Advising: More than Student Satisfaction

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As a poster presentation, charts, graphs and handouts showing the survey used and the statistical analysis and results will be provided and displayed. How results have been used to enhance advisor training will be highlighted. Viewers will have the opportunity to discuss and explore the universal applicability of the instrument.

Engaging Students: Integrating Service-Learning into First-Year Experiences

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Serving over 8,000 students in a rural setting, Southern Utah University (SUU) is a regional master's-level university that continues to show impressive gains in student enrollments, retention rates, and levels of satisfaction. One key factor is our integration of service-learning into a variety of programs for first-year students. Dr. Earl Mulderink, SUU's Faculty Coordinator of Civic Engagement, will explore SUU's approach toward service-learning that includes a mandatory First Year Seminar for all incoming freshmen, along with summer orientation sessions that educate new students about service-learning concepts, practices, and opportunities. Pam Branin, SUU's Service & Learning Center Coordinator, will discuss the integration of service-learning into orientation, advising, and curricular and co-curricular programs, particularly through student-led activities such as "Make a Difference Day." As part of multifaceted institutional approach, a smaller, more selective group of first-year students join the "Rural Health Scholars Program" that commences with a first-semester seminar. Rita Osborn, Associate Director of the Utah Center for Rural Health, will discuss the service-learning focus of the Rural Health Scholars Program, which has developed over four years into one the region's outstanding "pre-med" programs. All of SUU's first-year students have access to a range of service-learning classes and opportunities that include Alternative Spring (and Winter) Breaks through international endeavors in Mexico, along with programs closer to home, such as serving at a local free health clinic in our own community. This interactive presentation will encourage audience participation in addressing a range of issues associated with service-learning, including its assessment.

Meeting the Academic Planning Needs of Parents and New Students at Orientation

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This presentation will address the successful way in which our university meets the needs of parents at New Student Orientation.

Advising and Registration at Orientation:

A brief description of the academic advising, academic planning, and registration process at New Student Orientation on our campus.

Parents Orientation:

A description of how Parents Orientation operates simultaneously with New Student Orientation. The success and challenges we have faced.

Academic Advising and Adjustment Issues:

Specific Information on academic planning and adjustment as presented to the parents, information on the purpose of allowing students to independently engage in the advising, planning, and registration process.

Mechanisms for Parental Input:

Without jeopardizing the developmental experience for the student, parents have the chance to learn and be included throughout the day.

The Starry Dynamo in the Machinery of Night: Liberal Arts and Libraries in a Digitized World

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In the early 1960s Lionel Trilling noticed that the students at Columbia University were unfazed by Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. It was just a book. Their hearts weren't seared as Trilling's and his classmates were a generation earlier. At Buffalo State College what Trilling noticed is more advanced. Textbooks have replaced books. Fiction has been eliminated from the first year writing programs. PowerPoint presentation scored to pop songs and talking animals acting as the students' double passes as critical thinking. It is as if not only the haunting, disturbing dimensions of the liberal arts education but education itself has been reformulated and smoothed out into a more deliverable, disciplined pedagogical system; more like shopping at the supermarket than a "sentimental education." At the same school there is a countermovement inside a handful of the first year program's learning communities, which forms a "college within the college" allied with the library and independent bookstores. Core classes are integrated with a writing class, a library research class, and a weekly seminar. The community has a central organizing theme. There is a capped enrollment with a small budget to go to the theater, to bring scholars into the classroom, and dine together. The

effect is startling. Students produce a different kind of work and at higher levels than their colleagues. The dialectical encounter of different classes, texts, pedagogical techniques, faculty perspectives, and cultural events produce over the course of even one semester a dynamic crystallization out of all the components that is at the heart of a liberal arts education. This roundtable will examine the future directions of a liberal arts education and its allied institutions like the library in an increasingly hostile world.

The developmental needs of first-year students at Stellenbosch University (SU): The role and impact of the Tracking System

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According to Dietsche (2005) a tracking system is a decision support system in which student-based data is used for various purposes, like the generating of information on student experiences. The data is used to create a culture of evidence. At Stellenbosch University (SU) such a system to determine the full first year experience was initiated in 2001. As a first tool to determine the developmental needs of first year students' two questionnaires, the Alpha Baseline Questionnaire (ABQ) and the Alpha Progress Questionnaire (APQ) were implemented in 2002. The ABQ is completed by first year students at the beginning of the academic year and the APQ at the end of the first year. These questionnaires generate data that helps to build a profile of SU first year students. As the results of these questionnaires alone do not give a complete profile of those students who need help, another questionnaire, the Early Support Survey (ESS), was implemented in 2007.

The results of the 2004 – 2007 cohorts who completed the ABQ and the 2007 cohort who completed the ESS are used to identify the developmental needs of the different cohorts. Four categories were identified that best represent the kinds of developmental needs the students have. These categories are: participation, perception of own abilities, generic skills, and wellness. Results are discussed for the university as a whole, per race and per language. The results of the two questionnaires are also compared.

As the developmental needs of individuals differ, the questionnaires were developed in such a way that when a student submits his/her completed questionnaire, he/she automatically receives individualized offerings of support. Examples of different types of support based on the same four categories are discussed. General comments and

recommendations are also included. (300)

A Prediction Model of First-Year Success at Stellenbosch University

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Researchers all over the world address the improvement of student success through the development of prediction models. In 2006 such a model was developed at SU as part of the First Year Academy initiative that was then launched.

The main aim of the prediction model is to estimate at the beginning of their studies what the students' chances are to be successful. It also aims to identify those students that will benefit from help. These students are subsequently informed about the help that is available. In such a way their chances to be successful are increased.

The model focuses on both quantitative and qualitative variables. School end results were used for the quantitative variables and data generated by the Alpha Baseline Questionnaire for the qualitative variables.

From the literature it is clear that the average school end percentage of a student is the best single predictor of success. Thus the SU model was initially developed around these percentages. This predicted 35.92% of the variance in the value of the variable first year average. A variety of variables (both quantitative and qualitative) were added in an attempt to increase the prediction value of the model. However, this resulted in the number of variables being too large (and consequently too complex to analyze) to accurately predict first year success. Therefore factor analysis was used to reduce the number of variables: the quantitative variables to seven groups and the qualitative variables to ten groups. The results show that both types of variables indicate a positive relationship in the prediction of first year success.

The prediction model was applied to the university as a whole, faculties, races, and languages. This model thus has the potential to add to the improvement of individual students' developmental needs and the study success of all students. (298)

Early Assessment: Using a University-wide Student Support Initiative to Effect Real Change

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The notion of conducting baseline or early diagnostic assessment among first-year students so as to determine their academic standing in the different disciplines that comprise their first-year courses is not an uncommon one. Indeed, many would regard this as a sound teaching and learning practice. Taking a holistic view of a student's academic standing, and progress, within the first six weeks of the academic year so as to provide an early warning to potentially at-risk students and to offer academic support where needed in good time, is possibly less common. But implementing an initiative of this nature university-wide and doing so in a coordinated and structured fashion, providing the necessary electronic systems and resources is, within the South African higher education system, a first.

This paper describes the first-year of implementation of the First-year Academy monitoring system, including the Early Assessment system, under the umbrella of the First-year Academy at Stellenbosch University. It highlights the impact that the process of implementation has had from its inception, effecting change across the entire university. On the one hand, the early focus on student success and the establishment of dedicated structures to facilitate such focus, has served as a catalyst for dialogue at faculty and departmental level around issues of teaching and learning - dialogue that did not previously occur across the entire university system. On the other hand, coordinating resources from different sectors of the university including administration, information technology, student affairs and student support, so as to support faculty activities around first-year student learning has set up a powerful collaboration that has the potential to influence thinking across the university. In this paper, the successes and ongoing challenges of implementing an initiative of this nature to support first-year student success will be explored.

Reflections on the First Year of Implementation of an Institution-Wide First-Year Academy Initiative: Highlights and Challenges

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Stellenbosch University (SU) is the first university in South Africa to have implemented a comprehensive, institution-wide FYE Initiative (referred to as a First-Year Academy (FYA)) in 2007. The challenges of ensuring institutional ownership, establishing new and more effective support mechanisms aimed specifically at first-year students, concomitant technological support systems, and having a systemic-holistic focus will be discussed. Special mention will be made of Teaching and Learning Coordinating points (TLCs) in every faculty as hubs where ownership can be developed, and where the gap between academic support and faculty staff can be bridged to enhance optimal cooperation. Other initiatives aimed at optimizing first-years' success that have been implemented, include an early assessment system where a mark for the first-years must be recorded in every first-year module after six weeks into the new academic year. The decentralization of the mentor/tutor system and re-establishing a residential mentor programme as part of the new ResEd programme have also been important elements of the FYA with the latter impacting especially on the out-of-class experiences of first-year students.

Several electronic systems that have been implemented to profile, track, communicate with and refer first-year students (especially the at risk students) will be described. Mention will also be made of a variety of other initiatives designed to impact positively on first-years' academic achievements, such as an in-house teaching and learning conference where good practice in first-year classes was shared, the establishment of a fund to stimulate research on teaching and learning in the first-year modules, a prestige evening where top-achieving first-year students and their favourite lecturers were recognized and where they received awards, and lastly, organizing the first FYE regional conference in Africa in September 2008.

The Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges: A Comprehensive First-Year Program

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We will discuss the Undergraduate Colleges at Stony Brook University (SUNY), a highly selective public university with 15,000 undergraduate students. Since 2004, every first-year student has entered Stony Brook as a member of one of six undergraduate colleges organized around themes of general interest to students: Arts, Culture, and Humanities; Global Studies; Human Development; Information and Technology Studies; Leadership and Service; Science and Society. The Colleges encompass a comprehensive first-year program designed to reduce the psychological size of the institution, enhance the academic success of our students, and foster research-faculty involvement with incoming students.

The Undergraduate Colleges are a collaborative equal partnership between academic and student affairs. The core of each College team consists of a Faculty Director, a Quad Director, and College-specific Advisors. These groups plan programs that reflect the theme of the College and connect students to the University and each other. They determine College curriculum and help to build community. College Advisors interact with students in seminars, at co-curricular events, and through traditional advising appointments. By placing the responsibility for the Undergraduate Colleges broadly across constituencies, we have generated widespread interest in the education of our first year students.

In the fall, each freshman is enrolled in a College-specific seminar taught by staff and designed to give new students the skills they need for success while exploring aspects of the Colleges' respective themes. The mandatory spring seminar affords freshmen a unique opportunity to get to know senior faculty in small, interactive classroom settings. The benefits to the entire university include increased discussion across constituencies; dissemination of expert knowledge; creation of a climate for collaboration; greater appreciation of different perspectives; and most dramatically, opportunities for the different cultures within a research university to understand one another.

Using Data: New Mission, New Goals, New Syllabus

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This presentation will share the process used to update the elective freshman seminar at Temple University called Learning for the New Century and will discuss “next steps,” including assessment.

Data from Temple’s Course and Teaching Evaluations (CATEs) and instructors’ feedback all pointed to the fact that a course designed in the mid nineties to introduce students to the purposes of higher education and to basic academic survival skills no longer met the needs and expectations of the students now entering the university (with average SATs of 1087 and an average high school grade point average of 3.35). The course needed a fresh look and feel in order to meet these students at their current level of academic preparedness and to focus on their overall transition to the university. As a result of much collaboration with several units within the university, a revised course emerged in Fall 2007 with a new syllabus, new mission, and new goals. This session will:

- review course-related materials, including syllabus, rubrics, grading constructs, and required policies and assignments with built-in instructor flexibility
- present opportunities used to ensure consistent course information and to move away from the course being referred to as “an easy ‘A’,” including video modules uploaded to the electronic Blackboard community, marketing the seminar during New Student Orientation, and enhanced instructor training
- share CATEs, student focus group data, and instructor feedback to guide “next steps”

The goal of the presentation is to share the process surrounding the development of the new mission and goals and course-related materials, as well as to share data with and engage participants in conversation regarding “next steps,” including assessment.

Alleviating Library Anxiety in First-Year Students

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Participants in this session will learn about library anxiety and tactics for alleviating it in first-year students. Participants will learn what library anxiety is, how it impacts students' information literacy skills, and how library programs can be designed to address students' anxiety and contribute to students' overall academic success.

Four tactics that have been employed at Penn State will be shared and discussed. To begin, Penn State's annual Libraries' Open House targets first-year students and introduces them to the library's physical layout, collections, and services. By participating, students leave knowing that they have a place to turn to for help with all of their information needs. The Open House is a popular event (attended by as many as 5,000 students) and feedback in the form of surveys has been very positive. This program is a shining example of how a traditional orientation event can be used to minimize the library anxiety many first-year students have and maximize connections between students and librarians. Secondly, in 2007 the Libraries launched a library-focused application that works within the popular social networking site, Facebook. To date, over 1,600 users have added this application to their profile which allows users to search for books and articles and quickly get help. Similarly, the Libraries' undergraduate-focused website is meant to give undergraduates quick access to popular library tools (e.g. search for books) and additionally provides instant help via instant messaging. Lastly, as an added feature, this site consists of widgets, which are small, portable versions of online tools. This feature allows users to take the library tools they use most and place them on open platform sites of their choosing (iGoogle, Facebook, blogs).

Information Literacy and Strategies for Implementing Learning Outcomes

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Students in the 21st century global economy must master the skill of critically evaluating and using information. Therefore, information literacy is an essential learning outcome. Because students cannot learn everything they need to know in their field in a few years, it is essential that students begin developing their information literacy skills so that they succeed in becoming independent lifelong learners. Ideally, information literacy skills are practiced across the curriculum using progressively challenging projects and assignments. First year seminars provide a unique opportunity for faculty to lay the groundwork for building practical and intellectual competencies such as information literacy.

This roundtable discussion will begin with introducing the topic of information literacy and explaining why it is a critical outcome for today's students. With this knowledge, participants will consider and share methods for integrating information literacy skills into first-year seminars and other course curricula through assignments and projects. Because of its very nature, collaboration between faculty and librarians is fundamental to information literacy. Successful partnerships require planning and shared goals. Therefore, a portion of this roundtable will also be dedicated to the process of working with librarians to facilitate information literacy.

Measuring and Using Changing Attitudes to Diversity

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In this highly interactive session, presenters will describe, and set in context, self-report data from a five-year study of freshmen attitudes and opinions. They will offer explanations for the gradual but significant changes in their attitudes that these data show, and will present some interesting correlates of inclusive attitudes among freshmen.

Main Issue: Incoming freshmen are showing changes in their attitudes toward important college success variables and diversity. The changes suggest that successive cohorts of students benefit from societal and environmental factors and hold broader and more inclusive concepts on issues of diversity. These students have more and increasing diversity in their prior knowledge and experiences than have students in the past. We will highlight the areas of knowledge and expectations that are most in deficit and those that are by our measures, are changing most rapidly. Faculty can build on this changing incoming knowledge base to engage and motivate students for academic and civic achievements. The highly empirical presentation will illustrate graphic and statistical data to support the finding of attitude change and presenters will discuss the explanations that fit the findings as well as the anomalies therein.

We will be presenting a complete research study, from questions to findings, with particular attention to the method and to the analyses that we employed. Theoretically and methodologically the work is rigorous. Attendees will be asked to suggest further directions for research and applications of our findings.

Participants will: Appreciate the dynamic state of incoming students' affective knowledge and through discussion, will explore with the presenters the systems in schools, homes, and society that are associated with the apparent changes in attitudes over time. Participants will also be invited to suggest ways in which faculty can harness this momentum to change the learning and developmental environment on campus.

Engagement and Empowerment: Embedding Institutional Curricular Priorities in the First Year

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In 2006, the School of Computing at the Robert Gordon University redesigned its First Year with the twin key aims of engaging students in the academic process and empowering them to make progress on the difficult process of becoming autonomous learners. The changes sought to place recent curricular developments and pedagogical best practice at the heart of the student experience, and to engage, at a deep level, with the findings of the Scottish National Enhancement Themes, especially those coming from the First Year Experience, and Assessment studies.

We describe the two main features of this project: A curricular focus which emphasises an active-learning pedagogy coupled with a diverse range of assessment practices aimed at promoting student reflection on their learning processes and a system of student support which incorporates supplementary teaching and provides a framework for the development of peer-support networks,

In terms of the student assessment processes, we detail the use made of a variety of approaches, In particular, we consider integrative assessment – integration of modes of assessment to attempt to balance the types (individual and group), functions (formative and summative) and modes (convergent and divergent) of such activity – and synoptic assessment – development of instruments of assessment that encourage students to combine elements of their learning from different parts of the programme and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area.

Alongside this curricular focus, we describe the embedding of academic and pastoral support for students, especially at-risk students, within mainstream contact time using social software to monitor feedback from students on their learning experiences and to provide timely intervention when needed. We describe the use of personal reflective learning blogs to promote critical analysis of the student educational experience, and their associated use as a means of promoting the formation of peer-support networks.

Bridging the Expectations Gap Between First-Year Students and the Institution

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What are student expectations? What are teacher and college expectations of students? Who is responsible for shaping student expectation of college? Are student expectations

important? When student expectations are not realistic, what intervention is possible? When there is a gap between student expectations and teacher expectations, how do we bridge this gap and raise student expectations and keep high standards? Western teacher employed in the UAE university and even local teachers do not seem to take student expectations into account when they design the curriculum. Academic and non academic programmes are designed with the view that it is the role of the institution to deal with student expectations to the standard level we want and most students' expectations are non realistic and shaped by their pre college experience which is often below college expectations. Research shows that students do not come to college knowing nothing about it. Nowadays most students are second generation students coming from educated families. Knowing student expectations is essential in designing and implementing educational programmes and activities. Communicating college expectations, and policies to students will enhance their involvement, motivation and interaction with them. The workshop will deal both student and college expectations in a crosscultural context, involving Western or Western-educated teachers and local Emirati Arab Muslim students.

Student Learning Communities, The Student Experience, and the Institutional Value Proposition: A Research-led First-Year Experience Strategy

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Peer support and learning communities play a critical role in supporting first year students' adjustment to tertiary education. The establishment of supported learning communities demonstrates that the contribution of such communities and their significance can be measured not only in terms of retention, but also on the basis of the value proposition to the participants and the institution.

The formation of social networks and peer groups eases the transition to university, reduces personal problems such as anxiety, depression and loneliness, and most importantly, help students to make transition from secondary to postsecondary study. Supportive learning communities support the study process and enhance psychological well-being. Undeniably, those students who work and socialise together are more likely to succeed, and are more likely to continue with their studies.

In social learning communities learners "self organize" into functioning communities with a general goal of supporting each other in their learning. The value proposition for the individual is the perceived self-interest that accompanies continuing involvement with the community - the value proposition for the institution is effective transition, improved retention, and better progression.

The UniGuides Program, a research based peer support system of learning communities demonstrates that even where transition is not embedded in the curriculum, transformation of both students and the institution has positive results. Retention improved and attrition is less than half the national trend for non participants, and significantly lower for participants. More importantly for First Year practitioners, an improved completion rate signals a deeper application and value-added component.

This paper discloses the outcomes of the longitudinal research on retention, persistence and completion among three learning communities in an undergraduate program over the period 2004-2007. The personal as well as institution impact of this project is assessed and translated into practical outcomes of value for both new and seasoned First Year Experience practitioners.

Social Learning Communities: A Construct and Blueprint for Improving the First-Year Experience Through Social Equity

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Social interactions amongst first year students as individuals provide subtle learning opportunities in which the lessons of campus and institutional etiquette, invaluable to learning, are acquired without thought or analysis. Behaviours, actions, emotions and communication distinguish between what is socially acceptable on campus and in the classroom, and in which circumstances various social interactions can take place. The establishment of a socially comfortable ecology promotes a sense of connectivity with the campus and the cohort. The socio-psychological and socio-cultural elements of the learning environment, and an understanding of social networking and consequently of learning communities are important to those planning and delivering first year programmes and events.

Within the university context, appropriate student services and non academic structures are fundamental in the establishment of social learning communities which should be based on the personalisation of interaction to support learning. From the moment that a student begins the process of engaging with the institution there are social interactions which can influence, enhance and support individuals in their transition to, and persistence in tertiary study.

The poster presents schematic modelling to illustrate ways in which students engage in social communities to foster learning and how integration of services - accommodation, recreation, health, counselling, orientation, financial support, clubs and societies, and student activities, promote socialisation. Each element of student service plays a key part at various stages in the total experience, exposing linear progressive and cyclic models illustrating how learning communities interrelate to enhance and support retention strategies.

The poster demonstrates through a progressive modelling construct, how cohesive appropriate and engaging social learning communities can be created, and how the structures can assist first year practitioners to be able to mitigate some of the non academic procedural and structural problems often associated with transition and induction, and persistence.

The Role of Tutor Development in an Academic-Literacies Module: A South African Case Study

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Higher education in South Africa has made shifts from an elite to a mass system of education with a desire to foster democratic nation building. One of the major changes that has occurred is the merger of a number of institutions of higher learning. These were formerly segregated by virtue of race and language. As a result of the mergers a new type of comprehensive institution offering a broad spectrum of academic formative as well as vocationally oriented programmes has been established.

This presentation will focus on the University of Johannesburg (UJ) as one such merged institution and will examine how the changes at UJ have impacted on teaching and learning by focusing on a tutor training programme in an academic literacies module. This module forms part of an Extended Degree Programme devised to meet the needs of "underprepared" first year students.

Coordination of this module encompasses a variety of roles which are in constant evolution as the work is increasingly integrated with that of faculty. Tutors, who are selected and trained, are the primary facilitators of the module. This research is informed by the belief that the interface between tutor and student is vital for students to attain literacy in their chosen field.

Having established the positive impact of both mentoring and training tutors, it was decided to further extend tutor development and support so that the tutors could act effectively as agents for social change. The impact of focusing on tutor development has

resulted in better, more effective tutoring. In addition, extended mentoring has led to not only transforming identities and enriching relationships but significantly to changing and shaping the module itself. Finally, the net result has led to a metamorphosis of consciousness as well as a development of practice that is both inspired and demanded by the evolving context.

Demystifying PASS(Peer Assisted Study Sessions): What...? How...? Who...? Why...?

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Supplemental Instruction, known as Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) at The University of Manchester, is a well established academic support programme, which has been in operation since 1995 first introduced into the Department of Chemistry

Although starting in just one discipline, the scheme has expanded rapidly to include 14 disciplines and over 300 PASS Leaders who volunteer to support and facilitate the learning of lower year students.

PASS utilises the experience and expertise of higher year students (PASS Leaders) by training them as facilitators, not teachers or tutors, to support their group of lower year students in finding solutions to their problems themselves, through facilitated discussion and guided questioning. Each group's pair of PASS Leaders encourage active learning in an informal, friendly and fun environment that does not seek to replace any form of interaction between staff and student but to provide another opportunity for students to enter into institutional discourse with their peers.

PASS Leaders undergo extensive and ongoing training from staff who are themselves trained as SI Supervisors by UMKC to ensure the standard is maintained and that, as Leaders, they receive consistent training of a benchmarked quality.

The Institutional structures for implementation of PASS ensures the quality of the schemes and that appropriate support is provided to the leaders. This requires partnership between central Teaching and Learning provision, Faculty, Schools and Disciplines.

The presenters supported by staff and student PASS coordinators will:

Explain ‘What is PASS?’ and ‘How does it work?’

Explore the theoretical and practical aspects that are required for a successful PASS programme

Discuss the benefits of PASS to the various stakeholders (students, leaders, discipline, institution) such as easing the transition to University Life and clarifying course expectations

Peer-Assisted Study Sessions(PASS): Snapshots of Practice and Innovation

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Although starting in just one discipline, PASS has expanded rapidly to include 14 disciplines and over 350 PASS Leaders who volunteer to support and facilitate the learning of lower year students at the University of Manchester.

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This poster session will illustrate the model and successful structures which support the programme. Visual displays including video footage will provide case studies of PASS in practice including students liaising with graduate employers to develop their transferable skills, working in partnership with academic staff to develop and evaluate the schemes and, demonstrate how disciplines have designed tailored online systems to support their PASS Leaders whilst streamlining their administrative roles and enhancing evaluation.

What We Know For Sure: Using Institutional Data to Determine Best Practices for First-Year, Transfer, and Adult Students

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On both sides of the Atlantic, colleges and universities are looking for solutions to student retention, progression, and degree attainment issues. With more than thirty years of research, there is a wealth of "best practices" available for implementation. Yet many researchers and practitioners quickly discover that the transferability of best practices is often less than ideal.

Few institutions start to look for solutions by studying themselves. There is a serious disconnection between institutional data and institutional decision-making. While institutions value data, its dissemination and use remains limited to a select few. And, data analysis remains the sole domain of personnel associated with Institutional Research. Antidotal evidence suggests real data analysis as a tool for problem solving is rarely utilized.

In October 2006, during a visit from Dr. Vincent Tinto, the question was asked, "What did we know about the academic undergraduate experience of a UT student?" Unable to answer, and encouraged to take a serious look at ourselves, a study was undertaken to look at undergraduate academic experience as revealed through student transcripts. Was there a relationship between choice of courses, grades, gender and major? What courses were our students taking during their first semester? During their second semester? Were advisors "steering" specific populations of students to specific undergraduate courses? And, was anyone in the institution, besides the student, was paying attention to a student's undergraduate academic experience.

Using the Student Information System (SIS) for AY 2005, AY 2006 and AY 2007, the author looked at the courses taken each semester by the new student cohorts. New students were defined as any student who was entering for the first time as a full time student (12 or more semester credit hours) for the semester. Each of the six cohorts (fall and spring for three academic years) are being tracked for their selection of courses,

grades earned, time with advisors, and length of enrollment. In the near future, the study will be repeated for part-time students (enrolled in less than 12 semester hours).

The arrival of a new president in 2006 followed by a new provost in 2007 has made the study timely. A joint effort by the administration, faculty, student life and enrollment management has been working to re-engineer both the first year experience and the undergraduate experience at the University. The data analysis undertaken as a challenge from Dr. Tinto has become an important part of the equation for reform. By looking at ourselves, we are identifying areas where "best practices" make sense and areas that we will have to develop our own solutions.

Assessing the LEAP Program: The Evolution of an Approach

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The University of Utah's LEAP program, a learning community for entering students, has expanded from an initial offering of five sections in 1994 to twenty-six sections in the most recent semester, enrolling some 650 students (approximately 25% of incoming students) in a variety of component programs including a sophomore peer mentoring program (the Peer Advisor Program), several college specific programs, and multi-year programs for underrepresented students in various professional fields. LEAP's growth has made it central to undergraduate education at the University of Utah and has also increased the urgency of questions about its effectiveness. With a change of leadership in 2005, when a new Director and Associate Director were hired, LEAP got serious about assessment. But where to begin? The assessment efforts of the previous decade had consisted only in year-end surveys of students, with little analysis of the results. This presentation discusses the evolution of our efforts to assess the LEAP program since 2005. We describe in detail our current initiatives: a portfolio study of student writing, an analysis of the university's Graduating Senior Survey, and a study that uses statistical matching of three sets of students—non-LEAP, LEAP, and LEAP Peer Advisors—to determine LEAP's impact on student performance as measured by GPA, retention, and time to graduation. The objective of this study is to match students who are demographically similar, who have the same High School GPA, ACT or SAT score, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, but who differ in terms of LEAP participation. These statistical matches allow us to isolate LEAP's impact on student performance, apart from differences in background. We conclude the presentation by

addressing some of the shortcomings in these studies, as well as where we'd like to take assessment of the LEAP program in the future.

Students "At Risk" for Dropping Out: Emotional Intelligence and Student Mentoring

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The transition from high school to a post-secondary environment is known to be a stressful situation for many students. One important indicator of just how stressful this transition can be is the large proportion of 1st year students who end up failing or withdrawing. The reasons typically reported by students for leaving university include change of academic program, personal issues, financial concerns and health problems. Of these, personal reasons are often the most commonly cited and often include difficulties making friends, being away from existing friends and family members, dealing with newly found independence, and developing study habits for a new learning environment. Given the types of struggles faced by 1st year students it is not surprising that research has demonstrated a link between emotional intelligence (EI) and post-secondary success. This presentation will examine the efficacy of a post-secondary mentoring program designed to increase student retention rates at different years of study (with particular emphasis on 1st into 2nd year). The mentoring program is connected to a 1st-year experience project (now in its third year) that collected EI data with new students at the start of their 1st year of full-time academic study. Based on cut-off scores for the EI measure, several successive cohorts of students "at-risk" for academic withdrawal have been identified. A randomly selected sub-group of students from the various cohorts were invited to participate in 4-month summer programs that were delivered via the phone and/or email. The first cohort has now been followed for 3 years. Retention rates for the students involved in the mentoring programs were significantly higher ($p < .05$) than the "at risk" students who did not participate. Details of the program are described in the context of why EI is important for academic success in a post-secondary environment.

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success: A Cross-Cultural Study of American, Canadian and Irish Post-Secondary Students

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The transition from high school to the university setting is a stressful event for most young adults. First-year students face the tasks of making new relationships, modifying existing relationships with family and friends, and learning study habits for a new academic environment. In addition, they must learn to function as independent adults (i.e. budgeting time or money). A failure to master these types of tasks appears to be one of the most common reasons for students withdrawing from university during the course of a 4-year post-secondary program. Academic success in post-secondary education has proven to be a complex phenomenon to study. For researchers interested in the transition from high school to university, the study of various emotional and social competencies (i.e. emotional intelligence) has proven to be a useful predictor of academic achievement and retention. This presentation will examine some recent findings from research studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success in students making the transition from high-school to post-secondary study. Along with reviewing the core findings from a number of previously published studies, the presentation will present original results from a study using large student samples from Canada, Ireland and the United States. For all groups, the short form of the Emotional Quotient Inventory was completed early in the first academic year. At the end of the academic year students' cumulative GPA for the year was used to identify academically successful and academically unsuccessful students. For students in all three countries, academically successful students had significantly higher levels of various emotional intelligence dimensions. Results are discussed in the context of the importance of emotional and social competency during the transition from high school to university.

What's Unique about the Irish First-Year Experience?

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Irish students apply to university through the CAO (Central Applications Office) and the number of points obtained by students in the Leaving certificate examinations is used to match demand and supply. The timing of the process and the way it works mean that, during the first few months of their first year, many students have doubts as to whether or not they have made the right choice.

The majority of Irish students (60%), particularly students attending universities in Dublin, live at home and commute daily to the university. Those who come from further away in Ireland tend to go home at weekends. This has implications, both in terms of engagement with the university, and the type of support they are most likely to use.

The Irish educational philosophy, both at the secondary school level (high school) and at post-secondary, is quite different from that in North America and results in different types of first year programmes and interventions.

Irish university students normally do not pay high tuition fees to attend university. As a result, the attitudes and expectations universities place on students and parents on the one hand, and staff and faculty on the other, are quite different than in other parts of the world.

Irish universities are under significant financial pressure and the competing demands on their budget from teaching, research and student support is increasing. Whilst the state has earmark funds for student supports, they fail to grow as fast as the students' needs for support services. As the number of students attending institutions of higher education has grown exponentially over the last 30 years, support services have not been seen as playing a major role in Irish third-level institutions. This has an impact on how they can respond to the needs of students in transition.

Embedding a Transition Program at University College London

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In this paper I will illustrate and discuss the results of an on-going evaluation exercise in the context of the implementation and roll out of UCL's Transition Programme (TP), from its inception and piloting in 2005. The main aim is to offer an evaluation of the process of embedding a support programme of this type in a research-led institution.

The TP offers incoming undergraduates an enhanced induction, including sessions on study skills, peer-assisted learning and mentoring whereby small groups of first years are

matched to later-year students who guide and support them at the start of their degree; this programme is now embedded in 25 departments and will be extended to all departments for 2008/09.

Feedback about the programme has been collected over the last 3 years in the form of questionnaires, representing a useful data-set for this comparison and evaluation. For the purposes of this presentation, this data has been contextualised firstly through some comments on the institutional background of the implementation of the programme, and secondly with a set of statistics on retention and progression at UCL showing the possible impact of transition practices for new undergraduates in the participating departments.

Shared Voices: Writing Circles, Student Profiles, and Student-Led Conferences as Paths to First-Year Student Success

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Prominent scholars Vincent Tinto, Greg Bowe, and Richard Light stress connection with fellow students and contact with professors as significant contributors to success and retention of first-year students. Further, composition research shows that writing conferences enhance student engagement, satisfaction, and success. The conference conversation reinforces student/instructor equality, and teaches skills in communication, negotiation, and adaptation. This presentation will discuss three models for student/teacher interaction: Writing Circles, Student Profiles, and Student-Led Conferences. Presenters will offer related handouts and invite discussion.

Recently on our campus, Greg Bowe conducted a workshop, “Teaching in Conference: Will It Work for Us?” in which he outlined the writing circle model and related research. Several department members piloted versions of Bowe’s model, developing materials and organizational formats to best meet the needs of our courses and students. One speaker will describe the use of writing circles.

One-on-one contact with each student early in the semester is important in creating a supportive learning environment, leading to enhanced student performance and retention. One speaker will describe and discuss the first journal entry, a Student Profile—a student self-assessment tool of writing, reading, and speaking used to generate student/teacher dialogue—assigned in a Rhetoric and Communication class.

Learning to participate in a student-led conference provides the student a sense of academic and social belonging and nourishes skills in setting priorities, negotiation, and adaptation. When the student sets the agenda, the conference addresses issues that might not be raised in class, and allows the student to observe and individuate useful conference behavior—a strategy for student success. One speaker will offer a model for student-led conferences that encourage the student to view the instructor as mentor rather than power figure.

Emotional Intelligence and the First-Year Experience Course

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The audience-centered presentation will encourage participants to look at FYE exercises with another perspective. We will provide specific examples of processes, exercises and procedures that help students of diverse backgrounds to succeed by empowering them with an awareness of their Emotional Intelligence. During the discussion portion of the session, we expect the audience to provide their own success stories of how helping students manage their emotions has led to an understanding of their thoughts and perceptions of their first year experience. The presenters will lead the group in various exercises we have found to be effective in classes. One such exercise involves Listening Habits. Students are put into small groups and given an ineffective listening style. They are to “act” out what it looks like in different situations and the class has to guess. Next they have to “act” out what it would look like if it were effective. They are then asked assess which listening habits they fall into. They are also asked if they are more aware of their listening habits or others. This turns into a discussion of observation and reflection of their own acts. It also leads to discussion how as a student listening is a prized skill to master. The activity closes with a discussion of skills and tips for improving both relational listening and critical listening skills. Also, how listening can reduce conflict and encourage more productivity from others in their lives. Students are asked to monitor

their listening habits and come back to discuss what changes if any were made.

Several students have voiced that this type of exercise is powerful. Students have had life changing experiences which ultimately helped them navigate their social world in a more effective manner. This encourages them to achieve their academic goals. We will include as many of these successful procedures as we can in the time allotted. We will end with a booklet of activities that can be shared with others.

Guiding Lights: Enhancing Retention Through Student Support and Student Ambassadors

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Going to university for the first time is often an exciting experience but new students can feel disorientated and nervous about student life and the academic demands placed upon them. The expansion of higher education in the UK and attempts to widen participation have changed the nature of student population.

Since 2002 the University of Brighton has been implementing a Student Retention Project including a Student Support and Guidance Tutor (SSGT) model and a Student Ambassador (SA) model.

The SSGT is working with first year undergraduates with the initial aim of identifying students at risk of leaving their course, to improve retention rates and investigate reasons why students withdraw from university. This model has since been rolled out and adapted by eight Schools and the feedback from the SSGTs is now used in university policy formation and in some schools has had a direct impact on improved retention rates.

The SA scheme facilitates email contact between prospective and current students to build a relationship and find out about the course and student life prior to coming to university. One School has developed a new initiative which links the SSGT with SA. This model has pre-entry contact with prospective students via email in addition to open days and newsletters which are produced by the SSGT and SAs. Preliminary analysis suggest the pre-entry communication and support for applicants leads to improved knowledge and choice of university and improved awareness of the university environment. In particular, familiarity with the SSGT and the SAs provides continuity.

The “student voice” is an effective form of communication. In turn, the transition into higher education is eased and retention improved.

In this session, SSGTs from the University of Brighton will share practical experiences and research findings of key strategies to improve retention, support students in their transition to university and enhancing student first year experience through academic and social integration.

It Takes a Village: Role of Librarians in the First-year experience (FYE)

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The concept of the First Year Experience (FYE) Team entails collaboration among faculty, administrators, student services officers and all others who come into contact with first-year students to coordinate the delivery of information, support and guidance as students make the transition from high school to university. Librarians act as mediators toward learning by sharing and teaching their knowledge of information literacy: how to identify information needs, search for and locate information, and evaluate sources. Unfortunately, librarians are rarely integrated into university curricula and often treated as a point of need resource, where students may or may not take advantage of them as learning and teaching resources. Their contribution can be integrated at any stage of FYE program development; programs in infancy and well established programs can be revised to include librarians.

We do not intend to provide a formal presentation, but rather to facilitate a lively exchange of ideas on the desirability of providing information literacy and general support to first year students in targeted academic programs. Our interest in this topic evolved from our experience designing an online tutorial to help beginning level science students acquire science information literacy skills. We’d like to engage in a roundtable discussion of the characteristics of successful FYE programs that target students in specific academic programs. As part of that discussion, we want to explore the kinds of partnerships that first year experience programs have cultivated with other campus units. What are the characteristics that foster successful collaboration between first year experience programs and other campus units? How can campus units like the Library and Distance Learning Centers be proactive in fostering relationships with FYE program personnel? What do we need to know about each other in order to cultivate productive

working relationships that benefit our students?

The First-Year Experience in a State-Supported University: Administrative Vision and Challenge

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The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) was established as a state supported institution in 1907. Although founded as a teacher's college, it is now an accredited comprehensive university enrolling 12,500 students in 100 degree programs, including 45 master's degree programs and three Ph.D. programs. The incoming UCA freshman class enrollment for fall 2007 was 1,800 and 75.2 percent of the students live in resident halls. Living/learning community options are available to first year students including honors halls, three residential colleges, and a pilot commuter/resident hall program. A living/learning sophomore community experience is also available to students. All of these living/learning experiences contribute to the intellectual and social growth of each student. The UCA administration is concerned with supporting student success and the first year programs. This support is reflected in UCA's continually improved graduation rates, which are among the highest in the State of Arkansas. The University of Central Arkansas' administrative vision and challenges will be shared during the presentation, as well as data and information which reflect the success of the first year programs and suggestions for others who are engaged in similar initiatives.

University 1: From Access to Success for First-Year Students

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If indeed, we believe that “the success of an institution and the success of its students are inseparable” (Noel and Levitz, 1991) then it could be argued that the “journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” (Lao Tzu). In order to facilitate the success of its students, the institution must make as one of its highest priorities that first step of the journey, the first-year experience.

However, good students can and do experience transition issues in their first year of undergraduate study. Consistently, without support programs in place, 1/3 of incoming students will experience some type of academic difficulty during the first year. Without the necessary support systems these academic difficulties can lead to early leaving. As well, many first year students are undecided about their choice of a major when entering university or may change their mind during the first year. Why wait until students are not successful? University 1 is structured such that it offers four types of strategies for success: value-added strategies, intervention strategies, transitional strategies, and support strategies. In order to place the student needs at the center, University 1 has created an organizational structure that provides a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to the First-Year Experience.

Why is a first year experience so important? The response depends on the focus of the question. Why is first year important from an institutional point of view? The answer is retention. Why is first year important from a Faculty or discipline point of view? The answer is student preparedness. Why is first year important from a student point of view? The answer is awareness and commitment to the discipline. The data and discussion will provide support for the answers to these questions.

Connecting the Dots: Assessing Welcome Week using Student Learning and Development Outcomes

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In fall 2008, the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities will begin a required 6 day program for all incoming first year students – Welcome Week. The specific programmatic intent of Welcome Week is to assist students in their adjustment to the campus environment and campus life through a carefully designed schedule of programs and events. The overarching quantitative goals are to improve retention rates, improve student satisfaction and increase graduation rates. The qualitative goal is to expand our campus-level support of transformative undergraduate education.

In pursuit of these goals, we have designed an extensive assessment plan that not only looks at our quantitative measures but also considers the University's new Student Development Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes. Our aim has been to design a system that connects these quantitative and qualitative measures in order better to align our current and future undergraduate support efforts at the intersection of learning and student development. Our system is robust, scalable, and capable of being employed by multiple users.

In order to have a comparison group to benchmark future changes in undergraduate outcomes, we used a variety of assessment instruments with the fall 2007 cohort including a fall to spring leavers study, fall and spring first year check-in surveys, and first year student focus groups. Each assessment protocol will be conducted again next year to provide year to year comparisons.

Analyses of these studies provide us with interesting results, including positive unintended consequences. In addition, these results have allowed us to make adjustments in both the Welcome Week programming and in other first-year programmatic areas for the 2008 cohort.

The intent of this presentation is two-fold. First, we will present the results of the 2007 cohort study and second we will discuss how we mapped the goals of the Welcome Week program to the University's Student Development and Student Learning Outcomes and how we will use that in assessing the efficacy of Welcome Week.

Supplemental Instruction (SI): A Valuable Component of First-Year Programming

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SI focuses on difficult courses for first year students. It provides peer-led study sessions on note taking, organizing the lecture, discipline specific learning strategies, critical thinking, social engagement, and test preparation.

Students often arrive on campus without skills to be successful in rigorous college courses. They may have done well in high school but do not realize they are struggling until the first exam. We believe that SI provides a safety net by starting the first week of school.

This presentation provides information along with small group discussion on how SI helps students launch their academic career with support mechanisms to help them learn more effectively and engage with other students in problem solving and organization of content to be mastered. The SI leader attends all the classes and conducts sessions 3 times a week for all students enrolled in the course.

Data will be shown and discussed that present outcomes from a study on 37 institutions with SI over six semesters.

Melvin W. Jones Scholars: A Learning Community that is a Living Legacy

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The Melvin W. Jones Scholar Community is a learning community offered by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to promote academics, leadership, and community. This

community is designed to develop and retain a diverse student body at Nebraska. This unique community is a tribute to the legacy of Melvin W. Jones, former Vice-Chancellor of Business and Finance at the University, who committed extensive time to mentoring African-American students.

Program participants are commonly referred to as the “Jones Scholars,” first year students living together in a residence hall and co-enrolled in courses. The Scholars are organized by an advisory board consisting of faculty and staff from various parts of the campus community, including the participation of Dr. Colleen Jones, the surviving spouse of Melvin. The scholars and the advisory board meet on a regular basis engaging in conversations and activities around current issues, academic support, leadership development, and community service.

In this session we will provide an overview of the learning community program on our campus, this programs founding and evolution, including a resulting Jones Scholar alumni student organization. Presenters will also share relevant assessment such as the retention data of participants, interviews of the advisory board, faculty who have instructed co-enrolled courses, current and past program participants, as well as exit interviews of program participants that left the institution.

We will also discuss the challenges associated with learning communities that are comprised of students from multiple disciplines as well as the unique challenges associated with a community targeted at minority students on a pre-dominantly white institution.

We look forward to engage with other conference participants attending this session to hear about similar endeavors on their campus or the development of future programs.

Our Students Need Help: The Role, Effectiveness, and Implications of a College Success Course in Rural New Mexico

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This interactive presentation will include a history and development of a Student Success course at the University of New Mexico-Gallup, an institution that serves primarily Native American students. These students face considerable socioeconomic challenges as they embark on pursuing a degree or certificate at a two year branch campus of a major research university in New Mexico. Many confront the prospect of navigating the culture of higher education that can be intimidating and foreign. The presentation will describe how the College Success course evolved to include important affective components that engage the students at many levels. Formative data will be presented based on pre and post tests based on student learning outcomes. In addition, summative data will demonstrate the effectiveness of this course on student retention and success in completing their programs of study.. Implications of these data for administrators will be considered. Potential structural changes include the need for in house social workers/counselors, more intensive advising, other student support services, and capstone "transition to work life" courses.

What Do Universities Mean by “The Student Experience”

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This roundtable session will explore how Universities defines ‘the student experience’ and how this translates to student engagement.

In the last ten years Higher Education within Australia has mirrored the global trend of moving from it being the domain of the elite to mass education. This has led to a student population that is diverse in background, in needs and in expectations.

The student of today is often from an ethnic background other than the traditional dominant culture, may be domestic student or an international can range from being a

baby boomer to a member of generation Y. Many juggle the demands of study with the demands of paid work and increasingly live at home and commute to University.

As a result Universities can become transactional institutions where face to face contact is replaced with online contact and where students come on campus for the shortest time possible. For first year students in particular, where enrolment takes place on line and communication is often via the web or email, the first face to face contact can be in class in week one of semester. The idea of what makes up the student experience is further challenged within Australia through the advent of voluntary student union fees which has the potential to radically alter the whole landscape of University life.

In the face of this it begs the question of how universities define the student experience and articulate this to the student population. How should we be engaging students especially those from defined cohorts such as Residential students, International students or mature aged students and does 'one size fit all'?

The roundtable will present participants with the opportunity to share what strategies their institutions are putting in place to engage students, discuss whether strategies differ for different cohorts and what has been found to work and what has not worked?

The Impact of Social Anxiety on the First-Year Experience

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Social anxiety is a common, but under-recognised, condition so the session will begin by outlining the key features of social anxiety; including its antecedents and its effects on cognitions, feelings and behaviour. A distinction will then be drawn between social anxiety and shyness and the research relating to prevalence in adults and young people will be briefly reviewed.

Having established an appropriate background, the session will move to outline the main findings from the intranet survey of students with social anxiety by examining the impact of social anxiety on student well-being, how students coped and what support they would like the institution to put in place. Following this the key issues will be summarised and noted.

Discussion will then be honed to consideration of students during their first year at university or college. This element of the session will highly discursive and participants will be encouraged to think creatively about how higher education institutions can support and help socially anxious students embed in university life. It is anticipated that this discussion will focus on issues relating to two key areas; learning and the design of

curricula that account for social-interaction and public-speaking stress and the role of institutions in facilitating social networking to promote well-being and successful adjustment.

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'You're Not on Your Own' A Large-Scale, Multi-Campus, First-Year, Peer Mentoring Program

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In 2007 a peer-mentoring pilot program in the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of South Australia was implemented and subsequently evaluated. The results showed a successful program for mentors, mentees and university staff. The program, which services thousands of commencing undergraduates, has grown in 2008 to include two additional campuses and hundreds more students, with around 160 mentors supporting new students from eight different schools.

This assessed institutional initiative session will address the central issues for program creation, maintenance and longevity, with a particular focus on programs that are designed to foster a sense of community among commencing students, and to support student transition to both the academic and social dimensions of University life. Some discussion and feedback throughout the session will be delivered by mentors themselves in documentary video footage.

The first key topic will address how to involve student mentors in the program. The session will provide some practical tips and offer discussion, with audience input, around recruitment issues and strategies. In addition we will look at some of the qualities that make good peer-mentors and how to attract these people to programs.

Training is another key issue for those rejuvenating or establishing a program. What should training include? Who should do it? How can it be delivered? This presentation will take a second look at this important element of any peer-mentoring program. Peer-mentors can become disheartened or disinterested once the first week of the study year has been and gone. Some discussion and strategies for maintaining the enthusiasm and excitement of peer-mentors, throughout the duration of the program and from one year to the next will be offered.

With many institutions looking at programs that cross faculties, disciplines and campuses the session will give some practical ideas on how to run a peer-mentoring program that spans multiple campuses and areas of study.

Pay It forward: The Benefits of Student Mentoring Programs for Both First-Year Students and Mentors

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It is argued that it is vitally important to the success of a student mentoring program to focus on strategies designed to develop the student mentor's sense of community, connections and engagement with other students and the university. It is through having a student mentoring program where the student mentor's feel engaged that the benefits to new students (mentees) are increased. A recent Australasian Survey of Student Engagement has found students who work on campus have increased learning outcomes. The authors take this proposal a step further and argue that involvement in university volunteer programs also increase students' sense of engagement with their university.

The Business Mates student mentoring program was initiated following results in the university's Student Experience Questionnaire, which indicated students in the Division of Business had lower satisfaction levels than other divisions. This was specifically in relation to feeling a sense of community and level of interaction with other students.

The Division EAS Mentor program was established in response to a need to provide a positive framework for staff, students and peer interactions. The program was designed to increase the social networks on campus and to help orientate commencing students to university life.

While the Business Mates and Div EAS Mentor programs have different student cohorts, evidence suggests that student mentors have been satisfied with the programs and have noticeable benefits for their own sense of engagement with university life.

Both the Business Mates and the Div EAS Mentors identified their interest in increasing their own social networks and the desire to give something back, as they had been assisted by student mentors when they were a first year student.

An important part of this session will be the audience sharing experiences of common themes, and how other universities have built effective student mentoring programs.

Finding the calm in the storm: Addressing Retention Issues Through an Understanding of ‘At-Risk’ First Year Students’ Metaphors of Survival

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Retention and progression issues are paramount in many universities, particularly in the current neo-liberal climate that emphasise the funds attached to student degree completions. As a result, many universities have set up support programs in an attempt to reduce student drop-out. This paper reports on such a program conducted in an education faculty in a regional Australian university. In particular, the paper analyses the metaphors used by self-identified first year students as they talked about their transition into university and the strategies they were using to ‘survive’ their first attempts at tertiary study.

As part of the support program, the students participated in weekly Learning Circle meetings which aimed to build on strengths in their outside-of-university lives and provide opportunities for problem-solving and reflection on their experiences within the university context. During those meetings, the students used a range of metaphors to represent their experiences and these seemed to provide critical insights into the students’ perceptions of the support program and its apparent success in helping them make the transition to university study.

This paper uses the ‘texts’ of Learning Circle conversations and interviews to take a close look at the students’ metaphors. The texts are analysed using Fairclough’s (2001) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis and his text-interaction-context model. The analysis is based on an understanding that language users make conscious and unconscious language choices to represent experience, to interact and express a point of view, and to present a coherent meaning. Through combining textual and social analysis, this method enables the connections between social contexts, institutions and discursive practices to be examined, thus providing insights into the students’ expressed need for

social support to be available alongside traditionally-offered academic support. The paper concludes by considering implications for the design of future support programs for first year university students.

Privileging the Student Learning Journey: The Promotion of “Character” and its Relationship to Retention in Higher Education

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With transition to university as a strong focus across most higher education institutions, there is evidence of a plethora of approaches designed to initiate beginning students ranging in structure from stand alone university wide programs to more holistic, faculty-based or embedded approaches. This paper highlights the benefits of the First Year Infusion Program (FYI) which is based on a design and implementation strategy that sees a learning circle informing pedagogy and practice. Such an approach privileges relationships and social support as well as affording opportunities for enhanced academic preparedness. It is argued that high quality interactions with peers and academic staff in an informal context are vital to the enhanced capacity building for tertiary students in contemporary times. Consequently, efforts to improve the development of effective partnerships between all stakeholders become paramount.

Building capacity that sees the integration of pre-service education students from across specializations in a supportive community of practice is the underlying tenet for assisting and supporting students in an intentionally created context that is privileged within the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. In recent times, undergraduate teacher education programs have been increasingly scrutinized in terms of their inability to adequately prepare beginning teachers for the challenging social contexts in which their work is to be undertaken. Through consciously infusing the value of ‘character’ into the fabric of the transition program, there is evidence of tangible impacts upon the quality of interactions, relationships and friendships that actually occur for the participants in the learning process, as well as upon their commitment to completion of their undergraduate student learning journey.

Taking an International Perspective on First-Year Experience: what can we learn from good practice around the world?

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The presenters are editors of a forthcoming National Resource Center monograph on 'International Perspectives on the First Year Experience in Higher Education' (due for publication 2009). They also have a well-established institutional first year experience strategy at their own institution in the UK and have provided consultancy support to other European institutions on enhancing the first year experience.

In this session they will provide an overview of how strategies which support first year student experiences have developed in different national and institutional contexts.

They will also explore with participants specific examples of best practice in planning, delivering and evaluating the first year experience.

This session will provide participants with the opportunity to:

- Hear about different national and institutional practices
- Identify some common and distinctive concerns
- Relate global experience to their own context and needs
- Consider a range of strategic and practical approaches to planning and supporting the first year experience
- Explore ideas pertinent to their own institutions and countries

Sense of Belonging in First-Year Students: Does Living on Campus Really Matter?

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The purpose of this study was to determine if sense of belonging (peer support, classroom comfort, classroom isolation, faculty support) differed based on type of residence

(residence hall/dorm; apartment, house, or condo – not with parents; with parents) among first-year students. Participants consisted of 1,221 first-year college students with 12 or less transfer credits from a southeastern university in the United States. Data was collected through online questionnaires during students' second semester of college. The instruments included a demographic questionnaire and the Sense of Belonging Scale.

Interestingly, students' type of residence was significantly related to sense of belonging. Specifically, students living in residence halls/dorms experienced significantly more peer support than students living in either an apartment, house, or condo (not with parents) or students living at home with their parents. Similar findings have been reported by Lounsbury and DeNeui (1995), whose research illustrated that students living on-campus displayed higher psychological sense of community than those living off-campus. Students living in an apartment, house, or condo (not with parents) experienced significantly more classroom comfort than students living in either residence halls/dorms or at home with their parents. However, students living in an apartment, house, or condo (not with parents) experienced significantly more classroom isolation than students living in either residence halls/dorms. Faculty support did not significantly differ based on type of residence.

These findings illustrate the necessity of creating opportunities for off-campus students to develop relationships with their school-based peers living on and off of campus. Programs designed to increase classroom comfort would benefit all students; however these findings suggest that these programs should target the needs of students living on campus in dorms and students living at home with their parents. Limitations and ideas for future research will be discussed.

Reducing First-Year Students' Binge Drinking: Is an Online Intervention an Effective Approach?

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The main goal of this study was to validate two online interventions as mechanisms for changing first-year college students' drinking behaviors. We expected to find that those students in the three experimental groups would engage in less high-risk drinking and report fewer negative consequences as a result of their drinking compared to those students in the control group.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three interventions: 1) Focused expressive writing (EW), 2) Behavioral monitoring (MON), and 3) Focused expressive writing and behavioral monitoring (EWM). A detailed description of these three interventions will be discussed in the presentation.

We were able to solicit participation from 231 first-year students for our intervention groups. We also collected data on 256 students, which we used as a non-equivalent comparison group. The majority of participants were female (64.8%, range = 59-75%), and either Caucasian (61.7%, range = 60-65%) or African-American (24.9%, range = 18-29%).

Briefly, some of the results that we will review in our presentation are as follows:

- On average, those students in the EW group showed a 16.1% increase in binge drinking, those in the MON group showed a 6.2% decrease in binge drinking, and students assigned to the EWM group showed a 7.5% decrease in binge drinking. Out of the 231 students in the intervention groups, 46 (20%) showed at least a 5% reduction in binge drinking from pretest to posttest.
- Our results indicated that being male predicts a greater number of total drinks; perceiving that students' of the same gender drink more also predicts a greater number of total drinks.

We will also discuss barriers that we encountered as well as what changes we made in our second year of implementation. Lastly, we will discuss how others can implement these interventions on their campus.

The University of Toronto First-Year Seminars: 15 Years of Success

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In order to address the contention that newly admitted first year students were becoming disengaged from their studies, together with a perceived lack of skills assessment and mentoring, the dean's educational advisory committee recommended the creation of small first year seminars which were to be offered by every department in Arts and Science and taught by regular faculty. The Program began in 1993 with 67 seminars and has grown to over 100.

Ken Bartlett was appointed the first Director of Faculty Programs and continued to administer them until 2007. The Programs were reviewed formally in 2006-7, following an internal assessment of student satisfaction with their experience.

Now, 15 years after the implementation of the First Year Seminars, the FYE-International Conference offers an ideal opportunity to review why the Program was successful, despite the many factors inherent in a large research intensive university that militated against its implementation. The UofT model could serve as an example of how the various constituencies hostile to innovative programs might be overcome and how some of the difficulties in establishing non-programatic seminars might be addressed, even in times of declining resources, as was the case at Toronto. Equally, the Conference gives a wide forum to witness for the enormous value of first year seminars in large research universities, using the evidence of student satisfaction. Finally, it is important to address the issue of how an innovative program can sustain its energy and freshness after 15 years of operation, particularly once it becomes embedded in the institutional culture that the program was initially established to overcome.

Ken Bartlett, who co-chaired the advisory committee that established the Program and subsequently invested 14 years administering and teaching within it can offer a unique perspective on an initiative that helped change the culture of a large, conservative institution.

Peer Mentoring: Making a Good Idea Better through Innovation and Assessment

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The University of Utah's LEAP Program, a learning community for entering students, began in 1994 and instituted its sophomore Peer Advisor component in 1995. More than a decade later, the Peer Advisor program has matured to the point that we can see its impact both on LEAP students and on the Peer Advisors themselves in terms of leadership development, academic achievement, degree completion, and community service. This year, LEAP has experimented with an additional opportunity for students to stay affiliated with the program in their sophomore year and to serve incoming students.

Our presentation begins with an account of the way Peer Advising was conceived, modified, and developed over the years and the way the cadre of Peer Advisors not only functioned individually in the classroom, but formed a unit making major contributions to program directions. We then describe how the recognized success of this program inspired a new development in which a kind of personal peer advisor partners individually with incoming students.

We conclude with a description of an assessment initiative in which "trios" of students – one who did not enter the LEAP Program, one who completed LEAP, and one who became a sophomore Peer Advisor – are matched for demographics such as high school GPA, ACT or SAT score, first-generation student status, ethnicity, geographic community of origin, socioeconomic status, etc. and are then compared on criteria such as retention, time to graduation, time to declare a major, campus and community involvement, GPA at completion, and overall satisfaction with the University experience.

The presenters: Dr. Bliss is Director of the LEAP program and has taught in it since its inception; She was named a semifinalist in the 2007-08 competition for the Outstanding First-Year Advocate Award. Dr. Ownby joined the LEAP faculty in 1996 and directs the Peer Advisor Program.

Creating a Supportive Environment for First-Year Students by Developing a One-Stop Shop

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Students are often required to stand in multiple long lines to transact the business of admissions, registration, records, financial aid, parking, and cashiering. Providing a One Stop Shop where employees (admission advisors) are cross-trained in all areas allows for a much higher level of service to first-year students. Students are able to talk to one employee (advisor) regarding all areas in order to get questions answered rather than going from line to line--employee to employee. This presentation will discuss how Utah Valley State College was able to design and implement a One Stop Shop in an effort to create a higher level of service and support for first year students. The challenges and benefits of creating this service will be explored along with pitfalls to avoid. The creation of a culture that promotes high levels of service and support is critical in developing a successful One Stop Shop. Ideas and strategies of how to implement this service in order to provide greater support for students will be highlighted. Handouts on how to develop this service will be available as well as an invitation to visit Utah Valley State College One Stop will be extended.

Understanding and Supporting Student Decision-Making in the First-Year

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This presentation will report findings from a large qualitative study. The study aimed to enhance understanding of commencing student's decision making, in relation to issues that impact First-Year attrition rates at our institution. Topics explored in the session include the key factors impacting First-Year student decision-making regarding; full-time or part-time enrolment; choosing a course and a university; 'transfer' students use of credit; and official and unofficial student withdrawal. Provision of better support for effective student decision making was another key focus of the study. Student feedback on support needs and wants at commencement, and on how these might be better met by the university will also be canvassed.

The study which the presentation draws on was based on interviews with 136 students, from eight separate 'cohorts'. Criteria for inclusion in these cohorts reflected some of the major decisions commencing students make that bear on attrition at many institutions. The cohorts included six groups of higher education students (who, for example, withdrew at various points in semester 1, 2007, who changed degree courses with that

period, or who commenced with a part-time study load) and two groups of Technical and Further Education students.

Presentation of the research findings is organised into three sections. The session will begin with commentary on the decisions made by various students groups, the supports and resources that these students used, and the reasoning informing their decision-making. Some of the implications of the study regarding the process of student decision-making itself will then be teased out. In particular, some shortfalls in popular economic models of student decision-making are suggested. The session will conclude with a discussion of how the results might be employed by Victoria University in informing efforts to better support our First-Year students in making appropriate and rewarding choices in the future.

Sustaining Institutional Commitment and Momentum for The First-Year Experience

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Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia (USA), the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women (1836), has over twenty years' experience with first-year seminars, but a recent re-accreditation process resulted in a renewed emphasis and holistic approach to the first year of college. The president of the college, the vice president of academic affairs, and the vice president of student affairs will describe the critical relationships between administration, academics, and student affairs to sustain commitment and momentum for successful first-year programs. The presentation will include an overview of current first-year interdisciplinary and transitional seminars and our Student Support Team's early intervention initiatives.

Readership Ambassadors: Connecting the Common Reader Program with Study Abroad

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Because cultural worldviews shape student learning and professional success, WTAMU extended its common reader program by selecting first-year students, dubbed Readership WT Ambassadors, to complete service projects through travel abroad. Extensive survey results indicate that WTAMU students, like their peers nationally, do not feel their generation is responsible to, or for, their international peers. As a result, students indicate little understanding of current global conflicts, and do not feel their lives will be affected by world crises. Using the curricular innovation of a campus-wide common reader program combined with travel related to the selected text, WTAMU has enhanced students' educational skills by developing their broader global understanding.

For 2007, WTAMU selected *Night*, by Elie Wiesel. Traveling the same route written by Wiesel and linking these experiences to current global situations, Readership WT Ambassadors were equipped to facilitate cultural change with their peers, families, and communities. Through an essay/interview process, first-year students were selected to travel to Poland. They returned home as Ambassadors for Change and then traveled across a five state region and spoke to students about what they learned, implemented projects to address changes they championed, and encouraged "their" generation to embrace our global responsibilities. The results have transformed student engagement in our first year.

The Readership WT common book program now includes a travel component with each

book selection. Linking the common reader program with study abroad and service-learning has significant curricular impacts. This coming year, WTAMU will develop curriculum assignments, projects, and services addressing the conflicts rocking Africa. The 2008 common reader, *What is the What*, by Dave Eggers, which deals with a lost boy of Sudan, will become the vehicle for campus engagement. We will ask our students to read the book and embrace the aWAKE Project as a way of learning and applying course concepts from Political Science, English, First-Year Experience, Sciences, History, Marketing, Public Administration, Marketing, Music, Education and Communication. Courses in each of these areas would tackle domestic issues related to Africa through policy, politics and awareness. Select students would tackle issues related to Africa through an extensive study-abroad experience where they would support existing efforts with their hands, hearts, and minds.

This session will outline how schools could develop a similar program, find funding for it, and strategies to implement it.

Advising Theory and the First-Year Student

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How often do we consider how theory informs our advising practice? Student development and advising theories offer us an opportunity to recognize the developmental levels at which our students enter into university and how we can steward their academic and personal development. As advising administrators we welcome new students to campus each year. Each of our institutions has first year experience programs. Embedded into those are introductions into academic advising.

By grounding daily academic advising practice in theory, advisors can develop richer dialogues with students-helping them to make the transition into and through university level education.

During this interactive presentation we will present an overview of developmental advising theory, highlighting Crookston's and O'Banion's, seminal works and how they apply to the first year experience. In addition, we will explore student development theory, including Chickering, Astin, Schlossberg, Kuh and several other theorists.

The goal of this presentation is to demonstrate to practitioners working with first year students the use and utility of student development theory in constructing a framework for academic advising sessions. As proponents of developmental academic advising, we recognize that theory forms one component of a triad of advising elements that make up our practice. Beyond policies and procedures and relationships developed with our students, theory offers us the basis for composing our work with students. advisers guide students through the transition process of the first year.

Participants will receive materials and resources for continued practice and study of development theory. Assessment of our advising programs and practices will be discussed and data presented.

Assessing Whittier College's Collaborative First Year Program

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This presentation illustrates an institutional initiative for improving first year student success at Whittier College, a small (ca. 1,350 students), private, liberal arts college in southeast Los Angeles. A review of the literature on student success and retention confirms that learning and development improve when students are engaged in active learning and develop relationships with peers and faculty. To facilitate this at Whittier, the Director of the Writing Program and the Dean of First Year Programs collaborated closely to integrate successful practices creating a comprehensive first year model.

Whittier's first year experience incorporates its innovative freshman writing program with a first year seminar, first year advising, and living-learning communities. One of the objectives for this program was to foster levels of involvement and engagement in academics. The assessment model was a multifaceted approach examining pedagogical practices, and faculty-student and student-student relationships. The assessment revealed that students perceived they were actively engaged in their academics, and developed faculty-student relationships and peer relationships with fellow first year students and upper class mentors.

The objectives of this presentation are for participants to:

1. To review research on academic engagement, Living Learning Communities, First

Year Seminars, Writing across the Curriculum, and faculty-student and student to student interactions in higher education;

2. To be introduced to an integrated model of a freshman experience that incorporates all of these;
3. To learn about a faculty based first year advising model where the advisors teach the Freshman Writing Seminar;
4. To gain knowledge on how to develop an assessment model that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods; and
5. To provide recommendations for integrating the FYS in the freshman writing seminar, on building faculty student relationships, and on the use of peer mentors and peer tutors to conduct supplemental transition instruction, assist in advisement, and provide writing support.

Retention Initiatives at York University: From the Local to the Pan-University

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In 2007, shortly after the new “hybrid” position of AVP-Academic Learning Initiatives was created, York University launched a Retention Council co-chaired by one student services staff member and one faculty member (the AVP-ALI). This organizational structure confirmed the acknowledgment that student success relies on the active involvement of university personnel both in and outside the classroom. The mission of the Retention Council is to create and sustain avenues for communication and collaboration; to ensure that program assessment occurs in student success initiatives; to achieve excellence in student experience and success as measured by student retention, academic achievement, and a statement of satisfactory experience at York University; and to develop and support initiatives designed to improve the educational experience of York students from the end of Orientation through to Convocation. The philosophy guiding the activities of the Retention Council is that a student’s optimal experience extends beyond the curricular to include co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as the development of life skills and leadership skills.

The Retention Council has six sub-committees: advising; first-to-second year transition; faculty participation, student engagement, data warehousing and peer mentoring. The peer mentoring sub-committee is co-chaired by two staff members, both of whom have been involved in large peer mentoring programs. In this presentation, we will discuss the

peer mentoring program developed by the Faculty of Fine Arts at York University. Created prior to the establishment of the Retention Council, the Fine Arts peer mentoring program provides an example of a successful local initiative that can provide a model for others. It also illustrates how a body like the Retention Council works from the bottom up as well as from the top down: acknowledging successful initiatives; providing opportunities for communication amongst peer mentoring programs; and encouraging the sharing of concepts and approaches.

Program of Hope for Students at Academic Risk

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This presentation comes under the two of the conference headings: Academic Advising programs and Student Support programs as it describes a student support program organized by the Academic advisors for first-year students in an Arab university. Half-way through their first year, students were placed either on 'warning' or academic probation and advisors felt something had to be done. An invitation was sent out to all 98 students-at-risk to attend the first workshop. They were placed with one advisor to every group of 8 and the deans of students also facilitated a group. Students on the deans' list also attended and moved through the groups to answer questions and offer advice. Students identified their problems as they saw them and set themselves immediate goals to help them improve. Further workshops were organized on the issues they had identified, namely, time management, understanding the GPA, writing and IL. This concept of goal-setting ties in with Snyder, Harris, et al's, (1991) theory of hope. More than 2/3 of the students' GPAs increased and their overall rating of the support program was positive.