Increasing the Efficiency of Communication: Using Technology to Connect At-Risk Students to Faculty, Staff, and Campus Resources

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The development of our university's early-alert system for at-risk students (SOS; Save Our Students) was twofold in purpose. There was not only a focus on increasing student retention, but also making sure that students do not struggle alone on our campus. SOS was therefore designed to identify students who are struggling, academically or otherwise, as early as possible and to connect them with the appropriate campus resources.

SOS began as a high maintenance program where a member of the frontline of care (faculty, staff, or parents) would refer a student to our office via e-mail or telephone. A paper file would then be created where all the appropriate information on the student would be collected (contact information, course schedule, etc.). Because of the growth in the number of referrals within the first year of the program, the paper-based system proved sluggish, unwieldy, and over-all ineffective. It was decided that a web-based application, tying in to our university's information system, could possibly streamline the process, making it possible for counselors to spend more time helping students with their problems and less time dealing with administrative tasks. It also allows for better communication with those who referred the student.

This presentation will offer insight into the process of developing a web-based application to aid in meeting the needs of at-risk students, including the learning process we experienced along the way. It will also show how important and necessary partnering with other campus offices, especially those involving information technology, is to meeting the growing and changing needs of such a

program. This presentation will be interactive in nature, allowing for feedback and comments to help take this system to the next level of efficiency and effectiveness for the students.

Immersion into the Liberal Arts: Integration and Reflection as Skills

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Antioch College, in 2005, transformed its curriculum beginning with the first year - our Core Program experience. The Core is immersion into the liberal arts, taught within a Learning Community model. It is general education as well as skill development. One thing unique about the Antioch education is cooperative education situated in the liberal arts. Preparation for a student's entry into a Co-op Community begins in the Core as classroom faculty, along side co-op faculty, teach skills of reflection and integration. Integration of co-op experience with classroom learning is infused throughout the four-year curriculum, but is given its foundation in the Core. Having these skills prior to entering a cooperative education experience will strengthen the learning that happens while in the field. Co-op "Place as Text" seminars, which happen within co-op communities further develop these skills. The Core is also charged with establishing strong skills of writing, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning. We have been challenged to define standards for quantitative reasoning in the liberal arts, and have created our own assessment mechanism to reflect these. This presentation will share our program, our successes, and our challenges.

Parent Orientation: My Brain Made Me Do It

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Frequently, the concerns and decision making that confront college freshmen are developmental and typical in the population. Most parents and many faculty do not have a background in student development theory and learning and these issues may present a number of challenges. Providing information about developmental theory, the brain, its relationship to learning and decision making offer parents and others an opportunity to apply theory to the real life experiences of freshmen students.

With this in mind, this session will expand the discussion begun in FYP 101 at the National FYE Conference in February.

"Freshman 101" and "(Not Just For) Freshman 102"

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In 2005 Auburn University Montgomery developed a series of free programs designed to help new students be more knowledgeable, comfortable and successful in college. Eye-catching brochures were designed to promote Freshman 101 for Fall Semester. They were distributed to both students and parents during orientation. Brochures were given to faculty and they were asked to announce the program in appropriate classes. Campus e-mails were also sent to promote the program.

Freshman 101 was scheduled for six Wednesdays during the noon break between classes. The programs were held in a dining room adjacent to the main cafeteria in the University Center. Students were encouraged to buy lunch in the Cafe or brown-bag from home. Soft drinks and cookies were provided. The programs were held from 12:20 to 12:50 p.m. so that students would realize it involved a minimal time commitment and that they could easily get to a 1:00 p.m. class.

The topics for Freshman 101 were developed during brainstorming sessions involving student affairs staff members primarily from units that comprise CAPSS - Consortium for Academic and Personal Support Services. These departments include Career Development Center, Center for Special Services, Central Advising, Counseling Center, Learning Center/Instructional Support Lab and Student Support Services. The Senior Director of CAPSS and the Coordinator of First-Year Programs located in Central Advising coordinated the effort and recruited presenters for the topics selected.

Based on positive feedback from Freshman 101, it was decided to continue the format for Spring Semester. AUM is predominately a commuter campus with a large number of new students enrolling for Spring Semester. In order to attract continuing freshmen as well as new transfer students, the program title was revised to (Not Just For) Freshman 102. The format and schedule remained the same but new topics were offered.

Institutionalization: A Model of Retention Through Student Engagement

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Bowie State University and NASA Goddard Space Flight Center have, for the past 10 years, worked diligently together to enhance the science, mathematics, engineering and technology (SMET) domain. Efforts made, because of a Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE) Award, have changed the landscape of the SMET domain by increasing the retention and graduation rates, the number of students entering graduate and professional schools, and the number of students entering SMET related careers for minorities and women. Several initiatives – a Scholarship Program, PRISEM Tutoring Center, Safety-net Program, Research emphasis, Focused Mentoring, a Summer Academy for accepted incoming students, a Bridge Program for students needing assistance being admitted to the University, the RISE Program and the Bowie State Satellite Operations and Control Center (BSOCC) – provide the nurturing, mentoring, and opportunities for our students. As a result of efforts made, the retention rate has increase to approximately 80%, the graduation rate has increased 40%, and 85% of the SMET students are now interested or entering graduate and professional schools. Successes that have been documented by various assessment activities have led to the institutionalization of the Retention Model of the MIE Initiative. It is anticipated that University-wide application of the retention model will prove the incentives necessary to obtain similar results as the MIE Initiative.

Rethinking the Freshman Learning Community at Brigham Young University–Hawaii

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Three years ago, Brigham Young University–Hawai'i initiated its Freshman Learning Community (FLC), which enrolled new freshmen cohorts of 20 students (at least 50% being international students) together in three courses, seeking to introduce students to the life of the mind as well as effectively initiate them into an intercultural university community. Initial research on the development of intercultural sensitivity was presented at this conference in 2004 on Maui. Since then, the FLC has grown in some ways and struggled in others. When the curriculum is effectively integrated, the quality of students' intercultural facility continues to strengthen beyond control groups, and student critiques of their FLC experience is impressively positive.

On the other hand, while comparative research on student performance in a physics course reveals initial semester FLC achievement beyond a co-enrolled cohort of non-FLC students, results from subsequent semesters bring achievement closer to even, and even highlight greater struggles in the course by a specific FLC subgroup. The significant variable seems to be the quality of upperclass mentoring in the FLC. In addition, in our small university, we struggle logistically and demographically to (1) consistently offer FLC courses for which we can correlate or integrate curriculum and (2) effectively populate the communities with students who have the characteristics we desire in the communities.

Administration of the communities has shifted from Student Life to the College of Arts and Sciences, which houses the General Education program. We feel the program offers significant benefits to students and are looking to review and revise it to better serve more students and meet university and program objectives. This revision may include dropping the FLC to two shared courses from three to allow more students to participate. We also will work to develop effective mentors for the program.

Linking Language and Content Courses to Support Non-Native English Speakers

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The academic language needed for success in university courses can be challenging for non-native-English-speakers (NNES). This group potentially includes immigrants, nationals who speak another home language, and international students. Linguistic difficulties for this population have been fairly well-documented (Holmes, 2004; Lewthwaite, 1996; Ramburuth, 2001; Trice, 2003).

Although international students, and sometimes all newly-admitted students, entering English-speaking universities in the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the US are generally required to provide evidence of English proficiency as based on standardized tests, this does not guarantee a smooth transition.

The literature reflects a small number of programs designed to strengthen the English skills of matriculated NNES. Pairing NNES and native-English-speakers (NES) as study partners (Blakely, 1995; Mendelsohn, 2002), supplementary courses emphasizing academic language skills and study strategies (Beasley & Pearson, 1999) English language classes linked to content classes (Mlynarczyk & Babbitt, 2002), the collaboration of content and ESL instructors on curriculum issues (Snow and Kamhi-Stein, 1997), and technology-based English support (Wu et al., 2001) are some examples.

This presentation will describe a program in which international NNES are enrolled in an English skills course and a linked general education (GE) course. The English skills instructor attends the GE course with the students. In the English course, the instructor focuses on reading, vocabulary, lecture comprehension, speaking, and writing skills using the GE course materials. Although the focus is on building English proficiency, study skills, cultural information, and reinforcement of GE course content are also emphasized. In the 10 years since the program began, participants' GE course grades have been comparable to or better than those of students enrolled in only the GE class. These results are consistent across a wide variety of courses. The presenter will provide information about program administration, give examples of course activities, and share assessment data.

Understanding and Working with First Year Students Exhibiting Disruptive Behavior

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The university is a community of learners. Students, as well as faculty, have a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that supports effective instruction and preserves the dignity and respect of all community members. In order for faculty members to provide, and student to receive, effective instruction in learning areas, universities expect its members to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner. Occasionally, faculty members find that they cannot provide effective instruction because of disruptions. For the purposes of the workshop entitled, Understanding and Working with First Year Students' Exhibiting Disruptive Behavior, disruptive behavior is any behavior that interferes with the faculty person's ability to advise and conduct class, or the ability of other students to profit from instruction. Disruptive behavior may be viewed on a continuum ranging from isolated incidents of mildly annoying or irritating behavior which may be unintentional to more clearly disruptive, dangerous or violent behavior that should not be tolerated.

Faculty are rightfully concerned about the student who disturbs the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Faculty are often the first line of defense when it comes to preventing and/or curtailing disruptive behavior.

Initially participants will be introduced to the topic through a warm-up exercise. Subsequently, attendees will learn about the results of a 2006 university chairperson's survey on disruptive behavior. Additionally, select summary data from the university's judicial services will be compared to similar information about students' behavior from universities in China, Poland, Canada, UK, and Lebanon.

During the last half of the session there will be time for consultation about some of the more difficult student encounters that participants have experienced. As part of a peer consultation experience, we will discuss interventions that could prove useful for faculty who are often the university's best first line defenders.

Getting Engaged, Keeping Engaged, Staying Connected

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Cambrian College has made a strategic commitment to a First Year Student Experience program that addresses student retention and engagement. Through a strategic planning process cross divisional commitment has been made to three themes: Getting Students Engaged, Keeping Students Engaged through Building Community and Keeping Graduates Connected. This has created a culture of student engagement as well as raised awareness for all staff of the transition to college issues facing first year students. The presentation will provide an overview and sharing of best practices concerning the First Year Student Experience program.

The presentation will also focus on how Cambrian College has recognized that significant gaps exist in the flow of college program information to secondary school classrooms. We will outline our successful model of cooperation and collaboration that has resulted in improved and enhanced inter institutional communication, provided career mentorship opportunities, and the sharing of expertise and resources.

Participants will be provided with handouts that describe the projects undertaken by Cambrian College as well as pamphlets that were distributed to students. Time will be allocated to discuss

implementation issues as well as profile activities undertaken by the College.

Students' Perspectives of Parental Support in the College Transition

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The college transition is a major developmental milestone for young adults and their parents. Research has examined the roles of parenting style and attachment theory as associated with the transition to college. However, little information is available on the role of parental support at the time of the college transition. As parental support is documented to positively influence earlier school transitions (K-12), this study examines parental support in the college transition.

This study examines 157 (124 female, 33 male; 94% Caucasian, 6% other) first-year college students' perspectives on the role of parents in facilitating the college transition. Surveys were completed by students enrolled in a general education course at a large residential, comprehensive university. Students reported parent support prior to arriving at college, support during the first semester, and how parents could have better prepared them for the transition.

Qualitative analysis methods will be utilized. Using a constant comparative method, coding categories will be created. Content analysis will be used to tabulate categories of perceived support from parents prior to starting college, during the first semester, and students' recommendations for how parents can support the transition.

Preliminary findings reveal that prior to starting college the most frequently reported forms of support were material and emotional support. Examples of material support included providing supplies and dorm set-up. Examples of emotional support included expressed confidence in the student's capabilities and help in easing anxieties.

Results are discussed in terms of the key role parents play in students' reports of a successful college transition. The findings of this study may be utilized by universities to inform parents and students of the types of parental support that students indicate aid in a successful transition. Recommendations are offered for how parents can strike a balance between providing support and encouraging autonomy in their college-aged children.

A Strategic Approach to First-Year Orientation in a Hong Kong Context

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A strategic approach of freshmen orientation in Hong Kong context
Background:
Higher education in Hong Kong is undergoing a rapid transition from elite to mass university education. In City University of Hong Kong, there are more and more incoming first-generation students with diversified background and abilities. Student profiles and needs are discussed with reference to first year student surveys and assessment results.
Theoretical Orientations:

University orientation practices are becoming increasingly critical to student adjustment and success. To design strategic interventions, relevant student development theories are revisited. (e.g. Astin, 1984; Chickering et al 1993; Kuh et. al, 1991, Winston & Miller, 1987).

Proposed Strategic Changes:

A strategic approach of extended orientation is proposed for students to

- enhance learning

- develop early awareness

- establish directions and objectives
- connect to supportive relations
Existing orientation practices and proposed systemic interventions in City University of Hong Kong, involving Academics, student services departments, senior students and alumni in a concerted, university-wide effort, will be discussed.

Redefining New Student Orientation at a Liberal Arts College

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This session is designed to stimulate thought and discussion regarding the first experiences we facilitate for our incoming students. We hope to share the general process that has taken place at Colorado College over the past five years in hopes that other institutions may learn from our successes and difficulties. We also hope to learn of other innovative Orientation experiences currently taking place at other schools.

Academic support for our program comes from many sources related to the success of incoming college students. We attempt to connect many traditional New Student Orientation objectives with an early introduction to small-group experiential learning. Some influential works on our program have been:

Light, R.J. (2001). Making the Most of College. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Upcraft, M.L. & Gardner, J.N. (1989). The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Light (2001) makes references to the importance of making connections and getting involved in activities outside of the classroom, including service work. Levitz and Noel state, "The freshman's most critical transition period occurs during the first two to six weeks" (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989, p.66). They also discuss "making the freshmen connection", which is exactly what we are attempting to do with our programs.

The program will begin with a lecture-style overview of what has been taking place at Colorado College over the past five years. We will then transition into both Q&A time and discussion time. We hope to provide an opportunity for attendees to explore possible ways to transfer some of these activities to other institutions. We also hope for attendees from other institutions to share innovative and unique initiatives that are taking place at their schools.

Authoring Shared Expectations for Student Portfolio Projects

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This presentation discusses the portfolio assessment model used in Columbia College Chicago's required first-year seminar, New Millennium Studies (NMS). As a core course at a liberal arts college that places particular emphasis on practical preparation in the arts, media, and communication, NMS has attempted to make the critical thinking skills characteristic of a liberal education relevant to students' own artistic and creative interests. As such, the NMS Portfolio is not composed primarily of essays; instead, students create four artistic projects in different media, each of which is accompanied by an Artist's Statement that articulates the message and meaning of the project, connects it to the core texts of the curriculum, and reflects on the process of creation.

Because NMS is taught by faculty from all of Columbia's departments to classes composed of students in all majors, the Teaching Academy, the forum that provides support and preparation for current and future NMS faculty, has strived to build consensus about expectations and quality for student work in multiple media, including media that are not students' or faculty members' areas of expertise. In addition, the Academy has endeavored to articulate clearly what successful student portfolio Artist's Statements should look like, and how to help students think and write at a level that will produce the most effective Artist's Statements.

This presentation will discuss the process of creating such consensus among a disparate group of faculty, as well as efforts to communicate those ideals and goals to students. We will share strategies and language that might be adapted and implemented by other institutions who face similar challenges in collaboratively authoring or implementing shared goals and expectations.

Helping First-Generation Students Transition to the Liberal Arts College

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Many First Generation college students (many of whom are also Students of Color), often face various obstacles to a smooth transition into the first year of college. These experiences are often exacerbated by the privileged, largely white atmosphere of the liberal arts college. Many First Generation students experience a strong sense of not belonging, of not having the right backgrounds, the right possessions to fit in on campus. Moreover, financial aid, which gives allowances for books and other items, is often spent necessarily before the student arrives on campus, forcing the student to borrow books or computers from others or from the library, or to ask the college for additional funds to help purchase such items. Some need additional money to travel home over holidays, to buy winter coats, blankets, toiletries, and various other items. Furthermore, many of these students experience pressure from home to become professionals, mainly doctors and lawyers. To many parents and their children, such professions reflect the worth of a college experience, and allow the college graduate to stand out as part of a new generation of educated professionals who will help change the socio-economic levels of the family. Studies have also shown that First Generation students, and especially students of color, experience transitional problems not only at college, but at home—going home for breaks and vacations can often cause a sense of disassociation at home. The experiences they have had at college can make them feel as if they have little in common any longer with their families, and their families often express to them a sense that their education, even after a few weeks' time, has changed them. As a result, these students often come home from breaks feeling discouraged and depressed, thus causing further feelings of disconnectedness.

In this Roundtable Discussion, First Year Deans and Program Directors from a number of eastern private colleges and universities will outline the various tactics we have employed to support our First Generation students and to help them transition into the First Year Experience.

Evaluating Orientation Programs On-line: A Simultaneous Intervention and Evaluation Tool

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We all know that the transition to university takes longer than a week, and that all orientation programs are be-devilled by information overload. We also know that traditional paper evaluation methods conducted during Orientation produce little valid data. This paper presents recent attempts to simultaneously gain better evaluation data about orientation and offer more timely information to new students who may still be somewhat confused. The session will describe a new on-line survey sent to all new-to-Curtin University students (delivered approximately five weeks into the semester) that seeks a broad range of data about the effectiveness of Orientation and the students' adjustment to university. At the same time, the survey offers pointers to sources of assistance and the offer of individual advice. This paper presents data obtained from a pilot study carried out in 2005, and a revised version of the survey carried out in 2006. The data address the effectiveness of Orientation with respect to:

*   Enrolment and related Administrative Tasks
*   General Orientation Week Activities
*   Orientation Week Activities Specific to Academic Schools
*   Awareness and Use of Support Services
*   Issues Specific to Targeted Sub-Groups of New Students (Students
from Rural/Isolated Areas, Mature-Aged Students, Distance Education
Students, and International Students)

This paper demonstrates the usefulness of on-line technology in gaining a better understanding of the effectiveness of our Orientation programs; directions for improved service; and sends a positive message to students that the transition to university is not all accomplished in a single week.

Reluctant Reflectors: Developing Relevant Communication Skills in First-Year Engineering Students

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As part of Curtin University of Technology's First Year Project, research is being conducted into students' experience in developing communication skills appropriate to their studies. The

communication skills required by first year students change each year so constructing appropriate teaching and learning situations is a dynamic interactive process. This presentation will focus on how a team from the Division of Humanities has developed strategies over the past two years that assist first year engineering students to successfully acquire communication skills relevant to their discipline.

This presentation will outline the process used to help students become reflective learners and begin to confidently acculturate themselves into the discourse of their discipline. The process of creating both a quality report and a meaningful learning portfolio of their first year work, is one that does not come 'naturally' to the majority of students who enroll in our engineering degree. This creates challenges in the use of good pedagogy. The strategies we use to meet these challenges will be presented.

The results thus far indicate that students have had a positive learning experience and are more confident in articulating how they learn and how they use the discourse of their discipline. This presentation will outline the unit's structure, including assessment and feedback issues, and exhibit some student work. The experience of collaborating with academics from the engineering faculty as well as the reflections of people teaching this unit will also be included in this session.

Maximizing Student Motivation From the Start

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NISOD Innovation Abstracts Vol. XXVI, 'GETTING THEM EXCITED THE FIRST DAY'
"Get them so excited the first day that they can't wait to come back for the second" is our motto at Confederation College! Rather than bringing students in the first day of class to tell them about the textbook, when their tests are scheduled, and what we will cover in the course, faculty spend a day hosting an orientation that will help students become better connected

with the college and each other.

We learned that students were particularly anxious on the first day of class. Some of the most common questions they asked of themselves on that first day included:

* Do I know anyone who is sitting next to me?
* Who is teaching me-what is she/he like?
* Do I have what it takes to be successful in this
class?
* Am I going to fit in?
* Am I going to develop good friendships?

Working toward identifying appropriate responses to these questions, we created a Student Motivation

Program, with these objectives in mind:

* Establish a strong student/program relationship. A faculty panel would conduct a "meet and greet" exercise to help students connect with their professors and come to understand better why each of the courses they would take is important in the program.
* Introduce students to career opportunities. Students would meet graduates and employers to identify the opportunities and demands of their career choice.
* Connect students with each other and with their faculty. We would schedule various social events- e.g., a welcome BBQ-where students could mingle with first-year and senior students, faculty, support staff, and administrators. Food and beverage would be provided to make the social event even more inviting and informal.

Creating a Community of Caring: Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Peer Tutoring Program

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We suggest that it is critical in post secondary education that we strongly focus on peer tutoring as a means of improving the persistence and retention rate of our students (Kuh, et. al., 2005). Within this context, it is proposed that the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Model, Peer Tutoring: Community-Building for Success is reviewed.

It will be pointed out that it takes more than excellent academic skills to be a successful peer tutor; it is about the characteristics of an effective peer tutor that include the desire to help others, empathy, patience, gentleness, understanding and fairness. The philosophical base of the model is that peer tutors effect relationships by means of various capacities including reason and interaction(Greene, 1991). The peer tutor goes beyond the call so-called "scientific knowledge" to caring about the tutee (Schubert, 1986). Peer tutors must "care from inside" (Noddings, 1989) "efforts must, then, be directed to the maintenance of conditions that will permit caring to flourish"(p. 5). Caring is a permeable membrane that runs throughout the model. Caring is evident in the emphasis placed on civility at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; in freshmen orientation,

students make a pledge as such.

The peer tutor gives meaning to her/his work with tutees. This meaning is interpreted through the variety of skills taught in the in-services: listening, explaining, reporting and analyzing tutee's problems. The peer tutors carefully and patiently help the tutee to understand subject matter. This creates an ideal climate for the peer tutor to monitor the tutee's comprehension of the materials and to prepare the tutee for quizzes and tests.

The presenter will take the audience through each phase of the model, showing real pieces that will make each phase come alive. These pieces will include in-service guidebooks, peer tutor training sessions, SQ3R certification, applications, database, assessment tools and honoring peer tutors.

As the presenter comes to the conclusion of the session, she will share evidence of this successful model and answer questions about it.

Convergence: Creating An Integrated First-Year Experience

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Since Florida Gulf Coast University's inception in 1997, the institution has invested significant resources for the creation of first year programs. This began with the opening of the university in 1997 with a required freshman seminar called Styles & Ways of Learning. Three years later FGCU implemented its Learning Academy, a cohort based learning community program serving 80 students. The following year FGCU began its Freshman Convocation and the first year reading program. As the university grows, integrating the first year experience has become a greater challenge. The team of presenters represents five of the major components essential in the creation of a convergent first year experience. Through a robust assessment program implemented in 2005-2006, FGCU is using results to improve its first year experience, revise its general education program, and respond to changing student needs.

This panel includes information about the history of FGCU's first year programs, with particular emphasis on realizing the university's mission of delivering quality undergraduate education, developing community awareness and involvement, and promoting ecological literacy. The role of the Freshman Convocation, first year advising, and the first year reading experience will be presented. The success of the Learning Academy as a model of convergence is highlighted.

Of particular note in this presentation is a focus on the future. Growth in overall student population and in individual class sizes poses a challenge to creating high quality integrated first year programs. Several creative ideas proposed for Fall 2006 will be shared. Follow up questions and discussion will be encouraged to stimulate additional thought from others about how to deliver excellent first year programs and about innovations for the future.

Why Emotional Intelligence Matters in College

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Tinto (1975, 1993) suggests that in the first year of college the ability to build new relationships while modifying existing relationships with family and friends is critical to college transition. In

addition, results of recent Your First College Year (YFCY) survey indicated that more than one third of students felt "frequently overwhelmed by all they had to do", were often lonely or homesick, and worried about meeting new people. Many reported experiencing significant changes in their self-concept over the first year of college. When students are ill equipped to deal with these stresses and changes, it is unlikely they will persist in college.

There is a growing body of evidence that success is college is connected to strong emotional intelligence. Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan and Majeski (2004) found that students with GPA's of 3.0 or higher had significantly higher scores on most of the emotional intelligence dimensions than students with GPA's below 2.0. Specifically, they found that the intrapersonal, adaptability and stress management abilities (as measured by the Bar-On EQ-i) of students were important in contributing to student success. Higher achieving students demonstrated higher Total EQ, Intrapersonal Skills, Stress Tolerance and Adaptability. Emotional intelligence skills, unlike cognitive abilities measured by traditional IQ, can be developed throughout life. The first year of college is a transitional time, when these skills can make the difference between success and failure.

This session will discuss ways in which emotional intelligence can be measured and enhanced in first year students. Ways in which these skills can be addressed in the curriculum (via genera/liberal education/studies) will be shared as well as developing these skills in counseling and coaching sessions.

Finally, research and activities from one universities pilot program to enhance emotional intelligence in the First-Year Seminar course, will be shared.

The Power of Student Voices: Capturing Students' Perspectives on the Impact of First-Year Learning Communities Through Focus Groups

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Many institutions at various stages of implementing first-year learning communities (FLCs) recognize their powerful impact on retention. A great deal of quantitative data has been collected to substantiate effects of FLCs on grade point averages, retention, and graduation rates. But what do the students say? The purpose of this session is to feature and hear the voices of students.

A panel of students from Georgia State and IUPUI will share their experiences and perspectives on the impact of freshmen learning communities at urban research institutions. Each student will provide the following information:

Name, major, and theme of FLC
Reason for choosing FLC
Influence of the FLC on you as a new freshmen
Greatest lesson learned from the FLC experience
Impact of the FLC experience on you as an upperclassman

Time will be allotted for questions from the audience. After this interactive discussion, common themes that emerge from the students' comments will be identified, and the application of this information for program development will be addressed. The session will be presented as a model of focus groups and their effectiveness for capturing student voices. Participants will receive strategies and procedures for the process of conducting focus groups on their campus.

Qualitative Approaches to First-Year Assessment

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Hampshire College recently completed a systematic assessment of its new First-Year Program-a program that constituted a major departure from the previous academic and social experiences occupying the first year at the college. The New First-Year Plan comprises obligatory small,

advisor-taught first-semester seminars, a new distribution requirement, the introduction of first-year learning goals, a first-year portfolio, a new, online, narrative evaluation system, and two new living and learning programs (alumni-in-residence and faculty-in-residence). Given the magnitude of this change, the faculty required an extensive evaluation after year three of the new program.

One of the challenges we faced in developing this assessment project was the hesitancy with which most of our faculty and many other stakeholders welcomed standard methods of assessment. Although quantitative analyses of retention, academic progress, satisfaction, etc. would surely be required, these methods alone were unlikely to produce the degree of impact we sought. To approach this challenge, we developed a systematic, multi-method approach to assessment that attempts to incorporate different types of data (for example, formative and summative), data from different stages (for example, input, program, and outcome), and data that could be presented in alternative (and complementary) formats.

This presentation emphasizes the ways in which qualitative methods of assessment, including ethnographic interviews, focus groups, and student-to-student interviews can be important ingredients in an assessment protocol that aims at maximum involvement of crucial constituencies (such as the faculty and the trustees). Our approach emphasizes the desirability of triangulating across quantitative and qualitative methods, and presents ideas and suggestions for how to develop an effective mixed-methods approach on other campuses.

One central point of this session is to argue that certain assessment challenges-particularly those in which the categories of analysis are not clear at the outset-may particularly benefit from qualitative approaches. As a case study, we will discuss the successes and failures of Hampshire's new 100-level curriculum to illustrate how extensive interviews of first-year students can establish a surprising and important context for the interpretation of more quantitative analyses of academic progress and engagement.

The Importance of Math Readiness at Entry

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80% of students entering Hillsborough Community College need to take at least one college prepatory course. 22% of FTE at HCC was generated by prepatory courses in the 2004-2005 academic year. In Hillsborough County an average of 68% of grade 10 students pass the FCAT

(Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test).

In the 2001-2002 academic year, 92.3% of entering degree seeking students took the College Placement Test (CPT) for placement purposes. Only 30% of these students were found to be college ready, meaning that they did not need to take any prep courses. 56% of the students failed the math portion of the CPT, yet only 12.5% of those students later took the arithmetic test that would properly place students into either Pre Algebra or Beginning Algebra. Although 44% of FTIC students do not need to take prep math courses, many must enroll in Intermediate Algebra, which does not satisfy general education requirements for mathematics. From the Fall 2000-Fall 2003 semester 69.74% of correctly placed students passed their first math course.

ACT scores were 17-33 percent higher for students who took five years of math in high school than they were for students who took less than 3 years of mathematics courses. Unfortunately students were least likely to take 5 years of math through calculus, making the results of little consequence to the majority of students.

There appears to be a strong relationship between FCAT and CPT scores.

State wide 61% of students that scored in level 2 on the FCAT took the lower level prep math course; 25% took the second prep course. 67.8% of students scoring into level 3 on the FCAT were placed in the second level prep math course. 63.8% of level 4 and 91.4% of level 5 students tested out of prep courses entirely.

Merging Initiatives to Increase Student Success

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At Hillsborough Community College, Achieving the Dream and Title III have joined forces to strengthen existing student retention models. This presentation will share both the processes and early results of a combined academic and student services based project. Included in the presentation are state data, which has shown that students who are enrolled in a College Success course have a much higher rate of retention and success than those who do not. Additionally, presenters will highlight use of academic models such as supplemental instruction. Finally, presenters will share their implementation of an Early Alert system, interactive teaching strategies in the class, a self-paced Career Project, and the linking of success courses with prep reading courses. These strategies were culled from both external and internal sources: best practices resources and student-supplied data on both perceived and real needs.

Coherence, Connection, and Cohesiveness in the First-Year Experience Program at Hobart and William Smith Colleges

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In 1995 Hobart and William Smith Colleges adopted a new general curriculum and implemented its First Year Seminar program.

General characteristics agreed upon at the time were:
Entering students take a First Year seminar (FSEM) in the fall of their first year.

Even though the program has great flexibility, the seminars all share some characteristics: Students are housed by seminars, the instructor is the advisor of the class, the seminars are multidisciplinary, focus on critical skills, and are an introduction to the goals of the curriculum. The faculty members have total freedom in the design of the topic.

Two years ago we confronted the weaknesses of the program. We recognized that some important skills were not addressed (e.g., time management and library research skills). Diversity, residential and community connections were not a focus. Faculty had too many advisees, were pulling out of the program, and staffing of the seminars had become an issue. It was time for some changes! The Deans of first year students and the Associate Dean of Faculty (who coordinates the FSEM program) worked closely together to remedy the situation

A number of initiatives were launched under the rubric of coherence, connection and cohesiveness. Our goal was to strengthen the positive aspects of the program and create strong connections between the different elements of the program
a.   Coherence
All FSEM have in common a syllabus that follows a format and have key information including about disabilities, the Center of Teaching and Learning, library research session, and academic integrity policy.
They follow certain suggested guidelines for amount of reading and writing. All first year seminars must show as a priority the teaching of the critical skills, and are an introduction to interdisciplinary and the goals of the institution.

All FSEM instructors continue to be the advisers of their first year students, but there is flexibility in the length of time.
b.   Connection
Connections between living and academic learning are fostered in the different communities, and connections between town and campus are strengthened through "service learning communities." Connections between adviser and advisees are strengthened through contact made over the summer, and interactions during orientation.
The creation of the "Common Ground," a 6 week course taken by every first year student. encourages connections between the different segments of the institution. The "Common Ground" provides an introduction to leadership skills and opportunities, makes explicit community connections, both internal and external, and provides opportunities for students to interact in small groups with staff members
c.   Cohesiveness
The process :
In the fall, bi-weekly meetings with FSEM faculty were held to discuss what is working, what is not, and how to rectify issues. Next fall, the focus of these meetings will be on pedagogy.
Yearly Advising Workshop led by HWS faculty best advisers and the Associate Dean of Faculty
Implementation of the FSEM Colleagues Program: Teaching, Writing and Writing colleagues which foster close relationships between learners.

Regular debriefing sessions with the FSEM Communities instructors.
Bringing everyone together in an academic celebration: the First Year Seminar Conference.

Students present their best work to an audience of students and faculty, and answers questions. The presentations range from research papers to power point presentations, art works, to reading of original writing.

Finally starting next fall we will link the First Year experience to a symposium on issues of diversity and Civic engagement. The title of the symposium next fall is "Engaging Differences".

The Many Faces of Orientation

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Presenter's Purpose: Orientation programs must meet the needs of many different audiences. This interactive session will provide several strategies for addressing each audience.

Learning Objectives:

Ø   To provide strategies for helping students make the transition to the college community.

Ø   To provide activities for peer mentors and instructors to use to engage students in orientation programs.

Many institutions are implementing orientation programs as a way to help retain new students. The programs are similar only in name. They vary in structure from one day programs, to programs online, to week-long programs, to semester long programs. Often the orientation program is linked to academic advising. These programs do not lend themselves to lecture, but need to be interactive and supportive. Commuting students, transfer students, international students and traditional students have different needs as they enter the college community. Each group needs to learn they can depend on each other for support. They need to feel welcome as well as learn how to function on the campus. The attendees will be asked to participate in several activities to help develop a supporting atmosphere on their campuses while addressing the issues these different groups bring to their institution. Handouts with details about each activity will be provided to the participants. Orientation courses need to be interactive, yet convey the information that students need to function. Attendees will participate in several different strategies to help instructors provide the information in an active learning environment. Handouts will be provided outlining these strategies.

I plan to do the following activities:

ü   Tangram Activity to help students find key offices on campus

ü   International reception idea

ü   A Transfer student activity

ü   Commuting students activity

ü   Who Am I? Icebreaker

ü   Candy Scavenger Hunt with follow up activity

"Project Success": Successfully Changing the Culture of Academic Probation for First-Year Students

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Implemented Fall 2005, "Project Success" is a required intervention program designed for students on academic probation and students in jeopardy of going on academic probation. "Project Success" is designed to inform students of the vulnerability of their academic status and to provide students with the tools and resources necessary to become self-directed and motivated learners. Through "Project Success," students have become aware of campus resources, have an understanding of the importance and implications of a solid grade point average, and have realized the need to change their academic behaviors to avoid dismissal. For more information about Project Success, visit:

www.emas.ilstu.edu/probation/project_success/

This presentation will explain how a comprehensive program for probation students was developed, implemented and gained campus-wide support. Program components will be covered including how probation students were divided into categories (first year students, students on continued probation, and transfer students) and required to participate in specific workshops to meet and address their individual needs. The session will discuss individual program components and the student participation level in each component including: Success Workshop, Success Plan/Contract, Success Assessment and Success Evaluation Workshop. The session will also show the results of implementation, discuss the resources needed to implement such a program, lessons learned from a single year of implementation, and demonstrate how the program changed the campus culture of academic probation for both students and advisors.

Strategies for Campus Coordination of a Comprehensive First-Year Experience

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This presentation will showcase how Illinois State University transitioned from their work with the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year Project to a Provost-appointed Council for the First-Year Experience while maintaining the campus-wide momentum, excitement and support.

As a Founding Institutition selected to complete the Foundations of Excellence Project during the pilot phase, we engaged in the rigorous guided self-study schedule that required institutional commitment and enthusiasm. Upon completion of the project we were faced with the challenge of implementing the action items included in our Improvement Plan, which was the culminating project.

With continued Provost support, the Foundations of Excellence Task Force articulated the need for formal attention from a more focused constituency to assist the institution in coordinating this process, and recognized that the current committee membership needed to be revised to include representatives specifically charged with the learning and development of first year students at Illinois State University.

Presenters will share aspects of the formal proposal submitted to the Provost recommending the creation of a Council for the First-Year Experience and the reasoning used to make recommendations regarding Council membership.

The creation of the Council brought new opportunities as well as many challenges. Presenters, who are the current Council Co-Chairs, will provide insight into how the Council capitalized on the momentum and campus support that was so evident during our involvement with the Foundations Project. Including, building on the work already completed by the original Task Force, establishing smaller work groups with more specific goals, encouraging two-way communication between Council members and their respective units and collaborating with other units and constituencies on campus such as the American Democracy Project Task Force to assist us in furthering our goals. As a result of our collaboration with the American Democracy Project we were able to partner with them, our University's Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, and our University Assessment Office to secure Academic Affairs Enhancement Funding for a faculty development project that will include three summer faculty fellowships that will allow faculty to design online faculty development modules addressing integration of civic and community engagement in the curriculum with specific attention to the unique needs of first-year students.

The Council is finalizing their Assessment Plan this spring with the help of the University Assessment Office and presenters will share not only the plan but explain the process used in developing the plan, obtaining University-wide support and plans for implementation.

(Re)Creating Intentionality in College Going Decision

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The session seeks to engage in an assessment of changes in student characteristics reflected in a lessening of the degree of intentionality that accompanies the decision to enter College, which in turn impacts student attitudes and actions in ways that jeopardize student success. Part of the discussion included a review of an adaptation of a "best practice" intervention program for first-year students. In addition to functioning as a response to the question about intentionality in the college-going decision, this program demonstrates the power of collaboration between Student and Academic Affairs.

The session will review the theoretical frame that identifies a lessened or absent sense of intentionality as a negative variable in student success, a thorough description of the implementation of the intervention program (including data from pre- and post-tests addressing attitudes, learning styles, and self-efficacy and qualitative measures of effectiveness as well as student profile). The session will encourage participants to engage actively the question of intentionality and its relationship to student perceptions of responsibility, entitlement, required labor, and community involvement.

The program, "Choosing to Be A College Student," utilizes existing structures and programs in service to an original idea that asks new students to thoughtfully and deliberately seek the "position" of new college students. The program was piloted with approximately 100 students in Fall 2005; the pilot will be extended in Fall 2006. The design of the program involves students in significant interactions with faculty, students, alumni, student affairs professionals, and the services of the campus Career Center. In addition to accomplishing the goal of creating a moment of explicit intention around the decision to go to College, the program gives students experiences with professional relationships involving effective interpersonal communication and stranger-interaction as well as utilization of campus resources.

Creating a Climate for First-Year Student Success and Enhanced Retention

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This presentation will highlight findings from administration of the YFCY (Your First College Year) survey sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. The research study was conducted with students of the College of Health & Human Services at a 4 year public, doctoral university. Findings for discussion include: how much and how often freshmen students made connections with faculty, students' expectations, participation in extracurricular activities, personal study skills, time management, and students' levels of satisfaction with the first year. The data gleaned from this assessment were then used to formulate initiatives to enhance first-year success and retention in the College of Health & Human Services. Strategies and programmatic interventions included (1) establishment of an academic support center to provide early intervention for at-risk students and, (2) inception of "Freshman Connect," a program designed to enhance faculty-student interaction and student connection with their academic major. Retention statistics will be examined in relation to the interventions, and implications for campus initiatives, additional assessment, and future research will be explored.

Peer Mentors: Enhancing Student Success

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Many colleges have adopted the philosophy that it "takes a village" to educate undergraduates. Increasing numbers of universities rely on the talents of undergraduate student mentors to make the village-support concept a reality (Cams, Carns, & Wright, 1993). Additionally, the science of learning suggests the importance of learning within a social context (e.g., Bransford, et. al., 2004; Halpern & Hakel, 2004). Student mentors can help colleges establish socially comfortable environments that increase the likelihood that learning will take place. Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Portland State have utilized student mentors in creating supportive learning environments. Both have built national reputations for academic support programs, particularly those established to serve the needs of large, diverse, first-generation student populations. A professionally trained student mentor corps has been essential to the success of those programs.

Universities that rely on the professionalism of an undergraduate mentor corps must ensure that student mentors are adequately supervised and that they participate in comprehensive training programs embedded in an academic context to ensure that they gain as much from mentoring as do the students they serve. IUPUI and Portland State have developed structures to support the professional development of student mentors. The presenters will describe the methods utilized to create a professionally trained corps of student mentors including mentoring courses, training programs, reflection initiatives, a state-wide mentor conference, and a scholarship program.

The presenters will also offer an overview of the range of the IUPUI and Portland State mentor-supported programs, outlining the initiatives that utilize the student mentor corps including learning communities, Supplemental Instruction, and other academic support programs.

Literature on the increased utilization of student mentors in supporting the academic achievement of undergraduates will be discussed in the session. Copies of mentor course syllabi, scholarship contracts, training procedures, and assessment results will be distributed.

Examining FYE Enrollment on Student Outcomes at a Two-Year Community College: A Quasi-Experimental Design

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The empirical literature on FYE courses shows that students benefit from the content and experiences in the courses. Specifically, research shows that students participating in FYE have higher GPA's and retention rates. However, much of the research in this area has been conducted in four-year residential campuses serving primarily traditional-aged, middle class, white residential students (Franklin, Cranston, Perry, Purtle, & Robertson, 2002; Watson, 1993). Two-year campuses are significantly less likely to offer FYE experiences (Barefoot, 2006). Faculty and staff in a large community college in the Midwest implemented the first offering of a FYE course (IVY 101) for first-year students in the Spring 2006 semester. The session will describe the procedures and results

of a quasi-experimental design study examining the impact of participating in FYE course on knowledge of resources and first-semester GPA (Campbell & Stanley, 1966).

Student enrolled in the IVY 101 course and control group classes completed a pre-test, post-test survey instrument measuring challenges of college, academic motivation, and knowledge/importance of resources (based on resources and services highlighted in the FYE course). Results of independent ANCOVA's showed that IVY101 students' scores on the posttest were significantly higher than the control group scores controlling for pre-test knowledge scores and academic motivation indices. Once first semester grades are reported, several OLS regression analyzes will be conducted to examine the impact of participation on achievement.

A focus group discussion with IVY101 faculty is scheduled to discuss their perceptions of the course content, student experience, and to identify areas for improving the course. A content analysis of the focus group discussion and faculty responses to open-ended questions will be performed. At least twenty minutes of the session will be devoted to participant discussion around the opportunities and challenges to offering and assessing FYE courses in the community college setting.

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Lecture Induced Mind Paralysis: The Quest for a Cure

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The imagery often attached to higher education is a tiered classroom full of students and a faculty member giving a lecture/monologue on a topic of choice. Quite often, if you look into the faces and eyes of the students seated in those classrooms you will see the evidence of Lecture Induced Mind Paralysis: droopy eyes, heads that appear too heavy to support their own weight, profuse

drooling, extended periods of staring, dazed appearance uncontrollable doodling, snoring, and window/door gazing. The symptoms can be directly related to a lack of engagement in the instructional process.

Although the lecture does have its place in the process of teaching and learning, research would indicate that it is used to excess and produces less than adequate results. The alternative is to infuse presentations with easy-to-use interactive strategies that allow students to process their learning, discuss their views and learn the views of their classmates, engage in problem solving, and integrate new knowledge with opportunities for application, synthesis, and evaluation.

During this session, participants will experience and learn a minimum of 12 techniques that can be easily applied and replicated in any academic discipline. These include:

• Learning partners

• Numbered heads

• 60/60/30/30

• Expert interviews

• Encounters

• Poetry exchange

• Snowball

• Give Me Five

• Designated Hitter

• Graffiti

• 60 Second Theater

• Team/Partner Assessment Strategies

• Three Stay-Two Stray

Additionally, participants will be advised of several electronic resources that provide ongoing ideas and support in an attempt to find a cure for Lecture Induced Mind Paralysis.

Energizing the First-Year Experience with the Power of Purpose

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Life purpose is beginning to take center stage in a variety of areas, from Rick Warren's best-sellers The Purpose-driven Church and The Purpose-driven Life to the more than a quarter of a billion dollars invested by the Lilly Endowment in eighty-eight universities and colleges as part of its "Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation." Now it even reaches into retirement years with the AARP pursing a vision for a "society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose." Research and theory development conducted by the Center for Life Calling and Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) have shown that purpose is also a very important element in helping first year students as they transition from high school into college.

This has led to the creation of a life-purpose discovery process and culture on the IWU campus designed to instill a strong conviction of life purpose and the commitment to carry this out in world-changing leadership. As part of this process, students (1) complete serious reflection about the transcending implications of their purpose for life, (2) make the important college-related decisions concerning their life based on this purpose, (3) become equipped to continue making important decisions concerning their life purpose beyond college, and (4) become committed to changing the world through a sense of conviction and purpose.

This presentation will examine three important components of the life purpose discovery process at IWU. Component 1: Life Coaching—utilizes a team of professional "life coaches" to help students explore and identify their unique personal strengths in a broad range of areas through a variety of activities. Component 2: Curriculum Integration—works to embed the life purpose discovery process throughout the academic curriculum in the first year. Component 3: Academic Advising—encourages students to first understand a sense of life purpose prior to making class decisions and choices of majors.

Enlisting Parents as Allies for Their Student's Academic Success

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Students do not come to college alone; they come as a package with their parents. Today's first year students are products of an age of protective parents, significant affluence, tightly scheduled time, and near constant communication.

Advisers and faculty accustomed to dealing only with students have had to adjust to the involvement of millennial families. This session will provide participants an active introduction to a parent program that uses a series of case studies to address parents' expectations, help them navigate the transition from the customer service approach of recruitment to the teaching function of academic affairs, and introduce them to the people who will help shape their students' academic experience.

Faculty and staff on university campuses are developing new strategies for dealing with these "extended students" while operating within the boundaries of federal privacy laws and theories of student development. This session will begin with a case study reflecting a typical first year student challenge to set the stage for a discussion of the perspective that the parents of millennials bring to campus and how faculty and academic advisers can respond. A second case study will illustrate different perspectives of academic success, prompting a discussion on ways parents can support their students' learning. The session will then move to describe the evolution of this teaching-centered approach to parent orientation, including development of the session, writing and selecting cases, assessment of both pilot programs and field-testing, and changing curriculum needs. The goal of the session is to empower the attendees to take this approach to the families of millennial students and implement it on their home campuses.

A Welcoming Portal of Entry: Creating Collaborative and Comprehensive Programs for Entering Student Success

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The Policy Center for the First College Year has outlined foundational dimensions of excellence for working with entering students. Among the dimensions is the Organization Dimension which states: "Create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements."

Whether designated as "university college," "division of undergraduate studies," "general college," or "junior division," these units embrace the strategy of a broadly-based campus collaboration among all aspects and personnel of the institution which impact the successful adaptation of entering students. This model which provides a context for working with entering students is attracting renewed attention in the United States and in other countries as a means for supporting entering students. The models at UTEP and IUPUI are each extensive but also are distinct in their approaches. The common features are the following:

•   Collaborations with P-12 including programs for younger students and their parents.

•   Collaborations among units serving students at entry including admissions and student affairs.

•   Joint Appointments of faculty and of staff.

•   Curricular Approaches. Both universities have centered efforts in the classroom – with courses providing key interventions.

•   Strong Academic Support Services

•   Assessment

The presenters will share descriptions of their approaches to these elements and will invite program participants to consider strategies and programs on their campuses for providing an organizational context for supporting entering students.

The First-Year Experience for Chinese Students

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It's time for single-child Chinese families send their son or daughter to college or even abroad for higher education. Labeled as ' little emperor' in their childhood, 'talent' in their teenage and 'hero' in the national college entrance examination, freshmen soon found that the first year experience is far from their expectations and some even doubt if such an experience is worth the money . Questionnaires have shown us: They don't fully understand the curriculum and the assessment requirements in college; They are highly motivated but lack of strategies; They have difficulty in understand the learning style in high education and they believe that the teacher is there to provide all the necessary "right answers". On the other hand, they cannot adapt to campus life. Being the focus of the family and spoilt by at least six adults, they are not used to the college life of dormitory sharing. They find it hard to get well along with roommates and ask for help in need. Some even commit suicide for various kinds of reasons.

In accordance with the new situation, I spent much time helping them identify themselves in the transition from competence to commitment and proved to be a big success.1.introduce and explain the great reforms and policies on higher learning in China and abroad 2. help them make plans for future development 3.As an English teacher, I provide specific strategy training and help them understand the language course (reading, speaking, listening and writing) is an integrated one, not just memorize the vocabulary 4. adopt the learner-centered approach in teaching and enough the cooperative study in class and autonomous study outside class with the help of tape, disc, or language lab.5. have a right attitude towards tests: failure in one single exam doesn't mean the end of the world.

Educating Faculty Rather Than Labeling Students

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At the Universities of Kingston and Portsmouth we are keen to ensure equity of provision for all students and are currently working to provide a stimulating educational environment in which all individuals can flourish regardless of age, gender, social or national origin, or previous educational experience.

For students from non-traditional backgrounds or under-represented groups, university can be particularly daunting and a good first year experience is essential if they are to settle and make the most of their studies.

Research supports the notion that integration is essential for success. Students from non-traditional backgrounds often experience difficulties adjusting to the 'mass independence' of higher education, which results in anxiety about unfamiliar academic practices and low self esteem (Sambell, 2002). Lawrence (2001) suggests that it is important that teaching staff move from a deficit model to a supportive model.

Kingston University is adopting an approach that will ensure a supportive first year experience for widening participation students. Our first steps have been to help academic colleagues understand more about the nature of widening participation, raise awareness about how students from non-traditional groups perform; we also attempt to dispel some of the myths surrounding the concept of a 'widening participation student.' We will show how we have worked with colleagues responsible for implementing the Learning and Teaching Strategy and other key staff. We will also discuss important collaborative work with other institutions and local further education colleges.

Portsmouth is taking a similar approach to Kingston. We are also currently researching the factors that impact on widening participation students' first year performance; the findings from this research will be presented at this workshop.

In this session we aim to use our experiences to generate a lively and meaningful discussion about achieving inclusivity by engaging with faculty.

A Hybrid Model for Delivering a First-Year Seminar for Undeclared Students

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This presentation will highlight a unique, hybrid delivery model for a one-credit first-year seminar for undeclared students. This seminar was created by faculty advisors in the Advising Center for Undeclared Students with a technology grant and addressed a need to reach an ever-growing undeclared population. This format is a change from the first-year seminars previously offered to undeclared students in a traditional classroom format for one or three credits. This course, especially designed for undeclared first-year students, focused on reading across content areas and about majors, learning college success skills, making a connection with advisors, and getting oriented to campus life and services. Attendees will learn about the design of the course, which consisted of one weekly small group session to discuss material in the text, one weekly large group session with guest speakers from across campus, and assignments/discussions on Blackboard, as well as email communication. The instructors for the course were the students' advisors, and the students were also encouraged to meet with their advisor during the semester. Attendees will learn about the steps in the process, from securing the grant, learning the technology, and developing the course, to the teaching and evaluation of the course, as well as the faculty's assessment of what worked and what did not. The result of a student satisfaction survey, students' GPAs, and the role of the course in students' choosing a major will be discussed. Attendees will also learn of the future plans for this course, which will include additional technology. The presenters will entertain questions during and after the presentation.

Parallel Universes: The Gap Between Faculty Academic Expectations and Student Study Responses

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Faculty and academic support specialists who work with novice college students seeking academic assistance traditionally focus on assessment questions like the following: Does the student possess the basic skills necessary for learning in this class? (If no, assign to learning center or tutorials); Does the student employ effective time management and/or other study strategies? (If no, assign to workshops or tutorials on time management, note taking or textbook reading); Does the student know and practice effective test taking skills? (If no, provide review of test taking strategies); Does the student understand the course content? (If no, identify student "expert" in subject area).

This model of college student learning assumes that college learning skills or information deficit are the primary inhibitors of academic success. In this model, proper identification of the skill deficit and appropriate provision of a series or range of skill development activities in each deficit area will lead the student to academic success in higher education.

This workshop suggests an alternative model for viewing the academic struggles of novice colleges while engaging participants in learning activities and exercises. Participants will explore the parallel yet wildly different lives of faculty and novice college students in the classroom and trace how the habits, patterns of behaviors, expectations, and experiences of the first year may inhibit academic success. Research on student development and learning infuses the presentation, but the focus remains on effective and practical responses to the learning struggles of novice college students. Locus of control, task identification, complex problem solving, meta-cognitive thinking, conceptual frameworks, and relational thinking and learning are a few of the topics covered during this session. Upon completion of this session, participants should develop new understandings of their first year students and some fledgling ideas of how to apply these understandings to their work.

Small Course, Big Results

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We embarked on the McMaster Innovative Learning Study to determine longer term effects of taking an award-winning, first semester inquiry course. We used methods that went beyond self-report and included several exercises. Students show improved retention and up to two years advantage in several measures. Several aspects of the course could be responsible for helping students overcome transition barriers.

We first used student data from a five year period and found better retention, standing and honours

achievement for students who had taken the seminar.

Next, we embarked on a program of study that used samples of the target and contrast groups who had taken the course from one to five years previously. We asked participants to: complete surveys on learning approaches, attitudes and strategies; life goals, satisfaction with education, self-perceived change during university, indicators of scholastic and extra-scholastic activities; submit their best paper they had written in university; write short descriptions of steps they took in producing their best paper; complete an exercises in critical reading and analysis, research question development and justification; research design, and accessing information; develop and deliver oral presentations; work in small groups to solve a problem.

We found clear results in several dimensions related to a successful transition to university life—up to a two year advantage—over the contrast group.

We credit several components in the course for helping students overcome barriers to their transition: heuristic knowledge, self-understanding, faculty contact; friendship formation, and group strategies. But beyond that, we think that teaching students specific inquiry skills helped their academic careers. Some results are somewhat puzzling.

The audience will be invited to participate help explain both the clear and the puzzling results and to illuminate possible reasons that this small inquiry course could have had such large and long-term effects.

Math for Mathophobes: An Experiment in Bridging the Computational Divide

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The purpose of this paper is to assist instructors in developing effective mathematics instruction to students with a history of low achievement. Its focus is an experimental math course at Metropolitan College of New York (MCNY). MCNY is committed to a philosophy of "purpose-centered education" in which formal academic study is integrated with the acquisition of practical career skills. Most students have a history of academic difficulties; over 80% report serious difficulties in the past with math; and over 50% claim to suffer from math anxiety.

The new course remains faithful to the college's historical mission while departing substantially from its usual educational methods. Consistent with its mission, the course devotes substantial attention to practical problems that students face in their lives (such as calculating interest on student loans or credit card debt and saving for retirement). It goes beyond traditional methods first in its treatment of math anxiety and second in its use of developmental theory and research.

We include math anxiety as an explicit topic of study. Students read research into its causes and

detailed descriptions of methods to teach victims mathematical topics such as word problems, geometry and statistics. By studying these methods, we hope that many students will adapt and apply them to their own learning.

We apply developmental theory and research in many ways. For example, contrary to the usual practice of starting with abstract theory and then applying it to practical problems, we use a "bottom-up" teaching strategy of starting with solutions to concrete problems and then generalizing to broader mathematical principles. Similarly, we emphasize the process of learning from one's own mistakes over finding answers to specific problems. When students have difficulty with a problem, we coach them in methods of improving their solution and require that they continue work until they find the answer.

Meeting the Needs of First-Year Students Through a Transformed Curriculum

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The administrative decision to transform developmental education at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), an urban, doctoral intensive institution with over 22,500 students, came from three imperatives. The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) System decided in 2001 to eliminate remedial education from four-year institutions. In 2004, the TBR reduced the maximum hours for a baccalaureate degree to 120. Of the six four-year institutions in the TBR System, only MTSU's developmental education was growing. The third imperative was to serve our first-year student population that arrives on campus but was not prepared for college-level work.

Administrators met with the faculty announcing that the Developmental Studies Program (DSP) could not remain the same and sought the faculty's aid in revision of the program. The DSP was nationally recognized, winning the John Champaigne Memorial Award for Outstanding Developmental Education Program from NADE in 1993. Since 1985, DSP had been providing an important first-year experience for many MTSU students, with 40% of graduating seniors having

taken some developmental classes.

The first approach was to establish a forerunner to a University College, creating an Academic Enrichment Program that would have provided many coordinated services for the first-year student. However, individuals urged the transition of developmental courses into regular college-level courses through "stretching" or expanding the time for taking the regular courses.

In order to achieve consensus, a series of meetings were held with deans, department chairs, and faculty from departments and colleges that would "naturally" be homes for the four areas. The thorniest issues were the placement of tenured faculty in established academic departments, creation of combination courses of developmental studies and regular college classes, creation of new courses for high school deficiencies, and the limitations of time for official publications. The revised program for first-year students will be implemented in the Fall 2006.

Providing Professional Development Opportunities for First-Year Seminar Faculty

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The first-year seminar faculty is generally comprised of administrators, faculty teaching in other disciplines, and adjuncts from the community. Unlike faculty in a typical academic department, they are not all housed full-time in a single unit where they have opportunities for professional development or collaborations with peers. However, just as these factors are critical to developing and maintaining quality programs, they are also vital to an effective first-year seminar course. Increasingly, higher education institutions are turning to the first year seminar course as an essential tool in enhancing retention and graduation rates. Without faculty that have been equipped with the knowledge and skills to teach this special student population, the course becomes just an addition to the long list of courses that students have opted or been required to take.

It is the shared responsibility of the director of the first-year seminar program and the administration to provide opportunities for professional development for this group of faculty members whose role is becoming increasingly more important. The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to allow directors and other key individuals to communicate the importance of faculty development for first year seminar instructors; to identify challenges to providing professional development opportunities; to share ways to address these challenges; to emphasize specific areas that should be addressed in professional development; and to share examples of provisions that have been made in this area by other institutions.

To initiate dialogue, the facilitator of this session will provide information in each of these areas and will solicit feed back from all participants relative to these areas as well. After the session, the facilitator will summarize key elements of the discussion in written format. Each participant will receive this summary which can be used as a reference tool at their home institution.

Mentoring - Its Importance for the Future of First-Year Programs

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Recent research by Anttonen and Chaskes (2002) discovered that "mentoring" was the number one process by which past First Year Advocate award winners learned student advocacy skills. In addition, a Chaskes and Anttonen (2005) chapter in the recent Jossey Bass Book: "Challenging & Supporting The First-Year Students, A Handbook for Improving The First Year of College" proposes a skill set employed by these advocate winners in building first year programs for students. Building on this empirical research, the present study seeks to examine how advocates learned these skills and whether or not they were mentoring the next generation of student advocates. In addition, the study attempted to explore whether this skill was being passed on to the advocate's protégé and whether being a "change agent" was an important component in this process.

The study utilized a web based survey developed by the present investigators in conjunction with John Gardner, Director of the Policy Center on the First –Year of College located in Brevard, North Carolina and Stuart Hunter, Director of the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience. This survey was mailed, either electronically or in hard copy, to134 located past student advocate winners who received this award from the National Resource Center between the years 1990 and-2004. After, follow up requests, a total of 64 out of the 134 (48.5%) completed the survey. The quantitative data was compiled and under the leadership of one of the principal investigators, a research assistant read and categorized the open-ended responses into agreed upon categories.

This presentation presents the findings of this study and also highlights some possible direction both for future research and also for "mentoring "efforts in the field of higher education.

Why Smart Students Fail: Emotional Intelligence and College Success

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First year programs see many students who are certainly intellectually capable of succeeding in college, but whose difficulties with time and stress management, establishing positive relationships, or making wise decisions impact their success adversely. Defined as an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures or as the ability to deal with one's own and others' emotions, emotional intelligence (EI) is often the factor that separates successful from unsuccessful students. Emotionally intelligent students are those who can make the best use of their academic potential and are more likely to have a successful college experience.

This program will present a brief synopsis of the concept of Emotional Intelligence and will discuss the relationship of EI to academic success. Current research assessing the impact of EI on student success will be summarized. A personal development class designed to allow students the opportunity to assess and enhance their EI will be outlined. Participants in this session will experience several activities used in the class to address aspects of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, and general mood. This will also be an opportunity to for participants to share their own programming ideas in the realm of emotional intelligence.

First-Year Student Success at Nagasaki University

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There are some reasons why Nagasaki University is conducting educational reform focused on the First Year Experience. One is the surrounding situation of colleges and universities in Japan. The Japanese society has been shifting to a Knowledge-based Society. Universities are demanded to breed materials that can reorganize various kinds of information. The second is that universal access to a university education has become a reality in recent years. Due to the standards for admission to college are low, students who academic ability low enter colleges and universities.

The third is that Japanese universities will be expected to develop their distinctively educational and research functions on the basis of their management autonomy and independence. This means deregulation of the national university corporation law. Therefore, Nagasaki University established the First Year Students Program to provide a university education responsive to current trends in Japan.

Nagasaki University adopted the following strategies to promote educational reform. The first strategy was to provide the First Year Experience as the starting point in order to train students in the ability to reorganize various kinds of information. The second was to provide the First Year Experience which will enable students without specific objectives to develop the academic and social skills they will need to become productive citizens. The final strategy was to instill in students a spirit of Nagasaki University by providing a unique learning experience.

Nagasaki University aims to lay the groundwork for student success through a series of objectives to help students make a successful transition from a high school learning style into university learning style through general education and specialized study.

The outline of our case study is as follows:

1. helping students develop independent learning skills in our Freshmen seminar so that students can grasp the thinking style and attitude necessary for university learning.

2. the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills in Remedial education so that students can prepare for specialized study (The Faculty of Engineering)

Personality Type and Student Success in High-Tech Courses

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Many advising programs use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with their students, especially those students who are undecided. Traditionally we use the results for career and major counseling but there are many other ways we can expand those results to other advising areas. This presentation will discuss the influx of technology amongst college-aged students today. These students are, for the most part, members of the Millennial generation, one known for its heavier reliance on technology in all aspects of their lives. However, some students are not as successful when using

technology to communicate or in the classroom.

My research centers on using a student's personality type, as tested by the MBTI, to predict their level of success in a high-technology environment. Research in the past has focused on college students overall level of comfort when dealing with technology or on professors and their MBTI type in relation to their use of technology, but little or no evidence has been given on college students' MBTI type and their level of success in a high tech class environment.

We will present facts on the Millennial generation and their unique qualities along with the unique technology uses at North Carolina State University in their classes. Research will be presented focusing on first-year students at North Carolina State University linking their MBTI type to their actual grades in the most high-tech freshman class that is common to most freshmen. The information will be presented in a PowerPoint format with handouts for the group, including statistical analyses of the data.

Creating Organizational Change in Community Colleges to Better Serve New Students

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The Foundations of Excellence initiative sponsored by the Policy Center on the First Year of College focuses on the new student experience--a critical time for retention, learning, and development of skills that support future success. As participants in the Foundations of Excellence pilot for community colleges in 2005-06, Oakton Community College (OCC) and Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) have used an array of strategies to increase institutional awareness of the needs of new students; to assess existing practices; to create and implement a plan for improving services; and to promote relationships among faculty, staff, administrators, and students. To provide a portrait of the process and outcomes of this work, the speakers will provide

•   a brief overview of the Foundations of Excellence project

•   a brief overview of each of the community colleges

•   an explanation of the processes used at each institution to conduct the assessment and create an action plan

- a summary of key findings from each institution's assessment of current practice

- a summary of key decisions made regarding institutional change based on the assessment

- insights about institutional and cultural change resulting from the project to date

- a discussion about new directions for the first year experience in the community college.

The session will be organized to encourage questions and interaction of participants during the presentation. Afterwards, the speakers will engage participants in a discussion about ways they might implement a similar initiative on their home campuses.

From Senioritis to College Credit: College 101 in High School

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The panel presentation will (a)describe the philosophy and mission of the college related to student success(b)discuss the components of the project, i.e. existing articulation with the area high schools(c)discuss the demographics of the students,(d)address the developmental areas of the program- defining academic goals,developing learning skills, preparing students for future career, money management(e)project funding

Setting the Stage for Success: Evidence-Based Approaches for First-Year Students

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Teaching, learning and success should be an equation for the freshman year experience (teaching + learning = success). What should we be teaching to help freshman succeed? How can we enhance freshman learning for success in their first year?

These panelists provide initiatives from their various institutions which promote freshman success. Dr. Kim Keffer from Ohio University Southern Campus will present statistical evidence to support degree planning as one component for the freshman year program. Dr. Cynthia Spiers, from Rhodes State College, will explain the use of a rubric that helps students understand expectations as they learn to assess their levels in Writing and in Diversity Awareness. Following these presentations, the audience may participate in a Q&A session.

Afterwards, handouts from three other panelists will be provided to share information related to freshman success.
Dr. Miki Crawford from Ohio University Southern Campus - JumpStart: An Introduction Course to Campus Technology and Resources.
Dr. Norma Ryan from Ohio Department of Health - Strategies and Approaches for Mentoring and Facilitating Student Learning in a Creative and Safe Environment.
Dr. Ken Hoyt, President of Centenary College - Twelve Factors that Affect Retention and Fit into Tinto's Model of Social Integration.

A Hierarchy of Educational Needs: Maslow and General Education

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General education requirements serve a variety of functions in the curriculum: developing skills, cultivating different disciplines, preparing for citizenship, and understanding diversity. But students are not ready to value all of these purposes equally. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we can identify what they are ready for and plan their general education accordingly. This session will include a short presentation comparing Maslow's needs with educational needs, followed by group work on classifying requirements and developing strategies to help students move up the hierarchy. For instance, students acting mainly from fear about their academic survival may be most open to skill-building courses that support their performance in other courses, whereas those who feel safe in the institution may be ready to build social connections and to learn about others in, say, a race relations course. From sharing with other first-year planners, academic advisors can learn strategies for planning general education in a student's curriculum and for persuading them of its importance. Teachers and orientation leaders can learn to articulate in concrete ways the role of the general education program as part of a developmental process.

The Effect of First-Year Seminar (FYS) on Student Retention

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As a challenging problem for the academic community, student retention became an important issue for four-year colleges since the 1980s because student drop out brings about financial loss, and lower graduation rates (Lau, 2003). As many researches have consistently indicated that college students who have difficulty in continuing study usually left school within the first academic year (Lau, 2003; Wetzel et al., 1999), the first academic year in college is the very critical period, which affects student retention rates.

First-Year Seminar(FYS), offered every semester in the Smeal College of Business at the Pennsylvania State University, is designed to help new students learn about the university

community. For the past four years beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year, the FYS sponsored by Picower Foundation has been undergoing revisions in order to improve the course quality and reduce college drop out rates. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the First-Year Seminar on student retention and identify the factors which are related to the learning contents of the FYS with following research questions.

1.   What are the overall perceptions of the First-Year Seminar course affecting student retention rates?

2.   Are there significant differences in the perceptions of academic and social integration affecting student retention rates compared by each academic year?

In this ongoing longitudinal study from the year of 2003 to the year of 2005, we administered the perception survey at the beginning and end of each semester. Based on the collected data and analysis combined with secondary data including academic achievement and persistence, we will introduce our finding regarding the perceptual difference of drop-out students between pre-test and post-test survey. In addition, the perception comparison between continuing student and drop out student shown on the pre-test and post-test will be presented.

Designing a Seamless Learning Community: An Inclusive Approach to Fostering a Successful First-Year Experience

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All institutions have an interest in supporting and retaining first year students. It is our contention that the most successful first year programs reflect both an institution's culture and its student body. This session will focus on one example, which highlights a conscious approach at developing a mission-related model.

For the last three years, U.S. News & World Report has ranked Pine Manor (PMC) as the most diverse private liberal arts college in America. As such, we face some specific challenges to student transition. Regardless of where our students are from, PMC is likely to be a more diverse community. Building relationships across difference is often difficult. Supporting students in this regard is, for us, a crucial retention issue.

The key features of our model include a team approach to program design and implementation, holistic student advising, and a curriculum that reflects faculty and student interests and which integrates learning outcomes and transition issues. Students self-selected into theme-based courses and were assigned their advisor based on this choice. Though the content for each course differed, effort was made to offer similar types of assignments with an emphasis on reflective writing, critical thinking and perspective taking, and learning to work as part of as team.

The team worked to go beyond traditional advisory roles by focusing much of our energy on building relationships with students both inside and outside of the classroom. Particular emphasis was placed on developing an early warning intervention system in which communication was key to the success.

The first year team, comprised of faculty and staff representing various areas of the college, met weekly for program planning and served as a teaching circle providing opportunities to share practices and discuss a host of teaching and learning issues.

Full Semester Study Abroad in Ireland for First-Year Students

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For each of the past two academic years, 2004 and 2005, twenty Plymouth State University (NH) students have enrolled in the University of Limerick Ireland study abroad program. The students represent ten different academic majors.

The PSU model for this study abroad experience includes an on-site PSU faculty person who serves both as an instructor of two PSU courses and the students' academic advisor. The faculty member connects students to the PSU campus by providing information related to campus issues. The model differs from that used by another U.S. college where no faculty member was on-site to support its first-year students.

The academic course load for Plymouth State University students in Ireland consists of a combination of PSU and University of Limerick courses. All students participate in the PSU courses English Composition and First Year Seminar that follow the same guidelines as on-campus courses. The students round out their program with UL courses. Most students choose UL courses that focus on Irish culture; some choose courses that would satisfy other general education

requirements or provide an introduction to their major.

This study abroad model is worthy of attention since it provides first-year students with a rich cultural experience rather than adopting the usual approach of a junior year abroad. The presentation will explore the many positive aspects of the initiative. For example, it appears that the approach is particularly successful at enhancing the student's level of maturity and sense of responsibility for his or her own education. Students appear very motivated, and they have responded with unanimous enthusiasm. The presentation will also explore concerns expressed by both faculty and parents such as the fear of not bonding with the first-year class on campus, the distraction of study in a country where drinking is legal and adapting to unfamiliar teaching approaches.

Student Success: Residence Life and the Connection with NSSE's "Supportive Campus Environments"

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While post-secondary educational institutions participate in the 2006 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), practitioners and researchers find meaning and themes from the results. NSSE provides institutions with insight into the educational experiences and engagement of students. Kuh (2005) stated, "time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development" (p.8).

The 2004 NSSE results indicated that Queen's University performed well, and better than predicted, in the area of "Supportive Campus Environments". Approximately 95% of first-year students live in residence at Queen's. The high NSSE response rate (49%) provided Residence Life with an opportunity to draw some inferences about the results of first-year students (i.e., Supportive Campus Environments) and the Residence Life Program.

The intent of the Queen's Residence Life Program is to provide students with an opportunity to "integrate successfully into the University community" (Residence Mission, 2006) through programs that develop knowledge, skills, and abilities to help them succeed. The Program incorporates CAS standards (Miller, 2003) and learning outcomes into a variety of domains. Orientation and outcome-based educational programming are two areas which directly impact the first-year transition experience.

The Residence Orientation Program strives to incorporate intentional student learning and development and enhance educational experiences for students. Additionally, first-year students are exposed to an outcome-based educational program curriculum throughout the year. The curriculum is comprised of four areas: academic, greater community, health and wellness, and social. Monthly proactive and reactive programs are developed using student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences).

There are still a variety of challenges in delivering a seamless learning environment to first-year students at Queen's. These challenges provide practitioners with the opportunity to view the program through the lens of an "improvement-oriented ethos" (Kuh, et al, 2005).

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Residence Mission. (2006). Queen's University Residences: Mission Statement. Queen's University Residences: Kingston, ON, Canada.

Embedding Transition Philosophy Within the Academic, Professional and Administrative Processes of a Large University

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Last year we described our plans to embark on a program to institutionalize the first year experience at our university. This year, having completed the planning phase we now report on the pilot phase, implementing new transition practices across the institution based on nine focal areas. We stated then, and it has become more evident since, that critical issue driving this institutional initiative is, as the Policy Center for the First Year of College (n.d.) has found, that transition success is dependent on the creation of organizational structures and policies to provide a "comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year" and we are well aware, as McInnis (2003, 13) points out "bridging the gaps between academic, administrative and support programs [is] a substantial challenge".

The planning phase of our project identified nine key areas requiring collaborative attention from professional and academic staff. Our presentation will describe how we approach each of these interrelated areas from a combined academic (embedding teaching initiatives within the curriculum), professional (accompanying initiatives with appropriate professional knowledge and skills) and administrative (by creating protocols, policies and resources so the projects can become institutionalized) perspective. The areas we will describe include: academic integrity, team work and conflict resolution, faculty specific small group orientation sessions followed by a transition mentoring program, support for NESB students, enhanced virtual learning environments, early interventions, just-in-time information. Importantly, to create the organizational frameworks for long term success; these nine initiatives are underpinned by comprehensive staff development and communication strategies that include a visualization of the first year experience, and a resource identification, inventory & mapping project.

Technology and the First-Year Seminar: Hearing Students' Voices Through Podcasting

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As an Honors College we are constantly striving to create dynamic, interactive learning experience in our seminars. To achieve this goal we look to the cutting edge breakthroughs in technology. This past year the Honors College at Rutgers-Camden introduced podcasting in the classroom.

The Honors College podcasting initiative began as a modest venture into the possibilities of a

burgeoning new technology and its uses. We consider our efforts thus far a success as the technology has been used to create and implement twenty episodes of the program Dividing the Self. Dividing the Self is a show designed in coordination with Professor Paul Bernstein and his Honors Seminar students and showcases their personal stories.

The Honors College is initiating a series of seminar that will use podcasting as a supplementary tool. Also, we have extended podcasting outside the classroom to record Student Stories, detailing the complete student experience within the Honors College.

We see this as just the beginning of using this new technology in our curriculum and recruiting efforts. We are working with new seminar teachers to discuss new ways of making the classroom experience exciting, and we are even exploring the ways vidcasts can be used in the Honors College.

Our presentation will cover the process from the acquisition of the proper software and hardware to the implementation and distribution of podcasts. We will also discuss new ways to use the technology along with the more traditional ways that have been seen thus far, i.e. the transmission of lectures.

Transition from College to University: The First-Year Experience

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The presentation will fall into two sections. Section One, an analysis of the statistical data gathered during the research project will be presented by Dr Knox. This section will demonstrate differing first year experiences as students progress from community colleges to university study. When using the term 'first year experience' in this context, we may be referring to a student gaining advanced entry to a degree programme at academic year two or three level as well as to students entering into academic year one in the tertiary institution. The research data will consider both generic and subject specific issues that influence the successful transition from one sector to another. Dr Massie will present the second part of the report findings during which he will make reference to the importance of varying discourses in colleges and universities and to the difficulties encountered by 'non-traditional' students as they attempt to bridge the gap between the college and university experience.

Many students undertaking HNQ-Degree progression come from a background of relative poverty and the Scottish Executive's policy of social inclusion is highly significant in attracting them back to education, perhaps following less than positive experiences during high school education. The presenters will make reference to the creation and establishment of a network of practitioners and subject experts across the college and university sectors and a wide range of educational agencies in Scotland. The relationships built up between staff in cognate areas have engendered an environment of trust between the two sectors and have resulted in the creation of a strong platform upon which to build future co-operative projects.

The presentation will conclude by briefly discussing the importance of staff development and ongoing professional developments in both college and university sectors. The session will conclude with an opportunity for discussion of the germane issues.

Promoting Student Success Through Student Engagement

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The research findings are unequivocal. Student learning and student retention are correlated strongly with student engagement. The more actively engaged students are – with college faculty and staff, with other students, with the subject matter being learned – the more likely they are to persist in their college studies and to achieve at higher levels. The connection has been emphasized in a number of major studies and reports on the college experience.

As students become more integrated into the academic and social fabric of the campus community, their levels of commitment, academic self-confidence and motivation increase. This in turn influences their levels of persistence. To be successful retention efforts must address both academic and non-academic factors.

Success@Seneca incorporates the key research factors that address post-secondary retention and student success. An extensive 'Transition and Orientation' program prepares students to meet the challenges of academic life. Social activities, study skills and success workshops, and mock lectures are just a few of the ongoing sessions in which students actively participate. The 'College Coach' system provides ongoing support, encouragement, motivation and resource referrals as students meet with a 'coach' on a bi-weekly basis. The student stays connected, on-track, and accountable throughout their first year of studies. A user-friendly on-line 'Success' portal allows

students to build on their academic 'toolbox', explore career options, and enhance communication and relationship skills. An 'Early-warning' system allows staff to identify and assist 'at-risk' students, offering interventions and resources that lead to student success. Ongoing workshops, social activities, and electronic communication (e-mail) promotes a sense of connection and support.

Program staff tracked first year General Arts and Science students and found that, those students who participated in some or all, of the Success@Seneca program were, overall, more successful (all were promoted into second year) and obtained higher grade point averages than those students who did not participate.

Leadership Development Course for First-Year Students

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1.   Introduction to Korea and Seoul National University's Education for 1st year students.

Recently Korean Universities are showing heightened interest in the enhancement of the quality of higher education. The focus is on the contents of the curriculum for the incoming of freshmen, especially General Education (he courses for students' major are offered in sophomore thru senior years.). In the past, each individual college or school was responsible for providing GE courses": fundamentals of learning," "core curriculum" and general culture courses. Even though this practice might give the depth of discipline to the courses, it resulted in inflexibility and failure to meet the needs of the rapidly changing society and the students leaning desire. To cure these problems, SNU has created "Faculty of Liberal Education" to be primarily responsible for developing and implementing various innovative special GE courses and programs fit for the acceptance by the students, faculties and society in 2002.

2.   The needs of new comers and Special Courses and Special Programs offered by Faculty of Liberal Art Education, SNU

The Faculty of Liberal Education has paid attention to the survey of incoming students, conducted by SNU Center for Campus Life and Culture in 2004. According to the survey, the freshmen assessed their own leadership 'average' level (3.07 of 5 Likert Scale). But they regarded the leadership as 'important' level (3.83) in preparing their future career. This can be interpreted as the existence of the students' desire to seek the improvement of their leadership. Based upon this conclusion, College of Liberal Education introduced the "Leadership Development Program: Step into the future with confidence" to the freshmen in 2005.

3. Understanding Leadership development program: Step into the future

a. purpose of this course:

The purpose of this class is for the first and second year college students to have an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills. The curriculum consists of in the courses, learning from prominent speakers, and participating field trip activities to put the theories, enabling students to acquire essential knowledge.

b. Student and class analysis

The number of students of enrollment of this class and class number of each semester is: 1st semester,-2 classes, 173students, 2nd semester- 2classes, 187students in 2005, and 1st semester- 3 classes, 225 students in 2006. Class hour is every Tues., Wends., Thurs. PM 2:00-4:00. 1 credit course.

The ratio between male and female students participating in this program is 58:42. Regarding the total ratio of female student of SNU is 30%, the desire of leadership is more intensive in female students.

Freshmen account for 40%, sophomore 37%, and junior and above 23%. This demonstrates the strong need for a good leadership program/courses existing in the freshmen. And despite the original purpose of the program being mainly for the freshmen, also sophomore and above students had the need for developing their leadership, too.
c. curriculum of this course

15 week, one-semester course consists of the following:
-       building a 10 year future plan with a life planning expert,
-       Understanding other people's way of expression and empathizing, as well as our own, and learning about effective communication skills,

-       Getting an idea of the level of awareness in the Korean society through case studies of political, economic, and social transparency issues,
-       Acquiring an interest as well as experience in various fields by visits to companies and community service Practicing Korean and International manners and etiquette, preparing for and participating in a model international conference. And a lecture on the essence of leadership, displaying these qualities of leadership in life situations, and the importance of role models by well

known society leaders.

   d. Uniqueness of this Class

1) Dynamic interaction of Theory and Practice
Theoretical learning is followed by application through various activities For example, after the lecture on international conferences, students will apply what they learned in a model international conference of their own.

2) Usage Cases and examples

Mostly best and well-known leaders at subject area such as, CEO, Minister, Ambassador, Professors from Northwestern University, Harvard law School, University of Michigan, Industry CEOs, Chairman of Eugene Bell Foundation, President of AMCHAM Korea, Former minister, Ministry of Science and Technology Minister. US Embassy Commercial Department etc.

3)   Field Trip Learning

     There will be at least one field trip sessions involving visits to Korean and International companies and organizations.
     One Field trip to underprivileged organization or center.

     Students visit Etiquette Learning Place for their real experience for Western dinning etiquettes and Korean etiquettes.

     Students visit whole day training at outside institute for teamwork building intensified training.
     Visiting institution and companies are: UNESCO, KIM & Chang Law Firm, GM-Daewoo, MBC broadcasting center, Sam Sung Hospital, etc.
4)   Contextual Learning Structure of the Course Lectures

Students will be divided into groups for the field trip activities. Each student including the group leader will be assigned a role in the activities. This is a good example of 'situated learning'-contextualized learning: learning leadership by doing leadership.

5)   Pass/Fail student grading system.

The ratio of assessment: Attendance ---50%, Midterm report ---10%, Final report --- 20%, Teamwork activities 10%. As midterm and final assessment, students will be asked to turn in a report on the sessions they attended.

6) Financial Support

Faculty of Liberal Arts provides operating expenses while students paying their own field trip expenses. This sponsorship comes from Korean Ministry of Education and Human Recourse.

4. Effectiveness of the Course

1) Course evaluation of students

Students showed the 3. 83 level of satisfaction (N=161, SD=0.90. in 5 Likert Scale) for the course evaluation higher than the average 3.79(N=37,382, SD=0.84) for the other all GE courses. More specifically, students also gave high rating (4.0) in the area of achievement of their objectives in participating in the course, leadership competence development. It can be interpreted as their overall assessment that the course has helped their leadership skills substantially enhanced.

2) Addition of the English version of the Course.

The response from students was explosive. The enrollment was complete within 1-2 minutes from the moment of beginning of the registration. Therefore school had to add an English version of the course from this semester.

3) Creation of the special class for the USFK officers in Seoul.

The popularity translated into the fame and even the Headquarter of USFK showed keen interest in the program. Upon its request, the school (SNU) created another class combined with SNU students, in which 40 or so USFK elite officers were selected and sent to participate by formal memorandum of understanding agreement.

4) Getting internship opportunities
Because of its good contents and outcome, quite a few of the major corporations and public institutes, domestic or foreign, are now inviting to their internship the students who successfully completed the program. This internship opportunities generally lead to the formal employment.

5. The Tasks for the Improvement of the Course

        Unprecedented enrollment and subsequent increase in the number of classes for the course.
        How to reduce the high expenses to be borne both by the students and by the school.

        How to secure the budget for the operation of the Course
        How to make the lecturers committed for the Course
        How to reserve and find the places of learning, field trip, visiting.

        How to create differentiating courses reflecting the different levels of student and to
sequence these courses.
        How to provide continued learning in leadership going beyond the class.

Surviving the Storm: Impact of Institutional Change on a First-Year Cohort Program

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Simon Fraser University Surrey is a non-residential campus located in a highly commercialized area in a fast-growing primarily working and lower middle class Vancouver suburb. The student population is diverse, with a high proportion of non-native speakers of English.
The history of the campus in unusual: four years ago, after a change in government, Simon Fraser University assumed control of the former Technical University of British Columbia (TechBC). TechBC was established in 1997 as a public university with a mandate to offer technology-based programs of an applied nature. Changing government priorities saw a number of specialized post-secondary institutions in the province amalgamated into larger, more established provincial universities.

One of the programs at TechBC was TechOne, which served as an interdisciplinary first year for all students majoring in Information Technology, Interactive Arts, or Management and Technology.

TechOne became a flagship program for Simon Fraser University's new Surrey campus. Between 2002 and 2006, TechOne more than doubled its student numbers and was revised four times. SFU's original vision for TechOne was that it would become the first year of all degree programs in the Applied Sciences at the Surrey campus (Computing Science, Engineering Science, Interactive Arts and Technology, and Kinesiology) and would be run cooperatively by these academic units. That vision has proved impossible to implement, and TechOne is being revised again to become an independent program with its own budget, courses and faculty.

Although the past four years have been fraught with challenges, the successes of TechOne have inspired the creation of two new first-year cohort programs at the campus: Science Year One, an interdisciplinary science program, and Explorations, an interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences program. Both offer cohort-based learning, small classes, and time for faculty-student interaction and community building.

Two-Year College Students: Different Needs, Different Problems, Different Approaches

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The non-traditional, non-residential two-year technical college first year student (average age 26) needs differ from their 18 year old tradition college counter-part. Meeting their needs in a college success program requires a cooperative working relationship between the first year course, tutoring lab, retention counselor, student services, and counseling center. Less emphasis is placed on high school to college transition and more focus on empowering the student to simultaneously balance multiple roles such as academics, work, and family. Often these first generation college students require less theoretical approaches and more practical usable techniques. This can be achieved while addressing critical first year needs, such as critical thinking skills, goal setting, classroom and listening skills, time management, personal health and stress management, improving concentration and memory, test taking strategies and reducing test anxiety. These skills, coupled with Covey 7 Habits provided by a certified facilitator, are addressed in our 30 contact hour course. We will share our course curriculum that empowers the student to recognize their strengths and develop an individualized study system using their own unique learning style. In addition to that we add a lively two-hour new student orientation seminar prior to the start of each quarter; successful "lunch and learn" workshops throughout the year that make our ancillary services not only available but "user friendly" to students; and a tutoring lab were students feel accepted and comfortable to receive assistance in all subject areas through their academic career. We have found that this cooperative, interdisciplinary approach has improved student retention, students are evaluating services favorably and student GPA's are improving.

Integrating Academic Support and the Co-Curriculum in a Required Learning Community: Innovations for a Long-Standing First-Year Initiative

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Since 1975 St. Edward's University, a private liberal arts university in Austin, Texas, has introduced students to the University through a learning community which links a writing class with a section of Introduction to the Liberal Arts. All traditional first-year students participate in the program, choosing among themed sections of Introduction to the Liberal Arts, each of which is team-taught by faculty from different disciplines. The team-taught course allows students to read, discuss and learn about their chosen topic from several different disciplinary perspectives. The linked writing courses builds on this reading and discussion by providing writing and research assignments on related topics. Peer mentors also work with students in each section.

Panelists will discuss how this interdisciplinary team-taught program has changed to accommodate

a first-year class that grew from under 200 students to over 650 and how the program has been found to provide significant faculty development through the small teaching teams that make up the various sections of the learning community. They will also outline the following initiatives which have been added to the original program:

A reading class was developed for academically unprepared students. This one-credit-hour class is linked to a section of Introduction to the Liberal Arts and helps students develop reading, note taking and study strategies by working with material from the linked class.

A summer reading program coordinated with various curricular and co-curricular activities during the fall and spring semester (e.g., discussion groups, speakers, a theater production, art exhibits, and movies) was added.

An elective course, the First-Year Seminar in the Major, has most recently been developed. Team-taught by an academic advisor and a faculty member, this course introduces students to faculty and upper division students in the major and allows them to explore course offerings and career options for students in that field.

Viewing Student Retention Through a Cultural Capital Lens

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This Concurrent Session will commence with an overview of the structure of the presentation. The purpose of the research upon which this presentation is based is to attempt to identify a causal relationship between individual levels of cultural capital and student retention in Higher Education. The principal research instrument employed was a questionnaire by Sullivan (2003) who investigated the possibility of association between individual levels of cultural capital and educational attainment. The questionnaire was adapted to produce a more manageable instrument which could be completed in less than 15 minutes. This was achieved whilst increasing the questionnaire's level of reliability and, through factor analysis, confirming its validity.

Students in their final year of state funded education (Year 13) were recruited from three institutions and a total of 396 questionnaires were completed. Through the application of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), a cultural capital 'score' was attributed to each student. From this the upper and lower quartiles of the range were identified and 14 students were selected from the lower quartile and 18 from the upper quartile.

Focus groups were formed from the participating students and interviews in groups of 3 and 4 took place approximately 8 months prior to the students joining university. At university contact was established through email and students were asked to respond to a series of questions relating to the process of transition and integration.

The process of students reflecting and reporting on their   experience is on-going and the student 'feedback' element is not due to conclude until the end of April 2006. Accordingly it would be both premature and unsound to offer any findings at this stage. It is anticipated however that by the end of April 2006 all fieldwork will be completed and findings and conclusions can then be included in the presentation.

The Student Affairs/Academic Affairs Partnership in Learning Communities

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The goal of this session is to demonstrate one example of a successful partnership between student affairs and academic affairs and allow participants to develop strategies for similar partnerships on their campuses. The successful integration of student development theory into the pedagogy of the learning communities and the individual faculty at Buffalo State provides one such example. To open the conversation the presenters will have session participants introduce themselves and then discuss the nature of the student affairs/academic affairs relationship on their campus. Next we will explain the learning community model at Buffalo State and how student development theory was integral to its design and development.

We will provide a brief overview of student development theory and why we feel it critical to the pedagogy of our learning communities. Cohorts will be divided according to levels of campus support for successful partnering between the divisions. Small groups discussions of experience

with student development theory, faculty attitudes towards students and learning, and the role of student affairs.

The next aspect of the presentation will be an overview of the faculty development process for the learning communities at Buffalo State. Presenters will explain how fundamentals of student development theory were presented during this program and how we gained widespread acceptance among the faculty. This discussion will conclude with specific examples of how individual professors modified their pedagogy based on the lessons of student development theory.

Next we will engage the cohorts in discussion of the faculty development processes at their institutions. Based upon their understanding of this process as well as the faculty's receptivity to student development theory, the session will conclude with a discussion of the significant common obstacles and how they can be overcome.

Hitting a Moving Target: How to Create a Successful First-Year Experience for the Community College Student

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Community college students present a unique challenge to those seeking to develop successful first year experience programs. Developing and maintaining contact with these students can be difficult due to their extreme time commitments to work, classes, studying and social activities. As a result, their contact with the college can be extremely limited. They often come to class, leave to go to work, go home and don't return to the campus until they have their next class. If they remain on campus at all, it is likely to involve a solitary activity such as using library or computing services. In addition, community college students are less likely to have the same level of financial and emotional support that their counterparts at four year colleges experience. Often, students are not adequately prepared academically to meet the challenges presented in the college setting. So, the question that arises is "how do we develop and maintain effective relationships with these students, and how will this promote a deeper connection to their college experience."

Participants in this roundtable discussion will address this question and others as the presenters attempt to raise awareness about the most critical obstacles preventing many community college students from making a meaningful connection to their institution. Issues such as students work commitments, commuting demands, inadequate support from parents and career indecision will be

discussed. Creative suggestions about successful programs and activities will be encouraged so that all may gain from this knowledge.   The presenters will lead and facilitate the discussion and attempt to summarize ideas and suggestions on how to develop or improve first year experience programs for community college students. This will leave all participants with an idea of how to return to their colleges and develop new approaches for meeting the needs of new students.

Administration and Impact of the FYE Program

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After completing a two-year pilot program, Tamagawa University initiated a campus-wide first-year seminar program in April 2005 comprised of two required 2-credit hour courses, First-Year Seminar 101 and First-Year Seminar 102. Approximately 1,800 first-year students are enrolled in 64 classes taught by 64 trained instructors. Each class consists of between twenty five to thirty students. Students are required to take First-Year Seminar 101 in the spring semester and 102 in the fall.

The new program is administered by Tamagawa University's FYE Education Center. The Center manages the university's core curriculum including the first year seminars and other courses pertinent to FYE education. In charge of the entire Tamagawa FYE education system, the Center is responsible for developing FYE curriculum; improving the FYE program; overseeing teacher training and meetings on class management; distributing information to faculty, administration, and parents; and editing FYE textbooks. In addition, the Center has coordinated Tamagawa University's responsibilities as one of the co-hosts of the International Conference on The First-Year Experience since 2004.

In this session, we describe the new FYE program and discuss the educational outcomes of the program and the Tamagawa FYE educational system from various angles including a comparison of Japanese and American FYE systems. We will also examine the impact of the establishment of the FYE Education Center.

Student Satisfaction: More Than an "A"

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Since 1995 Temple University has offered an elective freshman seminar called Learning for the New Century. The course was designed to introduce new students to the purposes of higher education and to the skills necessary to succeed in the college environment. In 2005, over twenty sections enrolled close to 400 students. A similar number of sections are scheduled for Fall 2006.

Based on the number of students choosing to take this course, the consistent number of sections offered each fall, and the continued interest in teaching the course, the program has many indicators pointing to success. But, is the course meeting the needs of the students at the University?

Current data for the seminar shows that 67% of the students received an "A", but only 54% indicate that the course had value – even though 86% of the students thought the course was taught well. What can available data show us about this disconnect between outcomes and expectations? About how to improve the course for the future?

Temple's Course and Teaching Evaluation (CATE) form allows for respondents to distinguish between instructor-related and course-related items. Therefore, data from CATEs can be used to analyze the effectiveness of the freshman seminar.

The session will:

(1)   review course-related data, e.g. student interest, expected grades compared to actual grades, course objectives, course materials, effective use of technology, and evaluation of assignments

(2)   present recommendations

(3)   and discuss "next steps," including assessment

The goal of the presentation is to share the "re-envisioning" process with the participants in the session and engage them in a conversation surrounding the difficulties and opportunities that arose during the process.

Creating an Effective First-Year Retention Plan

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This session presents a step-by-step process to create a success-and-retention plan for first-year students. Each step—gathering data, preparing for the creation of a plan, writing the plan, creating action plans to support the initiative, putting in place a process to ensure progress, and assessing success—is detailed. Throughout the session, exercises facilitate engagement of participants in the session.

Gathering data: Suggestions of baseline data are offered that are fundamental to this data-driven process

Preparing for the creation of the plan: Engaging the community is fundamental to success and the creation of the plan offers an opportunity to start or enhance the implementation of a broad-based program.

Writing the plan: There are essentials that need to be incorporated in the actual document, and these are outlined.

Creating action plans: Action plans need to assign responsibility, detail a timeline, and prepare for assessment

Ensuring progress: Suggestions are made for a procedure to make sure that the plan is more than a document and becomes a true guide for implementation.

Assessing success: "Closing the assessment loop" is a critical piece for true institutionalization of strategies and change in the culture.

The Role of Homesickness and Coping Skills in Undergraduate Women's Optimism

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In order to promote student development, universities have to address students' needs on social, personal and academic levels (Kuh, 2006a). Personal and social dimensions matter because they can contribute to factors such as academic success (Kuh, 2006b; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2006) and dropout risk (McGaha & Fitzpatrick, 2005). The purpose of the present study was to examine how homesickness and coping strategies were related to optimism for undergraduate women.
The sample (n=173 females) completed a questionnaire packet to assess the variables. The

respondents were assured that their participation was anonymous and voluntary. They completed (a) subscales from Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub's (1989) Coping Strategies Scale (focus, denial, religion, planning, restraint, emotional/instrumental social support, suppression of competing activities); (b) Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad, and Currid's (1998) university dislike subscale of the Homesickness Scale; and (c) Scheier, Carver, and Bridges' (1994) Life Orientation Test to assess optimism.

Regression analysis indicated that homesickness and coping strategies accounted for 33% of the variance in optimism. Beta values indicated that university dislike and the coping skills of religion, focus and planning were unique contributors to optimism. Female students who dislike the university were less optimistic. Women who utilized religion and planning strategies were more optimistic. The focus coping strategy reflects an attention and venting of emotions; this strategy was associated with less optimism.

These findings highlight that a targeted approach to student support might be useful. Training in more effective strategies (e.g., planning) could empower women to feel optimistic and confident, which might increase their academic success. Greater attention and intervention towards more detrimental factors (e.g., homesickness, focus strategies) might ameliorate their impact on women's optimism. Such an amelioration could serve a protective function. Thus, if we can give women more effective psychological tools, then they might have a greater likelihood of retention and graduation.

The Millennial Student Project: First-Year Findings

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A diverse university community has benefits for all students in breaking patterns of segregation and stratification. Students learn better in an environment with diverse perspectives and become better prepared for our pluralistic, global society (Gurin, 2005). The "Millennial" generation is embarking onto college with a new way of thinking about diversity shaped by their real-life and media-defined experiences (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Accurate data on how students perceive diversity and their depth of their knowledge regarding social justice issues is necessary in order to better serve them. In order to build programs that remain relevant and responsive, it is important for universities to be aware of the changing attitudes and needs of students as student demographic and attitudinal changes occur. Because the first-year experience is critical for student development

and retention, it is imperative that universities have accurate data on first-year students and diversity.

This session will discuss how changing demographics and global trends impact diversity in higher education, presenting original research from a research extensive university. Based on previous research and a literature review, the Millennial Student Project presents a new framework for looking at diversity issues, highlighting data from the first-year experience. Important findings include the changing nature of student perceptions regarding diversity. Although students are generally supportive of services for underrepresented populations, the concept of diversity has become so diluted that discrimination may continue to occur as social justice issues are given less focus. However, the more students are exposed to diversity, the more they value social justice issues.

These findings will be illustrated through presentation of the new model and data and through a short film featuring students in the study. Dialogue will be encouraged throughout the session to be continued post-conference through an international consortium on the issue of students and diversity.

Serendipity Squared: Adding Exponential Value to the FYE Equation

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As a research led institution, The University of Auckland was guided in the development and implementation of its transition and retention strategies by international research, best practice and the specific needs of the University.

Initial strategies for transition and retention focused on students and student support. Institutional change in terms of governance or in academia was excluded by design. As the University's transition and retention strategy and structures have become embedded, the institution is changing its overall strategies, structures and governance to align with the student support strategy. Is this accidental, co-incidental, merely a question of timing, or the result of a particular pressure?

The outcome is that the one caveat that the student support strategy specifically excluded – institutional change – is now a key positive driver and performance indicator of the institution as whole.

This paper discusses the theoretical model that formed the basis for the development and implementation of the transition and retention strategy, and examines that element of an internationally recognized model specifically excluded originally. The paper examines key milestones that informed governance and institutional change, and how the fifth element of the Beatty-Guenter Model was realized by default.

The nexus between theory and practice presents a challenging environment for both researchers and practitioners. Developing an understanding of the factors and caveats that influence scholars and theorists on the one hand, and innovators or operators on the other, and how these interface with a key strategic arena such as transition and the first year experience, is complex. When accepted sequential order in both theory and practice are subverted, the conundrum is even more challenging. The University of Auckland's response to transition and retention has been remarkably successful. After five years of development and nurturing it has a distinctly unique outcome indicator and a wide range of interesting manifestations.

Developing, Implementing, and Embedding Appropriate Strategies and Models of Practice to Support FYE in Research Intensive Institutions

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This roundtable discussion will be participant-led, promoting open discussion and a sharing of practice. Drawing from their own experiences of implementing a diverse range of first-year-at-university, transition and peer support practices, models and strategies the presenters will facilitate discussion exploring how programs evolve in response to institutional contexts and how different institutions manage both the student and academic realms to maximize innovation and add value to the campus experience. The presenters will encourage participants to share practice, discuss the challenges and identify new opportunities.

The session will further explore opportunity for collaboration and networking across research

intensive institutions.

Using Games to Impart Lifelong Learning: Preparing Students for Financial Success

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Since 1999, The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has offered a three-credit hour first-year seminar as part of its core curriculum. The Seminar in Critical Inquiry is taught by faculty and staff from a variety of academic disciplines. Section themes vary by instructor, but all seminar sections work to strengthen students' academic performance, enhance students' essential academic skills, and increase student interaction with faculty and other students. As part of funding received through a Title V grant, the Entering Student Program is committed to developing web-based study skills modules to support the transitional course instruction.

The last module developed with seed funding from the grant was an interactive online game designed to help students see the connection between effective financial planning and academic success. The objective of the game is to build a house with all the components. For the house to be built successfully, the player must graduate in four years within the allotted sum of money, while making good decisions academically and financially through the duration of the game. The game tries to replicate various scenarios that may be experienced by the students and their decisions in each scenario guide the progress of the game. A worksheet is used along with the game to emphasize specific points and to engage students in the data presented in the game.

The modules were piloted in 2005 using focus groups. A survey assessment instrument was administered to students upon completion of the module. The students were asked to comment on the module style, design, instructions, and content. Responses were rated on a Likert scale. Open-ended questions allowed students to comment on their experience. Anecdotal data from instructors suggest that the students remember information presented in the module and use the information in later parts of the class.

This session discusses the procedure used to develop the module, provides a demonstration of the module, and presents the assessment to examine its efficacy.

Supporting New Learners: Challenges and Opportunities

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This presentation focuses on the impact that the changing nature of the student population in the UK will have on how universities support their students. Widening participation is a key policy development in UK higher education. This is at the same time that the sector is seeking to expand from 43% to 50% of the 18-30 age group, and increasing the cost of studying. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has accepted the argument from many universities that Widening Participation is not simply about changing who participates, but needs to be evaluated from a holistic perspective including the student experience and employability.

The presentation will explore the changing nature of participation based on Travis analysis of participation levels. This will enable the development of a framework of where UK Higher Education has reached in the shift from an elite to Universal model. The change in the student body places key demands on the Learning, Teaching and Assessment approaches and in supporting the student experience, namely:

• students increasingly enter with 'different' qualifications to the norm.

• students are now more likely to work through university in an unstructured approach to 'earning while learning'.

• the student expectation has shifted from one in which they are prepared to 'fit in' to a traditional support system, to a situation where they require a more modern approach.

• increasingly, students are selective in the activities in which they engage, and often only participate in accredited work.

The presentation will consider the progress that has been achieved to date across the sector with changes to the student body. It will then utilize case study research undertaken across the UK to demonstrate how universities are changing to meet the needs of tomorrow's learners. With reference to changing patterns in the USA and Australia.

The Supplemental Instruction(SI) Model for Peer-Led Study: Implementing SI in the Canadian Context

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Founded over thirty years ago at the University of Missouri, Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a program of regularly scheduled group-study sessions attached to difficult courses and led by students who have successfully completed the courses. These sessions provide students with opportunities to acquire discipline-specific learning strategies, to use the language of the discipline, and to apply the skills taught in the course, all in an interactive learning environment that promotes social and academic integration. SI is a well-established approach, with extensive research to demonstrate its success in improving student performance and retention.

Yet, there are unique challenges faced by Canadian institutions in translating this model of academic support into practice. There are union concerns, for example. Other challenges arise with funding, and the compensation for student leaders (most US programs operate within the framework of national grants.)   While the support available for implementing this program is impressive, our collective experience has been that the practical concerns we faced in Canada were not addressed. Sharing these challenges, and exploring how to overcome them, is the purpose of this presentation.

Participants will learn about the essential elements of an SI program, and about how three Canadian universities have adapted this model. Presenters will be prepared to discuss conditions and resources required to start a program, and the on-going issues such as staffing, training, funding, resources, and assessment.   They will share the barriers and benefits encountered on their campuses, and encourage participants to predict challenges they would anticipate on their own. Because of the interactive nature of the Round Table, the presenters will have prepared to explore a number of issues, to be determined according to the interests of the participants.

Handouts will be available, and participants will be encouraged to join our informal Canadian SI email discussion group, as well as the more established forums of the international SI group.

The Unity Experience: A Personalized FYE Course

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This presentation presents longitudinal follow-up to a session presented in the 14th International Conference on the First-Year Experience on Unity College's first-year experience course, The Unity Experience. The course was being introduced in 2000 as an interdisciplinary blend of academic content and skills. Based on on-going assessment, the course has since evolved into an experiential course based on student development theory and student-active pedagogy. The course, which is required of all first-semester students (with a separate version for transfer students), begins with a weeklong wilderness trip and builds on the resultant group process and camaraderie in an effort to get students oriented appropriately and keep them engaged with a wide variety of campus and community resources.

All course activities revolve around one or more of the three course goals: personal development, community engagement, and environmental awareness. Students are expected to explore and join campus co-curricular clubs or service groups and investigate their academic majors through structured meet-and-greet socials with program advisors and upper-level students in the same majors. They also participate in service learning activities, ranging from campus landscaping projects to community-based fund-raising dinners for social organizations. They explore connections among various course activities and their personal development and career goals by making regular entries in a reflective journal. Because Unity students are interested in environmental issues but often from a variety of diverse perspectives, students learn to listen to one another in and out of class and interact respectfully.

Student achievement is evaluated through portfolios; students are encouraged and trained to find creative ways to document their work and activities over the course of the semester. All portfolios are displayed in a portfolio expo at the end of the semester, a large-group celebration of the semester's activities.

Given steadily improving student success rates, the college administration is very supportive of the course, but the content and pedagogy are left completely up to the teaching faculty, who represent a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. Faculty meet weekly in a reflective practices group, planning and evaluating teaching strategies and learning activities, always trying to find ways to convey information experientially rather than didactically.

Doing the Right Thing Right: Reconfiguring Learning Communities at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

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A useful piece of folk wisdom holds that doing the right thing is not enough: the real test lies in doing the right thing right. Our session will describe how an ongoing learning community initiative at the University of Alabama at Birmingham attempts to do the right thing right. Learning communities play a prominent role in our institution's Freshman Year Experience initiative. During the last five years we have piloted and assessed learning community initiatives for both conditionally and non-conditionally admitted freshmen. We will soon be offering the third stage of our learning community initiative in conjunction with a comprehensive five-year institutional plan to strengthen core-curriculum offerings. Our session will provide an overview of our three-tiered learning community program and its institutional evolution.

During our session we will discuss (1) how we initially documented an institutional need for learning communities which address the academic diversity of our student populations and the complexity of their learning styles; (2) how we secured three rounds of grant support for our learning communities; (3) how we designed and implemented a best-practices course strategy whose common-content component emphasizes interdisciplinary critical thinking and close interaction with academic advisors; and (4) how we used assessment data to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses our learning community models and thus configure them as a progressive sequence.

Handouts for our session will include graphic models and brief verbal descriptions of our learning community course designs, subjective responses to our learning communities from students and faculty, retention statistics for our learning communities, and summaries of student gains in critical thinking reported by our learning community sections.

Responding to Diversity: Success Strategies Among First-Year Programs

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First-year programs at a metropolitan university must meet the needs of a diverse population: Students admitted provisionally, academically advanced students, and returning (older) students are groups that present the university with challenges to serve them well and retain them to graduation. This session will describe the Learning Communities Program, the Donaghey Scholars Program, and the Adult Student Advocacy Program - three programs developed to respond respectively to these diverse groups. Presenters are writing teachers and administrators in these programs.   The Learning Communities Program has been in place at UALR for several years. In the past, it linked the Fundamentals of Writing course with reading courses or first-year core courses. More recently, the program has been revitalized to link the First-Year Experience course, a course in orientation and learning skills, with the Fundamentals of Writing course.   The Donaghey Scholars Program, a university-wide honors program at UALR, meets students at the other end of the academic spectrum. Students are heavily recruited from state high schools; each entering class also includes international students. During the first year, the goal of the program, in addition to presenting rigorous curriculum, is to build community. Students have a Scholars Lounge and a faculty/staff that nurtures them and closely monitors their progress. First-year Scholars participate in a weekly Colloquium to orient them to the program and to the university, and to help them bond with each other.   Older returning students are served by Adult Student Advocacy (an arm of the Office of Campus Life) and welcomed into first-year writing classes designed to meet the needs of experienced working people. Often these students' academic skills outreach their own assessment of them, and faculty are alerted to help them become comfortable in the classroom and achieve a sense of belonging at a university where the average student age is 28. These students, who often expect to feel out of place, often discover that they "set the curve," and delight in mentoring younger first-year students - in essence forming a non-age-related community.   The session presenters will offer handouts detailing the structure of the programs and academic assignments designed to meet the needs of the three groups.

Building Inquiry Skills for First-Year Student Success: WISPR in the Library

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Heeding the recommendations of the Boyer Report, University of Calgary Administration is actively supporting further integration of Inquiry-Based Learning into the undergraduate curriculum. A number of first-year courses now focus not only on the content necessary to give freshman a foundation in the discipline, but also in the processes necessary to do research in their field of study. Librarians recognized that information literacy skills are essential for student success in inquiry-based learning environments and applied for funding to develop a "building skills for inquiry" syllabus to assist student development of these skills.

The grant enabled collaboration with an instructional designer and technical developers to create the web-based Workshop on the Information Search Process for Research (WISPR) in the Library. The WISPR framework is based upon the theoretical model of information seeking developed by Carol Collier Kuhlthau, taking students through the entire process of library research from topic selection to search closure. For each module in the workshop, actions and strategies, thoughts and feelings, and interactive activities are presented to assist students' progress to the next phase. The workshop also includes an online logbook that students use to document their work as well as to reflect upon the process of doing library research.

The most meaningful use of WISPR is when it is embedded within the course curriculum. Sections of the workshop are customizable so that individual librarians can tailor it to suit particular course content. This maximizes collaboration with teaching faculty and provides students with a learning experience that is relevant to their research needs within that discipline.

This session will provide an overview of the development process for WISPR, a demonstration the workshop's unique features, a description of the collaboration with teaching faculty to integrate WISPR into their course curricula, and present findings about freshman student learning using WISPR.

Exploring Learning Differences: A Successful Transition Course for First-Year Students With Learning Disorders

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This objectives of this session are threefold: (1) to discuss the unique challenges that college presents for first-year students with learning disorders; (2) to describe a successful transition course, "Exploring Learning Differences: Strategies for Success " developed to help students with learning disorders meet these challenges and (3) to describe the results of the evaluation of the course which indicates that the class provides students with learning disorders a network of mutual support, facilitates student understanding and acceptance of disability, and transition and adjustment into college.

The session will begin with an interactive discussion of some of the unique challenges that college presents for first-year students with learning disabilities and Attention -Deficit /Hyperactivity Disorder. This discussion will include a review of research literature on the transition needs of students with learning disorders, trends in student developmental theory and disability studies, as well as our own clinical experiences.

Next, the course "Exploring Learning Differences: Strategies for Success " will be described including how the course came to be developed on our campus and how first-year students with learning disorders are recruited and admitted to the class. Hand- outs describing the course goals, content, and methodology will be distributed. Strategies utilized in the course that facilitate peer support and self-exploration will be demonstrated through a video presentation.   Based on this information, participants will be able to develop a similar course at their own institution.

The presentation will end with a description the in-depth evaluation of both the long and short-term   impact of the course. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to 222 students who had taken the course up to eight years previously.   Students perceptions of the immediate impact of the course were assessed by a pre/post version of the questionnaire administered to 68 students taking the class. Chi-Square analyses conducted on each question indicated that the class provides students with learning disorders a network of mutual support, facilitates student understanding and acceptance of disability, and transition and adjustment into college.

The Effect of Learning Style and Teaching Style on Academic Success

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Improving the academic performance of first-year students is an important goal in ensuring their successful transition to college. A number of variables influence the academic performance of first-year students. Among these is learning style, which influences how a student processes information most effectively, the type of information they focus on, and how they choose to organize material. Compounding academic performance anxiety is the fact that students must deal with the teaching style of different professors. A professor's teaching style can influence the classroom atmosphere, what material is emphasized, and how students are evaluated. When a student's learning style differs from a professor's teaching style, the resulting mismatch can not only result in discomfort for the student but also decreased academic performance.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was used to determine learning style and teaching style. This personality inventory consists of four preference scales. Each scale contains opposite poles that reflect characteristic behaviors. Although every person displays behaviors characteristic of both poles, they have a preference for one of the poles. This preference results in the individual's learning style or teaching style. Differences in any of the preference scales between the student and professor can result in discomfort, confusion, and decreased academic performance. For example, students with a particular learning style tend to focus upon factual information and memorize those facts. If their professor has a teaching style that emphasizes concepts and the relationship between concepts these students have difficulty with the course. Memorizing facts, the student's preferred learning style will not result in mastery of inferential material.

Some students are confused by this mismatch of learning style and teaching style. Poor exam grades are often responded to by confusion: "I don't know what I did wrong" followed by "I memorized all of the facts" for a factually oriented learning style or "I understood all the material" for a student who emphasizes abstract theory. This confusion might be responsible, at least in part, for the marginal academic performance of some first-students.

Over the past seven years research by the authors has demonstrated the impact of learning style on exam grades. In introductory psychology, chemistry, and biology courses students with specific learning styles consistently had exam scores approximately one letter grade lower on exams that emphasized inferential material. On chemistry exams these same students had difficulty completing the exam in the allotted time when compared to students with the opposite learning style. In addition, a physics professor found that students with a particular learning style consistently scored one letter grade lower in an introductory physics course. In addition, note taking styles were indicative of different learning styles. Students who focus on factual information had lecture notes that were very detailed, but lack insight into conceptual organization; while abstract learners had lecture notes that often missed facts.

Strategies that students can use to compensate for different teaching styles and to succeed in college where they will face a diversity of teachers and teaching styles will be discussed. All instructors can benefit from this discussion (regardless of their degree of knowledge and

understanding of the MBTI). An understanding of their learning style is important for the first-year students so that they can adjust and develop techniques that allow them to make a successful transition to college and beyond.

The Relationship of Student Needs to Self-Esteem and Assertiveness in First-Year University Students

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The aim of this study is to explore the relationship of perceived social support, psychological well-being, anxiety, depression, needs for help to self-esteem, and assertiveness in first year university students.

This study was conducted with 170 first year female students age 19, 5, from ten faculties at the University of Latvia. Students filed out the following self-report instruments in November: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being, State-Trait Anxiety Scale, Beck Depression Inventory-II, Survey of Student Needs, and five months later, in April, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Rathus Assertiveness Scale, and repeatedly Beck Depression Inventory-II.

The results indicated that students with a high level of perceived social support in November reported higher scores on all dimensions of psychological well-being. Perceived social support from friends highly correlated .60 with the positive relations with others subscale of psychological well-being. The results indicate those students with higher scores in perceived social support and all dimension of psychological well-being. They had higher level of self-esteem and assertiveness after 5 month. Students with high self-esteem and assertiveness have low scores of depression in November and 5 month later.

Female students with lower self-esteem and assertiveness had lower scores on all dimension of psychological well-being in November. Students with low self-esteem and assertiveness have moderate depression scores in April. Students with lower perceived social support had negative correlation with anxiety and depression and needs for help in the problem areas: social relations, learning skills, and problems related with mental health.

Ensuing the Transition of Nontraditional Students in the UK

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In 1992, the old regime of established Universities in the UK was broadened to include a significant number of "new" universities, mainly created from existing polytechnics and colleges of higher education. The new era gradually saw an expansion in new types of student entering higher education. This process has been further accelerated with the introduction in 2001 of Foundation Degrees, two year sub-degree programmes largely based at satellite colleges.

The rapid expansion of new higher education programmes has brought with it a whole range of challenges. The students on the new programmes are probably not traditional 18 year old school leavers. Many are mature students with families or with a greater range of both personal and academic problems. Many come from work or from vocational college backgrounds, not straight from academic programmes in schools. The role of induction programmes and initial modules in personal and academic development have therefore become key to aiding students through the first few weeks.

Institutionally there are challenges, too. There are issues of marrying up of two sets of MIS data, two registration systems, two sets of library inductions, two sets of student support systems. The collaborative partner students have to learn to belong to and identify with two institutions, as do their staff. How can a sense of "belongingness" be communicated to and shared with the new students?

We have to learn from our mistakes, learn to manage the transition to higher education effectively to produce the best possible student experience at the most critical time of the higher education career – the beginning of semester one, year one. This is true for all students, but for non-traditional learners it is arguably even more important. If we fail to get it right, what are the effects in terms of retention and student success?

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The Bridge Program: Supporting a Successful Transition to Distance Education

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We will present a background on what we know about the retention and success of working adult students in distance classes at UMUC and how this research informed the design of the online retention initiatives. We will then provide an overview of each initiative's purpose and operations. Participants will learn both the mechanics of an online support system and the content. For instance, we will provide the objectives for the online orientation course and how we address issues of teaching note taking online; an excerpt of the training for online tutors and a visual of an online tutor study area; a menu of conversation topics for online mentors; and, sample scenarios of the online learning coaches' virtual activities that enrich online classroom learning environments and related community building. We will conclude with a summary of our findings on program impact and ensuring program modifications or enhancements.

Supplemental Instruction(SI): A Student Success Model Across International Cultures

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Since its debut at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) in 1973, Supplemental Instruction (SI) has expanded from a promising academic support model in the U.S. to an international network that influences global education. The model lends itself to a number of

innovative applications. In the thirty years since its development, international collaboration has played a key role in the growth and success of SI. A key contributor to SI's expansion has been a strong training component. Faculty and staff from over 1,500 institutions representing 30 countries have attended SI training workshops. These trainings have been the basis for dialogue on a worldwide scale. Within the presence of cultural differences, the shared value of global education provides a strong foundation for collaborative professional relationships among all of our SI colleagues.

With its international implementation, the SI model has been adapted and innovative strategies have been employed to meet the distinct needs of students in various cultures and educational systems. These educational systems differ in many ways, including philosophy, culture, budget, and student population, but all are still able to incorporate the core values of SI into the fabric of their individual organizations. Early on, Dr. Deanna Martin, the founder of SI, decided that the model should be modified by its users rather than its creators. We believe that SI should be fluid rather than rigid and dynamic, rather than static. As intended, the SI model has proven to be very versatile, and this is a primary reason why SI has been able to expand globally.

This session will provide an opportunity for participants to work together and engage in discussion on variations of SI and how it has been adapted to fit the diverse needs of different international cultures and disciplines.

Team-Teaching: Innovative Partnerships for Success

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Teaching partners from UNO's faculty and Student Affairs will present "Team-Teaching FYE - Innovative Partnerships for Success", mirroring the thriving combination of Academic and Student Affairs at our institution. We will explain several elements that make our program unique, the development of the model, share some reflections by teaching partners who have been involved since its inception, and discuss our assessment plans and results.

The FYE program's requirements for teaching partners include attendance at each others' classes, an integrated syllabus and grading structure, individual interviews with all students, participation in a supportive teaching circle, and an annual workshop. Students' requirements include attendance at campus events, individual interviews with the FYE faculty, academic and career exploration, and library instruction and a related project.

The model was launched in 2004, ironically during a time of budget cutbacks at the University. With FYE authority Betsy Barefoot's facilitation, a two-day workshop helped teaching partners bond as a group and hone in on the most important elements to include in the model. Two sets of teaching partners on the panel will discuss how the model plays out in practice, problems that have been encountered in the program, and the intended and unintended connections team-teaching has forged.

Assessment has taken place on several fronts – institutional, programmatic, and course-specific. Survey questions have been built into ongoing institutional assessment to examine how FYE correlates with a variety of student responses, for example Your First College Year (YFCY) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assessments. We have also examined some over time performance differences between FYE and non-FYE students (persistence, GPA). Three faculty have ongoing Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) projects examining different elements of the courses for students, including the impact of teaching teams and time management exercises. We have also designed some cross-program performance-based direct assessment measures, including common assignments like the letter to an incoming first-year student. Finally, quantitative and qualitative student feedback will be shared with the audience.

The First-Year Student Experience: The Challenge of Diversity

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The University of Paisley, Scotland, has fully embraced the government's widening participation agenda. Consequently it consistently recruits well above national benchmarks for the proportion of students from state schools, low participation neighborhoods and families with no prior history of experience in higher education. Further, its institution-wide approach to the provision of flexible routes into and through higher education has resulted in a very diverse student population, with approximately 50% students studying on a part-time basis and approximately 75% importing recognized prior learning into their new programme of study at Paisley. In addition, the University also has a reputation for exceeding national benchmarks on non-completion.

This paper presents a brief review of the five-year longitudinal study of the 2000/01 cohort of new entrants (2214 students), which has explored the dynamics of student flow into out, of and through University, (Knox and McGillivray, 2004); developed a model of student integration (Houston, Knox and Rimmer, 2006); addressed issues of college to university transition (Knox, 2003); set the Paisley experience within an international (Knox, McCormak and Rimmer, 2005) and national (Johnston, Knox and MacLeod, 2005) context.

The findings of this study have informed an institution-wide debate on the factors affecting student performance, persistence and progression and have given momentum to the establishment of Paisley's First Year Student Experience (FYSE) Project.

The genesis of the FYSE Project will be outlined and the various challenges addressed along the way will be reported, including ensuring institution-wide support for the Project, while meeting the requirements of different Schools each with its own student profile and support needs, and building in the student voice.

The paper addresses many of the conference themes and sets the scene for a fruitful discussion with fellow delegates on the challenges faced in the twenty-first century world of higher education.

Mapping Self-Assessment to Achievement - 18 Months Later

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The University of Portsmouth have introduced Personal Development Planning (PDP) commencing with the Individual Learning Profile (ILP); a paper-based, self-assessment of confidence in key skills (Numeracy, ICT, Verbal Communication, Time Management, Basic Academic Skills and Higher Academic Skills) completed by 1st year students during induction week. The extent of information generated by the ILP offers a valuable data source, thus the current authors identified a number of interrelated research projects with both internal and external and, applied and theoretical significance, to be investigated in three stages:

· Stage 1: evaluate the reliability, stability and validity of the ILP.

· Stage 2: identify causal relationships between previous academic qualifications, age, gender and ILP confidence scores.

· Stage 3: determine the predictive validity of the ILP confidence data, with retention, progression, academic outcome and 1st destinations as dependent variables.

Findings from Stage 1 and 2 (based on data from over 3,300 1st year students entering HE in 2004) demonstrating the reliability and stability of the ILP were presented at the First International Conference on Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Assessment, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, June 12-14. The current research revisits these students 18 months later in order to begin stage 3 of the research, outlined above. Thus the authors will determine whether on entry confidence can predict retention, progression and academic achievement later in the student life-cycle (data is currently being analyzed). This paper aligns strongly to the recently published Measuring and Recording Student Achievement report (Burgess, 2004) highlighting the need for evidence-based research to support the introduction self-assessment within PDP activities. Furthermore, this evaluation is based on a sound theoretical underpinning associated with the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). The outcomes of this research will have resonance with other HE institutions, contemplating PDP initiatives as well as significant theoretical implications.

Establishing a Track Record of Success: Assessing Effectiveness and Engagement in a Canadian First Year Transition Program

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At the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, the University Life 101 program is a first year seminar that has been established in order to address many of the transition and retention issues that

are prevalent for first year students on our campus. University Life 101 is a voluntary, non-credit, fee-for-service first year seminar. The program is peer-led, and is delivered during the first term of the academic year. University Life 101 has been in existence at the University of Saskatchewan for seven years; for the last four years, comprehensive assessment data regarding the student experience in the program has been collected.

This presentation will focus on the recent and rigorous assessment processes that have been implemented as a part of the University Life 101 program in order to determine its usefulness for first year students, and its ultimate effect on the retention of those students to our university. The presentation will address three key areas: (1) a description of the University Life 101 program and the Canadian context for first year seminars and programming; (2) a description of the assessment processes used as a part of the University Life 101 program; and (3) a description of how the results of this assessment have both highlighted the need for expanded, integrated first year retention programming on our campus and informed the practices used within the current first year seminar. Delegates who attend the presentation will be presented with a brief analysis of the collective evaluation data, and subsequently learn about the key elements of our first year programming that that lead to the highest levels of first year student success on our campus.

First-Year Assessment Practices: Empowering and Engaging?

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UK students' experiences of the first year of HE are frequently perceived as unsatisfactory, leading to the adoption of strategic learning strategies enabling students to pass assessments rather than effectively engage with the learning process. As a result, students fail to develop skills and strategies required to develop as autonomous and independently motivated learners (Haskell, 2000).

This paper documents findings from a comprehensive, national research project undertaken by the Higher Education Academy subject centre for Education (ESCalate). Staff and student views are investigated, determining the perceived purpose and flexibility of assessment.

Two key issues relating to students' experiences of assessment in the first year (QAA, 2005) have emerged as:

? empowerment, which aims to equip students with the capacities and knowledge required to develop their autonomy and become effective independent learners;

? engagement, which involves students in actively participating in and contributing to their learning through interactions with all elements of their learning environment.

Broad questions posed within this research include:

? what do academic staff want students to obtain from their first year?

? is assessment contributing to the development of students' engagement with, and empowerment from, the learning process?

? are first year assessments sufficiently flexible to meet the diverse developmental needs of a heterogeneous student population?

As higher education adapts to meet increasingly diverse demands, traditional forms of assessment may prove less effective vehicles for developing and demonstrating learning and are unlikely to contribute positively to first year experiences (Smith, 2004; Woodman, 2005). This paper argues that flexibility of assessment should reflect the wide range of learners' aims and align with the range of delivery modes and methods employed. Placing students at the centre of their learning process suggests a clear case for involving the learners within the assessment process, encouraging engagement and developing autonomous learning.

The Journey Begins: A Holistic Institutional Approach to Reviewing and Enhancing the First Year

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Journeys begin with a single step, however steps may be voluntary, forced, unintentional or misdirected. This paper critically reflects upon a university's ongoing journey towards enhancement of its first year. Features include its UK (and more specifically Scottish) context, collaborative and inclusive approaches, and support from institutional participants and external advisors. Major contributions by students as they inform, support and participate in the process are highlighted.

As the HE agenda of widening participation matured, focus shifted from initial access to student persistence, progression and the importance of the first year (Johnston, 2004; Tinto, 2004). Similarly, maturity in quality assurance procedures in the UK has evolved compliance models towards a quality enhancement agenda. Scotland's Teaching Quality Enhancement Framework includes engagement with sectoral enhancement themes, such as the 'First Year' and emphasizes engagement with, and by, students in quality enhancement. (QAA, 2005)

Preparing for external institutional review involves critical self-reflection, including engagement with enhancement themes. For the first year, this involved internal and external consultancy, and discussions with all stakeholders, including students, to address questions such as:

? What contributes to a supportive learning environment in the first year?

? How can optimal learner benefits (of engagement and empowerment) be facilitated and supported through this curriculum?

? What elements of the first year should be monitored, evaluated and reported, and how is/can this be achieved?

? How will emerging issues be addressed?

Requiring greater understanding of its students and their progression, the University established an institutional research network, providing a forum for staff to participate in, and evaluate outcomes from, research on the student experience. Planned, holistic approaches enhancing the student experience have begun. Inclusive, collaborative self-study and improvement processes are core elements of the institution's progression towards identifying and realizing its goals for the first year.

Getting to Know Me: The Role of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and Emotional Competency (EC) in Student Learning

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The session will commence with an overview of PDP in the UK and the unique way it has been implemented within the Psychology Department at the University of Teesside. A description of the student population will be presented to enable the audience to appreciate the rationale behind the method of the development and implementation of PDP.

An overview of Emotional Competency will be given including a description of the self assessment measure used (ECI-U).

The session will then go on to describe how self assessed EC was incorporated into the PDP to enable students to develop a more holistic approach to their development.

It will then describe, in detail, the processes that were involved in the delivery and use of PDP in both first and second year undergraduate cohorts.

We will explore, in depth, the unique interactions that students and staff have experienced through the increased understanding students have of themselves and their own abilities.

Evidence from the student evaluations will be presented to support our argument that increased student self awareness can lead to a more autonomous approach to learning and enable students to identify, accept and acknowledge areas of personal strength and challenge.

To conclude the session we will offer the audience the opportunity to debate the perceived benefits this version of PDP may bring to other disciplines and student populations (please note however that during the presentation we will be encouraging active discussion from the audience).

Enhancing Learning in the First Year: Responsivity, Reciprocity and Relationships

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Part A The context of the study
The first year student experience has become an area of interest for many universities both in Australia and overseas, and as a result, institutions now monitor with increasing intensity the experiences of their first year student population. This data becomes significantly crucial to the wellbeing of universities.

Part B The study
This section reports on a study that was funded by the university to interrogate the key research questions:

What are the perspectives of first year students when engaging in learning through lectures and tutorials? And;

What are the perspectives of lecturers when engaging with first year students when engaging in learning through lectures and tutorials?

The interpretivist paradigm was chosen to underpin the research. The value of adopting an interpretivist approach to research is that it can uncover people's understanding of a phenomenon, more specifically first year students' perspectives of learning engagement.

Part C The findings

The analysis revealed that a variety of factors played an important part in enhancing student learning engagement in first year as individuals, they reported different issues and emphasis on different factors. However, as a group, several themes emerged that were consistent across all students. These themes can be explored under three main categories that describe learning from a first year student perspective within one institution:

 the social aspect of learning,

the reciprocal nature of learning, and

the responsiveness necessary for learning.

Students also identified a number of significant pedagogical practices that reflected the responsiveness and reciprocity of lecturers and tutors including spontaneous questioning, substantive conversation, and the development of a low-risk learning environment. The students reported that the utilization of responsive and reciprocal pedagogies of this type ensured the deconstruction and reconstruction of key learning concepts that resulted in transformative learning engagement.

University of the Western Cape: A Peer Mentoring Programme for First-Year Students in the Residences

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This paper focuses on the conceptualization, design and implementation of a peer mentoring and tutoring program. The program is based at first year residences and utilizes senior students as mentors for the first year students in these residences. The mentors are placed in the residences. This is in line with the thinking that proximity of mentors to mentees is critical for the success of the program. The mentors also act as academic tutors and this brings a novel dynamic to the program. The university and specifically the residences claim to be a home away from home, and in this way the mentees get both psycho-social and academic support.

A qualitative approach, with purposefully selected informants, was utilized. Semi- structured inter views were conducted and the recorded data transcribed. A thematic analysis was used to interrogate the data.

The mentoring model that has been used employs both one-on-one as well as group mentoring. In the context of this model, the "lived experiences" of the mentees were observed through three lenses: transition, orientation and academic adaptation. The initial findings were very promising and positive.

In their reflection about psycho-social support, the mentees reported that the fact that they had someone to talk to made a great difference as most of them come from very rural settings. The mentees were also met at the residences on their arrival. In many instances their parents met the mentors. Parents reflected that they found it comforting to know that there were mentors who cared. It was clear from the findings that the mentors developed into the "significant other" of the mentees and played a key role in their psycho-social wellness.

A number of challenges emerged as a result of the program. These challenges covered areas like student governance, residential staff and management. Essentially these challenges had to do contestation about rights and access to resources like single rooms and so forth.

The following recommendations were resultant from the program experience:

·   Put in place an evaluation and measurement system

·   Set in motion a collaborative process with other student governance structures at residence

·   Firm up institutional support for the program

·   Integrate training with other similar programs on the campus

In conclusion, it seems as if the program has been extremely successful, both from an institutional as well as from a mentor-mentee perspective. The program is now in its second phase and a follow up study will be conducted to do a comparison and set targets for the future. It is suggested that research should be conducted to determine the impact of this kind of program on institutional and management transformation.

New First-Year Design Initiatives in Engineering at the University of Toronto

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The first year program in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto has recently undergone a substantial review and redesign. The major change is the introduction of integrated design and communication courses into the first year for students in all disciplines. For students in the standard engineering disciplines, the courses are Engineering Strategies and Practice (ESP) I and II. For students in Engineering Science, an elite science oriented program, the courses are Engineering Science Praxis I and II. These courses have as core objectives the development of competencies that are needed by current engineering graduates, in particular the ability to work with complex systems; to work in teams; to learn independently; to work through open ended problems; and to communicate effectively. This set of courses has been taught to the full first year class (~1200 students) for the first time this year (2005/06).

These courses shape the student's introductory experience of their discipline because they revolve around the central activity of engineering, which is design. With an emphasis on theory, Praxis provides a focus for the entire first year engineering science curriculum. Alternatively, in ESP the emphasis is on practice. In first term students participate in a fictitious design project and seminars that introduce them to the environmental, social, ethical, and human impact of engineering design. In the second semester the students work in teams developing a design for an actual client. This is a very large scale implementation of the principles of service learning. While it presents many logistical challenges, the experience for the students is exceptional.

In this session we will describe the design courses, explain the special features of these approaches, show examples of student projects, and discuss the challenges and positive outcomes that stem from this experience.

Building Informal Networks in a Large Institution

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The University of Toronto is a large institution with more than 60,000 students. It is highly decentralized, partly because historically it is a conglomeration of institutions, but more importantly, because decentralization helps students feel connected to smaller communities, rather than one monolithic administration.

The challenge of decentralization is how to bring together diverse administrations and departments to deliver consistent programs for first-year students. Each faculty has its own orientation and other first-year programming, as do many of the divisions within those faculties. Furthermore, there are centralized programs designed to help students on various levels, including a pilot First-Year Learning Communities program, a Passport program to encourage community involvement on and off campus, as well as a First-Year Initiative designed to have new students make use of the campus-wide Student Services as early in their academic careers as possible.

Delivering consistent programming and avoiding overlap requires involving as many stakeholders across the campus as possible. While this involvement may mean formalized meetings, many of the best initiatives and solutions are created through the informal networks that are created over time across the university community.

In this round-table session, we propose first to discuss the challenges to developing such informal networks. For example, sometimes two departments may be embarking on a similar initiative without realizing the other is doing the same work. Second, what are the opportunities for creating and fostering these informal networks? Third, what have been some of the successful outcomes from these networks? Finally, how can students be engaged to help departments across campus offer consistent, engaging programs?

The First-Year Student Experience: Reported Stress and Coping Strategies

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This study investigated the stressors experienced by first year university students and the coping strategies used to deal with these stressors. Despite the anecdotal evidence university faculty and staff have about first year students' stress, little research has examined this topic, particularly in Canadian settings. Nine first year students, six females and three males (17-19 years of age), were interviewed within the first six weeks of term, at the mid-point and again two weeks before final examinations. Emergent themes with respect to stressors included the quantity of academic work, clustering of examinations, balancing multiple demands, commuting, uncertainty about expectations, and financial pressures. The participants reportedly employed a variety of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies that ranged in effectiveness. Interestingly, while the reported stressors did not change across the academic year, the coping strategies used by the students changed substantially from the beginning to the end of the first academic year. Specifically, as the year progressed, the students learned to compartmentalize their time, studying, and focus of attention. The participants also coped by altering their expectations; they became more realistic in terms of standards of performance and limitations. The results of this study differ from previously reported research as 8 of the 9 students commuted to school rather than living in residence or in off-campus housing. For a variety of personal, cultural and financial reasons, these students lived in the familial home and commuted to school. While they saved money by living at home, they reported making sacrifices in terms of not engaging in university life beyond the classroom, which in turn hindered the development of support networks with peers - an important coping method - and perpetuated a feeling of anonymity and alienation. Recommendations for interventions are made to assist first year students adjust to university life.

Online Communities, Discussion Forums, and Student Success

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A challenge for educators is to create opportunities to assist first-year students in establishing meaningful connections to their university or college. Students who meet classmates, make friendships, form study groups, make connections with faculty, and engage in activities inside and outside the classroom develop the skills they need to enhance their learning and succeed in their academic endeavors. Learning communities are an effective way for first-year students to get connected, stay connected, and succeed academically. Online learning communities/discussion forums allow first-year students to interact with each other, with upper-year students, and their instructors outside of class: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, wherever they are. Students discuss course material, ask for help, engage in meaningful discussions, and chat about a wide range of

topics. The BIOME (pronounced bye-ohm) online community was created in the Faculty of Arts and Science for the cohort of undergraduates who are taking courses and enrolled in programs in the life sciences. The successful BIOME "meeting place" can serve as a model for other educators. It has mushroomed since its inception, evolving rapidly in response to student needs and the demands of its users. This year over 4,400 students have registered to participate in BIOME's 220 academic and social discussion forums. The important portal feature of BIOME includes postings for upcoming seminars and special events, links to science headlines and student resources on campus, and profiles of professors. BIOME has been extremely effective in creating a "community of learners," providing a forum for first-year students to make meaningful connections with fellow students, faculty, and their university community; 75% of users say that BIOME is "important to my day-to-day life as a student." As one student writes: "I've met some of the greatest people through BIOME. It sure makes the university experience a whole lot better!"

rezONE: A Residential First-Year Experience at the University of Toronto at Mississauga

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The presentation will outline the rezONE program. Presenters will provide an overview of relevant literature and research that underpin the program including demographic statistics collected by Statistics Canada. The collaborative program planning process will be described and strategies for developing a partnership planning model will also be provided. The presenters will spend considerable time describing the Peer Academic Leader model that is used for program delivery, including recruitment, selection, training and evaluation techniques. We will then elaborate upon the program curriculum, which balances programming around academic support and transition specific to a new student's discipline, with support for the psycho-social developmental transition as outlined in student affairs literature. Preliminary assessment data will be shared, as will the program implementation plan for the next two years.

The First-Year Experience at the University of Utah: Partnering Across the Campus and Community

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The environment of the first year experience at a university is critical. Alexander W. Astin has proposed an "I-E-O" [income-environment-outcome] model of retention, which argues that, for students whose preparation [income factors] is strong, the graduation rate [outcome] can almost be assumed. For others, however, the environment at college, especially during the first year, makes the difference. We suggest that a crucial approach to creating a dynamic environment is to forge campus and community partnerships. Once this network is created, those allies have a vested interest in maintaining an environment of first-year success.

The LEAP program at the University of Utah is a first-year learning community. Over the course of two semesters, students explore the concept of community in readings and class discussion. At the same time we form a community, both within individual sections and throughout the larger LEAP population. The Honors Program, which has a partnership with LEAP, also creates community, and nurtures it through the rest of the student's college career.

The presenters all teach at the University of Utah. Dr. Bliss is the Director of the LEAP Program, Dr. Bradley is the Director of the Honors Program, and Dr. Ownby directs the Peer Advisors. Between us, we have taught thirty-four years in a first-year program, have developed relationships with six colleges across campus, have worked with eight campus groups specifically designed to support first-year students, and have partnered with at least ten community groups.

We propose to discuss this network of partnerships in three specific areas:

Support services (such as library instruction, writing program, residence halls, advising, and high school recruitment), Service (elementary, middle and high school programs; community service; Peer Advisor outreach), and Academic (Honors Program, Colleges of Health, Engineering, Business, Fine Arts, Architecture, Law and Medicine). We will also summarize assessment initiatives.

Engaging the 21st Century Student

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This presentation will track the development, implementation and evaluation of this new course. The development of the course began with the creation of an interdisciplinary Design Team mandated by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to create a new first year course. The Design Team worked for over 18 months to construct the new course for first year students and a related course to prepare senior students to serve as mentors. The first phase of development consisted of finding a central theme for the course and creating a model for the first offering, restricting the enrolment to 200 students. The theme was Knowing the Future and the model combined a weekly plenary meeting with a host professor and guest presenters with break-out (discussion) sections of 10 students, facilitated by student mentors. We will discuss our concept of mentorship and explain how the senior students were trained and the role they played.

The central task for the students in the course was the capstone Team Project which required them to select a local site and project it 20 years into the future, using methods and information learned in the course. These projects were presented in a final fair that created considerable excitement on campus. We will include images of the fair and an assessment of the opportunities and problems created by this team project.

This presentation will reflect on the lessons learned through this development process and the first offering of the course. The evaluation results indicate considerable success in meeting our objectives while also raising important issues to consider in ongoing redesign.

The course benefited tremendously from the breadth of vision that is possible using an interdisciplinary design team, but also suffered from overly ambitious learning objectives and the attempt to cover too much ground.

Access to Success: A Comprehensive First-Year Program

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UW-Milwaukee is a public urban research university enrolling over 28,000 students. Following almost two years of data analysis and discussions, the campus resolved to take determined action to improve the overall retention/graduation rate and, especially, reduce the gap in success rates between majority and minority students and the even larger gap between entering students requiring developmental courses and those who do not. In Fall 2005, UWM launched Access to Success.

Access to Success begins with recruitment and admission strategies to maintain access while also increasing enrollments of diverse, high-achieving students. Most of the strategies adopted in Access to Success comprise a comprehensive and coordinated program to increase first year student success that includes a Summer Bridge Program, the Freshman Mentoring Network, First-Year Transition Courses, Academic Advising Assessment, Honors programming, redesigned Mathematics courses, a new Multicultural Student Center, Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Teaching Teams, and the creation of a web-based Early Warning System. The goals of Access to Success are to increase first year retention for all freshmen and especially for freshmen of color and freshmen requiring developmental work while building the overall diversity and achievement of the student body.

While it is too early to assess the impact of Access to Success on its overall goals, the data do show that, for the entire freshman cohort as well as for targeted groups, those who participate in retention strategies demonstrate higher retention and achievement. Especially impressive interventions include Summer Bridge and Supplemental Instruction programs. In addition, students with low

math preparation who took a pilot math course that employed technology with instructor/tutor support completed two sequential math courses with high grades in a single semester, enabling them access to curricula requiring college level mathematics. Based on its assessment of these pilot initiatives, UWM is now expanding program capacity and student participation.

Dive In 2006: Scaffolding Student Engagement in First Year

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Research in the higher education sector indicates that student engagement in university life is the key to improving retention rates as well as encouraging academic application and success. To support the enculturation of students entering the University of Wollongong a wide range of information is provided on the university's website, however, the volume and complexity of this material can be overwhelming and, at times, it is couched in terms that render it impenetrable. It is presented in jargon that is foreign to the uninitiated rather than in terms that have meaning for students. Difficulties associated with accessing and understanding important information make the transition to university life more challenging than necessary.

Following the production of a CD-ROM for students in the Faculty of Education in 2005, a more comprehensive resource involving a template relevant to all faculties as well as completed examples for the faculties of Education, Creative Arts and Science was undertaken for students entering in 2006. Experienced students, that is, students who had recently completed the first year of their degrees, were employed at every level of the production of the CD. The involvement of experienced students was regarded as a key factor in producing a resource to support the learning experiences of new students. From a Vygotskian perspective, learning is particularly effective when it occurs within a context where the "novice" engages with a more experienced peer or one who has recently mastered the task at hand. Dive In is an example of a tool that has been constructed with this in mind and, as such, it represents a resource that enables opportunities for new students to grow into the culture of university life. Feedback from students and staff indicates that the CD has achieved its purpose.

Creating a Supportive Environment for Students by Developing a One-Stop Shop

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Students are often required to stand in multiple long lines to transact the business of admissions, registrations, records, financial aid, parking, and cashiering. Providing a One Stop Shop where employees (advisors) are cross-trained in these areas allows for a much higher level of service to first year students. Students are able to talk to one employee regarding all areas in order to get questions answered rather than going from line to line--employee to employee. The development of the One Stop has created a culture of support for first year students. This presentation will discuss how Utah Valley State College was able to design and implement a One Stop Shop in an effort to create a higher level of service and support for first year students. The challenges and benefits of creating this service will be explored along with pitfalls to avoid. The creation of a culture that promotes high levels of service and support is critical in developing a successful One Stop Shop. Ideas and strategies of how to implement this service in order to provide greater support for first year students will be highlighted. Handouts on how to develop this service will be available as well as an invitation to visit Utah Valley State College's One Stop will be extended.

Academic Support Center Programs and Services: Targeting New Students through Graduation

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This presentation will be conducted as a PowerPoint presentation. A projector and screen are requested to use with a computer. The summary of the presentation will cover the Academic Support Center's Programs and Services that Target New Students through Graduation. This will begin with a short overview of the background and demographics of VSU students. The significance of conducting the review of the Academic Support Center's programs and services will

be shared by identifying its characteristics. The ASC mission and evolution over a five year period will be shared with highlights of its academic support contributions for the success of new first time students through graduation. The results of the two research questions will be answered, which were 1. What are the current characteristics of the ASC? And, 2. What are the ASC programmatic interventions that have shown to impact VSU students' success for retention and graduation? The research results will provide evidence of assessment results from quantitative and qualitative data for ASC from 2001 through 2006 on its programs and services from student surveys, quarterly reports, annual reports, and national studies such as the 2005 American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) retention and graduation study review and report that included VSU. At the conclusion, there will be a question and answer period. Persons in attendance will be asked to share program practices that have shown positive outcomes for increasing student retention and graduation at their institutions. A handout will be provided to the attendees.

The World is Flat - But the Campus Has Mountains

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Thomas L. Friedman's best-selling book claims that the world is "flat" because technology has empowered individuals to connect, collaborate and compete with anyone anywhere. While companies and individuals are horizontally integrated, nimble, and innovative, campuses are often trapped in deliberative and autonomous vertical silos. If survivors are those most responsive to change, higher education needs to adapt quickly. After all, if students (and their families) do not perceive the university as being relevant, responsive, and a worthwhile investment they will connect and collaborate with a "competitor" (or simply an alternative) who can give them what they seek faster and cheaper. Where we don't provide what they need, others do - or soon will. "Facebook" is a perfect example of that on the social front: while we are trying to create affinity groups, our students are a step ahead of us, doing so (for better or worse) in their own ways. What, then, is what Friedman calls our "unique core competency"? And how can we position ourselves to be the best enablers of students in the new, flat world?

As Allan Kay says, "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." This presentation will provide guiding principles and specific mechanisms to use to recast the university – and an individual campus – for the 21st century. These include:

– Educational practices that best enable and empower student learning.

– Facilitating collaboration, innovation, and efficiency.

– Using outcomes based assessment focused on core competencies.

– Reforming the academic calendar to facilitate integrative approaches.

– Integrative interdisciplinary and individualized programs of study.

– Global Literacy focus for all programs and majors.

– Integrating academic and administrative systems and processes.

– Revising roles and rewards to align with integrative approaches.

– Facilitating realignment using the University College model.

– Aligning resources with integrative approaches.

The Big Class Experience Made Small: Possibilities for Course Management Systems

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This paper will examine the impact and student response to the creation of an online course management systems community to extend the course experience beyond the boundaries of the classroom. This study will consider the response
of students to course management systems through their actions not their "words" by virtue of their participation in the course management systems portion of blended courses. The three courses under examination are third-year university courses demonstrate that the desire to connect through course management systems varies with the size of the course and the type of course, but provide many examples ripe for use in the first-year course.

While you do not have to literally "live online" to create a sense of community for large lecture courses, technology such as course management systems can create a sense of community. The first example is that of a large third year lecture course (enrolment of 180). Steps were taken to replicate some of the sense of the seminar that is lost at that level when size becomes a barrier to discussion, beyond the tutorials. As the semester comes to an end posts on the discussion board are approaching 4000. In the case of a smaller seminar of 35 students activity on course management systems closely parallels the class work. The second sample course, as a research methods course, is more applied in nature increasing the appeal of course management systems. In the smallest seminar of 16 the face-to-face interaction is great and the reciprocal response to course management systems is limited.

This session will examine the outcomes and possibilities of the creation of the seminar environment online and student responses, which seem to be dependent on a greater or lesser degree of connection to a face-to-face community and the utility of the course management systems community. The frequent first-year experience of the large lecture class can potentially benefit

from application of course management systems.

Examining Beliefs in the Transitional Space of the College Mathematics Classroom

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Social, cultural and psychological shifts complicate the student's ability to mediate the transition experience in the first semester college mathematics classroom. Language use, appropriate behavior, values and customs interconnect the student to the learning experience while at the same time are challenged throughout the processes of transition. A picture of college mathematics students in their transition through first semester mathematics was developed from a quantitative study conducted in Fall 2005 with first semester college mathematics students using the Learner Characteristics questionnaire implemented in 2000 by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). From an analysis of the data, the students' sociocultural identity was revealed through their beliefs and attitudes about mathematics and learning mathematics as they mediated the transitional gap. Through the lens of consequential transitions by Beach (1999), the description of these first semester students reflects the lateral transition students make through the first semester of a college program. The students described effort and persistence in learning demonstrating a tenacity to continue in the semester. They are willing to learn new material while employing memorization strategies and control strategies. Elements of mediational transition are evident through the emphasis students placed on elaboration strategies. This variable describes how students interconnect the usefulness of mathematics with what is known and within the context of the real world. They are determined to know how these connections are made. Students are also motivated by exploring the relationship of their mathematics learning to their vocation as indicated through the variable instrumental motivation. Being aware of the interplay of these characteristics, the professor can structure the classroom setting to decrease anxiety, build confidence, and teach strong problem solving strategies.

Resource:

Beach, King. (1999). Consequential transitions: a sociocultural expedition beyond transfer in education. Review of Research in Education, 24, 101-139.

First-Year Experience: Passport to Engagement

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At York, First Year Experience is extremely important and integral to a successful transition into York University. Faculty and staff are committed to supporting students' transition to university and to the personal and academic success of all students.

The First Year Experience: Passport to Engagement Program was developed exclusively for first-year transition to University. The Series consists of 7 critical skills and community-building sessions that provide first year students with an opportunity to learn more about the rich and vibrant community at York University. It helps them build the critical skills necessary for success at university while at the same time increasing their connection to others students and university staff.

The first year of the series begins during Academic Orientation and continues throughout the academic year. The desired outcome is a deepening of students' connection to the College environment, to its peers and personnel, and to opportunities for more meaningful skills development.

The desired outcome of the First Year Experience: Passport to Engagement Program is a deepening of students' connection to the University environment, to its peers and personnel, and to opportunities for more meaningful skills development. To this end, the close collaboration of faculty, staff, and student organizations is necessary.

The sessions are widely advertised and included a First-Year Experience Passport that encourages students to attend. There are several reasons for using the "Passport". Beyond the idea of motivating students to attend sessions, the first reason was to give them credit for attending these sessions. They would get it stamped and it would count toward participation at the university. York University is contemplating the implementation of a system that formally acknowledges student participation in university life. This includes recognition of attending academic skills sessions, academic community participation, and participation in student life. Some students report placing information about attending these the sessions on their resumes. Prizes were also offered for attending these sessions.

First Year Experience: Passport to Engagement Program 2005-6 sessions:

1.   On Your Mark: Starting The Year Off On The Right Foot

--Meet a panel of students, staff and faculty to learn the ins and outs of university life.

Winters College. Wednesday, September 28th, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Winters Senior Common Room, 021 Winters College

or

Stong College. Tuesday, September 27th, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Sylvester's Lounge, 201 Stong College

2.   Effective Research and Avoiding Plagiarism: Library and Internet Research

--See how the experts locate and evaluate information using a variety of online tools.

Vanier College. Thursday, October 20th, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.,

Renaissance Room, 001 Vanier College

        or

Calumet College. Wednesday, October 19th, 11:30 – 12:30

Senior Fellows Lounge, 214 Calumet College

3.   Keeping Up The Pace: Time Management Skills For University

--Learn how to manage time to improve your grades and school/life balance.

Founders College. Tuesday, October 25th, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Founders Assembly Hall, 152 Founders College

        or

Bethune College. Wednesday, October 26th, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Paul A. Delaney Gallery, 320 Bethune College

4.   Time Out: Stress Busters For When The Going Gets Rough

--Stressing out? Get a handle on stress just in time for exams.

McLaughlin College. Tuesday, November 8th, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

McLaughlin College Junior Common Room, 014 McLaughlin College

        or

Atkinson College. Wednesday, November 9th, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Harry Crowe Room, 109 Atkinson College

5.   York's Colleges: The Inside Track

--Discover the rich resources available to you at your College!

Winters College: Wednesday, January 18th, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Winters Senior Common Room, 021 Winters College

           or

Stong College: Thursday, January 19th, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Sylvester's Lounge, 205 Stong College

6.   Life Outside The Classroom: Clubs, Governments, Services, and Athletics

--Explore the many ways of getting involved in York's vibrant campus life.

Vanier College. Thursday, February 2nd, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 a.m.

Renaissance Room, 001 Vanier College

           or

Calumet College. Wednesday, February 1st, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Senior Fellows Lounge, 214 Calumet

7.   Crossing The Finish Line: Completing 1st Year & Looking Forward To 2nd Year

--Ask the panel about programs, majors, and the challenges of second year.

Founders College. Tuesday, February 28th, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Founders Assembly Hall, 152 Founders College

           or

Bethune College. Wednesday, March 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Paul A. Delaney Gallery, 320 Bethune College