

PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH
DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION AND
INSTITUTIONAL RE-ORGANIZATION
STUDENTS IN TRANSITION CONFERENCE
DENVER, CO
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Session Objectives

- ▣ Describe the process of proposing re-organization
- ▣ Illustrate a model of departmental collaboration from the Taylor University program
- ▣ Provide assessment data which informs continual quality improvement and can be applied at other institutions
- ▣ Share best practices from participants regarding departmental collaboration

Taylor University

- ❑ founded in 1846 - interdenominational liberal arts university of evangelical faith
- ❑ located in a rural community - Upland, Indiana
- ❑ 1,900 traditional undergraduate, (primarily residential), 100 graduate and 230+ online
- ❑ resources limited for personnel and programs – wearing multiple hats!



Era of the Silos

- ❑ Separate personnel and programs from:
 - ❑ Academic Affairs (learning support)
 - ❑ Student Development (new student orientation)
 - ❑ Admissions (retention)
- ❑ Working with same students:
 - ❑ At risk students
 - ❑ First year students in transition
 - ❑ Exiting students



Best Practice Sharing

- How are your student success departments organized on your campus?
- Would re-organization of departments to promote student success fit your institution?

The Charge

- ❑ From the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee
- ❑ Task Force formed:
 - ❑ Coordinator of Academic Support (Academic Affairs)
 - ❑ Director of New Student Programs (Student Development)
 - ❑ and Graduate Assistant New Student Programs
 - ❑ Director of Retention (Admissions)



The Process

- ❑ Weekly Meetings Aug-Oct 2010
- ❑ Conducted a literature review on FYE
- ❑ Gathered information from respective areas
- ❑ Met with key stakeholders:
 - ❑ Advising * Registrar * Assessment
 - ❑ Residence Life * Dean of Students
 - ❑ Enrollment Management * Career Development
- ❑ Wrote a report (current state of Taylor's FYE and retention)
- ❑ Developed proposal (to address next steps for FYE and retention)



Guiding Principles

- Institutional fit
- Based on change theories
- Alexander and Gardner's (2009) hallmarks
 - Leadership: philosophy, organization, roles and purposes, transitions, and improvement
 - Community of Learners: faculty, students, learning, and diversity



Highlights from Literature

- Three Recurring Themes
 - ▣ Diversity among a first year population
 - ▣ Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Development
 - ▣ Positive contact between the first year student and others within institutional community



Best Practice Sharing

- What are some of the best examples of departmental collaboration on your campus?
- What challenges do you face on your campus for departmental collaboration?

Report: Current State

- FYE
 - ▣ One designated staff person (1 / 2 time) and GA
 - ▣ New Student Orientation (WW and IAS 101)
 - ▣ No formal FYE program
- Retention
 - ▣ One designated staff person
 - ▣ Collaboration across campus
 - ▣ Goal of 90-92%



Proposal

- Alexander and Gardner's Foundational Dimensions
 - Leadership
 - Philosophy
 - Organization
 - Roles & Purpose
 - Transitions
 - Improvement
 - Community of Learners
 - Faculty
 - Students
 - Diversity
 - Learning



Alexander, J. S. & Gardner, J.N. (2009). Beyond Retention: A Comprehensive Approach To The First College Year. *About Campus*, 14(2), 18-26

Proposal

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

LEADERSHIP : Philosophy

Increased administrative support at all levels to raise institutional awareness and value of first year issues

A First Year Summit-one day seminar for all faculty and staff; national expert invited as keynote

CTLE programs related to first year

Allocated resources for a formal first year initiative

Communication to students regarding the importance of the first year

In all applicable documents, communicate the value of the first year and the intentionality Taylor demonstrates to that end

Proposal

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE (continued)

COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS: Faculty

Introductory courses taught by the best faculty equipped for facilitating learning in the first year

The feasibility of a first year faculty across the curriculum further explored by the Provost's Council

Objectives 1.3 and 1.4 in the 2016 Academic Vision and Plan (p. 7):

AA & SD faculty encouraged and rewarded through the promotion process for their distinctive work with/for first year students.

Scholarly research related to the first year conducted by faculty and rewarded

A culture of responsibility for the first year should be conveyed and nurtured by the Provost and deans to the faculty (Alexander & Gardner, 2009, p. 22).

Proposal

- Short Term Initiatives for Retention
 - ▣ Enhanced academic advising
 - ▣ Programs focused on at-risk students
 - ▣ Enhancement of connectedness to the university
 - ▣ Enhancement of student support services
 - ▣ Centralized collection of student retention data
 - ▣ Creation of parental orientation program



Proposal

SHORT TERM INITIATIVES FOR RETENTION

At-Risk Students

The AEC director interview students who have low test scores and/or grades to determine the feasibility of accepting the student into the AIM program

Establish a limit of not less than 5% but not more than 10% of the freshmen class to be accepted under the AIM program

Continue to enhance the awareness of the Early Alert System to faculty and to develop a culture of faculty intrusiveness with students at risk both socially and academically

Communicate with matriculated students through the Admissions Office concerning the services offered to better allow the student to have success in the University

Development

▣ Re-organization

- Fall 2012
- Director of the Academic Enrichment Center
- Director of First Year Experience
- Director of Retention
- Director of the Writing Center
- Learning Specialist (1/2 time)
- Coordinator of Tutoring Services (1/2 time)
- Program Assistant
- 2 Graduate Assistants
- Director of Academic Advising



Assessment of First Year Experience

□ IAS 101

- Initial assessment results from end of course student survey data show improvement in several areas from FA13 to SP14 including:
 - assignments contributing to learning (+1.2)
 - assignments helped with transitional issues for first year college students (+.6)
 - learning is stimulating (+.22)



Assessment of Retention Rates

2010	468	RETURNING	398	373	349	45
	1		85%	80%	75%	10%
		GRADUATED		1	17	308
				0%	4%	66%
2011	462	RETURNING	404	381	363	
	1		88%	83%	79%	
		GRADUATED		0	10	
				0%	2%	
2012	498	RETURNING	445	424		
			89%	85%		
		GRADUATED		0		
				0%		
2013	459	RETURNING	405			
			88%			
		GRADUATED				



Assessment of At-Risk Students

- Director part of admissions process for academically underprepared students
- New criteria developed for provisionally admitted students
- Assessment data shows an increase in 2012 to 2013 retention rates from 57% to 71% of the AIM students and 60% to 64% of IAS students



Continuous Quality Improvement

- Institutional Implications
 - Fostered collaboration between academic affairs, student development, and admissions
 - Provided more effective support to meet the transitional needs of first year students, increased retention rates, enhanced learning, and streamlined services
 - Established the comprehensive reach of the First Year Experience program
 - Built connections with faculty teaching first year courses
 - Advanced faculty development strategies



Continuous Quality Improvement

- Services have been streamlined per data collection (e.g. observation). Through collaborative efforts within the new department, staff have coordinated services so students no longer have to visit three separate offices and corresponding staff to have their transitional needs met. Quantitative data still needs collected to confirm student impact including satisfaction.
- As we enter the third year of this initiative, assessment will continue as data is beginning to demonstrate benefit of the changes made. We plan to build on this foundation, particularly as we develop a comprehensive first year program.



Best Practice Sharing

- What are your aspirational goals for departmental collaboration toward student success on your campus?
- How could one of these be achieved in the next one, three or five years?

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