

Using CAS Cross-Functional Frameworks to Facilitate a Collaborative FYE Approach

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Session Objectives

As the result of attending this session, attendees will gain:

- an awareness of the need for program standards and assessment guidelines for cross-functional issues or topic-oriented teams, including FYE.
- increased knowledge of essential elements and best practices for FYE cross-functional teams.
- understanding of how to efficiently conduct a self-study of a FYE program that encompasses elements of multiple functional areas



“Founded in 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is the **pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs.** CAS creates and delivers dynamic, credible standards, guidelines, and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality programs and services. **CAS aims to foster and enhance student learning, development, and achievement.**”



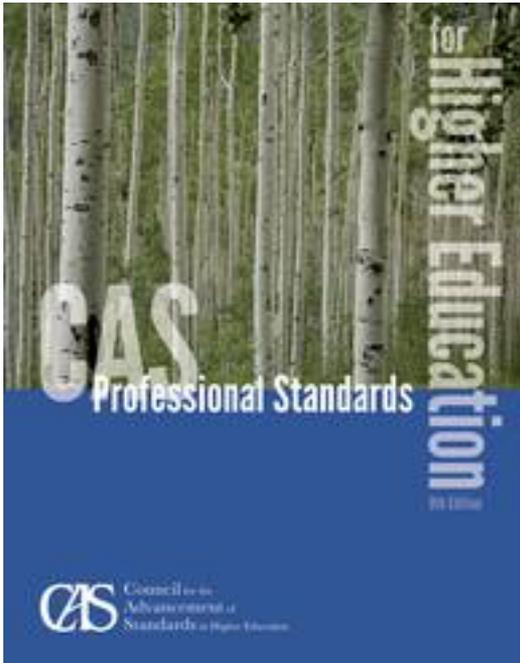
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CAS

- Includes 43 member organizations that comprise a constituency of 115,000 higher education professionals
- Represents a significant majority of higher education practitioners in student programs and services throughout the U.S. and beyond
- Provides tools to higher education leaders assessing institutional effectiveness, student learning, and outcomes

Functional Area Standards



- General Standards
- Standards for 44 different functional areas
- Several functional areas are a part of FYE
 - Academic Advising Programs
 - Campus Activities Programs
 - Civic Engagement and Service-Learning Programs
 - Housing and Residential Life Programs
 - Orientation Programs
 - TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity
 - Undergraduate Admissions Programs and Services



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Guideposts for CAS

- Principles that Guide the CAS Standards
 - Students and Their Environments
 - Diversity and Multiculturalism
 - Organization, Leadership, and Human Resources
 - Health Engendering Environments
 - Ethical Considerations
- Characteristics of CAS Work
 - Collaboration & Consensus
 - Philosophy of Self-Regulation
 - Cross-Functional Approaches



Guideposts for CAS

- Principles that Guide the CAS Standards

- Students and Their Learning
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Organizational Structure
- Health and Safety
- Ethical and Professional Standards

“Within higher education settings, increasingly issue- and topic-driven activities, programs, and services have emerged, requiring perspectives beyond the scope and responsibility of individual functional areas. These efforts must be collaborative and strategic across traditional boundaries or silos.”

(Drechsler Sharp, 2015)

- Characteristics of CAS

- Collaboration & Communication
- Philosophy of Self-Reflection

- **Cross-Functional Approaches**



Why Cross-Functional Frameworks?

- Request for guidance to deal with issues that span multiple departments
- Wanted frameworks that have common threads regardless of issue, similar to general standards
- Wanted frameworks that looked and felt similar to functional area standards
- Wanted a resource that could address emerging issues in higher education

The Charge to the National Resource Center

Develop standards and guidelines for **“an approach for addressing emerging, evolving, and on-going issues or topics from a multi- and interdisciplinary perspective through teams of higher education professionals from different fields or functional areas”** for the development, delivery, and assessment of a high-quality first-year experience.



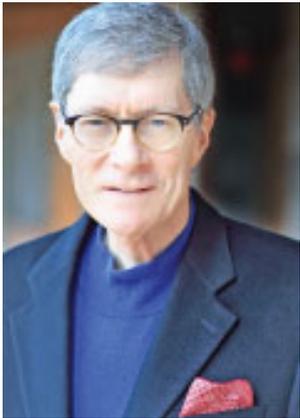
Our Reaction



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FYE: A Working Definition



“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)



“Excellent” FYE: A Working Definition

“Excellence [is] characterized by an approach to the first year that **spans the curricula and cocurriculum**. This approach is **central and systemic** rather than appended or patched to the **core institutional mission**.” *(Barefoot et al., 2005)*



“High-Impact” FYE: A Working Definition

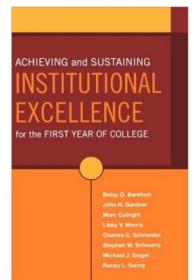
“The highest quality first-year experiences place **a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.** First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.”

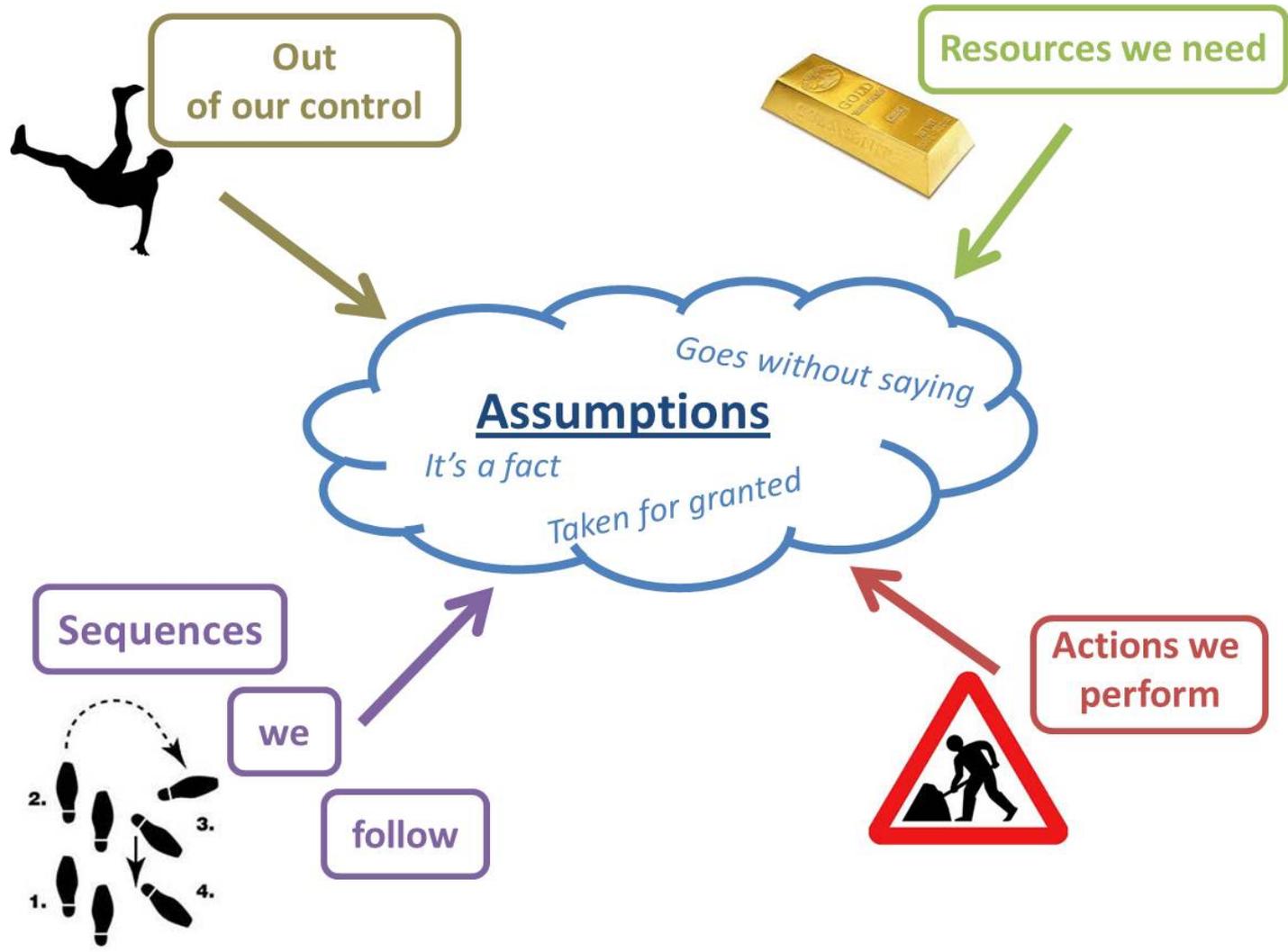
(Kuh, 2008)



Criteria for FYE “Excellence”

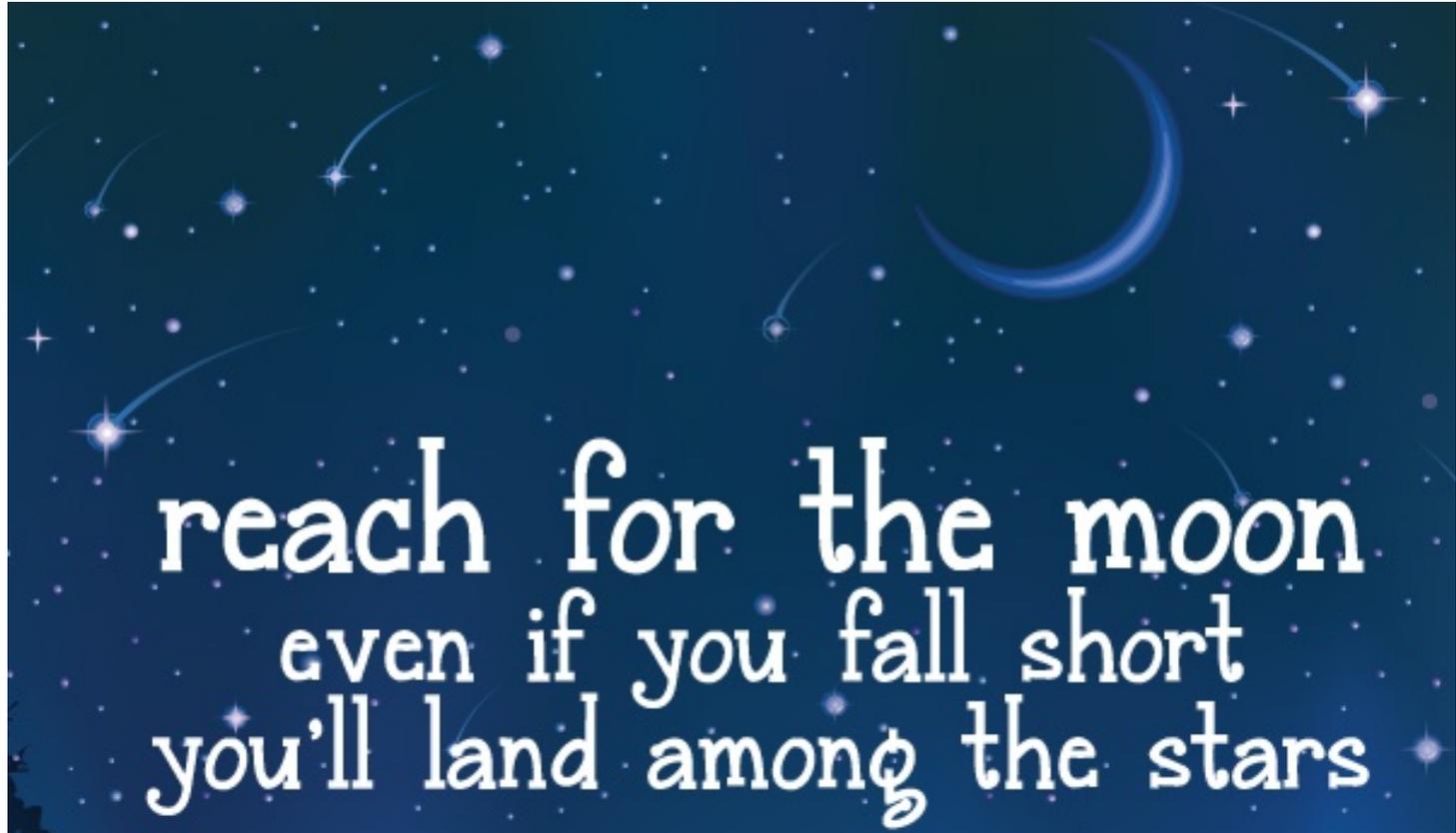
- “Evidence of an **intentional, comprehensive approach to improving the first year** that is appropriate to an institution’s type and mission.”
- “Evidence of assessment of the **various initiatives that constitute this approach.**”
- “Broad impact on significant numbers of first-year students, including, but not limited to special student subpopulations.”
- “Strong administrative support for first-year initiatives, **evidence of institutionalization, and durability** over time.”
- “**Involvement of a wide range of faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and other constituent groups.**”





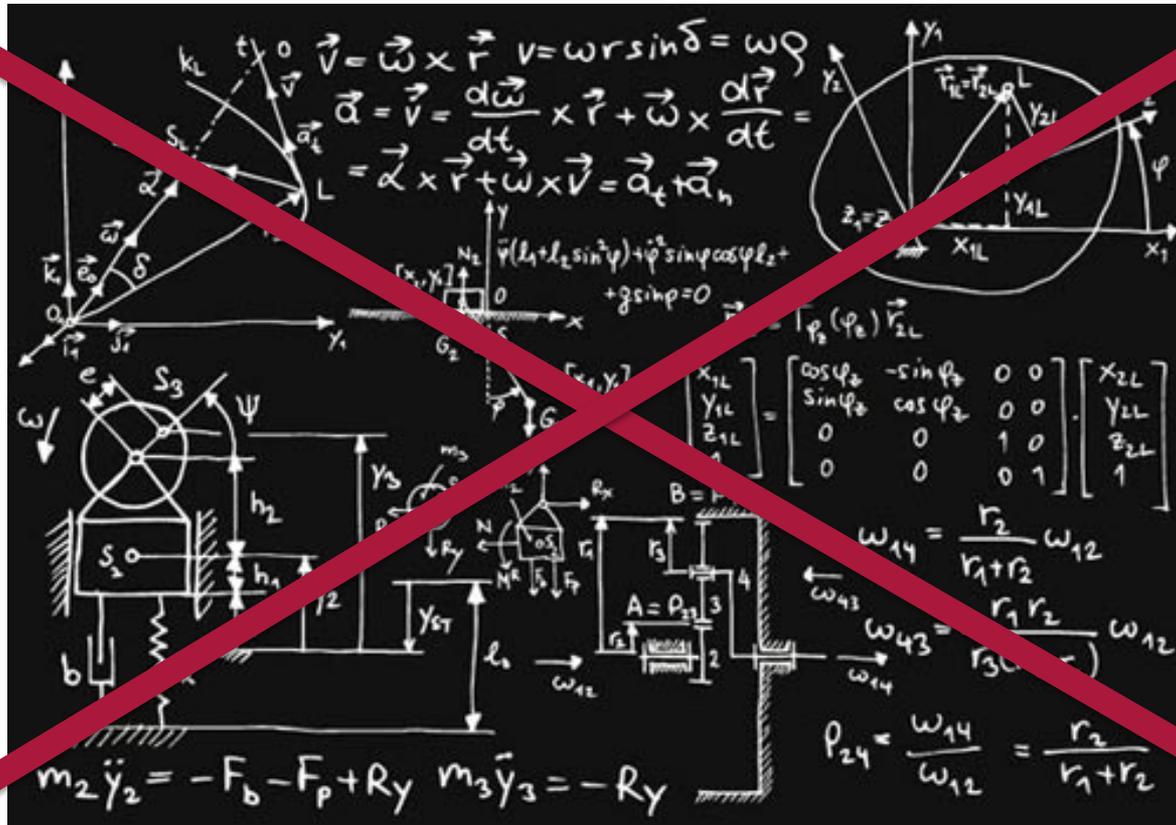
Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Aspirational (“may even” statements)



Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Process oriented and not formulaic



Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Operate as an ongoing and sustained group



MONTH	DAY	YEAR	AM	HOUR	MIN
OCT	21	2015	PM	04	29
DESTINATION TIME					
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	AM	HOUR	MIN
JUL	02	2012	PM	11	49
PRESENT TIME					
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	AM	HOUR	MIN
OCT	26	1985	PM	01	20
LAST TIME DEPARTED					



Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Strive for participatory governance and consensus



Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Attending to FY students' psychosocial & safety needs, academic success, social well-being and sense of belonging, and 21st Century learning outcomes



Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

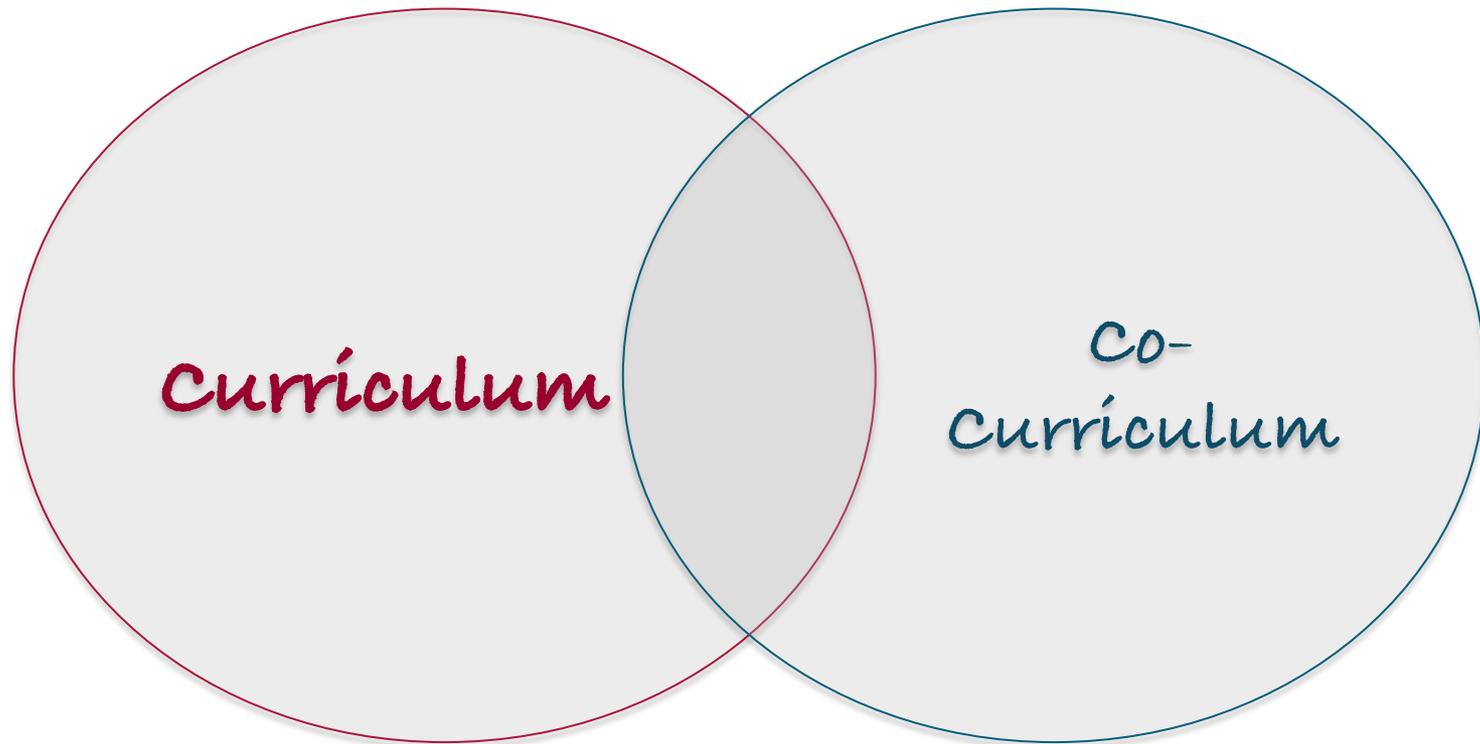
- Includes FYE positional leaders, other transitions, and students



"They won't put you on committees if you dress funny and have a reputation for being irritable and irascible." ...Larry Gunter

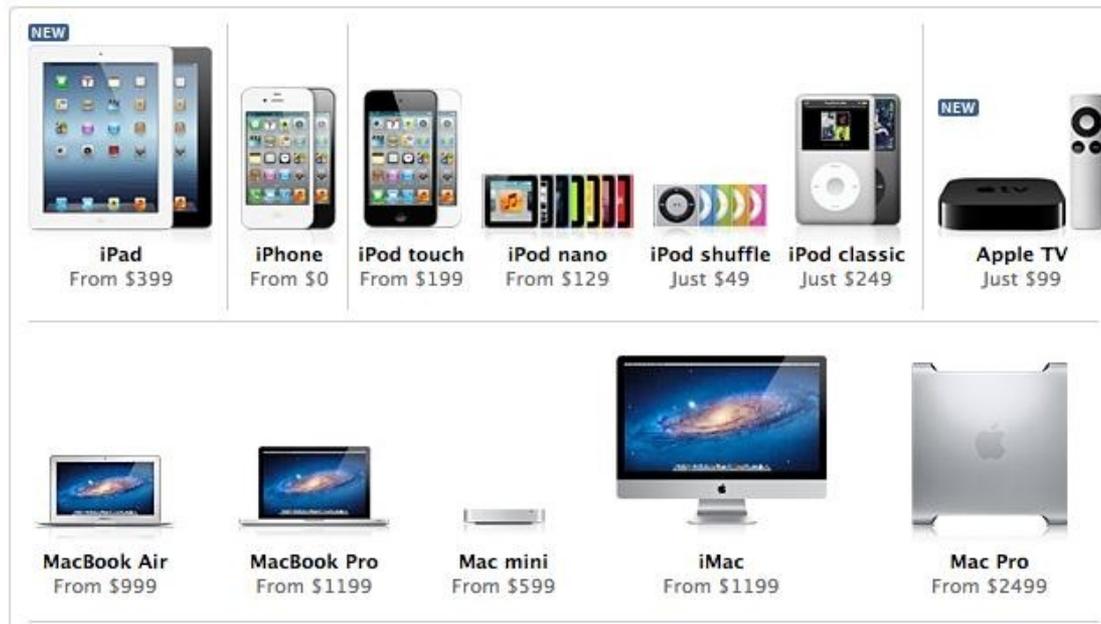
Assumptions for CAS FYE CFF

- Includes curricular and co-curricular components



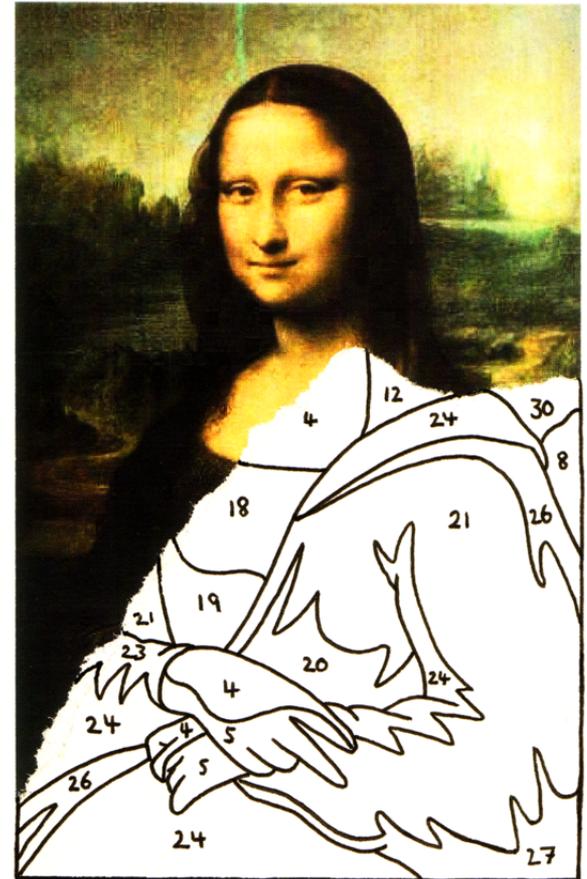
Challenges

- Brand loyalty
 - Format consistency with CAS Functional Area Standards
 - Format consistency with other CFF being developed



Challenges

- Less is more... unless it's not enough –or– The Mad-Libs approach to a comprehensive FYE
- Providing operating standards and guidelines without creating a set of instructions
- Provision of detail versus scaffolding



JUST DO IT.



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Outline



Framework for a Cross-Functional Issue

- I. Introduction / Context
 - Why issue/topic is a matter of importance to higher education institutions
 - Why cross-functional approach is essential
 - Historic context
 - Perspectives on how to best prevent and respond to issue
 - Summary of studies, findings pertaining to issue or topic
 - Summary of relevant policies, legislation, government responses
 - Notable “best practices” or initiatives addressing the topic / issue
 - List of references, readings, and resources; including those addressing effective cross-functional team structures, dynamics, and theories
- II. The Charge
 - Identification of who is issuing the charge and their scope of institutional authority
 - Clear statement of goal of cross-functional team and objectives of the team
 - Date / timeframe for reporting findings/outcomes and recommendations
 - Accountability: clarity about to whom the cross-functional team is accountable
 - Examples of “best practices”
- III. Cross-Functional Team
 - Address: Selection/Composition
 - Functional representation from across institution – those directly affected by issue, advocates, students, faculty, other key administrators – as well as from external partners
 - A membership that varies in background and expertise to best reflect those involved in “issue” prevention and response
 - Selection based on subject matter function and expertise
 - Student representation
 - Size – large enough to establish smaller working groups
 - Address: Leadership, Responsibility, Accountability
 - Within the team, oversight and leadership transparency
 - Scope of authority/influence
 - Decision-making
 - Service delivery
 - Address: Processes that support cross-functional team’s work
 - Clarity regarding time commitment expectations
 - Adjustments to existing positions, work/teaching load and performance plans/evaluations/promotion reviews to account for time and contributions to team
 - Resource allocations and other types of support (e.g., meeting space, technical support, administrative and scheduling support, graduate or student assistants)
 - Formal and informal recognition of team and its work
 - Examples of Best Practices
- IV. Cross-Functional Team Approach and Processes
 - Recognition/identification of interconnected issues, i.e., cross functionalities, processes, and responsibilities
 - Gather and review institution specific information and practices related to issue
 - Identify existing efforts and extent of their effectiveness
 - Establishment of agile approach to discussion, e.g., conference calls, all-day, intensive in-person meetings to discuss and develop recommendations
 - Identification of constituents, experts within and outside the institution with whom to consult
 - Establishment of work groups from different campus stakeholders to develop leading best practices; ensure subject matter/functional area experts are on groups

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- Leveraging existing campus organizations / entities to continue to provide input and channels through which students, faculty, staff, etc. can help
 - Research and evidence-based efforts should include
 - Review prevention practices and response systems implemented at other institutions
 - Review aspects of programs from other institutions to provide insight into implementation strategies and to find ways to improve ongoing efforts
 - Review academic research examining facets of the issue
 - Review studies concerning policies, training, education, case management, and support for those affected by issue, e.g., institutional surveys, focus groups
 - Listen to / survey students (the small number of students on the team cannot speak for all students or all those affected by issue, nor represent the diverse needs and experiences of students across the institution)
 - Identification of potential gaps within institutional efforts
 - Categorize and consolidate key “gap” areas
 - For each key area, summarize research that was examined, the gaps and provide preliminary recommendations
 - Process for development of core recommendations for establishing the institution’s approach for preventing and responding to the issue
 - Examples of Best Practices
- V. Program Elements / Strategies / Tactics
 - Best practices / recommendations / guidelines for preventing, improving, educating, advocating, responding and reporting on issue
 - Articulation of intended outcomes for students and the institution
 - Emphasis on efforts that are collaborative, joint, demonstrate campus-wide commitment, interconnection
 - Ways of navigating points of intersection
 - Strategies/tactics for addressing the improvement of student learning and program/institutional outcomes; examples of performance metrics; financial resources, staffing, risk management
 - VI. Communications
 - Communication strategies should be developed with common messaging for all constituents
 - Communication strategy should be comprehensive and coordinated with student, faculty, staff, campus groups and external partners
 - Engage media relations as well as students in crafting and delivering the communication messages
 - Establish a comprehensive website to provide content, information and resources
 - Establish common nomenclature
 - Examples of best practices
 - VII. Assessment and benchmarking
 - Use standardized data set to report data in a consistent manner, with agreed upon definitions, for tracking common themes related to the issue
 - Charge all relevant functions to collect information using aggregate standardized data to foster accountability and communication
 - Establish baseline data set and plan for collecting, analyzing and reporting, including frequency of updates/reports
 - Create metrics and key performance indicators; and a dashboard for reporting and monitoring
 - Build in process for evaluating effectiveness and contributions of cross-functional team
 - Build in process for assessment of student and institutional outcomes
 - Build in process for data sharing and communication strategy
 - Examples of best practices

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Our Organizational Approach



Our Organizational Approach

- Introduction
- **Why?** The Charge & Operating Principles
- **Who?** Cross-Functional Team
- **How?** Approach and Process
- **What?** Initiatives, Strategies, and Tactics
- **So what?** Assessment
- References



IT'S NOT [?] 
WHAT
BUT  **WHY**
YOU DO IT



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The Charge and Operating Principles

- The Charge
 - “This framework advocates that cross-functional teams have a clear and defined role in the organizational structure manifest by a charge coming from source(s) of institutional authority.”
- Context for Operation
- Goals of the Cross-Functional Team
 - “...needs to operate under a set of common goals that are relevant to a comprehensive FYE but also allow enough freedom for interpretation of those goals in various areas of the institution that comprise the components of the FYE.”





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Cross-Functional Team

- Selection/Composition
 - “It is critical that the composition of the team includes the major stakeholders and constituents of the FYE work on campus” (i.e., faculty, representatives from core elements of the FYE, students, other student transition support efforts)
- Size
- Acknowledgement and Recognition
- Leadership, Responsibility, and Accountability
 - “While composition of the team is intended to create a foundation for participatory governance and to facilitate collaboration, it is necessary to identify a ‘leader among peers.’”

we **How** **THIS IS**
we **DO**

Approach and Process

- Authority
- Resource Parameters
 - “The team must have funding to operate in pursuit of its mission and goals.”
 - “It is imperative to identify resources that extend beyond fiscal support to include other forms of operational assistance.”
- Inventory of Existing Practices
 - “The team needs to conduct an audit of existing...initiatives at the institution as well as a review of promising practices in the field of FYE.”
- Communications

SAY WHAT?

let's break it all the way down



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Initiatives, Strategies, and Tactics

- Constitution of the First-Year Experience
 - “While there is no one formula for the array of initiatives that comprise a successful FYE, there are certain educational experiences that must be included as pillars for a high-quality, seamless, and comprehensive learning and transition experience for new students.”
- Integration of First-Year Educational Experiences
 - “Intentional and meaningful connections across initiatives is critical to achieving true excellence.”
- Integrity and Quality of First-Year Experience Efforts

so**what**



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Assessment

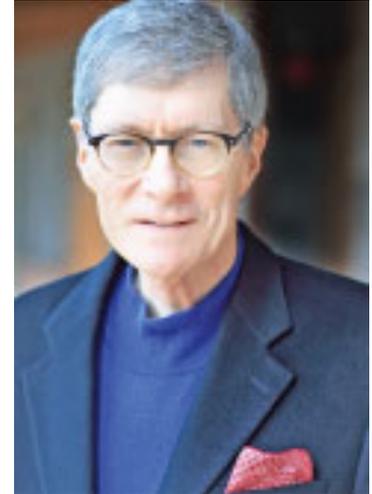
- Assessment Planning
- Identifying Existing Data
 - *“Individuals and teams equate assessment with data gathering effort without paying attention to the manifold sources of data that are currently available.”*
- Data Collection
- Interpreting & Reporting Effectiveness of Outcomes
- Interpreting & Reporting Effectiveness of Cross-Functional Team
- Effecting Change Based on Assessment Results



External Reviewers



Stephanie M. Foote, Director and Associate Professor, Department of First-Year & Transition Studies (KSU)



John N. Gardner, President, John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education



Rob Kenedy, Co-Chair, Canadian First-Year Experience Network (York University)



Andre van Zyl, Interim Director, South African National Resource Centre for the First-Year Experience & SIT (UJ)

Discussion Questions

- How would this framework help you in your current FYE work across campus or help generate this type of cross-functional work?
- What are some road blocks in cross-campus collaboration for FYE?
- This framework is contingent upon support from campus leadership. How have you been successful in getting “buy-in” from the top?
- Other comments?

