Meeting the Needs of Second-Year Student through Campus Activities

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Director of Student Engagement
University of South Carolina, Columbia
Overview of this Session

- Setting the Context: The Sophomore-Year
- Building the Case for Developing Sophomore Specific Programs
- High Impact Practices to Support Second-year Students
- Bringing it back to Campus: Next Steps
Learning Outcomes for Today

As a result of this presentation, participants will:

• Be able to articulate why the sophomore year should be a specific focus of work
• Understand the developmental challenges facing sophomores and how these impact student learning
• Accurately assess institutional readiness for change and incorporating sophomore needs
• Be able to devise a plan for change on your campus
Think about Sophomores on your campus...

- In general, how would you describe them?
- What are their needs and issues?
- What challenges do they face?
Issues for the Sophomore Year

- Dealing with an intensified curriculum
- Being in an academic twilight zone
- Career and major selection issues
- Having “Plan B” ready
- Who am I and why am I still here?

- Reality hits hard
- Institution is not as supportive as during the first year
- Peer issues
- Cost/benefit ratio
- Trading up
- Negative behavioral patterns catch up to them

(Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000)
The “Sophomore Slump”

1. Higher-than-expected attrition from the sophomore to junior year
2. Reduced motivation
3. Declining academic performance
4. Reduced academic and extracurricular engagement
5. Increased disciplinary issues
Key Challenges

- Engagement:
  - If *slump* occurs

- Discernment:
  - The process of connecting knowledge about self with knowledge about the world

- Problem Solving:
  - Making sense of changing opportunities, dreams, abilities
Sophomore Student Satisfaction

- What do sophomores value most?
  - Environment that promotes intellectual growth
  - Valuable course content and excellent classroom instruction
  - Knowledgeable, fair, and caring faculty
  - Approachable and knowledgeable advisors
- Sophomores had significantly higher expectations from other class levels on over half of the 73 SSI items.
Areas where sophomores are significantly less satisfied than other class levels

- Approachability and concern of their advisors
- Registration process being free of scheduling conflicts
- Receiving timely feedback from faculty
- Caring nature of faculty members
- Large performance gaps (difference between expectations and satisfaction levels)

(Jullierat, 2000)
Sophomore Experience Survey
(Schreiner, 2010)

- Most satisfied with learning process
- Least satisfied with advising

- 63% reported sophomore year better than first year—contributed to positive campus experiences
- 64% planned to reenroll
Sophomore Experience Survey

- Student satisfaction with overall experience (value added) was a strong predictor of intent to reenroll and graduate.
- Frequency of and satisfaction with student/faculty interaction predicts intent to reenroll (over 1/3 had no outside interaction).
- Peer satisfaction strongest contributor to satisfaction.
- Students’ psychological engagement with learning was the greatest predictor of student success, satisfaction, and retention.
Why Institutions Create Sophomore Programs

- Retention
- Promote Student Success
- Promote Student Engagement
- Desire to support students beyond the first-year
- Connection to Institutional Mission
- Residency requirements
How do students experience the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year?
Wandering and Wondering: Traversing the Uneven Terrain of the Second College Year

- Focus group study
- Students existed in or moved through four stages in three aspects of their lives
  - How they view:
    - Themselves
    - Their relationships
    - Their academic experiences and decisions

PROPOSED SOPHOMORE YEAR CONTINUUM

Academic Integration

Not yet considering major
Deeply Committed to Major

Following others, Withdrawing, Following Stereotypes
Purposeful in College Life

Sense of Self

Unsophisticated in selection of friends/ evaluation of relationships
Making “Friends for Life”

Social Engagement/ Quality Relationships

Schaller, 2011
Random Exploration

- First year of college
- Undirected, lacking reflection
- King and Kitchener’s pre-reflective stage
  - I know only what I have seen, unexamined beliefs
- Marcia Baxter-Magolda: absolute knowing, based upon authority figures, dualistic thinking
- Just tell me what to do, and usually I’ll do it

How do “typical” sophomores make meaning?

Truth
- There is an answer!
- I need to find it.

OR

Answers are more elusive.
- I need to figure it out.
How do “typical” sophomores make moral choices?

- What would my peers do?

OR

- How will others be impacted?
Focused Exploration

- Some students move to this stage over the summer, others during their second year
  - Questioning: just about everything
  - Lack of direction, but feeling pressured to decide
  - Metaphor of standing on a fence
  - Desire self-exploration of interest, values

Tentative Choice

- View their future and major more clearly, feel a sense of responsibility
- This stage is really important for second-year students
- Design individualized learning plans
- If students examine the options fully, engage thoroughly, and make decisions based upon internal connection, then their choices may be more aligned to their personal values and interests.

Commitment

- Very few sophomores make it to this point by the end of their second year
- They are comfortable and resolute with their choices, planning for their future, clear about what they want and how to go about getting there.

Essential Components of the Sophomore Year

• Blend of challenge and support
  • Give students the responsibility for learning
  • Ask guided questions and let them figure out the answers—find their own voice.
• Mentoring and engagement with their campus community
• Character and identity development
• Learning by doing; experiential learning, community-based research, internships, cross-cultural experiences
• Strong faculty-student interactions
• Self-reflection and assessment (Type Focus, Holland)
Where to begin
2008 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives

- **Purpose**: “to get a better understanding of sophomore-specific efforts” on campuses across the country
  - Unit of observation was the institution
- **Administration period**: Nov.-Dec., 2008
- **Administration target**: chief student affairs officers
- **Total number of respondents**: 316 institutions
Characteristics of Respondents

- **Institutional type**: 24% 2-year; 76% 4-year
- **Institutional affiliation**: 48% private; 52% public
- **Institutional enrollment**:
  - 62%: 5,000 or less
  - 16%: 5,001-10,000
  - 9%: 10,001-15,000
  - 4%: 15,001-20,000
  - 8%: More than 20,000
- **Institutional selectivity**:
  - 31%: inclusive
  - 32%: selective
  - 24%: more selective
Respondents with Sophomore Initiatives

- 37% (n=115) of respondents reported having a sophomore-year initiative
- Characteristics of respondents with sophomore initiatives
  - Much higher proportion of 4-year institutions
  - Generally representative across institutional size
  - Statistically significant skew toward:
    - Private institutions
    - More selective institutions
Types of Sophomore Success Initiatives

- Academic advising
- Career planning
- Class events
- Community service/service learning
- Credit-bearing course
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Curricular learning communities
- Faculty/staff mentors
- Financial aid
- Leadership development

- Online resources
- Opportunities to co-teach or assist in teaching a class
- Peer mentoring by sophomores
- Peer mentoring for sophomores
- Print publications
- Residence life
- Retreats
- Student government
- Study abroad
- Undergraduate research

Major
## Most Common Sophomore Success Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophomore Initiative</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career planning</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>58.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>50.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online resources</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mentoring by sophomores</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence life</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service/Service learning</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff mentors</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Least Common Sophomore Success Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophomore Initiative</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student government</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print publications</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate research</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural enrichment activities</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retreats</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to co-teach a class/TA</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mentoring for sophomores</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular learning communities</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit-bearing course</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marked “Don’t Know”

• 17.0%: Financial aid
• 12.6%: Undergraduate research
• 9.0%: Opportunities to co-teach or assist in teaching a class
• 8.8%: Community service/service learning
• 8.0%: Study abroad
• 7.9%: Peer mentoring for sophomores
• 7.8%: Academic advising
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

1. Ensure commitment by the institution
   - Designate a point person for sophomore initiatives (dean, director, coordinator, advisor)
   - Requires visionary leadership and motivation
   - Beware of sustainability
   - Look for internal and external funding
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

2. Build support from key campus stakeholders
   - Link to institutional mission
   - Identify and incorporate key players into the process
   - Educate advisors, faculty, and staff
   - Engage parents
   - Involve student government
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

3. Create partnerships between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs
   - Student needs are “complex, holistic, multicentric” (ACPA/NASPA)
   - Strong, high-level support
   - Advising
   - Career services
   - Residential life
   - Community service
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

4. **Gather local campus data**
   - Student input is crucial
   - Focus groups
   - Feedback from advisors, peer mentors
   - Adding additional questions to national surveys
   - Explore Alumni Relationships and Community Partnerships
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

4. **Gather local campus data** (cont.)
   - Compare to national data
     - Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI)
     - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
     - Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) Freshman Survey and its follow-up College Senior Survey (CSS)
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

5. **Survey and adapt what already exists on campus**
   - Re-allocate resources
   - Re-package programs
   - Leverage off of first-year programs
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

6. Identify gaps and create new initiatives
   • Use eight focus areas to see what’s missing
   • Consult SOPH-List (National Resource Center)
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

7. Intentionally package and marketing the program
   - Be sensitive to your particular sophomores (traditional vs. nontraditional, commuter vs. residential, etc.)
   - Understand the importance of student input
   - Manage change, relationships, and the story
A University of South Carolina Example
Sophomore Retreat

Second Year Students:

Are you feeling the Sophomore Slump?

If so, look into the...

SLUMP RETREAT

Sophomores Learn, Understand, and Map a Plan

A retreat to the foothills of upstate South Carolina where you will make new friends, enjoy the great outdoors, engage in meaningful community service, participate in team building activities, and stay in cozy cabins.

LookUp Lodge in Travelers Rest, SC
Jan 12 - Jan 15 2007

For more information and to download the application visit www.housing.sc.edu/secondyear/

Sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs in conjunction with University Housing and the National Resource Center for First Year Experience and Students in Transition.
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

8. Assessing the program from the outset
   - Student evaluations
   - Outcomes assessment
   - Draw from first-year experience movement (Upcraft 2005)
Steps for Creating a Sophomore Program

8. **Build assessment into the program from the outset** (cont.)
   - Emphasize “comprehensive” assessment (Upcraft 2005)
   - Create the case for the program’s existence
   - Link goals to outcomes
Budget Considerations

- Institutions fund what they value
  - How can you tie the sophomore year into existing mission and goal statements?
- Assessment
  - Assess what students are learning first then move into program effectiveness
- Know your funding sources
Curricular & Co-curricular approaches to supporting sophomores

- Seminars/sophomore specific courses
- Learning communities
- Undergraduate Research
- Study Abroad and other Exchange opportunities
- Service-Learning
- Leadership Development
- Traditions and rituals
Traditions and Rituals

• “The arrangement of environments is perhaps the most powerful technique we have for influencing human behavior.” (Moos, 1986, p.4)
• Welcome Events
• Convocations
• Ceremonies
University of Cincinnati

Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative (CSI)

Well-defined Programming

Specific connections to career development through resume workshops, etiquette dinners, and involvement with alumni

Linked Course Learning Communities!

Students take 2-3 classes together around a specific major: Health Sciences, Psychology I, and Neuroscience

Developed from a grant through the Alumni Association

Key Learning

• Importance of good partnerships!
• Utilize existing resources

Assessment

In development
Mission: The Sophomore Initiative (TSI) at the University of South Carolina (USC) is the combination of services, programs, and curricular and co-curricular activities that provides a gateway between students’ college transitions and their future aspirations. TSI offers a foundation to explore the specific experiences and opportunities USC has to offer, especially those related to career development, high-impact learning, academic success, and connection to campus.

TSI Goals/Components:
- Career development
- Experiential education/high-impact learning
- Academic excellence/academic success
- Connection to campus
University of South Carolina

- Summer newsletter
- Sophomore September
  - A series of 5 events designed to welcome students back to campus and launch them to success in their sophomore year
    - Sophomore Welcome
    - Study Abroad Fair
    - Snow Cone Cool Down
    - Major and Information Fair
    - Career Fest
University of South Carolina

- Sophomore Website
- Residence Life
- Upper-class Living and Learning Communities
- Redefining the role of the Resident Mentor
  - 1-1 meeting with sophomore residents
  - Discussions connection to Housing’s learning outcomes and the sophomore year experience
- Themed Learning Communities
Designing Campus Activities for Second-Year Students

- Know your students
- Create meaningful learning outcomes
- Design experiences to address their needs
- Tie your SYE programs into institutional mission and goals
- Repackage existing resources
- Assess, assess, assess!
Valuable Resources


- [http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/index.html](http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/index.html) and Soph ListServ
On-Line Resources

- National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition - Sophomore Year Resources -
  http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/index.html

- Sophomore Year List-Serve -
  http://sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/index.html

- Selected Institutions that have Sophomore Year Program
  http://sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/school.html

- Center for Life Calling and Leadership -
  http://clcl.indwes.edu/index.cfm
Questions and Discussion
Contact Information

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