



**capstone  
scholars**  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# THE FIRST YEAR SEMINAR AND HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS

CASSIE DAVIS, DUNCAN CULBRETH, DAVID DEWEIL,  
AND KATIE ZIMMERLE

## CAPSTONE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Capstone Scholars Program at the University of South Carolina is a two-year experience for high-ability students with an extensive focus on the beyond-the-classroom experience with an enrollment of over 1,900 students. Incoming first-year students are invited into the program based on test scores and high school GPA. The one common academic experience during the first year is University 101 while leadership, service, research, study abroad, and social experiences are provided throughout the two years of the program.

## CAPSTONE AND U101 PARTNERSHIP

The Capstone Scholars Program has had a partnership with USC's University 101 Programs since its inception. U101 now offers over 45 sections of their course exclusively for Capstone Scholars to reinforce the community aspect of our program for first-years. We also give placement precedence for Peer Leaders who were themselves Capstone Scholars, so they can offer an extra layer of common experiences and mentorship to their students. The classrooms are often located in or nearby the residence halls that hold a majority of our first-year students. Another reason that our partnership has been so fruitful is that it has scaled exceedingly well alongside our growing numbers; although we are taking in over 1,000 students each year, we can still help offer a small community setting capped at nineteen students through U101.

## HIGH PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Class Time Well Spent
- Meaningful Class Discussion
- Learning
- Positive Instructor Relationships

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS

- Focus on academics
- Competitive
- Over committed
- Stressed
- High emotional intelligence
- Less likely to be a first generation student

## AREAS FOR GROWTH AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Continued assessment across academic units, programs, and student types
- Understanding the utilization of resources as it relates to high ability students
- Improve standards for instructor training and communication throughout the prior summer and semester including education on incoming student cohorts and high ability students

## TAKEAWAYS

### DISCUSS EXPECTATIONS

- Be aware of both student and instructor expectations.
- Students are expecting meaningful dialogue and challenge work as well as a lot of time and care from you.
- Be as available as you can, but it is also important that you let them know how available you are - don't want them to have unrealistic expectations.

### MENTAL HEALTH

Talk about it! They might not need the information now, but there is a good chance they need it later.

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Remember who your students are and make your information and FYE relatable to your students.

## REFERENCES

Gerrity, Deborah A, et al. "Honors and Nonhonors Freshmen: Demographics, Attitudes, Interests, and Behaviors." Honors and Nonhonors Freshmen: Demographics, Attitudes, Interests, and Behaviors , vol. 13, 1993, pp. 43-52., [www.nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-13.1.43?code=naaa-site](http://www.nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-13.1.43?code=naaa-site).

Humbel-Courtney, Julie, et al. "Supporting High-Ability Students in the First Year." University 101 Programs [http://sc.edu/univ101/CourseEffectiveness/impact\\_of\\_Univ101.html](http://sc.edu/univ101/CourseEffectiveness/impact_of_Univ101.html)



## The First Year Seminar and High Ability Students

## The First Year Seminar and High Ability Students

David DeWeil, Associate Principal

Duncan Culbreth, Assistant Principal

Cassie Davis, Assistant Principal

Katie Zimmerle, Assistant Principal



## Learning Outcomes

As a result of this presentation, participants will:

- Gain an understanding of the needs of high-ability students
- Recognize the benefits and challenges associated with the implementation of a first-year seminar course aimed at high-ability students
- Come away with tactics for their own first-year learning environments as they apply to high-ability students



## Characteristics of High Ability Students



- Focus on academics
- Competitive
- High emotional intelligence
- Over committed
- Stressed
- Less likely to be a first generation student

## Goals and Expectations of High Ability Students



- Graduate school
- Classes will be stimulating and meaningful
- Students expect to be challenged
- Role of faculty and staff
- Time, resources and services



## Do We Benefit High Ability Students?



Are we:

- Preparing them to meet their goals?
- Challenging them?
- Supporting them academically, personally and mentally?



## Capstone Scholars and UNIV101



- Built into CSP's design since its first year
- Now offering over 40 sections exclusively to Capstone Scholars
- Peer Leaders who have been Scholars before are often placed in these sections
- Proximity to residence halls
- Partnership has scaled well over time due to 19 student cap per section



## Understanding the Needs of Capstone Students and their U101 Experience

- U101 End of Semester Surveys
  - Paper survey distributed at the end of the semester
  - 30-40 Questions ranging from:
    - Instructor and Peer Leader satisfaction, preparation, approachability, etc.
    - Value, community, adjustment to college, etc.
  - Coursework and content (including the use of UofSC's textbook *Transitions*)
- Evaluation of Capstone Scholars Program Specific U101 Sections vs Non-Capstone (General) Sections



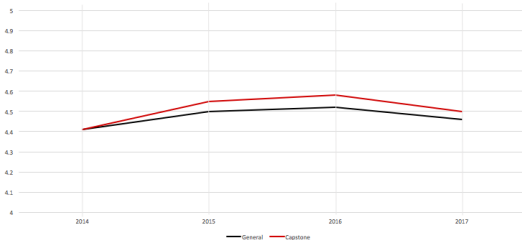
## High Performance Areas

- Class Time
- Meaningful Discussions
- Overall Learning
- Positive Instructor Relationships



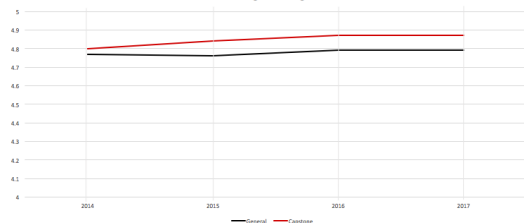
### U101 Class Time

"Class time was well spent"

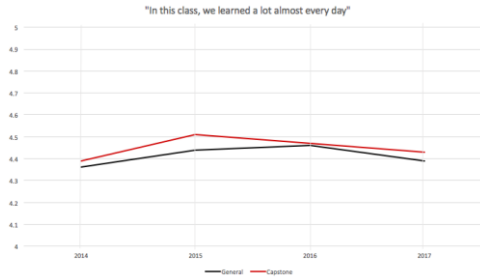


### U101 and Meaningful Discussions

"The instructor encouraged meaningful class discussion"



## U101 and Learning

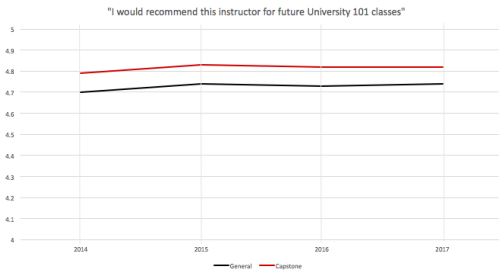


## High Ability Students and their Characteristics in the Classroom

- Putting high ability students in the same classroom helps lead to:
  - class time well spent
  - more meaningful discussions
  - more information learned and gained
- Why?
  - Think about these students characteristics!



## U101 Instructor Relationships



## Capstone Scholars and UNIV101 Instructor Relationship

- Selection of instructors
- Importance of instructors and mentorship with high ability students
- Specific expectations and training set for these instructors



Capstone Courier



## Capstone and UNIV101 Integration



Connecting UNIV101 goals to Capstone where it makes sense

- Service
- Personal Challenge
- Syllabus integration

Suggest select campus partner presentations

- Research
- Study Abroad
- Career Center

Faculty Principal presentation



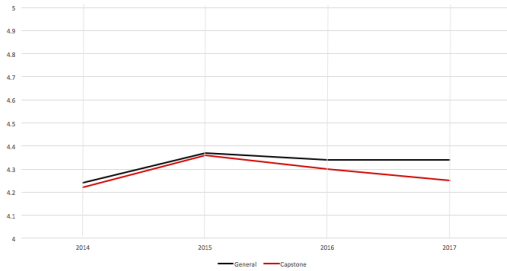
## Areas for Growth

- U101 and its Aid in First Year Students' Adjustment to College
- U101 and the Ability to Meet the Needs of Capstone Scholars
- First Year Students' Perception of U101 and its Value
- Inclusion of Outside of Classroom Experiences as it Relates to Overall College Experience



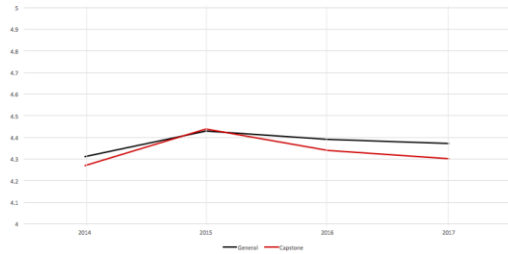
## U101 and Adjustment to College

"Taking University 101 helped improve my adjustment to college life"



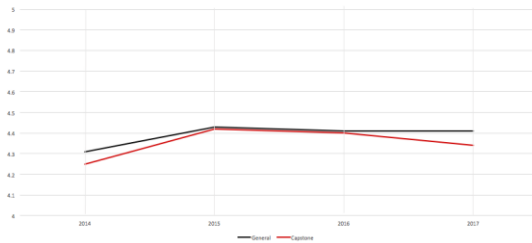
## U101 and the Needs of Capstone Scholars

"The content and topics covered in this course were relevant to my needs"



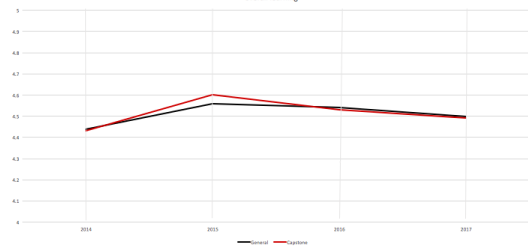
## U101 and Its Value

"Taking University 101 has been a valuable experience"



## U101 and Outside of Classroom Experiences

"This course helped me understand the role outside of the classroom learning experiences play in contributing to my overall learning"



## Implications for Our Office

- Further assessment
  - Compare to other required U101 sections (Public Health and Teaching Fellows)
  - Utilization of resources offered through U101, Capstone vs. general sections
- Continue to play to the strengths of the instructors
- Improve standards for instructor training and communication throughout the summer and semester
- Brand ambassadorship for the U101 program as a whole



## Applications for Your FYE

- Discuss Expectations
- Remember your Audience
  - Graduate School
- Mental Health - Talk about it!



## References

Gerrity, Deborah A, et al. "Honors and Nonhonors Freshmen: Demographics, Attitudes, Interests, and Behaviors ." *Honors and Nonhonors Freshmen: Demographics, Attitudes, Interests, and Behaviors* , vol. 13, 1993, pp. 43–52., [www.nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-13.1.43?code=naaa-site](http://www.nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-13.1.43?code=naaa-site).

Humbel-Courtney, Julie, et al. "Supporting High-Ability Students in the First Year."

University 101 Programs  
[http://sc.edu/univ101/CourseEffectiveness/impact\\_of\\_Univ101.html](http://sc.edu/univ101/CourseEffectiveness/impact_of_Univ101.html)

## Questions



Please remember to submit your  
evaluation on Guidebook!

<https://guidebook.com/g/fye18/>

#FYE18



[www.sc.edu/fye](http://www.sc.edu/fye)