Discussing What Works: Challenges and Opportunities in Making Second Year Programs Successful

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Presentation Overview

- Welcome
- Overview of the Sophomore Experience
- The USC experience
- Success, Challenges and Planning on YOUR campuses
- Resources and Recommendations

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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)
## 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>

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Issues that led to the creation of the SYE program at USC

- Retention Gap
- Issues of satisfaction in the second-year
- Sophomores as “boat people”
- Withdrawal of resources in the second-year experience
The Second-Year Experience at USC

The Sophomore-Year Experience: A Developmental Model

- Academics
- Time Management
- Dependence
- Freehod
- The Sophomore-Year Experience
- Social Life
- Finances
- Attitude
- Future

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The Sophomore Initiative at The University of South Carolina

• **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
USC Successes and Challenges

• **Building Support for Sophomore Programs**
  • Success: Initial Task Force, cross-campus collaboration
  • Challenge: Keeping momentum

• **Assessment**
  • Success: Strong initial needs assessment
  • Challenge: Long-term management, defining the audience

• **Buy-in from Students**
  • Success: Putting Students in Leadership positions
  • Challenge: Student interest

• **Programming**
  • Success: SSI for residential population, Sophomore September, newsletter
  • Challenge: Lack of participation- SLUMP retreat, Sophomore Planner
Questions to Ponder

- How do you define success for your sophomore-year experience programs?
- What programs have been the most successful in reaching sophomore students?
- What challenges or obstacles have you faced in meeting the needs of sophomores on your campus?
Notes

• Challenges- defining the group, sophomore v. second year terminology, class cohorts, attendance or planning unless there is an immediate need/ goal by the student- the buy in, allowing time for the culture to change for these programs to become traditional, needs of transfers: sophomores or first-years?, think they have it all figured out by year two… should the message come from upperclassmen peers and not the administration, overlap with students who are already attending events (not the students we may be worried about), defining learning outcomes/ developing assessment plans, awareness of larger or smaller programs to reach different styles/ personalities, meeting them where they are at, second semester first-year programs as a lead into the second year,
Questions to Ponder

- What types of partnerships and institutional support are needed to make these programs successful? How do you gain institutional support for your SYE?
- What are the most successful ways to reach sophomore students on your campus through either active or passive events?
- How do you assess your sophomore-year experiences?
Notes

- Partnerships needed
  - Can’t fall on one person or office
  - Need support from the top
  - Faculty involvement
    - Start small and move broadly
    - Tying in academically based programs
    - Lecture series or lunches etc.

- Need to look at what students value and how do you build off of that because culture takes a long time to change.
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

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Recommendations

- Clearly define learning outcomes at the outset
- Establish strong cross-campus partnerships
- Incorporate students thoughts
- Step back and allow new eyes to review programs/initiatives
- Connect to relevant institutional goals
- Keep marketing fresh, make use of social media
- Assess, assess, assess
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  – Twitter: “OSE_USC”
  – www.sc.edu/studentengagement