Syllabus Preparation and Team Building Workshop Minutes - April 2014

This year’s workshop focused on supporting the continued improvement of UNIV 101 by asking instructors, peer leaders, and graduate leaders to discuss working with a co-instructor, assessment nuggets, and new resources for UNIV 101.

Co-teaching teams introduced themselves to their co-instructor through the lens of True Colors, and then introduced each other to their tablemates.

Table groups discussed one of three pieces of assessment data from fall 2013, and considered three questions: 1) What does this mean?; 2) Why does it matter?; and 3) What will you do about it in UNIV 101 this fall? Groups then shared their discussion with the large group.

The following assessment nuggets and implications were shared:

- Student perceptions of instructor approachability and accessibility matter to course success
- The tone and language of your syllabus matter too (consider including “please come see” to your office hours and/or including your cell phone number on the syllabus)
- Need to meet students where they are
- Consider Google Voice if you prefer not to share your personal cell phone number

Impact of Including Cell Phone Number on Syllabus
2013 First-Year Seminar Assessment Results (7pt. scale)

- Syllabus included instructor cell phone number
- Syllabus did not include instructor cell phone number

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<th>Recommend UNIV 101 (ns)</th>
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Recommend Instructor (p=.002)  
Recommend UNIV 101 (ns)
Peer/Graduate Leaders improve course effectiveness due to their relatability to the students and their insight as co-instructors.

Regular meetings and sharing responsibilities will maximize your co-teaching impact.

Peer/Graduate Leaders need opportunities to be a mentor, role model, and facilitator in and outside of the class.

We can make the course better through more meaningful assignments.

Meaningful assignments include reflection and opportunities for application.

Consider relevance, context, and feedback when assigning and returning homework.

Groups further discussed supporting meaningful homework in University 101 by sharing ideas and examples regarding what makes an assignment meaningful. A number of ideas were shared, and a handout was provided (see SharePoint).

To further support University 101 this fall, the Faculty Resource Manual and Peer Leader Toolkit have been updated and posted to SharePoint. New assignments from instructors who scored...
highly on the meaningful assignments question on the First-Year Seminar Assessment were also added to SharePoint. Additionally, in response to instructor demand, three current UNIV 101 instructors recorded all of their lesson plans from fall 2013, and they have been added to SharePoint and sorted by instructor and by topic.

Participants were also provided information about the fall 2014 Campus Partner Presentation Process (see SharePoint), and the next steps and important dates for teaching UNIV 101 (see SharePoint). Key highlights included:

- Instructors should attend the Building Connections Conference on May 21.
- Supplemental Reading selections are due by May 28.
- Campus Partner Presentation scheduling on TutorTrac begins on May 28 and closes on August 6. Most presentations have changed, so please review all information about presentations thoroughly before scheduling. Some will be demonstrated this summer.
- Syllabi are due on August 6 to Elise Porter at portere@mailbox.sc.edu.
- The First-Year Reading Experience will be held on Monday, August 18 in the Carolina Coliseum. This year’s book is *The Circle* by Dave Eggers.

Teaching teams spent the rest of the time planning their course. Blank course calendars were provided.

**Materials provided (all posted to SharePoint):**

- 2014 Syllabus Check Sheet
- Blank Course Calendars
- Campus Partner Presentations Packet
- Important Dates and Next Steps
- Meaningful Homework in UNIV 101
- *The Circle*
- True Colors Worksheet