Supporting Sophomore Student Success: Results from the 2014 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

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National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

USC Sophomore-Year Experience Working Group
January 30, 2015
First Year
- Orientation
- Common Reading Programs
- First-Year Seminars
- Student Engagement

Junior Year
- Internships
- Study Abroad
- Peer Leadership

Senior Year
- Capstone Experiences
- Job Fairs
- Professional Licensing
- Graduate and Professional School Applications
- Internships
- Study Abroad
- Peer Leadership
Sophomore Student (*Unmotivationus Middlechildibus*)
Existential Questioning

What is the purpose of my life?

Why am I taking all these classes?

Practical Questioning

What should I major in?

What career should I choose?
KEEP CALM AND SURVIVE SOPHOMORE YEAR
Sophomore Year Matters

- Engagement
- Focus
- Sense of Direction
- Sense of Belonging
- Interactions with Faculty

- Lead to increases in motivation, academic success, self-authorship and thriving
What are Institutions (We) Doing About/For Sophomores?

- National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives
3rd Administration

N = 778
Under-represented by:
Private, For-Profit Institutions with fewer than 1,000 students

Over-represented by:
Four-year institutions
Public institutions
Institutional Efforts Specifically Focused on Sophomores

- Retention Study < Four Year
- Institutional Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Program Self-Study
- National Survey < Four Year
- Accreditation < Two Year
- Grant-Funded Project

• 42% Reported “None of These”
Nearly 80% of institutional efforts that include an intentional focus on the Sophomore Year are less than 5 years old.
# 10 Most Frequent Campus-wide Objectives for Sophomores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>% of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Exploration</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Preparation</td>
<td>&lt; Two Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Assistance</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of a major</td>
<td>&lt; Four Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Opportunities</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection with institution</td>
<td>&lt; Four Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rates</td>
<td>&lt; Two Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
46% of Institutions report offering at least one initiative specifically geared toward sophomores.
What Sophomore-Specific Initiatives are Most Frequent?

- Academic Advising (57.6%)
- Career Exploration (52.7%)
- Career Planning (48.7%)
- Early Alert (42.7%)
- Leadership (40.3%)
- Major Exploration (33.1%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Initiatives More Frequently Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Two-Year         | • Internships  
|                  | • Financial Aid                     |
| Four-Year        | • Major Exploration                 |
| Public           | • Academic Advising                 |
|                  | • Internships                        |
| Private          | • Leadership Development            |
|                  | • Class Events                       |
|                  | • Live-on Requirement                |
Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative (Initiative That Reaches Highest % of Sophomores)

10 Most Frequent Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative

- **Academic Advising**: 45.7%
- **Live-on Requirement**: 8.2%
- **Early Alert**: 4.7%
- **Other**: 4.1%
- **Credit-Bearing Course**: 3.8%
- **Academic Coaching**: 3.2%
- **Class Events**: 2.9%
- **Sophomore LLC**: 2.9%
- **Career Exploration**: 2.3%
- **Major Exploration**: 2.1%
Primary Initiatives More Frequently Offered by Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-Year</th>
<th>Four-Year</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
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<td>• Early Alert</td>
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<td>• Internships</td>
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Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative: Categories

- Academic Advising
- Residential Initiatives
- Major and Career-Focused Initiatives
- High-Impact Practices
- Academic Support
- Curriculum or Course-Based
- Communication to Sophomores
- Campus-Based Events
- Away-from-Campus Events
- Transition-Focused Initiatives
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Leadership Development
- Comprehensive Sophomore-Year
- Early Alert
Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative: Categories

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Required to Participate in Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative?

100% of sophomores required to participate:

- Academic Advising - 60%
- High-Impact Practices - 26%

No sophomores required to participate:

- Major and Career-focused - 73%
- High-Impact Practices - 30%
Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Academic Advising

• Academic Assistance
• Retention
• Selection of a Major
• Graduation
• Student-Faculty Interaction
Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Residential Initiatives

- Connection with Institution
- Student Engagement
- Retention
- Support Network
- Self-Exploration
Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: High-Impact Practices

- Student Engagement
- Intercultural Competence
- Civic Responsibility
- Leadership Opportunities
- Career Preparation and Exploration
- Critical-thinking Skills
Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Major and Career-Focused

- Career Exploration
- Career Preparation
- Selection of a Major
- Retention
- Graduation
Educationally Effective Practices in Primary Initiative: *Performance Expectations at Appropriately High Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Not Present</th>
<th>Partially Present</th>
<th>Pervasive Throughout</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-Impact Practices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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Educationally Effective Practices in Primary Initiative: **Significant Investment of Time and Effort by Students**

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Educationally Effective Practices in Primary Initiative: *Interactions with Faculty and Peers about Substantive Matters*

- **High-Impact Practices**: Not Present
- **Academic Advising**: Partially Present
- **Major and Career-Focused Initiatives**: Not Present
- **Residential Initiatives**: Partially Present
Educationally Effective Practices in Primary Initiative: *Frequent, Timely, & Constructive Feedback*

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Educationally Effective Practices in Primary Initiative: *Experiences with Diversity*

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Sophomores’ satisfaction with advising significantly predicts:

- Their overall satisfaction with their college experience
- Their satisfaction with faculty
- Their perception of tuition as a worthwhile investment
Observations and Lingering Questions

• Sophomore programs slowly becoming more prevalent
• Sophomore programs becoming more diffuse
  • Tend to emerge in different areas on campus first
  • Collaboration and coordination happen on campus later
• Academic advising a cornerstone for sophomore-year support on campus
  • Less frequently include elements of high-impact practice
• Can a “high-impact integrated experience” be conceived and delivered across multiple initiatives in the sophomore year?
  • Issues with coordination
Thank You!

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