

Foundations of Excellence[®]

IMPROVING THE FIRST COLLEGE YEAR: AREAS OF FOCUS

Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience[®]

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www.fyfoundations.org



Welcome and Overview

- ▣ What is Foundations of Excellence®
- ▣ Areas for Improvement
- ▣ Low Cost Recommendations for Improvement
- ▣ Questions and Answers





What is the Foundations of Excellence[®] Self Study?

Guided self study based on an aspirational model built and built on 30 years of the First-Year Experience reform movement

- ✓ Takes a holistic approach to the first year
- ✓ Aspirational, not minimum, standards
- ✓ Model for assessment and improvement

The first college year is a distinct unit of analysis.

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FoE Institutional Participants

- ▣ FoE began in 2003 with four-year sector
(124 pilot and 24 “Founding Institutions”)
- ▣ Extended in 2005 to two-year institutions
(88 pilot and 10 “Founding Institutions”)

To date, 147 institutions, both four-year and two-year, have participated in Foundations of Excellence

Currently, 20 four-year and 10 two-year participants

How is FoE different from other forms of first-year assessment?

Its focus: The institution

Its unit of analysis: The entire first year

Its method: Nine Foundational Dimensions[®]

Philosophy

All Students

Organization

Diversity

Learning

Roles & Purposes

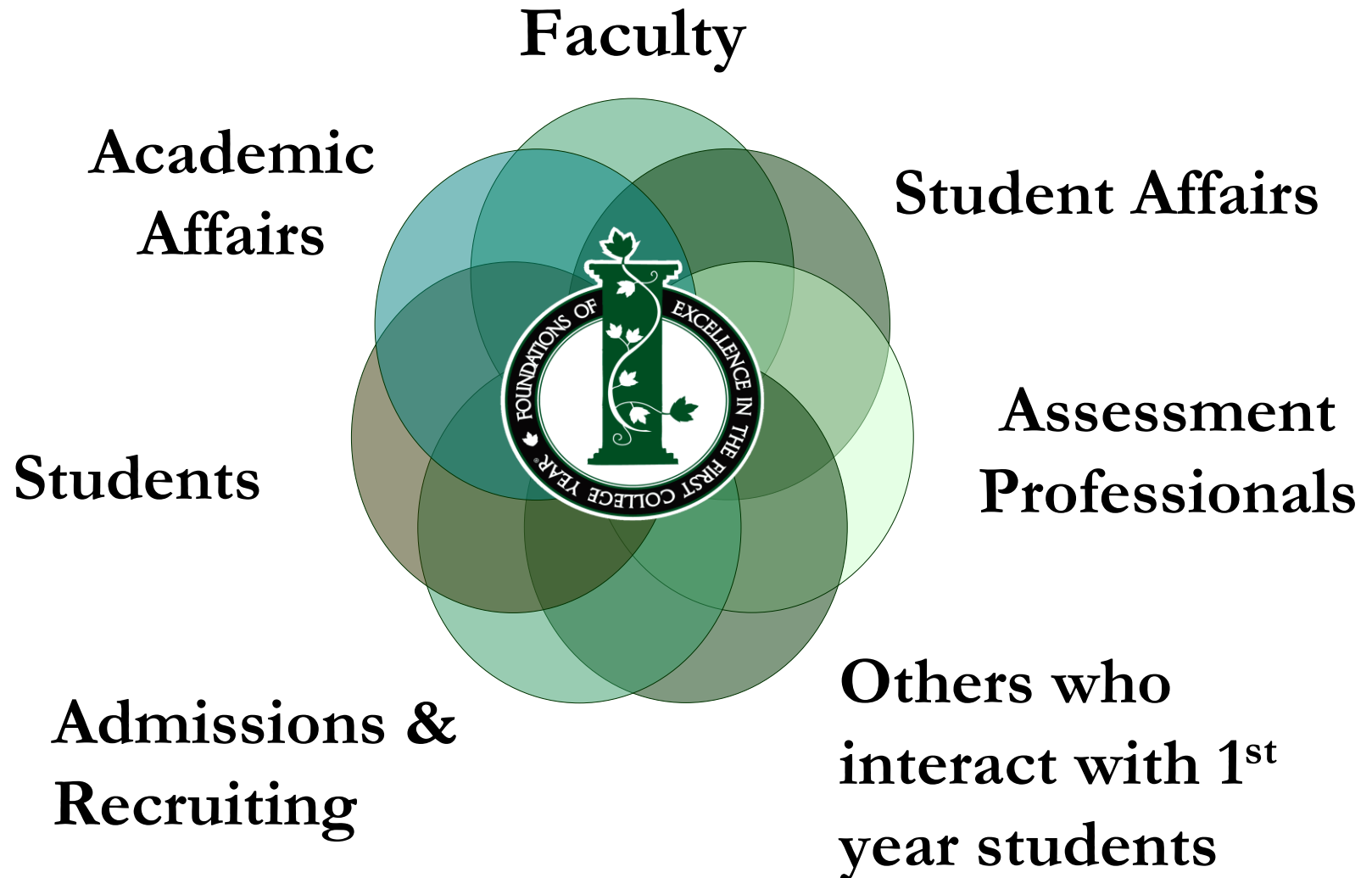
Faculty/Campus Culture

Improvement

Transitions

The Engine of the Process...

The FoE Task Force



Foundations of Excellence[®] Process



Action Plan

Task Force
Assessment

Surveys/Evidence

Current Practices Inventory

Performance Indicators

Foundational Dimensions[®]

FoEtec[®] - Hands-on Assessment

- ✓ Password protected online site— accessible 24/7
- ✓ Access to the Current Practices Inventory & Performance Indicators specific to each Dimension
- ✓ Access to FoE Faculty/Staff & First-Year Student Surveys and Results
- ✓ Self-study materials are developed and stored in one central location that is accessible to everyone on the task force.
- ✓ Maintains a record of the self study and action item recommendations

Areas for Improvement



Recommendations made by
former FoE Institutions

Analysis of First-Year Action Plans

- ▣ Population
 - 2006-2007 National Select Cohort
 - 2007-2008 National Select Cohort
- ▣ Categories included if at least two institutions had recommendations



Overall List of Proposed Areas for Change

Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Significant commonality across
institution types in areas

Exceptions

Four-year only:

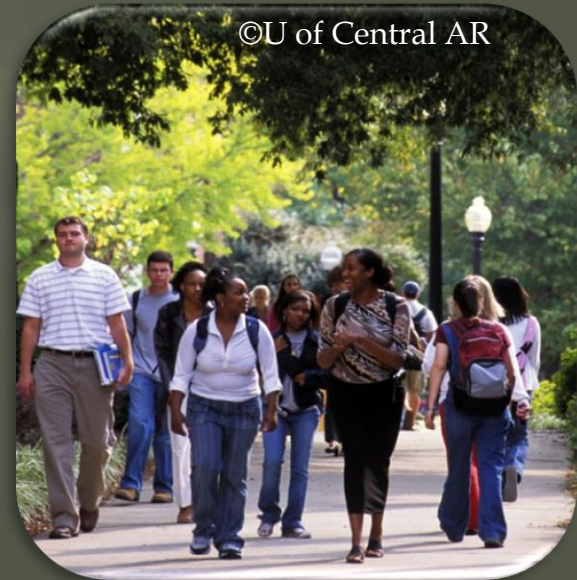
adjuncts, class size, and roles and purposes of higher education

Two-year only:

admissions, developmental classes, leadership development, pre-registration, retention, and syllabi

Top Areas for Recommended Change Among Four-Year Institutions

- ▣ Communication
- ▣ Organizational Structure
- ▣ Professional Development
- ▣ Philosophy
- ▣ Assessment
- ▣ First-Year Seminar
- ▣ Diversity
- ▣ Curriculum
- ▣ Advising
- ▣ Learning Goals



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Top Areas for Recommended Change Among Two –Year Institutions

- ▣ Communication
- ▣ Advising
- ▣ Professional Development
- ▣ Diversity
- ▣ Student Orientation
- ▣ Philosophy
- ▣ Organizational Structure
- ▣ Data Collection and Availability
- ▣ First-Year Seminar
- ▣ Assessment
- ▣ Early Alert/Warning

Low-Cost Action Items

▣ Communication

- Make available to all new students an orientation brochure which includes all support services available.
- Ensure the material available for distribution among students is consistent.
- Develop and implement a communication plan to disseminate relevant assessment and survey data to constituents working with first-year students.

Low-Cost Action Items

- ▣ First -Year Organizational Structure
 - Create a standing committee to provide oversight, coordination and assessment of the first-year experience.
- ▣ Professional Development
 - Organize a symposium for first-year instructors to learn and share best practices.
 - Properly prepare new faculty by having department leaders ensure they are provided with sample syllabi, course outcomes, and a departmental mentor.

Low-Cost Action Items

▣ Philosophy

- Develop and communicate a campus-wide philosophy statement for the first year.

▣ Advising

- Assign advisers early in the process, within the first two weeks of the semester.
- Make advising consistent across campus in terms of quality and communication to students.

▣ Assessment

- Maximize the use of data that already exists.
- Create a culture of assessment and data driven decision making for improving first-year programming.

Low-Cost Action Items

- ▣ Diversity
 - Provide opportunities for faculty dialogue to exchange ideas for including diversity in course curriculum
 - Create and disseminate a statement of values about diversity to guide curricular and co-curricular activities.
- ▣ Recognition and Rewards
 - Create a First-Year Teaching Excellence Award
- ▣ First-Year Seminar
 - Standardize curriculum of existing first-year seminar.

The First Year Matters!

QUESTIONS?

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Thank you for attending!

Session #: E-10

Contact us:

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Please stop by our exhibit booth to learn more.