An Overview of the Sophomore Year

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

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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CREATING SOPHOMORE PROGRAMS?
Second Year: Developmental Milestone

• Critical juncture for students developmentally
  – Academic development
  – Connection to institution and place in the community
  – Career development
  – Personal identity issues
  – Examination of life purpose

• Increased capacity to make progress on important college outcomes
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?
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
Campus Response to Sophomores?

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
Sophomore Student
(Unmotivationus Middlechildibus)
KEEP CALM AND SURVIVE SOPHOMORE YEAR
# NSSYI: Most Important Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve retention</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career exploration</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career preparation (&lt; 2-year)</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic assistance</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of a major (&lt; 4-year)</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership opportunities</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection with the institution (&lt; 4-year; &lt; Private)</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rates (&lt; 2-year; &lt; Public)</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
46% of Institutions report offering at least one initiative specifically geared toward sophomores.
Duration of Sophomore Initiative

- More than 20 years, 21.6%
- 2 years or less, 26.0%
- 16-20 years, 4.2%
- 11-15 years, 6.6%
- 6-10 years, 18.6%
- 3-5 years, 23.1%
Coordination of Sophomore Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-Totally decentralized</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5-Totally centralized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.sc.edu/fye
Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career exploration</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early alert systems</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major exploration and selection</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic coaching or mentoring</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mentoring by sophomores</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class events</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013-2014 NSSYI
Primary Sophomore-Year Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-on Requirement</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Alert</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit-Bearing Course</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Coaching</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Events</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore LLC</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Exploration</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Exploration</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013-2014 NSSYI
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

These initiatives include such sophomore programs as internships, learning communities, service-learning, undergraduate research
Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Major and Career-Focused

- Career Exploration
- Career Preparation
- Selection of a Major
- Retention
- Graduation
Examples of Sophomore Programs

• University of South Carolina
  – SophoMORE series
  – http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_success_center/beyond-your-courses/sophomore_success/

• Ohio State
  – STEP
  – Faculty buy-in and interaction with students is key

• Belmont University
  – Growth & Purpose for Students (GPS)

• Norfolk State
  – Graduation Academy for STEM students
  – Sophomore summer bridge
  – Sophomore/Junior transition week

• HBCU-UP (National Science Foundation)
  – Benedict College – supplement tuition of STEM students to improve credit-hour momentum in sophomore year
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT SOPHOMORE STUDENTS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?
What are Sophomores Saying?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore year is worse or much worse than first year</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses are worse/much worse than first year</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting grades below a B average</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still unsure of my major</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surviving…barely</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sophomore Experiences Survey, 2014
## Sophomores Slumping?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissatisfied with….</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My grades</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My living situation</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My health</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interactions with faculty</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My peer relationships</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole college experience</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount I’m learning</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sophomore Experiences Survey, 2014
About 1 in 5 sophomores are experiencing a “slump” in motivation, grades, or satisfaction with the college experience.

Sophomore Experiences Survey, 2014
About 1 in 5 sophomores are "thriving" on campus:
- Engaged learning
- Positive perspective
- Academic Determination
- Social Connectedness
- Diverse Citizenship

Thriving is a strong predictor of student success measured by student persistence and GPA

Sophomore Experiences Survey, 2014
Pathways to Thriving

- Pathways to Thriving for African American Students
  - Psychological Sense of Community
  - Spirituality
  - Faculty Interaction
  - Institutional Integrity
Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Demonstration of competence/Accountability

(Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013)
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Performance Expectations at Appropriately High Levels

- High-Impact Practices
- Academic Advising
- Residential Initiatives
- Major and Career-Focused

Not Present : 1 2 3 4
Present Throughout: 5

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

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HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Significant Investment of Time and Effort by Students

1. High-Impact Practices
2. Residential Initiatives
3. Academic Advising
4. Major and Career-Focused

Not Present
Present Throughout
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Interactions with Faculty and Peers about Substantive Matters

- High-Impact Practices: Present Throughout
- Academic Advising: Present Throughout
- Major and Career-Focused: Present Throughout
- Residential Initiatives: Present Throughout
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Frequent, Timely, & Constructive Feedback

High-Impact Practices

Academic Advising

Major and Career-Focused

Residential Initiatives
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Experiences with Diversity

- Residential Initiatives: Present Throughout
- High-Impact Practices: Not Present
- Academic Advising: Present Throughout
- Major and Career-Focused: Present Throughout
Sophomore Year Assessment

• Consider how you will define “Sophomore”
  – Number of credits
  – Time on campus
  – What information do you already have on your campus about this group and how is it defined there?
• Conduct a data audit
• Choose one or two outcomes and spend several years doing a deep dive
Using National Data for Decision Support

• Consider the level of the data that is available nationally
  – Institution-level data
    • National Resource Center (Nat’l Survey of Sophomore Initiatives)
    • IPEDS
    • Helpful in understanding programs and contexts
  – Student-level data
    • National Student Clearinghouse
    • Sophomore Experiences Survey
    • Helpful in understanding student outcomes
Potential National Data Sources on Sophomores

- Instruments that could be used for sophomores:
  - Sophomore Experiences Survey (free at www.thrivingincollege.org)
  - Student Satisfaction Inventory (Noel-Levitz)
  - Second-Year Student Assessment (Noel-Levitz)
  - Diverse Learning Environments Survey (HERI/UCLA) (Can be used in Second Year)

- NSSE does not target Sophomores
Thank You!

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