

## CHEER Program Positively Impacts Retention and Degree Completion

**F**ayetteville State University (FSU)'s CHEER Program (Creating Higher Expectations for Educational Readiness) is a month-long bridge program open to individuals admitted as first-time students for the fall semester. Its primary aims are to facilitate students' transition into the university and to strengthen their preparation for university-level academic work. Implemented in 2002, CHEER has had a positive impact on the subsequent academic success of program participants. These outcomes, combined with recently released national data, provide compelling evidence that summer programs are effective means of promoting student retention and degree completion.

Developed initially as a collaborative effort between FSU and Prairie View A&M University, the CHEER program consisted of a series of non-credit workshops that served nine non-residential students in summer 2002. CHEER has undergone significant revision every year since its inception. In summer 2006, 165 participants, two thirds of whom resided on campus, enrolled in mathematics and English classes and had the opportunity to earn six credits.

A typical day in the CHEER program includes two-hour blocks devoted alternately to classroom instruction and tutoring sessions conducted by peer tutors under the supervision of staff members. Workshops on study skills, time

management, financial aid, and other related topics are presented along with cultural-enrichment activities. The schedule of activities provides a structure similar to what students experienced in high school. At the same time, students begin to understand their increased responsibility for time management as they are introduced to the academic rigors of the university.

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The cost of the CHEER program has increased from less than \$20,000 in its first year to more than \$200,000 in 2006. The university's willingness to make this increasing investment has been guided by evidence that each group of CHEER participants has outperformed their non-CHEER counterparts in retention, hours earned, and GPA. The 20 participants in 2003 CHEER had an academic profile that would predict progress slightly behind the class as a whole. Yet, three years later, this group is well ahead of non-CHEER participants. Initial outcomes for the 2005 CHEER group are similarly encouraging. Even though the 147 participants had a lower average SAT score (820 to 840) and a lower average high school GPA (2.75 vs. 2.9) than

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*CHEER student correcting a peer's work. Courtesy, Fayetteville State University*



CHEER student checking a peer's work.  
Courtesy, Fayetteville State University

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non-CHEER participants, at the end of their first year, 93.9% of CHEER participants were still enrolled compared to 89% of their non-CHEER counterparts. CHEER participants had earned 6.7 more credit hours than non-CHEER students (26.2 vs. 19.5). Their average GPA was 2.42 compared to 2.13 for non-CHEER students. Just under half, 46.9%, are on track to graduate in four years (i.e., they have earned at least 30 hours with a GPA of 2.0 or better) compared to 12.1% of non-CHEER students.

The positive outcomes of the CHEER program are consistent with the findings of the recently released study, *The Toolbox Revisited* (Adelman, 2006), which followed 1992 high school graduates for 8.5 years and identified the following factors as increasing the likelihood of degree completion:

1. High school curriculum that prepares students for post-secondary education

2. Four or more credits earned in summer school
3. Twenty or more credits earned in the first calendar year of enrollment
4. No delay of entry into college after graduating from high school
5. Less than 20% non-penalty withdrawals or no-credit repeat courses

The CHEER program addresses the first three of these factors directly and possibly has an indirect effect on the other two. The course work and intensive academic support in CHEER reinforce and supplement the academic preparation provided by the high school curriculum (*Toolbox* factor one). Program participants earn up to six credits in CHEER (*Toolbox* factor two), which gives them a boost toward earning at least 20 hours in the first calendar year (*Toolbox* factor three). The findings of *Toolbox* indicate that summer programs such as CHEER may be especially helpful for African American students. While summer study helps all students, African American students who earned four or more credits in summer school were nearly four times as likely to earn a degree than those who had no credits in summer school (78% vs. 21%).

While CHEER does not directly affect the timing of students' entry into the university (*Toolbox* factor four), the possibility of getting a "head start" at no cost may commend the pursuit of postsecondary education over other possible choices. Finally, limiting non-penalty withdrawals and

no-credit repeats (*Toolbox* factor five) is largely a matter of advising students about the impact of enrollment decisions on degree completion. The workshops in CHEER provide an excellent forum for informing students of the importance of earning all the hours that they attempt.

The initial impact of the CHEER program has made it an essential feature of FSU's overall retention program. Encouraged by CHEER's success, FSU has developed a similar program for second-year students, which has had initial positive results.

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Moreover, thanks in part to the success of CHEER and the findings of *Toolbox*, the University of North Carolina has begun to reevaluate summer school as a means of improving retention and graduation rates throughout the system. At a time when legislators, policy makers, and the general public are calling on higher education institutions to improve retention and graduation rates, all institutions should take a closer look at summer school and programs such as CHEER as strategies with significant potential for improving student retention.

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FSU assessment data provided by  
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## Optimizing the Role of Adjunct Faculty: Campus Strategies That Work

In addressing the challenges that face today's colleges, it is impossible to overlook the effects that the disappearing full-time faculty have on students. Nationally, in an effort to cut costs, the proportion of faculty appointed to full-time, tenure-track positions is declining each year, while there is a corresponding growth in the hiring of adjunct or contingent faculty. Adjunct faculty can bring cutting-edge expertise to the university, but they are not regularly available to students outside class. This continuing trend is unfortunate because the research clearly suggests that informal student interactions with faculty outside the classroom positively influence student persistence, college graduation, and graduate school enrollment.

Nationally, part-time or adjunct faculty comprise 86.1% of faculty on campus (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004); however, adjunct or contingent status means that the host university makes little or no long-term commitment to the person occupying the position or to his or her academic work. Part-time faculty are regularly passed over for professional development opportunities.

In an effort to reinstate opportunities for informal student-faculty interaction and greater chances for development, the Adjunct Academy at City Tech (New York City College of Technology) is striving to optimize the role of adjunct faculty on campus

**Elaine Maldonado**

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and in the lives of students. In this new program, part-time faculty are compensated for remaining on campus when they finish teaching classes in order to provide students with support as both mentors and tutors. Practicing in their fields, they also help their students establish bridges to the workplace and professional organizations with which they are associated. Adjunct faculty are also encouraged to engage in college-

wide and off-campus activities that promote professional development in a variety of disciplines.

The Adjunct Academy grew out of and is administered by the College Learning Center. A program under the auspices of the Office of the Provost, it represents an academic crossroads at City Tech where students can find tutoring, workshops, test preparation, and computer access. In a small 2002 pilot project that targeted Freshman Composition, adjunct faculty were recruited to tutor and mentor after teaching their classes. The initial outcomes showed great promise. The pass rate in Freshman Composition had been 77%. For students who participated in the new project, the pass rate jumped to 90%.

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*Adjunct Professor Elliott Colchamiro with students of construction technology.  
Courtesy, Yasemin Jones*



*Adjunct Professor Anne Leonhardt working with a student of architectural technology. Courtesy, Yasemin Jones*

## **ADJUNCT FACULTY** Cont. from p. 4

In 2004, City Tech was awarded a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) grant designed to further develop the pilot into a sustainable prototype, and, in late fall 2004, the Adjunct Academy was born. The grant specifically targets high-risk, first-year courses in the School of Technology and Design. EM 150 (an engineering technology course) had a pass rate of 52% in fall 2004. For students participating in the project, the fall 2005 pass rate rose to 82%. AR 121, the History of Architecture, had a pass rate of 77%, but for participating students, the pass rate jumped to 100%.

From the start, the program was conceived with sustainability in mind. In a climate of tight budgets, the key to sustainability is clearly on reconfiguring the existing budget rather than searching for new funds. Below are activities critical to establishing and sustaining an “adjunct academy” on campus:

- Reconfigure the tutoring budget to support fewer, but

highly qualified tutors drawn from adjunct faculty.

- Recruit adjunct faculty-tutors from the departments in which they teach.
- Match tutoring hours in the Learning Center with adjunct teaching schedules.
- Apply unused tutoring hours to faculty development such as cross-disciplinary campus events, department meetings, and local conferences.
- Arrange to have adjuncts schedule office hours in the tutoring center.
- Involve adjunct faculty in campus-wide activities.
- Include intellectual property of adjunct faculty.
- Track and publicize student performance as a result of the

adjunct program by including outcomes in annual reports, college publications, and on web sites and by presenting the project and associated outcomes at department meetings and college functions.

- Maintain visibility on campus, in campus publications, and in the press by interfacing with other programs on campus.
- Provide a written “plan of action” for the tutoring coordinator so that the program is sustainable after the funding period.

It is also important to advertise and disseminate the program off campus and to generally keep the project alive and moving forward. A full-color brochure is distributed regularly at conferences. A newsletter

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*Adjunct Professor Clement McCalman with students from engineering technology courses. Courtesy, Yasemin Jones*



Adjunct Professor John Fehling working with students of engineering technology. Courtesy, Yasemin Jones

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called *Common Ground*, written by adjuncts, was recently published, in which they discuss their experiences as faculty tutors.

The administration, students, and faculty are very supportive of the academy. For example, faculty collaborate by sending students to work on class projects with adjuncts. College administration's support is shown by the fact that the academy will be institutionalized next year. Students said they considered a tutor successful if he or she

- was available when they needed him or her (i.e., they did not have to wait).
- led the student to the correct answer rather than giving it to them.
- knew the subject matter well (i.e., did not have to search for the answer to a problem).
- was empathetic.

As director of the Adjunct Academy and director of the College Learning Center, I am frequently asked to describe the program. Inevitably, I am embarrassed by its simplicity: Students are hungry to spend time with faculty, and faculty are anxious for greater opportunities on campus. So far, it is a win-win situation.

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## Peer-Mentoring Program Eases Transition to University and Increases Retention

Since 2002, University of New South Wales (UNSW) has been working toward implementing peer-mentoring programs in all colleges and departments so that first-year students can have peer mentors to support their social and academic transitions.

These programs were introduced to address problems of attrition in the first year. Peer mentors have proven to ease first-year student transition to the university and increase retention (Grant-Vallone & Enscher, 2000).

Evidence demonstrates that peer mentors have significantly enhanced the student experience at UNSW. At the same time, peer mentors have opportunities to develop leadership skills and experience (Glaser, Hall, & Halperin, in press).

The number of mentoring programs at UNSW has risen from four in 2002 to more than 20 by 2006. Some are for all students enrolling in a degree, as in the Arts and Social Science program; others are school based, such as the School of Psychology program; while others are for special categories of students such as the Rural and Remote Students Program and the Mature-Aged Students Program.

The program is monitored by a Peer-Mentoring Steering Committee composed of faculty representatives. Overall coordination of the program is managed by the University

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Counseling Service. Although the Committee oversees the university-wide program, day-to-day administration is dealt with by the coordinator of each particular program. About 70% of first-year students are invited to join the peer-mentor program (because not every department has a peer-mentor program), and approximately 60% accept.

Program coordinators recruit mentors from upper-level undergraduate students (third- or fourth-year students) in the field within which the program is organized. All mentors participate in a training course conducted by the University Counseling Service before serving as mentors. This training course is a one-day workshop that defines the role and responsibilities of mentors, and provides answers to common problems arising from the mentoring relationship. Mentors are not paid but are given a certificate from the University acknowledging their contribution. In some programs, they are invited to a lunch or social function at which the certificates are presented.

Mentees are invited to join the program after they enroll. Those who

accept the invitation are matched with a mentor, and a first meeting is arranged. Mentors are responsible for a group of up to 10 mentees, assigned to them by their program coordinator, and meet with these mentees as required by the particular program. Mentors usually meet with their mentees in groups, face-to-face, but some mentees prefer to communicate with their mentor by e-mail because of time conflicts. Scheduling became such a problem that, in 2005, first-year students were able to notify the coordinator of such conflicts who then arranged for the mentee to change groups. The change has resulted in more mentees reporting that they made use of the program. The programs run from four to eight weeks and usually conclude with a social function.

The structure of the mentoring sessions vary from program to program, but generally aim to cover most of the following issues:

- Familiarizing mentees with the university campus
- Facilitating social contacts among mentees
- Helping mentees adjust to the teaching style of the university
- Referring mentees to the available student services on campus
- Assisting mentees with their administrative problems

Although attempts are made to match mentors with mentees in their degree or area of specialization, the mentoring program is not meant to

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serve as a coaching session. Mentors are not expected to help mentees with their assignments or in understanding course content.

Since 2002, all peer-mentoring programs have been evaluated by administering questionnaires to both mentees and mentors. Reports of these evaluations have been published (Glaser, Hall, & Halperin, 2006; Hall, 2004) and presented at meetings of the Peer-Mentoring Steering Committee. Findings from these evaluations are communicated to the program coordinators to assist them in making improvements.

Ratings of helpfulness of the program showed a slight improvement in 2005. In 2004, less than 15% of mentees found the program to be of considerable help and in 2005, it rose to 20%. Ratings by mentees of helpfulness of the program in specific areas in 2005 are shown in Table 1. The program is helpful in most areas except helping with teaching style. Although the program is not meant to be a coaching program, some assistance with helping students adjust to the different method of teaching used at university as compared with high school might be incorporated more fully into the program. Interestingly, mentors tended to overestimate their helpfulness (Table 2). The difference in perceptions of helpfulness may be a result of the mentors' learning process. As they gain experience, their self-estimation may become more accurate, and they may learn new approaches that are perceived as more helpful by mentees.

Table 1

*Percentage of Mentees Rating the Mentoring Program Helpful in Each of the Various Areas Addressed by the Program*

| Area                                       | Little or no help | 2    | 3    | 4    | A great help |
|--|-------------------|------|------|------|--------------|
| Finding my way around the university       | 15.3              | 25.2 | 22.1 | 18.3 | 19.1         |
| Help with teaching style                   | 25.5              | 25.1 | 27.9 | 15.4 | 6.1          |
| Help with social contacts                  | 13.8              | 21.3 | 29.9 | 20.9 | 14.2         |
| Help access university services            | 14.6              | 23.4 | 27.2 | 19.5 | 15.3         |
| Help feel part of university community     | 12.5              | 22.5 | 30.3 | 23.6 | 11.1         |
| Help understanding university requirements | 12.8              | 18.8 | 28.2 | 27.4 | 12.8         |

Table 2

*Percentage of Mentors Rating Their Helpfulness to Mentees*

| Area  | Little or no help | 2    | 3    | 4    | A great help |
|---|-------------------|------|------|------|--------------|
| Help mentees find their way around the university | 7.7               | 15.4 | 31.6 | 38.5 | 6.8          |
| Help with teaching style                          | 5.9               | 15.3 | 39.8 | 29.7 | 9.3          |
| Help with social contacts                         | 5.1               | 21.2 | 31.4 | 31.4 | 11.0         |
| Help access university services                   | 4.2               | 11.9 | 29.7 | 33.9 | 20.3         |
| Help feel part of university community            | 6.8               | 16.9 | 34.7 | 31.4 | 10.2         |
| Help understanding university requirements        | 1.7               | 14.5 | 33.3 | 37.6 | 12.8         |

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Arts and Social Science Department mentors. Courtesy, University of New South Wales

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Mentors were also asked to identify the skills they felt they had gained from their participation (Table 3). Organizational, self-confidence, and communication skills rate the highest while employment skills lag behind despite the emphasis on including the mentoring experience on student résumés in the training session.

Working as mentors is evidence of leadership and a willingness to contribute above and beyond what is normally expected. Employers look for these qualities in their applicants. Although mentors feel they have improved a number of generic and personal skills, they do not seem to realize how their role as mentors might positively influence future employers. The training program needs to emphasize this benefit for future mentors.

The peer-mentoring program is now an established part of the University's resources available to assist first-year students in all colleges and departments. The program is attracting more students each year and is well-received by participants. The

Table 3

*Ratings of Benefits Mentors Believed They Received From Their Participation*

| Mentoring program assisted in: | % Ratings of Benefits |      |             |      |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|
|                                | Not at all            | 2    | Some extent | 4    | Very much |
| Improved communication skills  | 1.8                   | 13.2 | 33.3        | 38.6 | 13.2      |
| Identification with school     | 6.1                   | 13.2 | 29.8        | 38.6 | 12.3      |
| Improved social skills         | 5.3                   | 13.2 | 29.8        | 40.4 | 11.4      |
| Improved employment skills     | 13.2                  | 20.2 | 25.4        | 30.7 | 10.5      |
| Improved self-confidence       | 5.3                   | 15.9 | 30.1        | 32.7 | 15.9      |
| Improved organizational skills | 5.3                   | 22.1 | 29.2        | 25.7 | 17.7      |

program requires minimal funding from the University and fulfills an important role in assisting first-year students in adjusting to university life. Continuing funding of the program is a priority for the University.

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## Saluting Seniors: A Fun Approach to Easing the Transition From College

Graduation is supposed to be one of the happiest days of a college student's life. They have passed their finals, secured a job or been accepted to graduate school, and found a place to live. But for many college seniors, the days and weeks before graduation are filled with additional hurdles: running to the parking office to pay outstanding tickets, racing to the library to return overdue books, finding time to get to the bookstore to get measured for academic regalia, and making one last trip to the dean's office to double-check graduation status. If all of the pre-graduation errands go well, the happy, yet exhausted college senior is primed to walk across the stage on graduation day with relative ease. However, if the multiple visits to campus departments go badly, this already frustrating process can lead to years of distaste for their alma mater.

It is no wonder that Gardner (1999) equates the process of receiving a degree with being a "frequent flyer." Although college seniors have been our faithful passengers, providing vital revenue to our institutions for years, we often treat them poorly at the end of their journey with us. In an effort to reduce some of the stress associated with graduation, Rutgers College has developed a program to facilitate a more seamless approach to graduation. As a supplement to the traditional off-campus activities

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planned for Rutgers College Senior Week, the College's Senior Week Planning Team (comprised of upper-level student leaders) has initiated a fun, social, on-campus program geared toward facilitating students' graduation preparations and overall

transition out of college. In partnership with the college's Senior Year Experience (SYE) committee, the Senior Week Planning Team developed the concept of an outdoor "Senior Salute." Complete with a live band, free food, giveaways, and, most important, all the university's senior-related resources in one central, convenient location, the Senior Salute established the first college-wide effort to reduce the administrative stress of graduation for seniors.

By bringing together various university departments (i.e., student development, academic services, the counseling center, and career services; University Libraries, parking, the yearbook, alumni relations, and the university bookstore) that have specific responsibilities for helping students graduate, the three-hour event serves to both publicize Senior Week and provide outgoing seniors with an opportunity to square away all necessary pre-graduation details with efficiency and ease. From the outside,

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Seniors at Senior Salute. Courtesy, Staci Hersh



Band at Senior Salute. Courtesy, Staci Hersh

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the event, now in its third year, looks like part concert, part picnic, and part carnival. This inviting atmosphere is exactly the mood that the planning team intends. Participating departments are given their own tables in a high-traffic area outside the student center, inviting passers-by to stop and do business. Whether this means paying library fines or confirming graduation status, students have a one-stop shop for all their pre-graduation needs. Given the free-flowing nature of the event, it is difficult to assess how many students attend annually, but it is estimated that several hundred students take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Senior Salute. "This is a great idea," said one senior, "I got to confirm my graduation status and pay my fines... and I only had to go to one location to do it."

Senior Week also has a positive impact on staff: "I enjoy the chance to get out and interact with seniors in

the festive atmosphere of the Senior Salute," says Betty Spear, Assistant Dean of the Senior Class at Rutgers College. "The Dean's Office can be an intimidating place for some students and Commencement is an exciting, but dignified, day. The Senior Salute generates excitement among students about their impending graduation and offers the opportunity to focus on the tasks at hand. It is a celebration of many offices and services at the university joining together to wish the students well as they prepare to leave Rutgers."

The Senior Salute shows students that the college is ready to support them and make the transition away from school easier. The Senior Salute has received an enormously positive student and staff response gathered through informal comments, surveys, and focus groups. The event has proven to be one of the first rituals in anticipation of graduation that helps solidify the transition out of college, and strengthen the long-term

relationship with the university beyond graduation. Kerri Mahoney-Willson, Assistant Dean for Student Leadership and Involvement sums up:

I think the attention being paid to the senior-year experience and the emotional and psychological impact on students is hugely important. The transition from college to the real world is a tremendous and momentous step in the lives of our college seniors, and offering an event like the Senior Salute provides an opportunity to help make that process simpler.

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## Involving Faculty in Orientation

Successful new student orientation programs involve the entire campus community including administrators, student affairs professionals, staff, and maybe, most important, faculty. Such involvement “is a prime factor in creating a community environment where entering students want to belong, perform, and contribute” (Smith & Brackin, 2003, p. 40).

However, new student orientation staff sometimes struggles to attract faculty to participate in the process. The question then becomes how do universities and colleges, regardless of institutional size, attract faculty to participate in orientation programs. This question was posed on the FYE Listserv, and several participants responded with strategies that have been successful on their campuses. Other institutions were also contacted to ensure a good representation of geographic location and institutional size.

A common way institutions welcome new students to campus is to hold events or ceremonies that introduce them to the academic community. At Bucknell University, located in Lewisburg, PA, selected faculty speak at the matriculation ceremony where incoming students receive pins identifying them as members of the campus community. Furthermore, faculty at Bucknell also voluntarily participate in dinner events where students have the opportunity to interact with faculty in a social setting. Amy Badal, Assistant Dean of Students and

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coordinator of new student orientation at Bucknell commented, “Faculty are receptive to participating in our programs and always helpful in welcoming students.” At Converse College in Spartanburg, SC, faculty members even host dinners in their homes for small groups of entering students during orientation, while St. Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, IN, prefers to host picnics as a more informal gathering of faculty and students.

Another way that institutions incorporate faculty into orientation is to invite them to participate in sessions that support academic preparation and transition. For example, at Pennsylvania State University at DuBois (PSUD), selected faculty lead workshops about academic study skills in collaboration with the campus learning center. The University of Oregon, based in Eugene, conducts a similar event called “Faculty Perspectives” where faculty members give a mock lecture and offer tips for students as they navigate their first college classes. Bucknell and PSUD faculty hold sessions for new students in which they discuss expectations professors

See FACULTY, p. 13

### BEST PRACTICES IN ATTRACTING FACULTY TO PARTICIPATE IN ORIENTATION

1. Seek out faculty already involved in other areas of campus (e.g., those who recruit prospective students or participate in first-year programs).
2. Review course evaluations and student recommendations as a means of targeting faculty who interact well with students.
3. Encourage long-time faculty participants in orientation to recruit other faculty members.
4. Link the first-year seminar to orientation, and offer a stipend for teaching the seminar. Then require some type of participation in orientation.
5. Let the faculty choose the communication method. During first contact, inquire how faculty would like to communicate in future (e.g., telephone, e-mail, or fax) and then use that method for all subsequent correspondence.
6. Ask for faculty input in planning orientation events.
7. Incorporate some type of ceremony or event in orientation that requires a faculty presence (e.g., picnic, convocation, matriculation ceremony).
8. Encourage faculty members to host dinners during orientation in their homes for groups of incoming students. If possible, provide funds to underwrite the cost of these events.
9. Have student orientation leaders write thank-you notes to participating faculty.

**FACULTY** Cont. from p. 12

have of their students in an effort to further prepare them for their courses.

As an alternative to only recruiting faculty for specific orientation events, some colleges link orientation to other academic initiatives or services. Saint Joseph's and Berry College located in Mount Berry, GA, seek to build relationships between faculty and students by linking their orientation with first-year seminar programs. Berry invites faculty members to teach a section of the first-year seminar course, which includes participation in new student orientation. At Saint Joseph's, faculty serve dual roles by acting as an orientation leader to their first-year seminar class.

Another way to achieve high faculty participation is to include academic advising opportunities in orientation programs. At Saint Joseph's, many students register before arriving at orientation. During orientation, faculty members meet with groups of 12 to 14 students to discuss any changes they want to make to their class schedules. The University of Oregon reports that 80 to 100 faculty members advise students who have already declared a major during orientation, and that 95% of these faculty participants return from year to year.

When all else fails, institutions may offer a stipend or other incentive to faculty to participate in orientation. Berry and Saint Joseph's offer a stipend for faculty who agree to teach a first-year seminar, which requires orientation participation. The University of Oregon also provides stipends for faculty who participate in the

academic advising aspect of orientation. While budget constraints may prevent the distribution of stipends, non-monetary incentives can be just as effective. Converse offers free T-shirts and meals to their faculty as a way of compensating them for their time.

Even though these institutions have success in recruiting faculty to participate in orientation, the process was not necessarily easy, and at times, they had to work hard to involve faculty (see sidebar on page 12 for strategies to attract faculty). Sean Kelly, Director of Student and Enrollment Services at PSUD, indicated that the impact of faculty participation was more important than having large numbers. He said, "I am not as worried about the number of faculty involved as I am about the quality of the interaction taking place with those who do choose to be involved." The work, time, and energy expended to involve faculty in orientation will be worthwhile if students have opportunities to meet faculty early and often, thus decreasing the intimidation factor enough so that they will feel comfortable approaching faculty once classes begin.

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- Cox, B. E. (2006). *A proven possibility: Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom*, 3(5), 4.
- Karp, S., Bingham, K., Heeter, S., Martz, D., Waple, J., Brush, D., et al. (2006). *Changes in orientation increases student matriculation*, 3(6), 2.

**PEER** Cont. from p. 9**Related Articles in E-Source**

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## Video Helps Parents Make Transition to College

**Danielle Stayzer**

*Manager, First-Year Experience Office,  
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The First-Year Experience Office at McMaster University recognizes the importance of involving parents in the university experience. Therefore, we provide support and information to help parents prepare for their new role in their students' lives. During our one-day summer orientation program, Welcome Day, we traditionally offer a panel session to parents where administrators speak about health and wellness, safety and security, issues of confidentiality, hospitality services, and residence life. This year, we introduced a new parent workshop that focused more on understanding the university experience so that parents can better guide and support their students.

In August 2005, we decided to capture parents on video talking about their fears and concerns for their students. We based this decision on our experience with filming students discussing their worries and showing the result during orientation. Students viewing the video realized that they were not alone and that other students shared the same concerns. So, on Welcome Day 2005, we had a film team roaming the campus, approaching parents and asking if they would mind being interviewed on film about their experience as parents of new students. Not everyone was willing, but most were. All parents were asked the same two questions: What is on

your mind? What do you think your son or daughter needs from you? The footage was reviewed to identify common themes. Then, clips were grouped by theme to demonstrate the parents' top concerns. Between the two segments of parents' answers, we inserted students' comments about their worries. This allowed us to show parents the students' perspective and how this matched or differed from their views.

In order to produce this video, we asked students from the Multi-Media program for help. The students filmed, edited, and produced a professional-quality video for us that could be used in their academic portfolios. We partnered with other student affairs units who also produce videos to purchase the necessary equipment (i.e., video camera, microphone, tripod, and editing software) to keep our costs low. Such a collaboration can occur on other campuses that wish to produce videos but have a limited budget.

We presented the video during Welcome Day 2006 and hoped to generate discussion among parents as they shared their feelings and ideas. Although the group was not as talkative as we had hoped, they enjoyed watching the video and agreed they

could relate to the concerns expressed. Parents were overheard talking about the video as they left the room, saying they, too, were worried about their student succeeding academically.

To keep the video fresh and updated, we took new footage in 2006. We also asked an additional question, "What advice would you offer other parents beginning the process of choosing a university?" We will incorporate responses to this new question into our video as we prepare for Welcome Day 2007.

We believe parents are a valuable resource who have a lot to offer in supporting the success of our students. It is our goal to continue making videos aimed at supporting parents who cope with their own transition and to communicate other important information.

The video can be viewed at <http://fye.mcmaster.ca/fyeoparentvideo.htm>. Comments and feedback on the video are welcomed.

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See VIDEO, p. 15

**VIDEO** Cont. from p. 14

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## eSOURCE FOR COLLEGE TRANSITIONS

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## 2007 TELECONFERENCES

### TOPIC PEERS

March 8, 2007

Panelists:

**Greg Blimling**, Vice President of Student Affairs, Rutgers University

**Glen Jacobs**, Executive Director, International Center for Supplemental Instruction, University of Missouri-Kansas City

**Dorothy Ward**, Associate Dean of University College and Director of the Entering Student Program, University of Texas at El Paso

### TOPIC TECHNOLOGY

April 12, 2007

Panelists:

**Kathleen Clower**, Director, Instructional Media, Florida Community College at Jacksonville

**Robert Feldman**, Associate Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Massachusetts

**Julie Little**, Associate Director, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative

### TOPIC ACADEMIC & CAREER ADVISING

April 26, 2007

Panelists:

**Paul Gore**, Associate Professor, College of Education, University of Utah

**Jocelyn Harney**, Dean of Student Services, College of DuPage

**Betsy McCalla-Wriggins**, Director Emeritus Career & Academic Planning Center, Rowan University



## Incorporating Diversity in a One-Day, First-Year Student Orientation

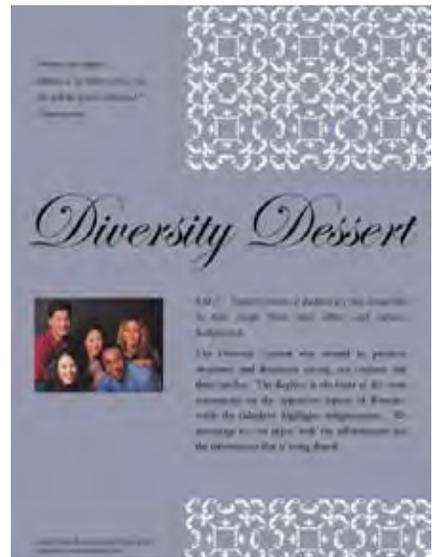
For more than a decade, Youngstown State University (YSU) has facilitated a one-day, first-year student orientation prior to each semester. The survey findings for the fall 2005 class suggested that orientation was successful in educating incoming students in all areas except diversity, i.e., students were dissatisfied with their opportunity to explore diversity and make additional connections to the institution. Thus, the need to incorporate diversity into orientation programming became a priority for the Center for Student Progress.

This priority created several questions: (a) Which diversity topics should be covered at orientation? (b) How should the topics be presented? and (c) When and where will diversity fit into an already full one-

day agenda? Orientation staff used a framework developed by Andreatta (2005) to identify the eight areas of diversity orientation would address: (a) disabilities, (b) economic class, (c) ethnicity/race, (d) gender, (e) generational issues, (f) political beliefs, (g) sexual orientation, and (h) spiritual identity. After researching each topic in detail and finding both positive and negative facts, data, and pictures, orientation staff decided to use three media to convey their message: (a) display boards illustrating types of oppression, (b) a slideshow illustrating enlightenment, and

**Tysa M. Egleton**

*Coordinator, Center for Student Progress/  
Orientation Services, Youngstown State  
University, OH*



*Diversity Dessert program.  
Courtesy, Tysa Egleton*

(c) the presence of faculty and staff to encourage discussion.

To answer all three questions, YSU implemented Diversity Dessert, which made its debut during the fall 2006 orientation. Diversity Dessert created an open, non-threatening environment for reflection and discussion. Collages depicting prejudice and oppression were placed on display boards around the room. For example, a display board illustrating ethnic oppression used quotes such as “a July 2001 Gallup poll reported that 55 percent of whites and 83 percent of blacks believe racial profiling is widespread.” A slideshow with related musical themes ran continuously during the session and celebrated differences and examples of tolerance and understanding portrayed in film and seen at YSU and across America. For instance, one slide stated the U.S. Census found that “nationally, women



*Cake at Diversity Dessert. Courtesy, Tysa Egleton*

See DIVERSITY, p. 17



Members of faculty and staff at Diversity Dessert. Courtesy, Tysa Egleton

## **DIVERSITY** Cont. from p. 16

have constituted the majority of college students since 1979." Students and their families were encouraged to browse through the information while enjoying a variety of cakes and cookies. A diverse group of faculty and staff circulated around the room facilitating dialogue and answering questions. The overall objective was for students and their families to

participate in the session throughout a two-hour period.

Our orientation staff found that Diversity Dessert has rejuvenated the afternoon orientation programming. Previously, the orientation agenda ended with a rush of course scheduling. Now, the agenda gave students time to not only reflect on their orientation experience but to also have an opportunity to see the diverse world of higher education that they were entering. A family member of a fall 2006 first-year student stated that she "appreciated the chance to see the diverse education the YSU community has to offer her student." All participants, including faculty and staff, were asked to evaluate the Diversity Dessert's structure and content. The majority of participants believed the structure and information to be beneficial. Although future assessment will be conducted, based on the current positive feedback, Diversity Dessert has found a permanent home in the YSU orientation program.

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Skipper, T., & Phillip, A. (2004). *Resources for diversity in American colleges and universities*, 1(6), 7.

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## Parents, Cell Phones, & College Students: National Resource Center Announces 2006-2007 Fidler Grant Recipient



**B**arbara Hofer of Middlebury College in Vermont is the recipient of the 2006-2007 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant. The grant, designed to encourage and enable scholarly research on issues related to college student transitions, includes a financial stipend and travel to two national conferences. The abstract from Hofer's winning proposal appears below.

### The Electronic Tether: Parental Regulation, Self-Regulation, and the Role of Technology in College Transitions

One of the primary psychosocial tasks of the period of emerging adulthood is to become an autonomous, self-governing, self-regulating individual. Increased use of e-mail and cell phones, however, means that students are often electronically tethered to

their parents, yet little is known about the influence of the frequency and content of this contact on student development during the transition to college and to adulthood. Using a web-based format for data collection, we will survey students and their parents during the sophomore year of college and compare this to our pilot data from first-year students and their parents in order to explore these developmental progressions both in the transition to college and the transitions *within* college.

### Paul P. Fidler Research Grant

In only its second year, the Paul P. Fidler Research Grant has become a well-respected and highly competitive grant program. The Center received 92 proposals from researchers and practitioners throughout the United States. Among the outstanding research projects selected as finalists were:

Heath Boice-Pardee of Rochester Institute of Technology, for his study entitled *The Sophomore Transition: A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Student Development*

Peter Mather of Ohio University, for his study entitled *An Investigation of the Experience of Traditional-Age Students Moving From On-Campus to Off-Campus Living*

Crystal Park of the University of Connecticut, for her study entitled

*A Stress and Coping Model of Adjustment to the First Year of Graduate School*

Susan Sy of California State University, Fullerton, for her study entitled *The Influence of Family Obligations on Latina Students' College Adjustment*

Complete details about the 2006-2007 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant are available at [www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant](http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant).

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition expects to announce the 2007-2008 Fidler Grant in the spring 2007. Visit [www.sc.edu/fye](http://www.sc.edu/fye) for more information.

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