

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

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

The First-Year Experience: Lessons Learned and Emerging Issues

Jennifer R. Keup Director, National Resource Center September 17, 2013



Overview

Talk a bit about:

- Provide definitional parameters for FYE
- History of the first-year experience
- Lessons learned from the decades of work in the U.S.
- Current challenges & looking ahead in the U.S. context

Qualifications

- Time!!!
- Not necessarily new information





www.sc.edu/fye

Data Sources

- National Resource Center
 - 2012-2013 National Survey of First-Year Seminars
 - 2009 National Survey of First-Year Seminars
 - 2011 National Survey of Senior Capstone Experiences
 - 2009 Peer Leadership Survey
 - 2008 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives
 - Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
- WNSLAE Data
- JNGI Student Success & Retention Survey
- AAC&U High Impact Practices
- ACT





However, let's be sure to begin at the beginning...





Before we get too far down the path...

- When does "the first-year experience" begin?
- In the U.S., our answer is complicated by the highly integrated nature of the educational system.
 - Early outreach
 - Community relationships
 - Transfer students (lateral, reverse, "swirling")
 - Dual enrollment programs
 - Admissions



...and for whom is FYE?

- Cimistic
- Miller
- High
- Civic
 Mir
- Moral
- Entitled
- Tech-savvy



 Groupnted

What words would you use to describe your first-year students?



allowers Lent Ultural

n-political

- Conformist
- Programmed



Not as Homogeneous as this Suggests

- Adult learners
- Veterans
- Transfers and "swirlers"
- Diversity along race, ethnicity, national origin, and first-language
- Working and financially needy students
- Physical, emotional, and learning ability levels
- Gender balance
- Academic preparation
- Others?



Food for Thought

- "First-year experience educators need to identify how their programs, policies, and pedagogies capitalize on the multiple perspectives that...college students bring with them—perspectives that contribute to the total campus environment." (Keup, 2008)
- Balance between acknowledging the individual student and forging a community culture
- How to remain flexible for personality profile of the next generation

...and, finally...

- What do we mean when we say "first-year experience"?
 - Comprehensive
 - Intentional
 - Integrated
 - Flexible
 - Systemic
 - Organizationally horizontal
 - Student centered



FYE: A Working Definition

"The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions."

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)



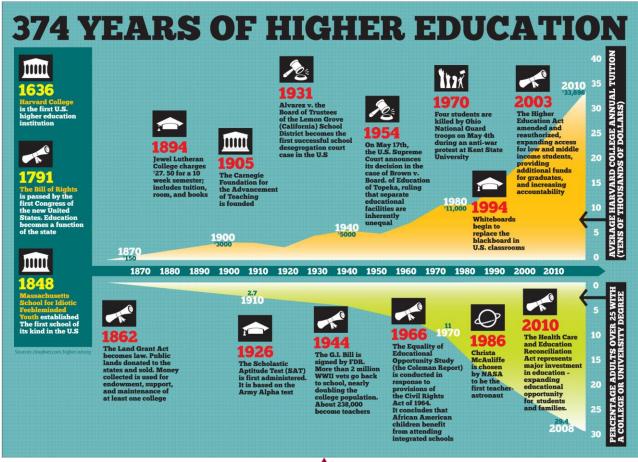
FYE: A Working Definition at UJ

"The FYE has been conceptualized as a holistic initiative which encompasses all aspects of first year student experience in the context of an invitational and equitable institution. It comprises both curricular and extra-curricular initiatives, and is far more than a single event, programme or course. It attempts to establish an ethos and a way of life, through which all firs year students will experience the transition into university life."



(Van Zyl, 2011)

FYE: FOUNDATIONS AND BEGINNINGS





FYE: Foundations and Beginnings

- Mass Higher Education Era in the U.S. (1945-1975)
 - WWII GIs: GI Bill and Baby Boom
 - Civil rights and desegregation led to greater access
 - Institutional expansion especially large public and CC
 - Increased financial aid (Higher Education Act)
- Access does not equal success
- "Rediscovery" of student support initiatives
 - Orientation
 - Learning communities
 - Service learning
 - First-year seminars



FYE: Foundations and Beginnings





 Student activism and a riot at the University of South Carolina in Spring 1970

- University 101 was created by President Thomas Jones
- Strong social justice undertones
- Teach students to "love" the university



FYE: A History

National Resource Center Milestones of Development

1982: First "National Conference on the Freshman Seminar/ Freshman Orientation Course Concept" held at USC



1986 -1999: John N.
Gardner, served as
executive director of the
National Resource Center

1989: Journal of The Freshman Year Experience introduced 1991: Center name changed to the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience

1994: Website created First-Year Experience listserv (FYE-List) established

1980

1983: Annual conference series on The Freshman Yeal Experience begins 1986: National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience established

First "International Conference on The First-Year Experience" held in the UK 1988: First monograph and FYE newsletter published

First National Survey on Freshman Seminar Programs conducted

First Canadian-American Conference on The First-Year Experience held in Toronto 1990: National

1990

campaign to recognize Outstanding Freshman Advocates begins 1993: First Conference on the Senior-Year Experience hosted by the National Resource

Center



FYE: History

1999: Transfer Year Experience listserv (TYE-List) established Center founder, John Gardner,

Center founder, John Gardner, retires and named Senior Fellow

16

Stuart Hunter becomes the second Director of the National Resource Center 2001: Joint international conference held with Pacific Rim Conference on the First Year in Higher Education

2004: Sophomore Year listserv (SOPH-List) established

2000

listserv (SYE-List) established

Year Experience

1997: Senior

1995: First National Conference on Students in Transition

Center name expanded to National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition

Assisted Queensland University of Technology in launching Pacific Rim Conference on the First Year in Higher Education 1998: Center name changes to National Fesource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition 2000: First Year Assessment listserv (FYA-list) established 2003: Launch of an electronic newsletter, E-Source for College Transitions

2005: Establishment of Paul P. Fidler Research Grant First National Survey of Sophomore-Year

Initiatives conducted



FYE: History

2006: 25th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience



2008: 2nd National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives conducted

Jennifer R. Keup becomes the third Director of the National

Resource Center

National Resource Center receives 2008 ASHE Special Merit Award 2010: Launch of online courses

National Award for Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars established

National Resource Center awarded a Spencer grant to study the impact of first-year seminars on student outcomes 2012: 25th International Conference on The First-Year Experience

Administration of the 9th National Survey of First-Year Seminars

2010

2013

2007: Annual First-Year Experience Conference Undergraduate Student Fellowships established

Stuart Hunter named
Executive Director of
University 101 Programs
and the National
Resource Center

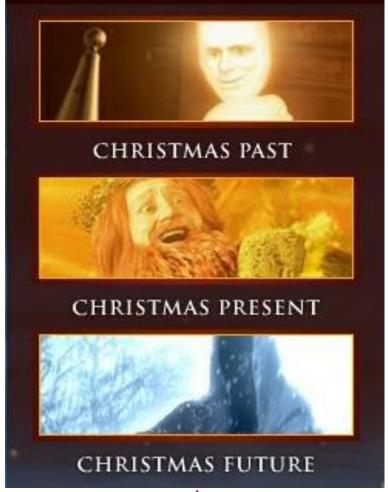
2009: Graduate Student Transitions listserv (GRAD-List) established Helping Sophomores Succeed: Understanding and Improving the Second-Year Experience published with Jossey-Bass

Launch of *The Toolbox*, an online professional development newsletter

2011: 30th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience Release of the five-volume book series, The First-Year Seminar: Designing, Implementing, and Assessing Courses to Support Student Learning and Success

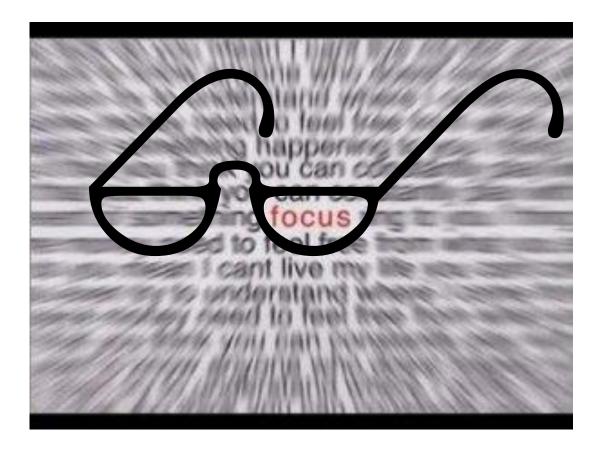


FYE: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow





FYE: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow





FYE: Lessons Learned

- Connecting FYE to RETENTION and moving beyond
- Choosing OUTCOMES effectively
- Effective use and transferability of HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPs)
- ASSESSMENT, accountability, and accreditation
- INTEGRATION across FYE programs



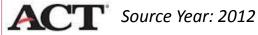
RETENTION

"Look to your left, look to your right—one of you won't be here next year."



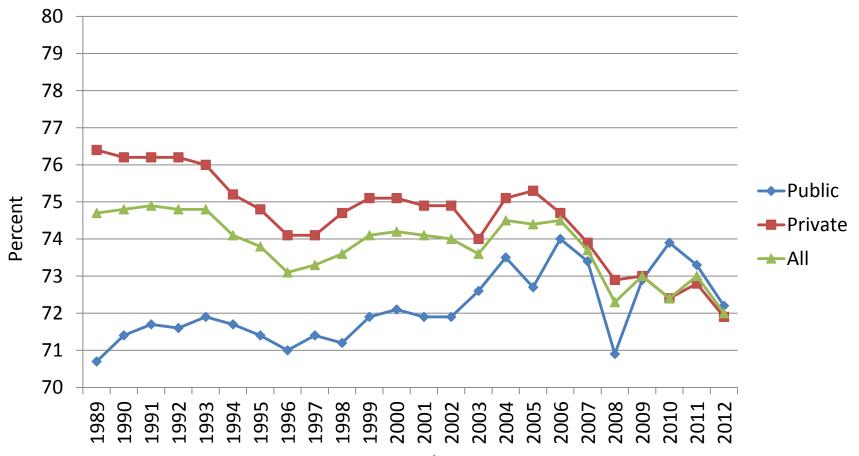
National First-to-Second-Year Retention Rates by Institutional Type

Degree Level/Control	N	SD*	Mean %
Two-Year Pubic	772	12.5	55.5
Two-Year Private	70	27.9	55.5
BA/BS Public	88	13.0	65.2
BA/BS Private	353	22.3	67.3
MA/First Professional Public	223	12.1	69.7
MA/First Professional Private	505	17.7	70.3
PhD Public	258	15.0	76.7
PhD Private	274	14.5	80.2
Total	2,543		66.5



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National First-to-Second-Year Retention Rates at Four-Year Colleges







National First-to-Second-Year Retention Rates at Four-Year Colleges





And yet, we are still invested...

- The word "retention" was found 95 times in the program for the 32nd Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience
 - 59 times in the program for the 25th Annual International Conference on the First-Year Experience
- Metric that is required for reporting
- Goal to "increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025" —Lumina Foundation
- Income and employment options are directly related to level of education

Common Goal of Undergraduate Initiatives

Goal of "improved retention/graduation rates"	Percent
First-year seminars	89
Early alert warning systems	89
Learning communities	83
Orientation	82
Bridge programs	75
Undergraduate research	49
Service-learning	31





- Profile
- Progress
- Process
- Promise



- Profile-The strongest predictor of student retention and success is the profile of the student and the institution.
- Progress
- Process
- Promise



- Profile
- Progress-Need to focus on students' progress toward a degree and not just their presence.
- Process
- Promise



- Profile
- Progress
- Process-retention and success is contingent upon systematic attention to processes that hinder and facilitate retention rather than just at-risk students.
- Promise



- Profile
- Progress
- Process
- Promise-"student attrition is a function of unmet expectations...,unfulfilled promises, and unrealized experience of the 'brand'."



Beyond Retention: Theory





"While many [theories] have seen the role of first-year and transition programs as solely focused on retaining the student, these programs should have a greater influence on setting the tone for what it means to be an educated individual and the responsibilities that come with gaining a postsecondary education."

(Torres & LePeau, 2013)



Beyond Retention: Methods

"Student persistence, or retention to the sophomore year, and academic achievement...are common measures [and] are of great importance as metrics for student success [but] learning outcomes desirable for all college students, such as written and oral communication, information literacy, problem solving, civic engagement, and intercultural and global understanding are also worthy of study."





(Kinzie, 2013)



Beyond Retention: Practice

"The almost singular focus on retention and graduation rates as...student success is inadequate, [there must be] a revised definition grounded in student learning outcomes."

"Definitions of student success must include not only retention and graduation rates, but also a wide range of student learning and developmental outcomes."

(Reason & Gansemer-Topf, 2013)



Persistence

- Persistence: [verb] "to continue steadfastly or firmly in some state, purpose, course of action, or the like, especially in spite of opposition, remonstrance, etc."
- Questions:
 - Should this be the primary goal?
 - Does this actually measure progress?
 - Does it actually limit the scope of our thinking and work with the FYE?
 - Does it have a "shelf-life"?



TO WHAT END? OUTCOMES



"Excuse me," said Alice, "how do I get out of here?"

"That depends a great deal on where you want to end up" said the cat.

"I don't care where I end up," said Alice, "I just want out!"

"Well," said the cat, "if it doesn't matter where you end up, it doesn't matter which road you take."

Carroll, 1865





21st Century: Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative learning



Metacompetencies for Employability

- Build & sustain working professional relationships
- Analyze, evaluate, and interpret data from various sources
- Engage in continuous learning
- Oral communication and persuasion
- Project planning and management

Gardner, 2009



Metacompetencies for Employability

- Ability to create new knowledge
- Understand the impact of company practices in a global setting
- Build a successful team
- Coach, mentor, & develop others
- Initiative



Gardner, 2010





Write down as many outcomes of the first-year experience as you can think of.



Domains for FYE Outcomes

- Retention
- Academic skills/experiences
- Campus connection
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal development
- Civic engagement/democratic citizenship
- Employability



Examples of FYE Outcomes

Retention

- Persistence to the second year
- Graduation rates
- Academic skills/experiences
 - Analytical & critical thinking skills
 - Development of educational career goals
 - Declaring a major
 - Knowledge integration & application
 - Academic engagement
 - Academic achievement
 - Cognitive complexity
 - Study skills
 - Introduction to a discipline

Campus connection

- Knowledge of university requirements
- Ability to identify, seek, & use organizational resources
- Connection to campus community
- Understanding history & traditions
- Involvement in cocurricular activities
- Satisfaction with student experience

Interpersonal skills

- Conflict resolution
- Written & oral communication skills
- Development of a social support network
- Multicultural competence



Examples of FYE Outcomes

Personal development

- Time management
- Identity exploration & development
- Values clarification
- Practical competence
- Life management skills
- Physical health
- Emotional wellness
- Moral and ethical development
- Leadership skills

Civic engagement/democratic citizenship

- Participation in service
- Engagement in philanthropy
- Political awareness/engagement
- Political activism/social advocacy
- Community involvement

Employability

- Analyzing a problem from various sources
- Innovation and creation of new knowledge
- Providing direction through interpersonal persuasion
- Ability to integrate ideas and information
- Applying knowledge to a real-world setting
- Ability to coach and mentor others
- Project planning and management
- Engage in continuous learning
- Desireability as a candidate
- Initiative
- Ethical decision-making
- Professionalism
- Ability to build a team
- Others?





First-Year Seminar Objectives*	Percent
Develop academic skills	54.6
Develop connection w/the institution	50.2
Provide orientation to campus resources & services	47.6
Self-exploration/personal development	28.5
Create common first-year experience	23.3
Develop support network/friendships	17.4
Increase student-faculty interaction	16.9
Improve sophomore return rates	15.5
Develop writing skills	11.9
Introduction to a discipline	7.0



Orientation Goals**	Percent
Introduction to the institution/facilities	98
Building connections with students,	
faculty, & staff	93
Celebrating arrival of new students	90
Advising	87
Improving retention/graduation rates	82
Course registration	81
Placement testing	66





Learning Community Goals & Outcomes**	Percent		
Student-to-student interaction	86		
Higher levels of academic achievement	85		
Improved retention and/or graduation rates	83		
Faculty-to-student interaction	81		
Linkages between different disciplinary			
perspectives	62		
Improved critical thinking	60		
Faculty-to-to faculty collaboration	41		





Effective Selection of Outcomes

- Communicate values and culture
- Help focus your efforts
- Identify institutional partners
- Create a "brand" identity for your program
- Indicate assessment methods and strategies
- Suggest specific interventions



HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES



What tools do we have to achieve these FYE outcomes?



	No	Yes		Who's in charge?
Academic advising				
Bridge programs				
Career planning				
Class events				
mon reading program		7		
nico/conico loarnir				

ice/service learning



In which of the following areas does your institution currently have initiatives for first-year students?

Peer mentoring/					-
Probation i ves					
Residence life (e.g., first-year student arrangements)					
Retreats					
Supplemental instruction					
Undergraduate research			·		
Writing-intensive courses	/				

"High-Impact Practices..."

...are curricular and cocurricular structures that tend to draw upon high-quality pedagogies and practices in pursuit of 21st century learning outcomes; they are "teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students..,[toward] increase rates of retention and student engagement."

Kuh, 2008



Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

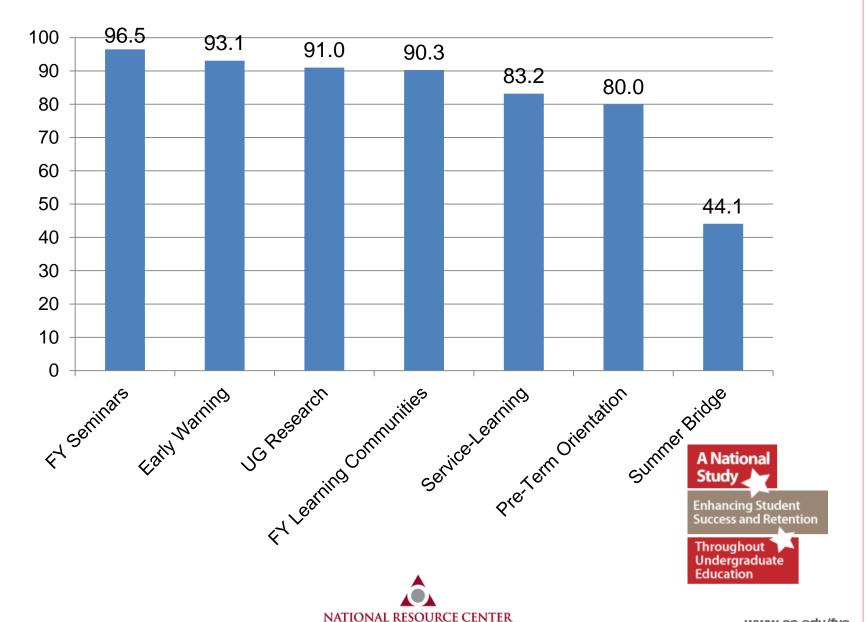
- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Accountability



High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- **■** Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative
 Assignments &
 Projects

- ☑ Undergraduate Research
- ☑ Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning,
 Community-Based
 Learning
- **✓** Internships
- Capstone Courses & Projects



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HIPs in Combination

89.7% of campuses offered a First-Year Seminar

High-Impact Practice in the FYS	%
Collaborative assignments & projects	67.2
Diversity/Global learning	58.8
Writing-intensive	42.5
Common reading experience	38.1
Learning community	36.8
Service-learning	31.8
Undergraduate research	12.8



Evidence of Effectiveness?



Evidence of Effectiveness? YES!



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However,....

- "High-impact practices...combine and concentrate other empirically validated pedagogic approaches into a single multideminational activity that unfolds over a period of time."
- "Only when they are implemented well and continually evaluated...will we realize their considerable potential."

Kuh, 2010



Selected Findings

- First-year seminars
 - More first-year seminars in CC and MSIs
 - 60% of are "extended orientation"
 - Class size of first-year seminars is drifting up (>21)
 - Changing patterns of requiring the course
 - 44% are offered for one credit
 - Traditional models of instructor compensation
 - 80% have a dean, director, or coordinator but >1/2 of these leaders serve this role in a part-time capacity



Selected Findings (cont.)

- Service learning
 - Service is often of short duration (<less than 10 hours)
 - One-shot experience or service "plunge"
 - Some evidence of integration into the classroom and reflection
- Common reading
 - Often solely an orientation or welcome week activity
 - Occasional connection to FYS, freshman composition, or developmental English
- Learning Communities
 - Range from structurally-related to thematically integrated
 - Mostly co-enrollment NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

Selected Findings (cont.)

- Online components
 - Reliance upon outdated technologies
 - Mostly used as a repository for course documents, assignment submission, and discussion boards
 - Low levels of social media use
- Student support tends to be heavily "book-ended" in first year and senior year
- Sophomore-year initiatives are still developing
 - Heavily connected to institutional type
 - Curricular opportunities underutilized
- Wide variation of use, type, and impact of HIP by
 major

So, what's the grade?





A Call for Innovative and Integrative Pedagogy in HIPs

Pedagogical "practices [tend to] be used in more functional rather than novel approaches. It seems that these course practices have great, albeit currently unrealized, potential for transformation into truly high-impact learning experiences for students [and] pillars in an integrated, intentional first-year experience."



(Padgett & Keup, 2011)

Emerging Evidence

 High-impact practices have minor direct effects on student learning

Salisbury & Goodman (2009)

 A more significant connection exists between "good practices" and student-learning outcomes

Goodman, Baxter Magolda, Seifert, & King (2011)



What are Some Vetted "Good Practices"?

- Effective teaching
- A variety of teaching methods
- Teaching clarity and organization
- Active learning
- Cooperative learning
- High expectations
- Integrative learning

- Quality non-classroom interactions w/faculty
- Influential interactions with other students
- Academic rigor and challenge
- Diversity experiences
- Meaningful discussion and homework
- Productive use of class time

Bottom Line

- We overemphasis the impact of offering and participating in HIPs on learning outcomes and retention
- It is what we are doing within the HIPs that is contributing to these outcomes
 - Innovative and integrative pedagogies
 - Vetted good practices
- Better understanding of the processes



Consider transferability

"It stands to reason that [HIP] key conditions can be adapted and incorporated into any teaching and learning situation inside or outside the classroom to promote higher levels of student performance. There are doubtless other highimpact activities...in which large number of students participate."

Kuh, 2010



Consider transferability

What are common student experiences that have the potential to become HIPs?



Possibilities

- Employment
- Campus activities
- Student media
- Advising
- Athletics
- Physical fitness and wellness

- Portfolios and performance
- Transactional experiences
 - Course registration
 - Parking
 - Financial aid
- Peer leadership



Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

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



ASSESSMENT

Are FYE programs and HIPs being "continually evaluated?"







Short Answer: "Not Enough!"

- 59% of respondents to the National Survey of First-Year Seminars say that they have assessed their seminar in the past three years.
- 58% of institutions responding to the National Survey of Sophomore Year Initiatives say that they have <u>ever</u> evaluated their second-year initiatives.
- 56% of institutions responding to the National Survey of Capstone Experiences indicate that they have assessed their seminar in the past three years.



Assessment Strategies

FYS Assessment	Percent
Student course evaluation	86.9
Institutional data	71.2
Survey instrument	53.4
Direct assessment of student learning outcomes	52.9
Focus groups with instructors	35.4
Program review	33.3
Focus groups with students	30.6
Individual interviews with instructors	20.0
Individual interviews with students	12.4



What is Being Measured?

FYS Objective	Percent
Develop connection w/the institution	44.9
Provide orientation to campus resources & services	37.8
Develop academic skills	36.3
Develop critical thinking skills	23.3
Create common first-year experience	21.6
Self-exploration/personal development	17.0
Develop support network/friendships	14.5
Improve second-year return rates	15.5
Increase student-faculty interaction	12.4

Percent
75.9
68.9
58.4
52.7
49.3
39.5
36.6
36.1
34.8
31.6
25.0
25.9

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Misalignment

"Too often program objectives represent articulation of broad learning objectives but the assessment strategy relies upon transactional measures that do not adequately capture progress and achievement of student learning and program goals."

Keup & Kilgo, forthcoming



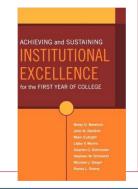
FYE Assessment Considerations

- "Just Do It!"
- The methods and tools we use to assess the impact of FYE need to consider students' self-selection
 - Who is taking advantage of FYE and HIPs?
 - Is it equally impactful for all students
- Need to maintain an institutional lens while considering national data
- Integrate longitudinal models
- Consider appropriate metrics: "expected retention"



Criteria of FYE "Excellence"

- "Evidence of an intentional, comprehensive approach to improving the first year that is appropriate to an institution's type and mission."
- "Evidence of assessment of the various initiatives that constitute this approach."
- "Broad impact on significant numbers of first-year students, including, but not limited to special student subpopulations."
- "Strong administrative support for first-year initiatives, evidence of institutionalization, and durability over time."
- "Involvement of a wide range of faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and other constituent groups."



INTEGRATION



A "Constellation" of Support

"Excellence [is] characterized by an approach to the first year that spans the curricula and cocurriculum. This approach is central and systemic rather than appended or patched to the core institutional mission."

(Barefoot et al., 2005)



FYE: A Working Definition

"The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions."

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)



FYE: A Working Definition

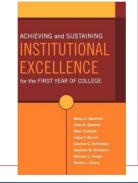
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Criteria of FYE "Excellence"

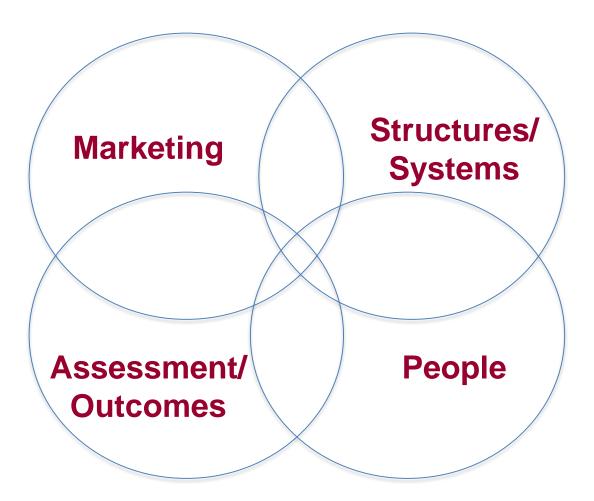
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Capitalizing upon Connections

- Program audit, including funding channels
- Branding
- Engaging campus advocates
 - Traditional partners
 - Emerging advocates
- Community partnerships, K-12 collaborations, other campuses
- Shared ownership but also accountability
- Turn existing programs into HIPs







Marketing

- Logos
- Branding
 - Subsidiary of university branding
- Theme
 - Continuous
 - Annual
- Merchandise



People

- Early champion
- Task Force/Advisory Board
- Leadership
 - Formal/appointed (e.g., Director)
 - Informal
- Ambassadors
- Student leaders
- Gatekeepers
- Objectors





Assessment/Outcomes

- Common learning outcomes
 - Related to branding
 - Appropriate to first year
- Omnibus surveys
- Longitudinal/comprehensive assessment strategy
- Linked to accreditation/self-studies



Structures/Systems

- Shared technology and alert systems
- Common documentation
- Organizational structures
 - University College
 - FYE department
- Physical spaces
 - Student Success Centers
 - Living-Learning Environments in Residence Halls



THE FUTURE: MEETING NEEDS, SETTING AGENDAS



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FYE: Current Challenges & Looking Ahead

- FYE maturing into a subspecialty of Higher Ed
- Moving beyond retention framework & employability
- Welcoming new voices in the field and preparing the next generation of leaders
- Advancing research and scholarship on student transition and success
- Growing presence of FYE in accreditation
- Internationalization of FYE
- Integration



FYE: Current Challenges & Looking Ahead

- New learning tools: technology
- New issues in FYE
 - Peer leadership
 - Developmental education
- Engage new FYE advocates
 - K-12 sector
 - "Business" services
 - New institutional types
- Address new FYE constituents (e.g., parents, public)

Need a Paradigm Shift?

http://youtu.be/47rQkTPWW2I



Questions & Comments

Jennifer R. Keup

keupj@mailbox.sc.edu

www.sc.edu/fye

