

Strategies for coordinating, enhancing, and assessing a distributed model for the first year experience

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Outline

- Brief overview of Illinois State University's First Year Experience (FYE)
- Organizational influences on student learning
- How is the first year experience structured on your campus?
- Brief overview of our work with Foundations of Excellence®
- Strategies for developing a comprehensive FYE Assessment Plan for a distributed FYE model
- Activity and discussion
- Conclusion

Profile of the Institution

Fall 2006 Data

- Total students – 20,261
 - Undergraduate – 17,842
 - Graduate – 2,419
- New beginning students – 3,200
- Average ACT – 23.9
- 11.3% graduated in top 10% of their HS class
- Residential campus – 7,204 live in University Housing

Illinois State's FYE

- Distributed model – no central FYE Office/Director
- Many programs and services touch the lives of our first year students
- These programs and services are coordinated through units in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

Key elements of Illinois State's FYE

- Required summer orientation program (Preview)
- Fall orientation program (Passages)
- Required housing policy (two years)
- Semi-structured first year curriculum
- First year seminar – not required, 1 credit hr, first half of semester
- Intrusive, centralized academic advising

Organizational influences on FYE

- Foundational Dimension® - Organization
Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year.
- [Challenging and Supporting the First Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College](#) (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot, 2005)
“Create an institutional mechanism or structure for oversight of the first year, in both the curriculum and co-curriculum.”



How is the first year experience organized at your institution?

Identify some of the influences that are involved in shaping first year students' learning and persistence.

Strategies for Developing Assessment Plan

- Comprehensive
- Manageable for a distributed FYE model
- Involved members of the Council for the First Year Experience
- Collaborated with the University Assessment Office
 - Maximize resources and utilize, as much as possible, existing data (NSSE, FSSE, individual program assessment)

Strategies for Developing Assessment Plan

- Goals reference institution or FYE mission.
- Focus on few broad areas based on Foundations of Excellence® and other university initiatives
 - Illinois State University encourages faculty and staff's commitment to the first-year experience.
 - Illinois State University provides intentional opportunities for first-year students to develop an appreciation of civic engagement.
 - Illinois State University provides intentional opportunities to foster first-year students' successful transition and retention.

Strategies for Developing Assessment Plan

- Measurable outcomes for each goal
- Goal: Illinois State University encourages faculty and staff's commitment to the first-year experience.
 - New faculty can articulate how to find information about campus resources for first-year students.
 - Faculty receive and use information/resources about campus support services for first-year students and have an understanding of the importance the University places on the first-year experience and the University's philosophy of the first-year experience.

Strategies for Developing Assessment Plan

- Identify the data needed for each outcome measure
 - Is it already available?
 - If not, work with unit to modify existing assessment methods to collect data.
 - What group's will be assessed?
 - Assessment methods
 - Who will conduct assessment (unit)?
 - Identify member of Council for FYE responsible for collecting data from the unit.
 - Timeline for collecting data

Illinois State University
First-Year Experience Assessment Plan 2006 - 2010

Program Goal	Institutional District	Student Reference	Outcome Measures	Data Needed	Data Already Available	What groups will be assessed?	Assessment and Delivery Methods	Who will conduct/collect assessment data for the Council?	Timeline
			Multiple outcome measures for each program goal						

Example

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
First-Year Experience Assessment Plan 2006 – 2010

Program Goal
Illinois State University encourages faculty and staff's commitment to the first-year experience.

Institutional Division Mission Reference
Educating Illinois – Individualized Attention: Providing the supportive environment of a small college through an innovative General Education program, strong student-faculty connections, superior student services, and a focus on each student as an individual, with unique educational needs and potential.

Outcome Measures	Data Needed	Data Already Available	What groups will be assessed?	Assessment and Delivery Methods	Who will conduct/collect assessment data for the Council?	Timeline
New faculty can articulate how to first information about campus resources for first-year students.	New Faculty Orientation (NFO) assessment data related to first-year student issues and campus resources.	Claire will incorporate questions into new NFO survey beginning fall 2007.	All faculty who participate in New Faculty Orientation and faculty who participate in CTLTA's new faculty follow-up session in December.	Survey given to faculty at the conclusion of NFO and survey given to same new faculty who attend the December follow-up session.	New Faculty Orientation (Claire)	August and December

Developing an assessment plan on your campus

Identify your top 3 focus areas

What would be some of the challenges to developing and implementing such a plan?

- Allowed for adjustment/rewording of some outcome measures (i.e. focusing on dismissal instead of probation)
- Our first year data will provide our baseline.
- Used data to determine some Council initiatives

Impact

- Provides a broad, university-wide perspective on the first year experience
- Encourages units to collect data on first year students / separate data by class level
- Encourages units to make adjustments to current programming to address unique needs of first year students