

**thinking globally, acting locally:
interpreting + customizing university-wide FYE goals**

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What's global? Why local?

Global is the broad perspective of the role of a first year seminar on a campus with 4,000+ new first-year students every fall semester.

Local is the way individual colleges and their schools customize course content so that it is relevant for our students.

Our goal: student success

Our perspective: global + local lens

Our method: relevant topics defined by faculty and staff within the student's area of study

Our FYE course at KSU:

1972–2005: orientation focus.

2005+: academic focus. Letter-graded graduation requirement, content + staffing by colleges. Some missteps at the beginning, but we have adopted a more thorough review of initiatives to make sure they fit with our mission, and that our SSP and college FYE staff can sustain them.

College-level course coordinators interpret common learning outcomes for their particular student population. Colleges chose their coordinators as they see fit:

- full-time professors
- assoc/asst deans
- senior-level advisors for their college
- JI co-leads FYE with her college's Director of Undergraduate Advising and Curriculum Services

Old organizational structure:

Orientation courses were part of the University Orientation Program housed in Student affairs

New organizational structure:

FYS (FYE) courses are part of Student Success Programs (SSP), which is part of the University College housed in Academic Affairs.

SSP makes the framework; the colleges fill in the content.

- University College course designation
- faculty and coordinators selected, supervised and paid by the college (RCM model)
- maintained our collaboration with Student Affairs
 - orientation-like topics are opt-in sessions through Student Success Workshops events (ex. Major and Minor Fairs)
 - Student Affairs informs and provides students with co-curricular involvement
- College FYE Coordinators meet with SSP director a few times a year

FYE faculty workload

Sometimes teaching this course is part of faculty load, advising workload, or included in “other duties as assigned.” Compensation varies: as part of teaching load, or paid as an adjunct.

This model provides the necessary flexibility to staff 200+ sections.

Global advantages:

Student-centered focus: SSP Offices guards and promotes the mission and vision of FYE, to upper administration and other university units.

Focus on our Mission: SSP and coordinators can measure, critique and assess.

Clearinghouse for Course content, requests from university constituents because FYE is a student access point that is attractive to many campus entities. We sort through requests and make decisions based on our FYE mission.

Consistent faculty training: summer workshops, ‘brown bag’ sessions, Blackboard page

Effective communication from SSP to college coordinators, and then their faculty
Coordinator meetings: share ideas that are passed along to faculty

Local advantages:

Relevant topics - get students into sections with faculty/professionals in their area of study (done at scheduling at DKS) For example, faculty can create relevant topics for their design, PR, journalism students.

Flexibility - faculty have easier access to coordinator who is an 'ambassador' of FYE mission and have fewer of faculty to support.

Connection to the college via linked courses and shared college activities.

Communication: group meetings, one-on-one, faculty training manual for some colleges

MC: allows people to operate in their wheelhouse. I don't know what specific needs each group of students need, nor can I keep up with changes.

I have training and experience with first-year college students, so broader programming strategies are my strength, and my responsibility.

Examples of adapting course content

A.L.I.C.E. training

Timing, context, needs of students, and FYE faculty skills influenced decision-making.

Result: This is a beyond-the-classroom experience; homework for all KSU FYE students.

- *This is something students need to know — information that helps them feel safe and confident here.*

May 4 Visitors Center

The events of May 4 1970 that occurred on our campus had national and international significance. Faculty Senate requested that this topic be included in FYE. It is not required.

Options: self-guided walking tour, guest speakers, videos, and the Visitors Center.

Result: JI takes her design students to the Center and walking tour because she can point out how design professionals solved this communication problem.

- *This is something students need to know to be able to connect with their school's unique history, and to think critically about these events and their design career.*

Student Media

Taking design, journalism, and communication students to see newspaper, magazine, TV, radio studios.

- *This is what students need to experience so the college feels like their academic 'home'.*

Presentations by junior/senior students in the major

This is one of the highest-ranked sessions in many FYE sections.

- *This is something students need to help them connect to their major and to their peers.*

Exploratory students

Our most popular "major" for incoming students. These students need to be able to figure out their passions, strengths, and to learn about KSU resources available to help them make a major and career decision.

Result: self-assessment assignments and activities: MBTI, attending the Majors and Minors

Fair, advising presentations from different colleges, and guest speakers in career fields of interest.

• *This is the kind of thing these students need so they can navigate through decision-making processes and keep themselves on track to graduate.*

Challenges:

- switch to 15-week graded course — took a couple years for everyone to be on board
- communication — use a variety of methods to reach both faculty and the students
- accountability process — there is a system of checks and balances.

Assessment methods:

Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) for all courses at the university

Course Learning Outcomes Survey from SSP to get an overall picture of how we are meeting the needs of the students and the University

Faculty 'Bright Spots' interviewed faculty with top retention numbers for qualitative data
This feedback helped me to determine appropriate training for new faculty teaching FYE.

Retention data: One college's student retention rate increased from 75% to 83% since this change has been in place

coordinator feedback: in meetings

peer leader reflections: during seminar classes peer leaders submit multiple feedback assignments

student feedback: through freshmen student groups such as the Freshman Advisory Council and Provost's Leadership Academy.

Survey question "This class helped me to adjust to KSU and to continue at KSU" responses were overwhelmingly in agreement.