

Using Peers to Bridge the Gap between Admission and Orientation

34th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience
February 8th 2015
Dallas, TX

Bryce Bunting, Ph.D
Phil Rash, Ph.D
Hayley Jensen, M.A.



A quick survey to get things started . . .



- **Groups of 2 – 3**
 - When are your first-year students admitted?
 - What are the first-year programs or interventions you have in place?
 - When do they take place?



Framing the Problem: Navigating the Summer Months



- Nationally
 - Summer Melt (*Castleman & Page, 2014*)
- BYU
 - “The great silence”



Our Intervention

- Transition Mentoring
 - Description
 - Objectives
 - Extend a personal welcome
 - Provide an immediate role induction to mentoring
 - Establish mentoring as a reliable point of contact
 - Communicate important information



Intervention Cont.

- Interactions, Timeline & Training
 - Welcome email (late Feb. – early Mar.)
 - Phone call (end of mar.)
 - Registration email (end of May)
 - Hand-off email (August)



Our Research

- Method and Scope
 - Qualtrics survey measuring perception of, and satisfaction with, recent transition mentoring experience
 - 710 responses (59% completion rate)



Key Findings

- Registration and course selection remain the top concerns
 - Personal connection is key
 - Students do not always understand the mentor role
- * Increased student meetings



Recommendations

- Continue support for registration, class selection, housing and financial aid
- Establish a more personal connection between students and mentors.
- Clarify the mentor role
- Mentor turnover



Challenges & Next Steps

- Increase in the number of new students
- Creating a mentoring “culture”
- Quality control
- Mentor attrition/availability/ remote mentoring
- Clarifying the role of a transition mentor
- Improving a sense of personal connection
- Technology and communication
- The “hand-off”



Contact Information:

Bryce Bunting

Associate Director, First-Year Mentoring

Brigham Young University

bryce_bunting@byu.edu

Phil Rash

Director, First-Year Mentoring

Brigham Young University

phil_rash@byu.edu

Hayley Jensen

Peer Mentor Specialist, First-Year Mentoring

Brigham Young University

hayley_jensen@byu.edu



References

Castleman, B. L., & Page, L.C. (2014). A trickle or a torrent? Understanding the extent of summer “melt” among college-intending high school graduates. *Social Science Quarterly*, 95(1), 202 – 220.

