Prepping for Sophomore Success in the First-Year

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Today’s Topics

- Trends and Issues in the first and second year
- Linking first and second year programs
- Defining high impact practices and why they work
- Steps for second year success
The Goal: Student Success

• Student Success is defined as: “academic achievement; engagement in educationally purposeful activities; satisfaction; acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and competencies; persistence; and attainment of educational objectives.”

(Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek, 2007)
A Means to an End: Student Engagement

Two components to student engagement:

• Student Behaviors- what students do; the time and energy devoted to purposeful activities

• Institutional Conditions- what institutions do; using good practices to encourage students to do the right things
Importance of the First-Year Experience

- Retention
- Student learning and academic success
- Academic and social integration
- Front-loaded resources
- The critical first six weeks of college
THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

The First Year Experience is the combination of services, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities that supports a student’s transition from high school to college as well as provides a foundation for academic success at a particular institution.

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Cycle of the First College Year

• Transition

• Establishment

• New Beginnings

• Making Commitments

Adapted from Hunter and Gahagan (2003). It takes a Year. About Campus, 8, (4), p. 31,32.
FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE
Services, Programs, Curricular and Co-curricular activities that students experience in the first year

Convocation or other opening ceremony
Clubs and Organizations
Commuting - the parking lot
Service-Learning
Cultural Events such as speakers, plays, concerts
Admissions
Financial Aid
Orientation
Academic Advising
Learning Assistance Services
Registration
The Curriculum
Student Success
Courses such as CC 101 or Freshman Seminar
Common Reading
Learning Communities
Residence Life

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THE SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE

The Second-Year Experience is the combination of services, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities that provides the gateway between a students’ college transition and their future educational and career aspirations as well as providing a foundation to explore the specific academic experiences and opportunities a particular institution has to offer.
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)
Academic Integration

Not yet considering major

Deeply Committed to Major

Following others, Withdrawning, Following Stereotypes

Purposeful in College Life

Unsophisticated in selection of friends/evaluation of relationships

Making “Friends for Life”

Social Engagement/ Quality Relationships

PROPOSED SOPHOMORE YEAR CONTINUA

Schaller, 2011
Summary of Schaller’s Stages

Stages have *tone* and *content*
Students may experience multiple stages at one time

Major content areas: Relationships, Self, Academics

- *Random Exploration*: exuberance, lack reflection
- *Focused Exploration*: frustration, reflection begins
- *Tentative Choices*: relief, some lingering anxiety – action begins
- *Commitment*: confidence
SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE
Services, Programs, Curricular and Co-curricular activities that students experience in the second year

- Financial Aid
- Apartment style living
- Academic Advising
- Learning Assistance Services
- Peer Leadership
- The Curriculum
- Gateway courses into their major and other “weed-out” courses

- Career Planning
- Study Abroad
- Focused involvement in Clubs & Organizations
- Commuting - the parking lot
- Service-Learning
- Community Involvement
- Undergraduate Research
- Job, Internship or Co-op
Why Link the First and Second Year

- Retention and Student Success
- Meeting them where they are
- Intentional planning for high-impact practices
A Framework for Connecting the First and Second Year

- Academic Success
- Intentional Communication
- Frontloading Resources
- Engaging Parents
- Encouraging High Impact Practices
Academic Success

- Academic Deficiency
- Credit hour momentum
- Loss of financial aid and scholarships
- Exploring courses with high DFW rates
- Examine institutional data that may help you understand the sophomore-year experience (NSSE, YFCY, SSI, etc.)
Communication

• Set expectations for engagement
• End of first-year discussions across campus
• Summer communication
• Ongoing monthly emails
• Social Media
• Retention software carried over to second year
Frontloading

“I think my sophomore year kind of left me more stranded, because your freshman year there were so many things that were reaching out to you that you come back your sophomore that it’s just like you’re on your own.”

• Meeting them where they are
• Welcome Back to Campus
• Providing resources
• Traditions
Parental Role

• Parents Weekends
• Ongoing Communication
• Parental Tips
  – Academic support
  – Living situation
  – Personal wellness
  – Finance
  – High impact practices
High-Impact Practices

- Seminar Courses
- Peer Leadership
- Learning Communities
- Undergraduate Research
- Service-Learning
- Study Abroad/Study Away
Sophomore specific courses

• Sophomore Seminars
  – Designed to support second-year students academic success and/or transition into the major
  – Credit or non-credit bearing

• Institutional Examples
  – DePaul
  – University of Tennessee Knoxville
  – Stanford University
Leadership Development

• “Helping students develop the integrity and strength of character that prepare them for leadership may be one of the most challenging and important goals of higher education” (King, 1997, p. 87).

• Institutional Examples
  – University of Cincinnati
  – Colgate University
Learning Communities

• Curricular
  – Cohorts of second-year students taking 2-3 common courses together
  – Iowa State – Women in Science and Engineering
  – University of Cincinnati – Psychology for Sophomores

• Residential
  – Sophomores assigned to live together around a theme
  – Belmont University
  – Emory University
Undergraduate Research

- Characterized by four attributes (Hakim, 1998)
  - Student mentorship by a faculty member
  - Research project leading to a meaningful contribution to the subject of inquiry
  - Conducted using widely recognized techniques in the field of inquiry
  - Final project can be disseminated and assessed.

- University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
- University of Michigan
Service-learning

• **Definition:** A form of active learning that connects meaningful community service with academic coursework and purposeful reflection. (University of South Carolina)

• **Specific Examples**
  – William Jewel College
  – Villanova University
  – Colgate University
Domestic Study Away and Study Abroad

• Study Abroad
  – University of San Diego
  – University of Richmond

• National Student Exchange
  – Consortium of over 200 institutions across the country that facilitate students domestic exchanges

• Short term experiences
  – Retreats
  – Alternative break experiences
  – Bridge programs
Considerations

• Consider your full “college” experience
  • How long is your typical “time to completion?”
  • Plan for this entire span
  • Second year experience rationale
  • Also consider third, fourth, fifth or junior/senior year rationale
ONE EXAMPLE

First Year
- Admission
- Orientation
- Transition
- Success
- Engagement
- Development

Second Year
- Transition to Major
- Leadership
- Internship
- Study Abroad
- Minors/Focus
- Career Development

Junior Year
- Integrative Learning Approaches
- Advancing Academic Success
- Transition Out
- Culminating Experience
- Career Development

Senior Year

Schaller, 2011
Practical Considerations

- Mission, Learning Outcomes, and Goals
- Timing – when to offer various initiatives
- Communication
- Raising student expectations and awareness
- From involvement to engagement
- Providing opportunities for structured reflection
Practical Considerations

• Good assessment
  – Get to know the students on your campus
  – What institutional data do you have and what do you need

• Build collaborative partnerships
Discussion

• What existing initiatives in your first-year experience could apply or extend to the second year?

• What are opportunities and challenges do you face about integrating the first and second-year experience?


