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2007 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates



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Front row: Shani Fisher, Sponsoring Editor, Student Success Programs, Houghton Mifflin Company; Mary Stuart Hunter, Director of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition; Edwin Hill, Marketing Manager, Student Success Programs, Houghton Mifflin Company.

The three award recipients not pictured here are **Robert J. Anderson**, Assistant Provost for Liberal Learning and Academic Advising, The College of New Jersey; **Paul Arcario**, Dean for Academic Affairs, LaGuardia Community College, The City University of New York; and **Pamela M. Milloy**, Title III Activity Director and Learning Specialist, Grand View College. Courtesy Bert Easter

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and Houghton Mifflin Company announced the 10 educators who were selected as the 2007 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates at the 26th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience in Addison, Texas.

These 10 educators share a common goal of improving the educational experience for entering college

students. They have been awarded this distinction for their exceptional work on behalf of first-year students and for the impact their efforts have on the students and culture of their institutions. Their achievements can be viewed at

<http://sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/advocates/currentyear/index.html>

Using Direct Assessment to Improve Faculty Development and Student Learning: An Object Lesson

At St. John Fisher College, we assumed our learning community (LC) students would know how to incorporate multiple points of view into their thinking and writing. A new assessment protocol demonstrated that our assumptions were wrong. At the end of 2003, we shifted our assessment of student learning in our LC program from an indirect method (i.e., using student evaluations) to a direct method (i.e., through reading and evaluating student portfolios). We drew up six specific learning goals (see side bar) and constructed a series of rubrics for each goal, with more specific learning outcomes that could be readily evaluated for assessing student performance. Because we were new at direct assessment, we decided to start in fall 2004 with one goal: *Students will approach an issue from multiple*



English Professor and Writing Center Director Theresa Nicolay speaking at a St. John Fisher learning community faculty development meeting. Courtesy St. John Fisher College

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perspectives. After randomly selecting a representative portion of students in LCs, an assessment committee evaluated these students' LC portfolios in relation to the rubrics for this learning goal.

We saw ourselves as experienced hands at LCs, having made them a requirement for all entering first-year students six years ago. Our program structured LCs as two separate courses from different disciplines clustered around a theme or issue. Our faculty members worked hard to intentionally link the courses' content. Imagine our surprise, then, when our direct assessment revealed that our students had difficulty dealing with multiple perspectives.

We had identified three specific outcomes integral to the overall goal of approaching an issue from multiple points of view. In terms of the first outcome, "Recognition of Multiple Perspectives," 69% of the students demonstrated acceptable or exemplary work. In "Application of Multiple Perspectives," acceptable or exemplary work was produced by 42% of the students. With "Analysis of Connections Between Perspectives," 31% of LC participants demonstrated mastery of this skill. These numbers were certainly lower than we expected,

THE SIX LEARNING GOALS

1. Students will increase their self-awareness via engagement in an important social issue(s) and reflection on where they place themselves regarding that issue.
2. Students will approach an issue from multiple perspectives.
3. Students will develop awareness of human differences and diversity, testing their ideas against others' ideas and arguments.
4. Students will be able to mount a convincing argument about a social issue, demonstrating the ability to write and think critically.
5. Students will increase their information technology and information literacy skills.
6. Students will learn to work effectively in collaboration with others, developing positive relationships with peers.

based on what we thought we had been doing in the LCs and the value of our model. We realized that our assumptions about the work students were doing were misplaced. What we saw as one of the primary functions of LCs—the exposure to other ways of thinking and the integration of those perspectives into students' own thinking—was not taking place.

Our reading of the student portfolios, however, revealed a context for these results that had less to do with the students' capabilities and more to do with the types of assignments our professors were giving their students. We discovered that professors were rarely, if ever, explicitly asking

See ASSESSMENT, p. 3

ASSESSMENT Cont. from p. 2

St. John Fisher faculty members listening to a presentation during a faculty development meeting.
Courtesy St. John Fisher College

students to produce work that called for multiple points of view. They never asked students to make or analyze connections among multiple perspectives, so the student portfolios did not reflect this type of critical thinking and writing. Further investigation revealed that many of our colleagues did not know how to construct assignments that would elicit more than one way of thinking about an issue. At this point, we set out to solve the problem in an active manner.

In fall 2005, faculty development efforts were directed at helping faculty members recognize the connections between how assignments are phrased and the work that results from those assignments. We also shared strategies for how to forge a closer relationship between assignments and the specific student learning goals. We facilitated a one-day workshop for LC faculty members the week before classes started. Additionally, during the semester, we offered a number of

workshops that focused on specific issues related to teaching in a LC. One workshop focused on how to teach course content by paying close attention to the teaching of skills. Another session was on gathering evidence of learning in class assignments.

These efforts saw some immediate benefits. In terms of "Recognition of Multiple Perspectives," 86% of the students were doing acceptable or exemplary work as compared to 69% in fall 2004. In "Application of Multiple Perspectives," the number of students increased from 42% to 47%. With regard to "Analysis of Connections Between Perspectives," the number jumped dramatically, from 31% to 68%.

We have moved toward a culture of evidence of learning and away from a culture of assumptions about the work we do. Because we have neither the time nor the resources to assess each goal each year, we plan to evaluate two goals per year and will return, after a few years, to each of the goals

to measure changes. The direct assessment improved our faculty-development program and the level of our teaching. We also gained valuable information about what students are really learning. Our experience offers an object lesson for how direct assessment can expose assumptions that are not true and can lead to pragmatic opportunities for improving what we do and how we do it.

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The Big Picture

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The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition Movement: What Is Its Appeal? What Are Its Ideals?

I have often wondered why the first-year experience (FYE) and students in transition (SIT) concepts have engaged so many educators around the globe for more than a quarter of a century. In this article, I will identify what I perceive to be the five most appealing, distinctive, and influential features of this long-standing national and international movement.

1. It is humanistic and holistic.

The educators I have met through the FYE/SIT movement are genuinely interested in the needs and welfare of students. In fact, the entire FYE movement emerged from the concerns of a former president of the University of South Carolina (USC), Tom Jones. Jones was influenced by Sanford's (1968) *Where Colleges Fail*, in which the author argued that colleges failed whenever they treated a student as less than a total person and ignored the fact that effective learning depended on the whole being, not merely on his or her "abstracted intelligence." This humanistic philosophy, coupled with the human potential movement of the 1960s, influenced

Jones' vision and the development of a first-year seminar, University 101, at USC. Although concerns about student retention and enrollment management helped sustain the movement, Jones' original interest was to treat undergraduate students, particularly first-year students, in a more humane and holistic manner.

Whenever I find myself among first-year student advocates, I feel proud to be associated with a group of caring professionals who devote themselves to serving those members of their college community with the least political clout and the most vulnerability. This altruism is also evident on the FYE listserv, now comprised of almost 2,000 members, who generously share their student-centered ideas and success-promoting materials with colleagues across the country and around the world.

2. It is devoted to reforming and transforming undergraduate education.

Educators who are invested in the FYE/SIT movement are also institutional change agents (Chaskes & Anttonen, 2005). These change agents

It is a great pleasure and honor to introduce a new feature of *E-Source in College Transitions*, **The Big Picture**, a regular column written by Joe Cuseo. Cuseo is professor of Psychology and director of Freshman Seminar at Marymount College in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. He is the author of *The Freshman Orientation Seminar: A Research-Based Rationale for Its Value, Delivery, and Content* (National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, 1991) and co-author of *Thriving in College and Beyond: Research-Based Strategies for Academic Success and Personal Development* (Kendall/Hunt, 2007). He has contributed numerous chapters to other publications on the first-year experience. Cuseo is known for outstanding presentations at national conferences and is a much-valued contributor to both the First-Year Experience (FYE) Listserv and the First-Year Assessment (FYA) Listserv. Selected as an Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate by the National Resource for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, Cuseo has been honored by his own institution and by national colleagues for his outstanding teaching and educational leadership. We are delighted that Joe Cuseo, a highly respected educator and prolific researcher and author, will provide a regular column to readers of *E-Source*.

meet to commiserate, validate, and articulate their shared concerns about creating a better learning environment for undergraduates, both inside and outside the classroom. Their sharing of ideas creates a collective buzz of excitement about changing conditions

See CUSEO, p. 5

CUSEO Cont. from p. 4

that block student success on their respective campuses.

3. It is student-centered.

The terms “new learning paradigm” and “learner centered” emerged in the late 1990s (Barr & Tagg, 1995; O’Banion, 1999) and are now banded about with great enthusiasm in higher education. Long before these terms became popular, the FYE movement had been a champion of learner-centeredness. Since its inception in 1982, the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience has attracted professionals with a strong student-centered mindset to its national meetings. For many years, these were the only conferences that were expressly titled and organized around the topic of *student experience*.

While the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience and the International Conference on The First-Year Experience focus on college students in the first year, the National Conference on Students in Transition follows students as they progress through different stages of the undergraduate experience. Most other higher education conferences are titled and organized according to the participants’ professional position or affiliation, such as faculty members in particular academic disciplines (e.g., American Psychological Association) or staff in particular professional positions (e.g. National Orientation Directors Association). However, when you hear about conferences sponsored by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, no membership organization comes to mind. Instead, the focus is on the student experience,

which clearly sends the message that these conferences are inclusive gatherings, open to all professionals with an interest in student success.

4. It is sensitive to student transitions.

The FYE/SIT movement has heightened our awareness of how the undergraduate experience unfolds over time and in sequential stages (e.g., first-year, sophomore-year, and senior-year experience). This transitional emphasis helps raise a collective consciousness that students are *developing* human beings who experience different needs and challenges at different stages of their college experience. As such, the FYE/SIT movement supports the systematic design and delivery of a well-timed, stage-sensitive sequence of programs aimed at facilitating students’ transition *into, through, and out of* higher education. The FYE/SIT movement reminds us that the college experience should have a meaningful beginning, middle, and end much like a well-written paper (and a well-lived life).

5. It is comprehensive and collaborative.

The FYE/SIT movement addresses multiple dimensions of the student experience by focusing on the total college environment (i.e., curriculum and cocurriculum). Members of this movement include faculty from diverse disciplines, a broad cross-section of student services and academic support professionals, as well as a wide array of administrators from both the academic affairs and student development divisions of the college.

The collaboration that occurs among professionals from different divisions of the college serves to model the type of partnerships that higher education sorely needs to create a “seamless” student experience. One

important function of the FYE/SIT movement is to counter the tendency in higher education to splinter college students and their experience into organizational and researchable parts. Since I first began attending FYE/SIT-focused events, I have communicated and worked with a wide variety of faculty and academic support and student service professionals to implement programs that enhance student success.

In summary, I think that the enduring influence and international appeal of the FYE/SIT movement is fueled by a comprehensive student-centered focus that galvanizes the whole college environment to help students develop holistically at each major stage of their undergraduate experience. Pursuit of this lofty ideal continues to excite me and is why I think the influence of the FYE/SIT movement has proven to be so deep, durable, and universal.

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First-Year Cohorts: Their Role in Retaining Special Education Teacher Candidates

Recruiting and retaining college students for the teaching profession, and for special education (SPED) in particular, have become more difficult as students gravitate toward higher paying professions. In the past, when students at East Carolina University (ECU) identified SPED as their intended major, only 60% of them were retained. One problem was the lack of faculty-student interaction. SPED students were required to take only one introductory SPED course during the first two years. This meant that they did not meet other SPED faculty until their junior year. Another major difficulty was passing the Praxis I exam, which is a requirement for upper-division SPED courses. While no passing rate data had been collected in the past, faculty noted that several students did not pass even though they were motivated to continue the program. To address these two problems, ECU introduced the cohort model in 2005 to build closer ties between faculty and students and increase student retention in the program.

SPED pre-majors (i.e., first-year or transfer students) were invited to join a cohort during their first semester on campus. If they were not in a SPED course, efforts were made to identify common course sections so students could meet other pre-majors. The invitation notified them of the first evening gathering (which included food) and described the first-year

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cohort model. A consent form was attached to the invitation for those students interested in participating in a research study on the cohort model. They were urged to come to the event even if they chose not participate in the study.

During the first gathering in fall 2005, SPED faculty, a few upperclass SPED students, and SPED pre-majors participated in an ice-breaker activity. After upperclass students described their experiences in the major, members of the cohort talked about their concerns and wishes. Students were worried about finding new friends away from home, having opportunities to meet other special education majors, and balancing their social life with academic life—concerns common to many new students. Students also found college-level classes challenging, and many admitted that they lacked time-management and study skills. They also expressed a strong interest in volunteer opportunities and job resources in the community. To address these worries and wishes, guest speakers were selected who could offer information, strategies, and resources

related to these challenges. The cohort also participated in mini-workshops on time-management and study skills during the first semester. The Student Volunteer Office informed the cohort of specific volunteer opportunities for SPED students such as Special Olympics or Rocking Horse Ranch (i.e., a therapeutic program for children with disabilities). During the first year, students were also encouraged to participate in Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC). Many of these activities resulted in leadership opportunities for students prior to their formal admission to the major.

Faculty continued to meet the cohort after the first gathering and served as mentors. They meet two or three times a semester, typically during mid-terms and just before finals. They also shared dinners, listened to speakers, and participated in community activities. Between meetings, students and faculty stayed in touch through an electronic distribution list and e-mails. Students could also meet their faculty mentors on an as-needed basis outside regular cohort meetings.

In the spring semester before the cohort was required to take the Praxis I exam (usually during the first semester of their junior year), emphasis was on preparing and studying for the Praxis. Students in the cohort who were likely to experience difficulty in passing the Praxis I exam were identified early by faculty and referred to academic resources and support to ensure their success and enhance retention.

Our experience with the cohort model has shown it is effective in

See COHORTS, p. 7

COHORTS Cont. from p. 6

several ways for students and faculty. Developing a peer network early in the fall semester eased the transition for students new to the university. This network was also academically oriented: Students formed study groups for their common first-year core classes. The cohort experience offered faculty the opportunity to meet pre-majors earlier and in a smaller setting than the traditional introduction course.

Since the inception of the cohort model, the SPED retention rate rose to 85%. An increase of approximately 50% was noted in students who decided to pursue dual/add-on licensure (i.e., adapted and general curriculum special education). The SCEC chapter grew as well. The response from students and faculty was extremely positive. Since launching the first cohort, half of the SPED faculty expressed interest in mentoring future cohort groups. Moreover, students continued to maintain close ties with their mentors. Furthermore, some students expressed an interest in serving as peer mentors for future first-year cohorts.

As with any mentoring program, there were certain challenges. Finding time for cohort gatherings was difficult, often resulting in evening meetings. For off-campus activities, arrangements had to be made for transportation since many first-year students did not have a car on campus. In addition, offering incentives (e.g., food, door prizes, or guest speakers) was not always effective in encouraging student participation in the cohort model. A more effective strategy was

for faculty to strongly encourage or offer extra credit to attend the events.

Future plans that should strengthen the cohort model will include upperclass students personally inviting first-year students to participate in cohort events. Upperclass students will also serve as peer mentors. Data concerning the Praxis I pass/fail rate will be collected and closely monitored for this cohort. Furthermore, since there was such a positive response to being involved in the SCEC organization, cohort meetings will be scheduled before or after SCEC activities to allow for greater participation. The cohort model has proven invaluable in strengthening relationships between students and faculty, giving first-year students a strong sense of community, and helping them persevere.

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Related articles in *E-Source*

- Cox, B. E. (2006). A proven possibility: Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom. **3(5), 4.**
- Stonebraker, R. (2006). Faculty mentoring at-risk first-year students. **3(5), 2.**
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eSOURCE FOR COLLEGE TRANSITIONS

E-Source for College Transitions (ISSN 1545-5742) is published bi-monthly by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Telephone (803) 777-6029. A single-year subscription is \$40. A multiple-year subscription is \$35 per year. An institutional subscription is \$100 per year or \$95 per year for a multi-year subscription.

The National Resource Center has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

The Center, a nonprofit organization, will use proceeds from the newsletter to defray publication costs, support research, and disseminate information.

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Lafayette's First-Year Students Analyze a Film for Their Common Reading

Lafayette College, an undergraduate institution with strong programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and engineering, has traditionally assigned a book for the summer reading program. However, in 2006, the college assigned a movie, *Crash*, the 2005 Oscar winner for Best Picture. Set against the backdrop of a racist Los Angeles criminal justice system, *Crash* centers around a series of disturbing events: two car accidents, a carjacking, vicious workplace vandalism, and a suspicious shooting death of one police officer by another. The various characters' lives collide with each other in unpredictable ways as each faces his or her moral dilemma and tries to cope with the consequences (see www.crashfilm.com).

Why choose a movie after years of assigning a book to first-year students? Because, after extensive discussion, the orientation committee decided that a complex and critically acclaimed movie would be equally effective in accomplishing many of the goals Lafayette has for the summer reading program: (a) promoting civic discourse on sensitive topics, (b) providing first-year students with an opportunity for intellectual engagement on challenging topics with faculty, and (c) providing a window into academic life at Lafayette prior to the start of classes. The committee hoped that, by selecting a movie, two additional goals could be achieved: (a) increasing student engagement by using a different learning medium and (b) teaching students that culture

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can be "read" in forms other than a written text.

Since 2004, Lafayette has been part of *Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life*, a national consortium of nearly 80 colleges and universities (see <http://www.ia.umich.edu>). The overarching theme of *Imagining America*, whose mission is to strengthen the public role and democratic purposes of the humanities, arts, and design, permeates all first-year programming at

Lafayette. The program also encourages first-year students to explore issues related to race and culture as it affects the lives of individuals in different American communities. By choosing *Crash* as part of the *Imagining America* program, Lafayette used the visual and creative arts as a catalyst for intellectual dialogue.

The summer reading program began in mid-July 2006 with a welcome letter to first-year students that explained the *Imagining America* program. Supplementary materials, including "How to Read a Film" (see sidebar), helped students navigate the, perhaps, previously uncharted territory of critically "reading" a film. Also included in the packet were directions on how to use the college's Blackboard learning system, which acted as an Internet community for students, contained a list of questions to consider while viewing *Crash*, and

See MOVIE, p. 9



Lafayette College's first-year student, Millie Barry, listens as President Daniel Weiss leads her group in the discussion of *Crash*. Courtesy of Chuck Zovko.

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supplied links to additional information about the movie.

Students were required to view the film over the summer. They watched it again as a group when they arrived on campus for orientation in August. Then they dispersed in small groups that included faculty, upperclass students, staff, and alumni. The group discussions addressed racial issues in the movie, analyzed its stylistic elements, and probed into questions initially raised in the online discussions.

What Lafayette hoped to achieve by choosing different media in its Summer Reading Program is to help students think outside the box and engage in serious discussions from multiple perspectives about difficult topics. Student responses to a 2006 survey of the summer reading experience suggests that the film was successful in achieving these goals (Table 1). Given that past selections included a graphic novel, works of nonfiction, and scholarly essays, a comparison of the surveys would not yield an answer which media the students found most appealing.

See MOVIE, p. 15

HOW TO READ A FILM: LOOKING AT CRASH

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- **What is the camera doing?**
 How far away from the subject is the camera? Is the image a distance (long) shot or a close-up or somewhere in between? Is the shot stationary or moving? If moving, how is it moving? Is the camera looking up or down on its subject? Is the frame level or tilted? Assume every frame involves dozens of premeditated decisions designed to convey meaning. What do the properties of the camera—cinematography—suggest in terms of the film’s content?
- **What are the elements in the frame—mise-en-scène (pronounced “meez-ahn-sen”)?**
 This consists of all the elements placed in front of the camera and visible on screen. The four main areas of mise-en-scène are (a) setting and props, (b) costumes and make-up, (c) lighting, and (d) figure behavior and movement. Crucial information is communicated through each of these four areas. What is in the frame and what does its inclusion suggest?
- **What is the editing pattern?**
 Does the film employ quick cuts or long takes? Are there many separate shots or fewer shots with a longer elapsed time between cuts? What transitional elements are in use between scenes or shots—cuts, dissolves, fades? Is more than one story told through crosscutting (i.e., interweaving bits of two or more scenes)? Does the frequency of cuts remain constant, speed up, or slow down? Is film speed manipulated?
- **What is occurring with the sound?**
 Cinematic sound consists of three aspects—(a) score, (b) noise or sound effects, and (c) dialogue. Does sound accompany or control a scene? Does it ever enhance or compete with a shot? How? In what ways does each element of cinematic sound advance or offer meaning?

Table 1
 Results From 2006 Survey of First-Year Students at Lafayette After the Summer Reading Program

Students reported	Percent of students (%)
They watched all of <i>Crash</i> .	95.3
They watched <i>Crash</i> two or more times.	80.5
They agreed or strongly agreed that “watching <i>Crash</i> introduced me to new ways of thinking about issues of race and ethnicity.”	75
They agreed or strongly agreed that “joining the classroom discussions about <i>Crash</i> introduced me to new ways of thinking about living in a diverse college community.”	70.6
They agreed or strongly agreed that “watching <i>Crash</i> enhanced my confidence to engage in discussions about race and ethnicity.”	62

Building Student Success at the University of Oklahoma

Like most universities, the University of Oklahoma (OU) works hard to improve its position in collegiate ranking reports. The Graduation Rates Task Force (GRTF) was formed in 2000 to study factors affecting student graduation. One strategy the GRTF used was to identify doctoral-granting schools with comparable student quality that were immediately ahead of OU in the latest *US News and World Report* (USNWR) rankings. We also included the University of Texas because it is a major research institution within our region (and because our rivalry with UT Austin extends beyond the football field). The subcommittee then examined the first-year retention rates, six-year graduation rates, and difference between the predicted and actual graduation rates as reported by USNWR for each of these schools. This generated a list of 23 universities with comparable student quality and retention and graduation numbers that were higher than OU.

Next, we divided the list among 14 members of the University College staff who scoured web pages and made calls to campuses. They were asked to look for any programs related to aiding student transition and academic success. They listed all programs and services, tallied the number of schools offering these programs, and compared what they found to OU's offerings (Table 1). While OU has many programs geared to help students make the transition to the university, the committee

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noticed several programs present at our competitors that were poorly developed or absent at OU. These included a centralized, campus-wide tutoring program, a learning center for study skills, learning communities, Supplemental Instruction, and summer bridge programs. We felt

that we needed to develop similar programs at OU if we wanted to improve our students' learning experience—and our rankings. However, it quickly became apparent that we would need an additional space on campus to house the offices and classrooms necessary to support such programs.

Hunter (2006) emphasized the need for a close alliance between student affairs and academic services, particularly for first-year students and other students in transition. With this in mind, we decided to locate the new building near existing student services. In fact, the center would form the academic corner piece of a "student

See SUCCESS, p. 11

Table 1
Programs Tallied in Campus Program/Service Analysis

Program/Service	Number of Campuses	OU?
Honors Program or College	24	Yes
Writing Center	23	Yes
Central Tutoring Program	19	No
Math Lab	19	Yes
Gateway-Type Course	18	Yes
Summer Bridge Program	18	No
Learning Center for Study Skills	18	No
Peer Mentoring Program	17	Yes
Learning Communities	17	No
Summer Orientation Program	17	Yes
Supplemental Instruction Program	15	No
First-Year Advising Center	12	Yes
Programs for Undecided Majors	10	Yes
Faculty Mentoring Program	7	Yes
Faculty-in-Residence Program	4	Yes

SUCCESS Cont. from p. 10

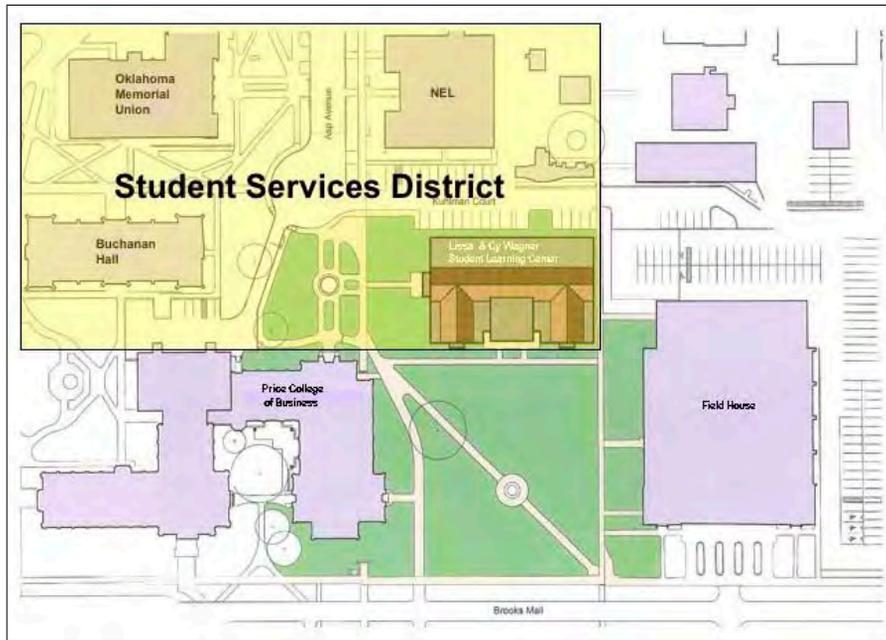


Figure 1. Student services district. The new building will form the academic cornerstone of a student services district in the heart of the OU campus.

services” district (Figure 1) made up of Buchanan Hall (Admissions, Records, and Bursar), the Oklahoma Memorial Union (student organizations), and Nuclear Engineering Lab (NEL) which, despite its name, contains student employment offices.

With the help and support of the OU president, David L. Boren, the Development Office wrote a thorough proposal to attract significant donations for this building project. A lead gift, coupled with support from a statewide bond effort, allowed us to plan a \$12-million building in the heart of campus.

With guidance from the provost and vice president for administrative affairs, the GRTF prioritized several elements for inclusion in this building. We pulled together many existing programs that affect retention and graduation rates, including the Writing Center, Project Threshold (an

office funded through a federal TRIO grant to provide educational services and opportunities for low-income students), University College. We added a tutoring/learning center, space for Supplemental Instruction, classrooms, and a computer lab.

Once GRTF identified which programs would be housed in the new Center, one of the most critical steps was selecting an architectural firm from an open competition. The architects then consulted with our program directors to give best estimates on how much new space would be required while staying within the budget, which limited the facility to 38,000 square feet.

Once the placement and general shape of the new Academic Services Center were determined, we considered the number of floors, the size, and working relationships of the various units. The architects created

scaled, color-coded paper cutouts of potential areas and offices. Pieces were arranged on each floor based on the following considerations:

- Mapping projected student traffic flow into, through, and out of the building, along with traffic to and from other major student centers, such as the Student Union building and residence halls
- Maximizing student study areas and areas for “hanging out”
- Developing an atrium/lobby close to the advising area for use during our Summer Enrollment Program and adjacent expandable classrooms for conferences and other large programs
- Providing classrooms to accommodate more than 50 sections of Gateway to College Learning courses, first-year seminars, and Strategies for Success discussion sessions
- Grouping related offices and programs (e.g., Freshman Programs and the Center for Student Advancement have natural alliances—both offices coordinate multi-section classes, produce and collate course materials, and require space for instructor office hours.)
- Placing the Assessment and Learning Center and the Writing Center in quieter parts of the building
- Designing the Project Threshold space with its own suite,

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outside major flow areas of the building and with a private inner area

- Locating the computer lab near the Assessment and Learning Center
- Developing the deans' area for ease of access and communication and oversight of the entire building

Despite the occasional frustrations, we will have a beautiful and functional new facility (Figure 2).

Groundbreaking was in September 2006, and the completion date is projected for summer of 2008.

Interestingly, the planning for this new building has already helped forge alliances between programs that previously had limited interaction. For example, the newly hired directors of the Assessment and Learning Center

communities, and, within the next year, we will begin some pilot projects in Supplemental Instruction.

How will we measure whether our long hours of deliberation resulted in a successful integration of student services? University College currently tracks student use and satisfaction with all our programs. We will continue collecting the same data after the new building opens. If we have created the environment we were hoping for, we should see student use of our services increase. More difficult to measure will be student attitudes toward the building; we hope that students will voluntarily gather there at all hours to study, relax, and seek help if they need it. The ultimate test, however, will be in our year-to-year persistence and graduation rates.



Figure 2. Artist's rendering of Wagner Hall. View of the south-facing aspect of Wagner Hall with new business expansion to the left, west side of the athletic field house to the right, and the clock tower of the Oklahoma Memorial Union in the background to the northwest.

Unfortunately, mid-project spikes in energy and building material prices forced a building reduction of 3,000 square feet. This occurred before the final blueprints were approved, which allowed the steering committee to remove a slice from the middle of the building, sacrificing some of the common gathering areas but none of the functional office or program space.

and the Writing Center are collaborating to plan for their shared space. In addition, the planning process forced our advisors to get together and re-think how they manage the flow of students through their offices. We have also started to introduce some programs in anticipation of our new arrangement. We have begun experimenting with learning

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What's Happening at the National Resource Center

NRC Welcomes New Coordinator of Public Relations and Resource Development



Rico R. Reed

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transitions (NRC) welcomes the new

coordinator of public relations and resource development, Rico R. Reed. Reed joined NRC on December 13, 2006, replacing former coordinator of research and public information, Bradley E. Cox, who is now pursuing a PhD at Penn State University.

A Lancaster (SC) native, Reed comes to NRC from Winthrop University where he served as public information coordinator for the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). He was responsible for collecting and assembling information on CERRA activities through interviews and research and wrote and edited news releases, articles, feature stories, speeches, reports, and promotional materials. His duties also included maintaining contacts with local media outlets and updating the CERRA web site. While at Winthrop, Reed earned his master's degree in liberal arts. Before that, he was a reporter with *Post and Courier* in Charleston, SC.

As coordinator of public relations and resource development, Reed will collaborate with other staff at the Center and with educators in the Center's international network to develop, market, promote, and share resources (i.e., research, publications, and events produced by NRC) with professionals in higher education. "Before coming here," Reed said, "I was extremely impressed with the work of the Center. Now that I've been here for a few months, my appreciation for the work that is produced by such a dedicated staff has only intensified. I look forward to my role in helping to develop and promote the work of the Center."

New Publications



Monograph 45 The Role of the Library in the First College Year

Larry Hardesty, Editor
A joint publication of

the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a Division of the American Library Association.

While the library is at the center of many campuses physically, it is often an overlooked and underused resource in improving the learning and success of first-year college students. Chapter authors explore structures and practices for helping students learn to navigate the college library; use the Internet effectively; and find,

analyze, and incorporate information into their academic work—a critical foundation for college success. Thirteen case studies present detailed information on current practice from a variety of campus types.



Monograph 46 Academic Advising: New Insights for Teaching and Learning in the First Year

Mary Stuart Hunter, Betsy McCalla-Wriggins, & Eric R. White, Editors

A joint publication of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Student in Transition and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

Grounded in the philosophy that academic advising is a robust form of one-on-one teaching, this monograph places advising in a new light, one that brings it to the center of institutional mission and activity. The monograph challenges all readers to embrace the tremendous potential that academic advising has for educating today's college students. Chapter authors explore the advising learning paradigm; examine current student demographics; and address learning patterns, self-assessment, and technology as key components of advising. Chapters also explore academic advising before enrollment and beyond the advising office, as well as the critical issue of advising

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assessment. The diverse populations of first-year students addressed in this monograph include adult learners, students of color, students with disabilities, honors students, undecided students, first-generation students, and GLBT students. The monograph editors conclude the volume by offering a series of recommendations and addressing the future of advising.

For more information on our publications, please visit www.sc.edu/fye/publications

Research

On November 28, 2006, the Survey of First-Year Seminars was launched. It is the seventh administration of this triennial survey. Thank you to all who participated. We plan to analyze the data in spring 2007 and hope to have a summary of findings on the web site in summer 2007. The monograph will be available in summer 2008.

Exploring the Evidence:

Reporting Research on First-Year Seminars, Vol. IV

Institutions that have researched the first-year seminar and/or its impact on students since 2005 are invited to contribute a report of their findings for inclusion in a new monograph. Deadline for submissions is July 1, 2007.

To download complete submission guidelines, please visit

www.sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/development/index.html

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***E-SOURCE* SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Guidelines follow for those who would like to submit articles related to significant student transitions for consideration.

Audience: *E-Source* readers include academic and student affairs administrators and faculty from a variety of fields. All types of institutions are represented in the readership.

Style: A limited number of feature-length stories will be interspersed with shorter research briefs or news items. Tables, figures, and artwork will be included on a space-available basis. Limited references can be printed. Articles, tables, figures, and references should adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) style. Annotations of new resources should include the following: complete title of the publication, author(s) or editor(s), publisher, publication date, and complete URL if source is available online. *E-Source* does not publish endorsements of products for sale.

Format: Submissions should be sent via e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment.

Length: Feature-length articles should be 500-1,000 words. Brief articles should be 250-500 words. Annotations of new resources should be no more than 50-100 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length.

Copyright: Articles shall not have been registered for copyright or published elsewhere prior to publication in *E-Source*. Photographs are welcome with a signed release form and name of photographer or copyright owner.

Contact Information: Contact information will be published with each article selected for publication in *E-Source*. Please include the following information with your submission: name, position title, department, institution, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Please address all questions and submissions to:

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Whether another film will be chosen for next year's summer reading program has not yet been decided. Currently, several topics are under discussion. Once the topic has been set, the committee will evaluate whether film, book, or a combination of both will work best. By using the visual and creative arts in orientation and first-year programs, Lafayette believes that students are (a) more effectively engaged; (b) encouraged to enter an intellectual discussion with upperclass students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and (c) supported in their development as informed citizens.

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Related articles in E-Source

- Liggett, S. (2005). *Mountains Beyond Mountains*: Campus and community apply summer reading to Katrina aftermath. **3(2), 1.**
- Corbin, L. (2005). The Novel Experience: An uncommon summer reading program. **3(3), 3.**

HAPPENING Cont. from p. 14**2007 Teleconference Series****Leading the Way:
Encouraging Student Success
Through Peer Education**

March 8, 2007 • 1:00PM EST
Panelists: Greg Blimling, Glen Jacobs,
Dorothy Ward

Students are helping students in a variety of roles from the classroom to the residence halls and everywhere in between. Learn the ins and outs of creating successful peer leader programs, selecting and training peer educators, and, most importantly, capitalizing on this often underutilized, but invaluable resource—our students.

**Teaching and Learning With
Technology: Current Practice,
Future Prospects**

April 12, 2007 • 1:00PM EDST
Panelists: Kathleen Clower,
Robert Feldman, Julie Little

Technology has transformed our campuses—changing the landscape of teaching and learning. Gain insights on how to harness this vast and creative medium for student success.

**Academic and Career
Advising: Forging Strategies
for Student Success**

April 26, 2007 • 1:00PM EDST
Panelists: Paul Gore, Jocelyn Harney,
Betsy McCalla-Wriggins

Academic and career advising is critical in teaching our students how to move from overwhelmed first-year students to graduating seniors with meaningful and intentional career plans. Join our expert panelists as they provide insight into the necessary

components of career and academic advising programs.

For more information on the teleconferences, please visit our web site: www.sc.edu/fye/events/teleconference

Upcoming Conferences

**Summer Institute
on First-Year Assessment**
June 10-12, 2007
Savannah, Georgia

**20th International Conference
on The First-Year Experience**
July 9-12, 2007
Hawaii's Big Island
Proposal deadline is March 12, 2007

For more information on the events, please visit our web site: www.sc.edu/fye/events/

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