NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

19th National Conference on Students in Transitions

Primer for First-Time Attendees
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Presenters

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Current Campus Trends of Interest

- Developing and maintaining excellence for students in transtion in the face of declining institutional, state, and national resources.
- The continued influence of the popular press and other media on higher education, particularly *US News & World Report's* rankings of colleges and first-year programs.
- More students and families incurring unprecedented debt levels and stress to finance an increasingly expensive college experience, especially in light of the declining availability of loans.
- Moving the focus of first-year and students in transition efforts beyond the "program" level to a comprehensive, integrated, and institutional approach.
- Shifts in the alignment of traditional student affairs functions to academic affairs; greater partnerships between academic and student affairs.
- More focus on learning (i.e., what students gain) vs. teaching (i.e., what professors do).
- Campuses paying more attention to the parents and families of college students and striving to engage in meaningful partnerships with them.
- Renewed interest in residential learning environments where residence life is intentionally linked to the curriculum and academic support.
- Greater use of curricular interventions and innovations throughout the undergraduate experience:
    - Learning communities
    - Service learning in discipline-based courses
    - Peer educators
    - Undergraduate research projects

- Increasing efforts to build campus community for new students through the co-curriculum (e.g., use of common readings, convocations, residential colleges, etc.).
- Advancements in assessment efforts:
    - Identifying the first year as a comprehensive unit of analysis.
    - Greater focus on measuring learning outcomes.
    - Wider campus conversations and efforts to use results of assessment efforts.
    - Connecting assessment to reaffirmation of the accreditation process.
    - The creation and measurement of "standards of excellence."
- Greater use of technology in both the academic (e.g., course management systems) and social aspects of students' lives (e.g., Facebook).
- Changing role of the academic library toward emphasis on information literacy skills and greater involvement of librarians in the first-year experience.
- Responding to the greater mental and emotional health care needs of today's college students.
- Others?

The Future: Meeting Needs, Setting Agendas

- More than a quarter century of FYE and Students in Transition and the movement has matured into a sub-specialty of higher education scholarship and practice.
- Moving beyond "retention" as a structure for the conversation about improving the undergraduate experience to a focus on student outcomes, learning, and excellence.
- Increasing the emphasis on research to guide improvements for student learning, success, and satisfaction as well as to gain a better understanding of student transitions into and through higher education.
    - Transition from responding to a need to setting an agenda.
    - Expand research clearinghouse.
    - Sponsor and commission new research on the undergraduate student experience.
- Continuing to foster a global community on the topic of the first-year experience and students in transition and to invite advice and input from the greater higher education community.
- Advocating for our network, engaging in constituent outreach, and fostering the development of relationships between the National Resource Center and higher education colleagues in the United States and internationally.
- Continuing to strive to include new voices in the field by:
    - Including historically underrepresented populations of students and professionals.
    - Considering perspectives from a variety of institutional types (e.g., community colleges, minority serving institutions, large research universities, etc.).
    - Identifying the next generation of leaders and advocates for student transition and success.
- Seeking ways to recognize excellence in undergraduate education in all areas, including research, teaching, outstanding programs, and best practices.