QUEST: The value of pre-enrollment programs to the successful transition of incoming first-year students

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Goals for this Session
I hope you will…

- Learn strategies for implementing pre-enrollment programs on your campus

- Learn about a collaborative initiative at a 4-year public institution

- Share successful strategies for approaching and securing faculty involvement with student affairs-led initiatives on your campus

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Session Overview

- Value of Pre-Enrollment Programs; what's the literature say?
- QUEST Program at
  - Goals
  - Logistics, including budget
  - Assessment
  - Where do we go from here?
- Discussion

Value of Pre-Enrollment Programs

- Chickering and Reisser (1993)
  - Developing competence
  - Developing autonomy
  - Interpersonal relationships
- Tinto (1988) the value of social integration in student retention
- Astin (1999) student involvement theory
- Dewey (1938) value of experiential learning

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Additional Pre-Enrollment Programs

- <u>Camp Buckeye & Buckeye Adventures</u>, The Ohio State University

- <u>GOPOP</u> (Georgetown Outdoor Pre Orientation Program), Georgetown University

- <u>Camp Texas</u>, University of Texas

- <u>WAFFYS</u> (Wilderness Adventures For First-Year Students), UNC Chapel Hill

A Quick Glance Year 1 to Year 2...

Year One – Summer 2007

- One Pilot Program with Honors (11 students)
- Developed relationships with TRIP Program
- Created goals for program
- Researched possible structures
- Graduate Student Practicum Position (Spring 2008)

Year Two – Summer 2008

- 4 Trips (44 students)
- Partnership between TRIP, NSP, Recreational Sports, Faculty/Staff
- Refined goals/learning outcomes
- Developed Assessment Plan
- Marketed via Admissions & Orientation

QUEST Goals

- Facilitate adjustment to University Life
- Encourage emotional, social, and personal development
- Facilitate development of positive attitudes towards UF
- Provide an opportunity for student leadership
- Facilitate connection of new students with faculty or staff member

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Collaboration

- Unique Collaboration with:
  - TRIP: Staff and Student Leaders
  - Recreational Sports: Lake Wauberg Staff
  - Faculty/Staff Involveme
  - Graduate Student Prac
  - New Student Programs
- Who does what?

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Budget – Who Pays for This?

- Each trip cost participants $60 (backpacking)-$120 (white water rafting)
- Fee Waivers Available (EFC less than $500)
- New Student Programs bought:
  - T-shirts = $275
  - Fee Waivers = $1200
  - Marketing/Printed Materials = $50
- TRIP covered cost of Faculty Members (absorbed into student fees)

Assessment Plan Components

- Paper Survey during van-ride home
- Focus Groups with students in October
- Email correspondence with Faculty Leaders
- Meeting with student trip leaders

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Paper Survey Assessment, n=29

As a result of your QUEST experience…

	SA	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	SD
I feel more prepared to start college at UF.	10 (35.7%)	8 (28.6%)	9 (32.1%)	0	1 (3.6%)
I feel more comfortable to start college at UF.	13 (46.4%)	8 (28.6%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	0
I learned more about myself and what I am capable of.	10 (35.7%)	9 (32.1%)	7 (25%)	2 (7.1%)	0
I am more confident in myself.	8 (28.6%)	9 (32.1%)	11 (39.3%)	0	0

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Paper Survey results, cont'

	SA	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	SD
I made new friends that I anticipate staying in touch with during my first year.	15 (51.7%)	9 (31%)	5 (17.2%)	0	0
I made a connection with a UF Faculty or Staff member who I anticipate staying in touch with during my first year.	14 (48.3%)	10 (34.5%)	5 (17.2%)	0	0
I feel more comfortable getting involved on campus my first year.	12 (41.4%)	12 (41.4%)	5 (17.2%)	0	0
I am excited to be a Gator.	20 (69%)	7 (24.1%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	0

Student comments (paper survey & focus group)…

- "I already felt attached to UF because of Quest. I already had a connection."
- "That I can survive without a shower but not without my phone."
- "All of us were Facebook friends within 24 hours so we keep in touch that way."
- "I am independent. I am much stronger than I thought (not just physically)."
- "Not all my HS friends like being outside, so maybe you should do some non-outdoor trips"

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Faculty Comments (email feedback)

- "I enjoyed it and might do another one in the future. If the feedback from the students says that having a faculty member was a plus then I might be even more interested in doing another trip"

- "From reading the survey, it seems you have extremely lofty goals that I don't think can be met"

- "We had a great time together. Lots of time to talk around the campfire. Conversations about UF, my past outdoor experiences, and music (my field) came up. On the other hand, they're 18 and I'm 49, possibly getting to know an old faculty member was not high on their priority list"

Student TRIP leaders comments

- In a follow-up focus group with 4 Trip leaders, they talked about:
  - Seeing students on campus together post-QUEST
  - Night at Lake Wauberg was essential in forming bonds
  - Asked many questions about being a UF student
  - Training session with faculty members would have been helpful

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Challenges Faced

- Business Trip did not fill
- Attempted a Leadership/Service Trip and 2 Diversity Trips – did not fill
- Assessment
- Logistics & Communication with participants
- Developing waivers, etc – all new materials!
- Select your dates early (by Jan if possible)

Pre-planning & Ideas for Summer 09

- Journaling – other ways to assess?
- TRIP and Faculty Training
- Diversity/Leadership Trips
- Market, Market, Market
- Use "goals" to develop "learning outcomes"
- Develop an online registration system
- Connect with Orientation Sessions
- Faculty-Led Trips (Summer 2010)

Small Group Discussion
Chat with a few people sitting near you...

- What is your reaction to a program such as this? Would it be feasible on your campus?
- Who might you want around the table at your institution to brainstorm ways to make a program like this happen on your campus?
- What are some first steps that you might be able to take at your university if you do not already have a program in place similar to QUEST?

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